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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

2 Timothy 3:10-17
Lesson #31
Authenticity & Authority
12/3/2023

1

2 Timothy 3
Paul's witness is in his response to suffering -

"10 But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 **persecutions**, and **sufferings**, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what **persecutions** I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! 12 And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be **persecuted**. 13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- which is rooted in his response to the MESSAGE of the Scripture.

14 You, however, **continue in the things you have learned** and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; 15 and that from childhood you have **known the sacred writings**, which are able to give you the **wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**. 16 All **Scripture is inspired by God and profitable** for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, **equipped for every good work.**"

2

The message of the Cross is the issue.

1 Corinthians 1

"18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . . 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of **the message preached** to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach **Christ crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**"

In spite of its naysayers, the Gospel has spread over the whole world because it is music to the soul for those with ears to hear.

3

The MESSAGE is inspired.
The Scripture reveals the message but is NOT the message.

Word & Way of the Cross **is the power & wisdom of God**

Embodied in the living Word

Inscribed in the written Word

4

The Biblical message is "soul food".
Any flaw in the messenger or Biblical text will not discredit the message.

"The (Gospel) truth is like a lion. You don't have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself."

St Augustine

5


The O.C. Law was like a road map.

The N.C. Spirit is like a compass.

6

“My goal is not to destroy faith but to challenge students to think critically and develop a more sophisticated view.”

The claimed authenticity and authority of the Biblical message makes it alien to the modern world,



but also music to the image of God in those who have ears to hear.

Bart Ehrman


7

What does it mean to “believe the Bible”?


Proverbs 4:27
“Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.”

Ecclesiastes 10:2
“A wise man’s heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man’s heart directs him toward the left.”

“I’m confused”

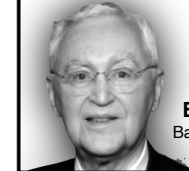


“God said it! I believe it! That settles it!”



8


“Biblical scholarship has increased the basis of my personal faith to see the firmness with which these materials have come down to us, with a multiplicity of copies, some of which are very, very ancient. I’ve asked questions all my life, I’ve dug into the text, I’ve studied this throughout, and today I know with confidence that my trust in Jesus has been well placed. Very well placed.”



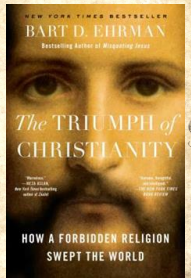
Bruce Metzger
Bart Ehrman’s mentor

9

“The reason the Christian religion swept the world was its unique message and the evangelistic efforts of its members.”




Bart Ehrman
The Triumph of Christianity



10

“The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which none dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.”

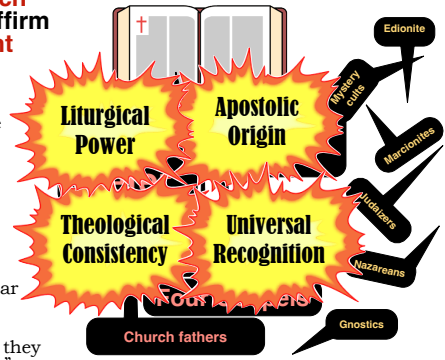


F. F. Bruce
Manchester University

11

How did the early church come to affirm the present list of N.T. books?

The canon of Scripture



“you have the words of life”
“In him was life ... the light of men”
“he is not far from each one of us”
“the sheep hear and know his voice”
“even though they knew God . . .”

12

“Most of the changes found in our early Christian manuscripts have nothing to do with theology or ideology. Far and away the most changes are the result of mistakes, pure and simple - slips of the pen, accidental omissions, inadvertent additions, misspelled words, blunders of one sort or another.”



Bart Ehrman in *Misquoting Jesus*
pp. 10, 55-56, 62, 94, 177

13

How we read the Bible can be a problem.

“God gave me a verse”
A spiritual “crystal ball”
An encyclopedia of “proof texts”
“Absolute Inerrancy?”
Hebrew is a “holy language”
Law of first occurrence
Numerology
Bible codes

- It is not enough just to pray for a sign.
- It is not enough just to follow the leaders.
- It is not enough just to follow our feelings.
- It is not enough to claim a promise.

*Study the Bible with your mind,
pray for godly wisdom,
and listen through the image
of God in your heart.*



14

“With the mind we analyze data, while in the heart we wait for illumination on it.”



Clark Pinnock

15

The message of the Cross addresses life's biggest questions better than the world does.



- ✓ Why do we die?
- ✓ What do we live for?
- ✓ Why do we do good?
- ✓ Why do we struggle?
- ✓ Why do we long for more?
- ✓ What makes humans so unique?

