
RETHINKING THE CHURCH: BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

THE EARTHY WORD OF GOD

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on July 2, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Southern Baptists have traditionally been called “people of the book” because of their tight grip on the Bible as the word of God. Many in higher education today deny such a ‘naïve’ claim about the Bible, but it is still quite common for regular Christians to say they believe the Bible is truly the word of God. And yet, the average Christian lives as though the Bible is irrelevant, outdated, and inaccessible. Many Bibles sit on shelves or tables without the slightest bit of wear, since the purchaser of that precious book hasn’t the inkling to mine its innumerable treasures. In this message, we shall consider what Southern Baptists mean by saying, “the Bible is the word of God;” and we shall consider some practical applications for those who want to live as though they really believe it is.

2 PETER 1:16-21

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.

21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY

The Bible is both earthly and divine, and we must pay attention to it.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

(1) THE BIBLE IS EARTHLY

(2) THE BIBLE IS DIVINE

(3) APPLICATION (#1): WE MUST GIVE IT ATTENTION!

(4) APPLICATION (#2): SOME ATTENTIVE METHODS

MESSAGE

(1) THE BIBLE IS EARTHLY

- ***“we were eyewitnesses of his majesty”*** (v16)
 - Peter and the other Apostles were eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ.
 - The Christian Faith is built upon a real historical person – No Jesus of Nazareth, then Christianity is entirely false

- ***“we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain”*** (v18)
 - Specifically, Peter and the other Apostles were witnesses of Jesus divine claims and mission.
 - Why was it a “holy mountain?”
 - Because it was there that Peter saw Jesus’ transfigured and glorious!
 - That is where Jesus “received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (v17).
 - Peter and the Apostles claimed to have been eyewitnesses to ***Jesus of Nazareth*** who is also ***the Son of God!***

- “we have the *prophetic word more fully confirmed*” (v19)
 - The “*prophetic word*” Peter is referring to is the Old Testament.
 - These prophets testified to God’s promises and His ongoing relationship with humanity.
 - The Old Testament “*prophetic word*” has been “*more fully confirmed*” or “*validated*” in the person and work of Christ.
 - The author of Hebrews says, “*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...*” (Heb. 1:1–2).
 - John says, “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known*” (John 1:14, 18).
 - The “*prophetic word*” and “*Scripture*” labels extends to the New Testament, as the Apostolic witness completed God’s self-disclosure.
 - The Apostle Paul said (in Ephesians 3) that he was given the “*stewardship of God’s grace*” (v2) in that God “*made known to [him]*” (v3) the “*mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations*” (v5). Furthermore, Paul said that this “*mystery*” was “*revealed to [God’s] holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*” (v5).
 - Later in 2 Peter, Peter says, “*beloved, since you are waiting for these [the coming of Christ in final glory – to judge and save], be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*” (2 Pet. 3:14–16).

- “*men spoke* from God” (v21)
 - It was “*from God*” that “*men spoke*,” but we must not forget, deny, or foolishly downplay the reality that “*men spoke*.”
 - A prophet is one who speaks the words of God, but he does so with his own words.
 - The Apostles spoke the words of God with authority, but these words came in the form of their own respective vocabularies, memories, and emphases.
 - Not dictation (except when noted)
 - Not automatic writing
 - “*men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*” (v21).

Summary: The Bible is Earthly. (Segue) *But it is not merely the words of men.*

(2) THE BIBLE IS DIVINE

- “*we did not follow cleverly devised myths*” (v16)
 - Peter contrasts his own testimony, particularly concerning the “*truth*” about Christ (v12) and concerning “*the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (v16), with the “false prophets” who came with a different message.
 - Peter and Apostles = not myths, but Christ’s own words and glory
 - *Jesus was/is the glorious God* (transfiguration – v17-18)
 - *Jesus is returning in power to judge*
 - If God “*did not spare the ancient world... when he brought a flood upon the ungodly*” (2:5), if God turned “*the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes... making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly*” (2:6), then God is able “*to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment*” (2:9)

