

The Authority of the Bible

Introduction.

- A. Authority in European Christianity by the Middle Ages.
 - 1. The Bible.
 - 2. Tradition.
 - 3. The Pope speaking *ex cathedra*.
- B. The Reformation was based on Scripture alone.
 - 1. Luther at the Diet of Worms.
 - 2. *Sola Scriptura*.
 - 3. The Berean believers.
- C. Much Scripture twisting denies the authority of Scripture.

I. Esoteric interpretation.

- A. What it is: the Bible contains a secret, hidden meaning, that can only be spiritually discerned.
- B. Examples.
 - 1. Essenes.
 - 2. First century Gnostics.
 - 3. Theosophical Society.
 - 4. Swedenborg (The Church of the New Jerusalem).

II. Supplementing Biblical Authority.

- A. What it is: adding more revelation to the Bible.
- B. Examples.
 - 1. Archie Matson.
 - 2. Edgar Cayce.
 - 3. Mormonism.
 - 4. Sun Yung Moon (Unification Church).

III. Rejecting Biblical Authority.

- A. What it is: denying Biblical authority in part or completely.
- B. Examples.
 - 1. Ernest Renan.
 - 2. Archie Matson.

IV. Response.

- A. Where did you get that idea?
- B. What is your authority?
- C. What evidence do you have to justify your belief?

V. Growing popular today.

A. Progressive Christianity.

1. Denies the inerrancy of Scripture.
2. Has a lowered view of Scripture.
3. Stresses feelings over facts.
4. Claims essential Christian doctrines are open to interpretation.
5. Redefines historical terms
6. Shifts from sin and redemption to social justice
7. Accepts collective salvation over individual salvation.

(Collective salvation is the restoration of whole cultures and societies to the "correct" socioeconomic structure, namely, Marxism.)

B. New Thought Christianity.

Doctrine	Traditional Christianity	New Thought Theology
The Nature of God	Theistic & Personal: God is the sovereign, transcendent Creator of the universe. God is a personal being existing as a Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).	Panentheistic & Impersonal: God is "Infinite Intelligence," a universal, omnipresent spiritual energy or creative force rather than a literal person.
The Identity of Jesus	The Unique God-Man: <u>Jesus</u> is the literal, second person of the Trinity. He is the unique Savior whose death and resurrection atoned for human sin.	The "Way-Shower": <u>Jesus</u> was a human teacher who fully awakened to his inner divinity ("Christ Consciousness"). He is an example of what all humans can achieve, not the exception.
Human Nature & Sin	Fallen but Redeemable: Humans are created by God but are inherently fallen due to sin. Humanity is completely distinct from the Creator.	Inherently Divine: Humans possess a "divine spark" and share an essential unity with God. "Sin" is not moral rebellion, but merely ignorance of one's own divinity.
Salvation	Redemption from Sin: Salvation is a gift of grace from God, received through faith in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.	Awakening Consciousness: Salvation is an internal shift or "at-onement" where a person recognizes their inherent oneness with the Divine Mind.
The Bible & Prayer	Exegesis & Petition: The Bible is the literal or inspired Word of God to be understood in its historical context. Prayer is a petition to a sovereign God.	Esoteric & Affirmative: The Bible is an allegorical text with hidden metaphysical meanings. Prayer consists of "affirmations" or "decrees" meant to align one's mind with reality.

C. New Age Christianity.

1. Merges many different movements.
 - a. Eastern mysticism.
 - b. Western occultism.
 - c. Pantheism.
 - d. The human potential movement.
2. Key beliefs.
 - a. Astrology – the Age of Aquarius (peace & unity).
 - b. Monism – God and the universe are one.
 - c. The self is the highest good.