

So What?

What Difference Do Our Beliefs About The Bible Make?

March 3, 2013

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 - *And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?*

We have said that an orthodox Christian belief about the Bible is that it is...

- The inspired Word of God
- Authoritative for our lives
- Complete, no more or no less than God intended
- Trustworthy, reliable presentation of Truth that can be trusted

So, why is it important to hold these beliefs about the Bible? What difference does it make to believe these things?

Two Models For Viewing Truth

Each model affects how we see and apply God's Word. The two models actually represent two radically different and opposing world-views.

- **Model #1:** Truth is defined by God for everyone; it is objective and universal. The truth is known through discovering God and his Word.
 - God--not humans--is central; he is the source of all things; he rules over all; God is the repository of truth, the author and judge of all that is right and wrong.
 - when a person acts immoral or unethical using God as the model for what is true, he or she is going against God's Word, the standard of morality that reflects his character and nature
 - sees God as the arbiter of what is right and wrong
- **Model #2:** What is true is defined by the individual; it is subjective and situational. Truth is known through simply choosing to believe it.
 - the individual is in control of moral matters; the standard resides within the individual, it is particular to that specific person (subjective) and circumstance (situational)
 - denies the relevance of what God has to say
 - when someone acts immoral or unethical he or she is offending another person's "idea" of what is right or wrong

Illustration: differing views of a multiple-car collision - the truth is, the accident happened - it does not depend on anyone's version of it; truth was what conformed to reality, not what the people involved believed it to be

- the truth of God conforms to reality
- if we substitute our own version of truth, we live with the consequence of defying reality

Choosing God's definition of what is right and wrong and living accordingly grants us the benefits of his protection and provision.

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

The relevance of God's Word to each of us is simply this--it is for our good!

If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands... I will grant peace in the land... I will look on you with favor... I will keep my covenant with you... I will walk among you and be your God (from Leviticus 26:3-6, 9-12)

Protection

- diving accident, due to ignoring intended protections
- Dr. S.I. McMillen, *None Of These Diseases* - over two dozen biblical divine commands or standards served to prevent such disorders as heart disease, cervical cancer, and arthritis

Provision

- God's commands, when obeyed, not only protect us from harm, but also allow God to provide for us, sometimes in breathtaking ways.
- Being obedient to God's Word means free to enjoy maximum leisure, maximum satisfaction, and maximum liberty--in the way God intended.

To summarize, if we don't believe the Bible is...

- The inspired Word of God - we will lack any kind of moral compass or plumb-line or standard upon which to base a moral or ethical framework for our lives
- Authoritative for our lives - we will treat it just as a "good book," with no legitimate demands upon our loyalties or behavior
- Complete, no more or no less than God intended - we will question its value, be easily swayed by its critics, and be tempted by other claims of authority
- Trustworthy, reliable presentation of Truth that can be trusted - we will be susceptible to the relativistic worldview that sees truth as purely subjective and situational; the meaning and power of God's Word is diminished to the point of having little effect

But, if we believe the Bible is...

- The inspired Word of God
- Authoritative for our lives
- Complete, no more or no less than God intended
- Trustworthy, reliable presentation of Truth that can be trusted...

...then we will want to...

- read it - to get to know better this awesome Creator of the universe
- study it - to know better just what it is this God asks of us
- obey it - to open up the tremendous potential for our protection and provision
- share it - to enable others to enjoy the benefits of protection and provision
- defend it - so that the criticisms that have created barriers to belief might be refuted
- treasure it - because it is the Word of Life