

The Authority of Scripture in the Matter of Origins

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I don't know of any better place to start this message or this conference than from here. For if what we read here is not correct, if it is not so, and if we do not believe it, nothing else really matters. 2 Timothy 3:16; *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

If you would, keep this passage in your minds, and I want to read you a quote taken from W. R. Downing's book entitled *A Baptist Catechism*. He wrote this: "If the Bible is the very word of God preserved in written form [inscriptuated] - and it is - then there are certain things that are necessarily true. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, not merely the work or words of men. Because the Bible is the very Word of God, it is authoritative, the very highest authority. As the very Word of God inscriptuated it is infallible—incapable of error and without deceit. As the inspired, authoritative, infallible Word of God inscriptuated, it is necessarily inerrant or without error, and wholly true in every aspect. Because the Bible is the very word of God, and completely trustworthy in every respect, it is sufficient as our only rule of both faith [what we are to believe] and practice [how we are to live]." I use this because I certainly could not put it in any better words than W. R. Downing has written.

We run into a problem sometimes when we are dealing with those who oppose the Word of God, especially as we are dealing in this conference with the matter of origins. When you deal with people and you talk with them, they will invariably ask you, "What do you believe?" And you will tell them what you believe, whether it is concerning creation or other things that are related. Then you might be asked, "Why do you

believe that?" Your answer would be, "Because that is what the Bible teaches." Well, the next logical question is, "How do you know the Bible is right?" How do you answer this question? You might say, "Well, the Bible says it is right." Then you get into circular reasoning. "I believe the Bible." "How do you know it is true?" "Well, the Bible says it is true."

Well, it goes a little bit further than that. In the matter of regeneration and new birth, God gives faith to His people. This God-given faith enables us to believe the Word of God, no matter who or what may oppose it. And this is sufficient with us, without making any apologies in any way whatsoever. We should always be ready to state what we believe and unashamedly say, "I believe it because the Bible says so!" Again, make no apologies for that—never apologize for believing the Word of God.

Let me just say this also, since I am the first speaker of the conference. Every preacher here is going to have personal opinions about some of these things. And invariably in a Bible conference, personal opinions will leak through. We are just earthen vessels, and personal opinions sometime come through. Be careful to check everything you hear by the word of God. For it does not really matter what I believe, what Brother Justice believes, or what any other preacher here believes. The question we must answer, what we must search out is; "What saith the Scripture?" What saith the Scripture is what we are looking for in this conference.

And, let me add this. I am not, and I am sure you are not, concerned with scientific knowledge or intellectual concepts and theories in the matter of origins. I am not interested in that. Some people are, but I am not. I looked up the word science and I want to read to you what Webster said the word science means: "knowledge acquired by observation, deduction or testing." Well, always remember this. Science is always conducted by fallible men, with finite minds, and with finite means. And

science is always changing. What was a scientific fact one hundred years ago has now been proven false by modern science. And if this earth continues, what is a scientific fact in modern science will be disproved in the future.

Look with me in your Bible back to 1 Timothy 6:20; "*Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.*" There is something about science, and I don't know just exactly what it is, but there is something about science that always seems to be bent against the truth of God's word. Paul had to deal with it in his day, evidently, and it is always a problem. Verse 20 speaks of "*the oppositions of science*" and then Paul added "*falsely so called.*" Why is it "*falsely so called?*" It is because science is ever changing knowledge. Science never remains the same. Scientific knowledge is not what it once was. It is just not reliable. It is just not trustworthy. One year you are told that something is good for you; the next year you are told it is not good for you. Eat all the oatmeal you can this year—then next year it is peanut butter or something else. But, it is always changing. You cannot trust it. You cannot rely upon it.

Let me tell you, as we live in this world, we have one tangible thing that we can trust, we can depend upon, and that is our Bibles! As Christian people we should never look to science or the intellectuals of this world to substantiate or to confirm the Word of God. I am not interested in science confirming the Word of God! They cannot! And always remember this; anything anyone uses to verify or to substantiate the Word of God must be viewed by them to be of a higher authority than the Word of God. You cannot use something of equal or of lesser authority to substantiate anything nor to validate anything. You have to use something greater. And whatever you may use to validate the Word of God, in your mind, that has more authority than the Word of God. Whatever you put above the Scriptures, you view as a higher authority than the Scripture. I saw just a little while back an individual sitting with his Bible. And this

may offend someone, I don't mean for it to offend. He sat with his Bible and had a quarterly Sunday school book on top of his Bible. I said to myself, "That is fitting, he has the Sunday school book on top or above his Bible", when it should be the other way around. But that is the way people view things.

