

Prayer List

Sierra
Gene
Judy
The Williams' Family
Ophelia
Arley

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Looking At the Bible in a Bible Way

Paul Earnhart

People look at the Bible in many ways—as a compendium of religious myths, one of the great books of history, the repository of absolute and final truth. Most views of the Bible are held, I suspect, by people who have made very little study of it. In such cases even a correct view of its real nature would rest on such shallow considerations as to be largely meaningless. A person can hold any view of the Bible he chooses, no matter how preposterous, but wisdom and fairness demand that he at least determine how the Bible views itself before reaching his conclusions.

Does the Bible see itself as a collection of pious myths? Does it pose as a compilation of philosophical treatises? Does it purport to be merely a handbook of ancient proverbs? All these questions and others are easily answered by the simple process of reading the Scriptures themselves.

The apostle Paul wrote nearly half the books of the New Testament. Whether we agree with his conclusions or not, Paul's view of Scripture must certainly be considered normative. In his last letter, written shortly before his death, Paul reminisces about Timothy's early life as a student of the Scripture at his mother's knee. The apostle urges his young protege to hold fast to the certainty of these "holy writings"

Elders:

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This Week's Question:

In what book does a woman call on the north wind and the south wind to blow on her garden?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Jonah - Jonah 4:8

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because “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16, NASB). Here Paul affirms that the breath of God is not only in the ideas and concepts of Scripture, but in the very written words.

Paul’s reference to “Scripture” in 2 Timothy has special application to the writings of the Old Testament, but there is plenty of evidence that the writers of the New Testament considered their own words as part of the same “sacred writings.” Peter so treats the writings of Paul which, he said, contained some difficult things which “the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.” In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul gives two citations from “Scripture.” The first is from Deuteronomy 25:4, but the second can only be found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7). In this way the fabric of the New Testament Scriptures is woven together as a seamless garment. If one rejects Paul’s high view of Scripture, he also discredits Peter who called Paul’s writings “scripture” and Luke who was his close companion and associate in the gospel. It is not likely, given the close ties between all the men who wrote the New Testament, that any of them could survive such an assault with their integrity intact. Either we must accept the Scripture for what it claims to be—God’s own word written down—or we must reject it all as flawed and unreliable. There is no middle ground.

But for those who claim to be followers of Jesus there is a way to settle our question beyond dispute. If we can determine how Jesus saw the Scripture we will have at least decided the issue of how a disciple of the Lord should see them. When a person becomes a follower of the Son of God, all his questions are potentially resolved. He simply seeks to learn what Jesus’ attitude toward any matter is and then takes that attitude for his own.

How did Jesus view the Scriptures? In a post-resurrection appearance to two despondent disciples He upbraids them for their slowness “to believe in all that the prophets have

spoken!” (Luke 24:25). He then proceeds to explain “to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Just before His ascension the Lord comforted His disciples with the assurance that “all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). This is an echo of His words in the Sermon on the Mount: “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished” (Matthew 5:18). The Son of God resided absolute confidence in the written words of Scripture because they were His Father’s words—and because they were His Father’s words they were destined per force to be fulfilled in their entirety.

The confidence of Jesus in the very words of the sacred writings is especially revealed in a question He raised with the Sadducees on the Tuesday before He died: “... have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Matthew 22:31–32). In this argument to establish that there is life beyond death, Jesus rests His case on the tense (present) of a Hebrew verb. There can be no doubt that the Lord held the Scriptures to be verbally inspired and therefore true. With Him an “It is written” was the end of all controversy (Matthew 4:6, 7, 10; 19:4–6; 21:23; Luke 10:25–26).

Since Jesus never called attention to a single error in the Scriptures, there are three possibilities: (1) There are no errors in the Bible. (2) There were errors, but Jesus was unaware of them. (3) He was aware of errors, but did not choose to call attention to them. The first is the only option that will not completely destroy Jesus’ credibility as the Messiah.

We have the freedom to reject the clear claim of the Scriptures about themselves. That is our choice. But we do not have the freedom to reject that claim and still maintain that we are disciples of Christ. Those who make that affirmation must walk as He walked (1 John 2:6).