16

Some reflective concerns

1. Divine revelational authority is centered more in the **theological message** of the Bible than in its literary precision.
2. Respect for the **diverse literary genre** of Biblical documents is important.
3. The integrity, heart, & discipline of the **interpreter** is more significant than the technical precision of the document.

NOTE: Does a focus on absolute Inerrancy disrespect the nature of Biblical revelation and miss the purpose of its message?

17

The idolatry of **Bibliolatry**

John 5:39

“You search the **Scriptures**, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and **it is these that bear witness of Me.**”

- Excluding its need for interpretation**
- Exaggerating its technical precision**
- Exceeding its scope of authority**
- Expunging its contextual setting**
- Ignoring its various literary genre**

18

The Holy Ark's (Torah) entrance initiates the Jewish service and is the focus of worship.



19

Has the Bible become central to some Evangelical congregations?

Bibliolatry is demanding more of the book than is necessary.




20

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy
 Nine articles, drafted in 1978 by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy

ARTICLE XIII

We deny that inerrancy is negated by biblical phenomena such as:

a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.



21

2 Kings 17:37

“The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do **forever**,”

The word “forever or eternal” is used 56 times in the Old Testament in connection with things **that have already ended or will end!**

Ex.21:6, 31:16 (Heb.8:13), 1 Sam.1:22, Isa.65:17 (2 Pet.3:10) etc.

22

The N.T. writers sometimes get the source of their O.T. quote mixed up.

Matt.27:9 (Zech.11:12-13)

“Then that which was spoken **through Jeremiah** the prophet was fulfilled, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel; and they gave them for the Potter’s Field, as the Lord directed me.’”

Mk. 1:2 (Mal.3:1)

“As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, ‘**Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way;**’” (Note that Matthew avoids this “mistake” — Matt. 3:3.)

23

N.T. writers can seem to misquote the O.T.

They often quote from the LXX (Greek copy of the Hebrew text) or paraphrase the O.T.

Matthew 12:21 (Isaiah 42:4)

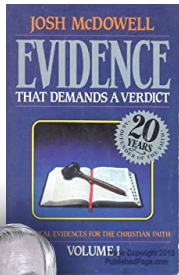
“and in his name will the Gentiles hope.”
 “and the coastlands wait for his law.”

Hebrews 10:30 (Deuteronomy 32:36)

“The Lord will **judge** His people”
 “For the Lord will **vindicate** His people.”

24

What is the evidence that demands a verdict?



Who was Jesus?

- Liar
- Lunatic
- Lord

• Light

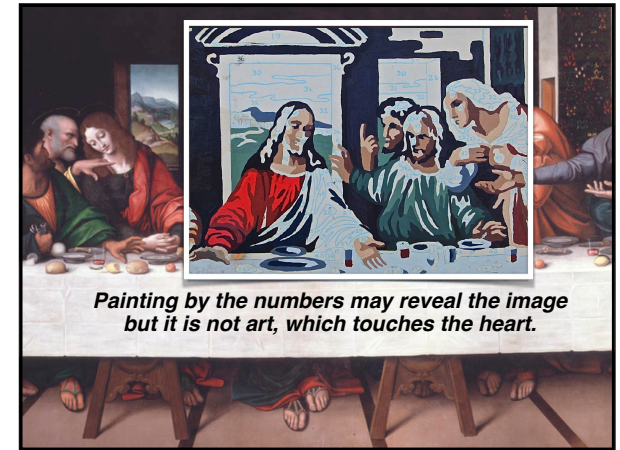
The authority of the Bible rests within its *Gospel message* not its scientific "proofs".

25

So how are we to understand the authority of the Gospel Message?

1. Keep the *main thing*, the main thing. (The core issues of the soul, the unfolding drama of redemption, the Word and Way of the Cross.)
2. Respect the *context* (genre, literary, historical / cultural, theological, covenants, etc.)
3. Listen to the jury / verdict of the *soul*. (the image of God = a spiritual antenna)

26



Painting by the numbers may reveal the image but it is not art, which touches the heart.

27

How do I know the sun exists when I can't view its blinding light? I know because it's by those rays the whole world comes into sight.

How do I know, that God is real and bear His image without doubt? I know because it's by this view the meaning of life I have found out.

28

Alien Berean Christian Disciples

Study the Bible (Don't worship it.)
Witness to America (Don't idolize it.)
Show your faith (Don't just mouth it.)
Hope beyond this life (Not in it.)



The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

29

2 Timothy

Next lesson
2 Timothy
4:1-8

Looking back and ahead at the end of life



30