All the scientific knowledge that comes out today and all of the archeological digs that go on, and all of a sudden we get headlines, they have discovered something in Egypt or somewhere in Israel. They dug it up and maybe this will substantiate what the Bible says. I don't care! I remember, it has been a number of years now, I went to Israel and was looking forward to going into the empty tomb. I don't know if that was the same tomb that Jesus was buried in, but I was looking forward to going in there. I don't know what I was expecting to feel, but I was really expecting to feel something. The day finally came when I was able to walk into that tomb, and I walked in there and I was so disappointed. I did not feel anything! Didn't feel a thing! I had heard about the empty tomb; I had read about it and I wanted to go in there, I wanted to see it! I did not feel a thing! And I thought about it later, just how foolish I was. I don't need to see an empty tomb to validate my faith in an empty tomb. And we are like that sometimes, we want something to prove it—show me. That is the way we are by nature. And science comes out with their Hubble telescope and they are able to see something, supposedly prove something that somehow might get back into Ezekiel's prophecy. We will say, "There that proves this." We don't need that! We have the very Word of God.

Brother Chamberlain, don't get scared. I am not going to get on your subject, Hebrews 11:3. Brother Chamberlain is preaching next and he is preaching on "*Faith*" and I told him earlier, I don't know how you preach on the authority of the Word of God without talking about "*faith*." If you don't believe it, it does not really matter to you personally. Notice, if you would, Hebrews 11:3:

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." I want you to notice this, *"By the word of God."* Here is the authority of Scripture relating to origins—origins of all things. It does not matter what! It came into being by the word of God. And I am looking forward to Brother Chamberlain's message because I know it takes faith to believe this. Hebrews 11:3 states, *"by the word of God"*, by divine fiat. Through faith we understand that the worlds were created by a command from God, a command with authority. Keep this in mind, if you would, this matter of fiat, God ordered it! He demanded it! He commanded it! It was by the word of God! This is so important—simply by the word of God.

Go back with me to Psalms, if you would—and in Psalms 33. And again, I am going to say, as I did at the beginning of this message, it seems like circular reasoning if you preach on the authority of the Scriptures and then you are going to teach from the Scriptures that the Bible is right. You go in a circle, but it is a pretty good circle to stay in! Psalms 33:6, *"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."* Let us stop there. All Scripture is given by inspiration. All of you know, I am sure, that God breathed it out. That is why we call it *"the word of God."* It is the very breath of God. So stated in the New Testament; so stated here in the Old Testament; *"by the breath of his mouth."* Verse 7, *"He gathered the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."* Why? Why should all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him? *"For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."* By divine Fiat, a command with the authority of Almighty God!

Now let's look at Psalms 148:1-5: *"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise*

him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD." I will ask the question again, "Why"? Why is it repeated in these verses that we should praise the LORD? The answer is obvious, "*for he commanded, and they were created.*" Just by his command, creation came into being.

Let me go over to the Book of 2 Peter just a moment. In 2 Peter 3:1-5 "*This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly. are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.*"

Let me show you a paradox: Verse 3, "*the scoffers, who shall come,*" and they are here, "*walking after their own lusts.*" The scoffers in verse 4 will tell you it is a foolish doctrine to believe in the coming of the Lord. They will deny the Lord. They will certainly deny the second coming of the Lord. And the argument they will use is, "*all things continue as they were.*" They will say this on the one hand and on the other hand they will teach evolution. You put that together. They say that all things continue as they were, but yet they believe things are still evolving. That is the ignorance and stupidity of this great heresy. But notice in verse 4, they allow for creation: "*all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.*" There are many different ways an individual can be ignorant and not every way is something bad. All of us are ignorant about something. But if you will, look at verse 5, to be "*willingly ignorant*" is the worst ignorance of them all. They willingly are ignorant that it was by

divine fiat this world came into being.

