

## WHAT IS CONSERVATISM?

### I. **A belief in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.**

- A. One who is religiously conservative believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God that it claims to be (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. You have to be careful because many say the Bible is inspired but they don't view inspiration as Paul did.
- C. The Bible shows itself to be inspired in many ways.
  - 1. The unity of the Bible shows it to be inspired.
    - a. 66 books, taking 1600 years to write by probably 40 different authors.
    - b. They wrote in different places, times, languages and with varying educational backgrounds.
    - c. Through all of it, there is amazing continuity and harmony of thought.
    - d. All the books point to Jesus and all reveal parts of God's plan to bring Jesus to earth or what to do now that He has come to earth.
    - e. The reason is that all were moved to write by the same Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).
  - 2. The accuracy of the Bible shows it to be inspired.
    - a. It tells us the earth is round (Isaiah 40:22).
    - b. It tells us about the ocean currents (Psalm 8:8).
    - c. It tells us the importance of blood (Leviticus 17:11).
    - d. It is historically accurate as well.
      - (1) There was long thought to be error in the Bible concerning the Hittites, but archaeology proved their existence.
      - (2) There has been accusations that David was a post-exilic creation, but recent finds show that David was king of Israel.
  - 3. Probably the greatest evidence of inspiration is that of fulfilled prophecy.
    - a. We could talk all night about this.
    - b. The writers all attributed their words to God.
    - c. Isaiah said Babylon would fall and it did 200 years later (Isaiah 13:17-22).
    - d. Ezekiel prophesied that Tyre would become a place for the spreading of nets and it did (Ezekiel 26:1-5).
    - e. There are over 330 prophecies about Jesus and He fulfilled each one, the odds of which have

been calculated to 84 with 123 zeroes behind it.

- f. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and His own resurrection.

D. Conservative Christians believe God's word to be inspired while many who lean towards liberalism denigrate it as a fallible instrument and even call it a dead letter.

**II. A belief in the authority of the scriptures.**

A. Conservative Christians believe the Bible to be authoritative in all matters religious and moral.

- 1. Their thinking for this is based on the fact that they believe the Bible to be God's inspired word.
- 2. One writer stated it this way: "The authority of the scriptures for faith and practice rises or falls in accordance with one's concept of inspiration. If it is but a human voice that speaks in the scriptures, or if its message is in some manner dependent on how it moves me or if it needs me to complete it, then the authority of the scriptures is greatly weakened if not entirely nullified. But if the divine voice is speaking through the writers as they themselves claim, if the writers are channels for conveying the divine will to mankind, then the scriptures become profitable to me as God's directives in matters of doctrine, reproof, correction and for instruction in righteousness.

B. When we hold inspiration lightly, what becomes authoritative is our thoughts and feelings.

C. The scriptures claim authority.

- 1. Colossians 3:17.
- 2. Jesus attested to the authority of scripture when He stated, "the scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).
- 3. We see how authoritative it was in the life of Jesus because that is what He used to fight temptation.

D. The Bible tells us how to be saved, how to stay saved, how to worship God properly and all other matters for which we need authority are found in God's word.

E. We must understand how the Bible authorizes (CENI).

**III. A belief in the silence of scripture as prohibitive.**

A. When one discussed the topic of the silence of scripture, one is discussing whether silence prohibits or allows.

B. The conservative Christian believes that silence is prohibitive.

C. The reason for this belief is that there is scripture to back it up.

- 1. Jeremiah 7:31 - God never commanded them to worship idols therefore it was not permitted.
- 2. You and I are not to go beyond that which is written, thus the silence of God is prohibitive.
- 3. Hebrews 8:4 tells us that Jesus could not be a high priest on earth and 7:14 tells us why.

D. We don't baptize infants because we have no authority to do so.

- E. We don't use instruments of music in worship because the New Testament is silent on the use of them in worship, other than our own voices.
- F. Because conservatives believe in the inspiration of the Bible, which gives it authority, they believe that silence is prohibitive.

**IV. A belief in the relevancy of scripture today.**

- A. Those who tend toward liberalism often bash the idea that the Bible is relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
  - 1. They sight the fact that the letters were all written 2,000 years ago.
  - 2. They were written to people who did not have the modern conveniences and methods we have today.
  - 3. Thus, the Bible is not cultural relevant today.
- B. This type thinking does not take into account the fact that man's greatest need, culturally or otherwise, is the forgiveness of sin.
  - 1. The Bible tells us of the only cure for sin.
  - 2. The Bible tells us the only way to obtain that cure.
  - 3. Nothing else will ever be able to take its place despite changes in culture.
- C. All cultures will need to know who their neighbor is.
- D. All cultures will need to know proper business practices.
- E. All cultures will need to know how to love each other.
- F. The Bible is just as relevant today as it was when the ink of each letter was still wet.
- G. Jesus said, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matthew 24:35).
- H. The Bible will always be necessary and relevant (1 Peter 1:23).
- I. We need to be careful when discussing cultural relevance because most people use that phrase when they simply mean what is most comfortable to them.