- ***Jesus is returning in power to save***
 - Peter says there is a “*day dawning*” and a “*morning star rising*” (1:19).
- **False prophets** = myths and worldly pleasure
 - They “*deny*” the very “*Master*” they claim has “*bought them*” (2:1).
 - They follow carnal pleasures and “*blaspheme the truth*” (2:2)
 - They “*exploit with false words*” (2:3).
 - They “*despise authority*” and do not speak with humble reverence about spiritual things (2:10).
- “*we have the prophetic word*” (v19) and “*no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation*” (v20)
 - The prophetic word – the truly prophetic word – does not come from one’s own explanation or interpretation.
 - Many a “prophets” claimed to be from God, but some of these were merely the thoughts and wisdom of men.
 - Those who speak the word of God do not speak from their own wisdom.
- “*no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*” (v21)
 - This is the “How” – “*men spoke from God*”
 - Not dictation (except when noted)
 - Not automatic writing
 - “*men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*” (v21).

Summary: The Bible is divine – it is the very word of God. (Segue) You probably won’t argue with anything I’ve said so far, but this is where I apply the pressure.

(3) APPLICATION (#1): WE MUST GIVE IT ATTENTION!

1. The Bible is the word of God, so “*you will do well to pay attention*” (v19).

○ ***You will do well when you give it attention.***

▪ “*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers...*” (Psalm 1:1-3).

○ ***You will not do well when you do not give it attention.***

▪ “*4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish*” (Psalm 1:4-6).

2. The Bible is the word of God, so it is a “*lamp shining in a dark place*” (v19).

○ ***Your way is illumined*** and your path is safe as you walk accordingly.

▪ “*The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day*” (Proverbs 4:18).

○ ***Your way is trouble*** and your path is disastrous as you walk in the dark.

▪ “*The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble*” (Proverbs 4:19).

3. The Bible is the word of God, so it is where He meets with and sustains us.

○ **The Bible is your “*lamp... until the day dawns and the morning star rises*”** (v19).

▪ Here is where God comforts and consoles you, grows and nourishes you, keeps and sustains you!

○ ***Without this lamp, the darkness will obscure the dawn.***

▪ Do you feel as though you have little or no light? Do you wonder if the light of dawn will ever come?

Summary: The Bible is both earthly and divine, and we must pay attention to it.

It is wisdom from God; it is illumination for our path; it is where God meets us until we meet Him face to face.

(Segue) But our neglect of God's word may be influenced by our ignorance.

If you see neglect on your part, if you do not give the Bible attention, then you have reason to be concerned...

- You may not be a Christian.
- You may not be nearly as mature as you thought.
- You may be ignorant about how to give the Bible attention.

(4) APPLICATION (#2): SOME ATTENTIVE METHODS

1. *Read the Bible at length and frequently*

- Your understanding and familiarity will grow over time, and this will cause your time to be more fruitful and enjoyable

2. *Read the Bible out loud*

- By yourself, with your spouse, and with your family

3. *Handwrite the Bible*

- Take your time, eliminate distractions, and try to write legibly

4. *Pray through the Bible*

- By yourself, with your spouse, and with your family

Major Point: The Bible is both earthly and divine, and we must pay attention to it.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

The Inspiration of Scripture by James Scott

http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/Inspiration.html

The Inspiration of Scripture by Loraine Boettner (*especially Part 6*)

https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/boettner/boettner_inspiration.html#part6

The Inerrancy of Scripture by Kevin Vanhoozer

<http://www.mercypres.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/The-Inerrancy-of-Scripture-Vanhoozer.pdf>

All Scripture – All of it by Kevin DeYoung

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2013/08/22/all-scripture-all-of-it/>

Methods of Meditation on Scripture by Don Whitney

<http://biblicalspirituality.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Methods-of-Meditation-on-Scripture.pdf>