

# Changing the Way You Think

## The Authority of Scripture (Part 2)

What I fear as a Pastor, and what I have feared for many years now, is the constant, unrelenting, desensitizing hum of personal preference, culture, and religious tradition that is slowly eroding the confidence of Modern Christians' faith in the Word of God.

*Many believe the Bible is full of wisdom and good advice, but see it as outdated in some of its moral standards, values, and restrictions.*

- **2 Timothy 3:15-17** "All Scripture is inspired by God...God uses it to prepare and equip his people..."
- **2 Peter 1:20-21** "...moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God."
- **2 Peter 3:15-16** "Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him...the ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction."

## Counterfeits of Truth

Although the Bible is an incredible privilege, and it is readily accessible to almost everyone, many modern Christians struggle to live out a biblically-grounded faith. Instead many rely more on:

- **Personal Preference**
- **Cultural Morals and Values**
- **Religious Tradition**

## Personal Preference

In our society, we have put an enormous value on individualism. Truth, values, and morals are seen more as an individual's decision and preference, rather than an absolute.

**Judges 21:25** In those days Israel had no king; everyone did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

As a result, even Christians approach Scripture as material to be edited and revised by their own preferences and perspective. When approaching Scripture, the focus has become whether or not "I agree" instead of humble obedience to our Maker. "Thinking for oneself" has become the virtuous mantra that both elevates human "knowledge" and subverts the Word of God.

## Romans 1:21-23

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being...

- There's a significant difference between humbly grappling with questions or unknowns and approaching God as a peer, or worse, as a judge.

## The Lessons of Job

The story of Job is framed by what is happening in Heaven (invisible to Job) and what is happening on earth (experienced by Job).

### Job's Experiences and Perspective

**Job 3:11** "Why wasn't I born dead...?"

**Job 3:23** "Why give life to those with no future, those God surrounds with difficulties?"

**Job 7:16** "I hate my life and don't want to go on living..."

**Job 7:18** "You test us every moment..."

**Job 13:23-24** "Tell me, what have I done wrong...why do you turn away from me...?"

**Job 16:9** "God hates me..."

**Job 19:6-7** "God has wronged me...I protest, but there is no justice."

**Job 21:4** "My complaint is with God..."

**Job 21:7,9** "Why does the wicked prosper...and God does not punish them...?"

**Job 23:3-5** "If I could find God, I would go to His court...and present my arguments...and listen for his reply..."

**Job 24:1** "Why must the Godly wait for God in vain?"

**Job 24:12** "The groans of dying rise from the city, the wounded cry for help, but God ignores them..."

**Job 30:20-21** "I cry to you, O God, but you don't answer. I stand before you, but you don't even look. You have become cruel toward me. You use your power to persecute me."

### Job 31:35-37

"If only someone would listen to me! Look, I will sign my name to my defense. **Let the Almighty answer me.** Let my accuser write out the charges against me. **I would face the accusation proudly.** I would wear it like a crown. For I would tell him exactly what I have done. **I would come before him like a prince.**"

### Wisdom Speaks

#### Job 34:35-37 (Elihu)

Job speaks out of ignorance; his words lack insight.

<sup>36</sup> Job, you deserve the maximum penalty for the wicked way you have talked.

<sup>37</sup> For you have added rebellion to your sin; you show no respect, and you speak many angry words against God."

"You show no respect...you speak many angry words against God."

#### 35:13-16 (Elihu)

But it is wrong to say God doesn't listen, to say the Almighty isn't concerned.

<sup>14</sup> You say you can't see him, but he will bring justice if you will only wait

<sup>15</sup> You say he does not respond to sinners with anger and is not greatly concerned about wickedness.

<sup>16</sup> But you are talking nonsense, Job.

You have spoken like a fool."

"It is wrong to say God doesn't listen, to say the Almighty isn't concerned."

#### 37:19-20 (Elihu)

"So teach the rest of us what to say to God.

We are too ignorant to make our own arguments.

<sup>20</sup> Should God be notified that I want to speak?

Can people even speak when they are confused?"

"Should God be notified that I want to speak? Can (should) people even speak when they are confused?!"

## **The LORD Responds** (Excerpts from Job 38-41)

*Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind:*

***“Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.***

*“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.*

*Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line?*

*What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?*

*“Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb, and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness? For I locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores. I said ‘This far and no farther will you come. Here your proud waves must stop!’*

*“Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused the dawn to rise in the east? Have you made daylight spread to the ends of the earth, to bring an end to the night’s wickedness?*

*Do you know where the gates of death are located? Have you seen the gates of utter gloom?*

*Do you realize the extent of the earth? Tell me about it if you know! “Where does light come from, and where does darkness go? Can you take each to its home? Do you know how to get there?*

***But of course you know all this! For you were born before it was all created, and you are so very experienced!***

*Where is the path to the source of light? Where is the home of the east wind?*

*“Can you direct the movement of the stars—binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion? Can you direct the constellations through the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens?*

*Do you know the laws of the universe? Can you use them to regulate the earth?*

*“Can you shout to the clouds and make it rain?*

*Can you make lightning appear and cause it to strike as you direct?*

*Who gives intuition to the heart and instinct to the mind?*

*“Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar and spread its wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make its nest?*

***“Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God’s critic, but do you have the answers?”***

*Then Job replied to the Lord, “I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers? I will cover my mouth with my hand. I have said too much already. I have nothing more to say.”*

***Then the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind: “Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.***

**(41:8) “Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?”**

**(42:1-6)**

Then Job replied to the Lord: <sup>2</sup>“I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you. <sup>3</sup>You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’ It is I—and **I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.** <sup>4</sup>You said, ‘Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’ <sup>5</sup>I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. <sup>6</sup>**I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”**

**Romans 9:20 Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God**