Let me go back to Romans 4:17 for just a moment. You can read it all when you have opportunity, but I am just going to point out here the last few words in verse 17. Our God is able to call "*those things which be not as though they were.*" Think about that! Our God, being God of all, an omniscient and omnipotent God, is able to speak of those things that be not as though they were. When God first said, "*Let there be light*", there had never been any light. He called it as if it were already. He said, "*Let there be light, and there was light.*" By divine fiat God is able to command things that are not as though they were. He commands things into existence. This boggles my mind: that God can command a thing that does not yet exist, but he can command it into existence. But here we get a glimpse of the greatness of our God.

Notice Acts 17. I am not going to take time to read all of this. You are all familiar with the account of when Paul was at Athens, and he went to Mars Hill. And you know about him running into these idolaters. They had a god for this and a god for that, and just in case they had missed one, they had one for the *unknowable* god. Paul told them in the latter part of verse 22, "*ye are too superstitious.*" This word *superstitious* means *religious*. Paul told these people "*you are too religious.*" And I can tell you this, there are some people today who need to be told and convinced they are too religious. You cannot be too godly, but you can be too religious.

I brought you to this passage of Scripture to show you this, verse 23; "*For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*" Now, here is a lesson for all of us. When Paul would teach these Athenians, these idolaters, about the true and living God, notice in verse 24, he goes straight to the matter of creation! Now, you think of all the other things that were at Paul's disposal, things he could have preached and taught these Athenians. But the Holy Spirit

moved him to preach creation. "*God that made the world*" is where he began. He said; "*God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;*"

Let me tell you, the One who created heaven and earth is the Lord, the Master and the God of heaven and earth. Paul also goes a little bit further here, verse 26, "*And hath made of one blood all nations of men...*" God created the heaven and the earth. He created all people. God is the Creator of all things. When you want to talk to someone about the Lord, here in Acts 17 is a good place to start, with creation. That's where the Apostle Paul started and it is a good place for us to start.

Look in your Bibles back to Genesis 1:1. Everybody here can quote this verse, but if you have a Bible, you should use it. Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" That one little verse is placed at the very front of your Bible, and it is just like the flaming sword that kept the way of the Garden of Eden. If you can't get by this one verse, you will never believe anything else found in the word of God. So many people can't even believe the first verse of the Bible! And then they want to argue with you about baptism or some other biblical doctrine. Well, get by Genesis 1:1 first. Go back there first. "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*"

And Paul told us in Romans 1:20 that in God's creation, "*his eternal power and Godhead*" are made known. You will never know His eternal power and Godhead if you don't believe the first verse of the Bible! I am never interested in discussing anything from there on to Revelation with anyone who does not believe the first verse of the Bible. I don't have time for it! If you do not believe the first verse of the Bible, I have some serious, serious doubts about your salvation.

I mentioned, and I am going to mention it one more time, and try not

to get on Brother Chamberlain's message, Hebrews 11:3, "*Through faith we understand.*" This word *understand* has to do with our mind—our intellect. When God saved you, He saved you wholly, totally. He did not leave out your brain. Have you ever read about the renewing of your mind? You know, we talk about being a new creation, but I think sometimes we forget our brain is included. In regeneration God gives us a new heart, a new spirit, and the renewing of our mind. This is what enables us to grasp the Word of God. We believe the Scriptures because God has given us faith. And more than that, He works with our understanding, our intellect.

I believe Genesis 1:1. I was not there, I did not see it happen, but I am convinced "*In the beginning*", whenever that was, "*God created the heaven and the earth.*" I am going to state once again, science cannot ever add to my faith and neither can science take away from my faith. Science cannot alter my faith. God gave that faith to me, and neither man nor science can change it. I like that song, "I Know Whom I Have Believed." I like those words "I know"! There are a lot of things we don't know and there are a lot of things we will never know. But we know what we know by God-given faith. Let no one ever shake you from it. It does not matter what science says. You should never look to them for biblical truth.

If you want to know the truth of origins, let me give you a hint and then I am through. If you want to know the truth of origins, don't go to the History Channel; don't go to National Geographic; don't go to the Discovery Channel. Come here! Come to the Word of God!

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