



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
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Confidence Comer John F. Board

In this week's Confidence Comer we will provide information for those who seek to investigate the topic of whether the Bible we have today is reliable. This is obviously a vital question regarding the Christian faith. If our source docu-

ment is not reliable, we cannot have confidence in any conclusions drawn from it. If on the other hand what we have are "Holy Words long preserved for our walk in this world," then we have the greatest of confidence!

One relatively small monograph (it could be perhaps termed a booklet) is F. F. Bruce's *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*. This is a great booklet for those who have questions regarding the reliability of the New Testament Documents. Indeed Bruce does provide a very convincing argument for the historical accuracy of the canon of the New Testament. This booklet can be purchased for under \$10.00 and is only 120 pages of text.

Another companion work, though not nearly as brief, is K. A. Kitchen's *On The Reliability of the Old Testament*. Though more pricey (\$36.00 paperback) and much more lengthy of a read (500 pages of text), this is still an excellent book to help confirm your faith in the OT documents. Kitchen concludes at the end of his examination "In terms of general reliability—and much more could have been instanced than there was room for here—the Old Testament comes out remarkably well, so long as its writings and writers are treated fairly and evenhandedly, in line with independent data, open to all" (500).

You may ask why is the OT work so much longer than the NT? Consider the difference in the time period (only one century 1st century AD), languages (only four), and cultures (Greco-Roman and Jewish) for the NT documents as compared to the OT (2000 years...3000 to do full background, documents compared would be in at least ten ANE languages, and there would be many bits of culture from all over factored into the study). Obviously, Kitchen did well to limit his work to five hundred pages! I hope this information will help you enhance your confidence in the Bible as an historically accurate document!

jfb

Time is an amusing thing to think about. We tell time, ask the time, and try to control time. There are different ways to find out what the time is. Of course you can ask someone else for the time. You can look to your

phone for the time. Time can even be told by where the sun is located in the sky. You can set time to a 12-hour clock or a 24-hour clock. Time has been a part of everyday life since men used it to measure how many days and moments had gone by. God invented time and put a beginning and end to everything. Human kind has even tried to put an end to time by predicting when Jesus will come back.

The great thing about the concept of time and the restraints it puts on everything in our life is that our Father in heaven is not affected by it. Time is a human concept because we cannot comprehend the world around us without time. This fully means we cannot comprehend the nature of God. God isn't held down by time nor is He confined to the restraints of time. God is eternal so therefore time cannot be applied to Him. God is a being and spiritual entity that has no beginning and has no end. We as humans cannot truly understand or comprehend God because one thing that allows us to comprehend things isn't used to describe God.

Romans 5:6 says that "6 for while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (ESV) AT THE **RIGHT** TIME Christ died. It's all in God's timing and His timing is perfect. Why is His timing perfect? God isn't confined by time like we are. He has power over time and His power over time allows everything to happen at the right time if we allow it to instead of making it happen in our time.

Mitchell's Weekly Manna Mitchell Lockhart

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — God Has Spoken
2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**P.M. — Social Drinking
Proverbs 20:1**

They Chose a King to Rule Them

Toward the end of the historical period of the OT known as the period of the Judges, the people revealed to Samuel that they desired a king to rule over them so that they might be like the nations surrounding them. When Samuel was offended God quickly pointed out that it was He, and not Samuel, Who should have been offended. Rather than choosing the rule of God, the people had chosen to be ruled by humans. In other areas of the Ancient Near East, like Mesopotamia, there was a period when the people took the rule of the king to the extreme—they actually began to view the king himself as a god who would protect the people. While Israel never made such straight affirmations about their king, nonetheless, they did choose humans rather than God to rule over them. Most often Bible students are appalled by such a choice but I wonder if we are really much different at times.

We claim to desire God's rule in our lives yet the action of our lives do not depict those who long for God to rule them. Even today as members of a kingdom, the Church, we have a King who seeks to rule over us. But do we recognize His rule? Many times congregations of the Lord's body fail to realize that Christ is the King of His Kingdom. More and more I hear of those who are traveling for vacation who no longer can find a congregation where they can worship. Why is this the case? Because people fail to recognize Col. 1:18, which reads, "For He is the head of the body, the Church..." They fail to understand that Jesus has been given all authority (Matthew 28:18-20). They fail to realize that Paul wrote through inspiration, "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col.3:17). To do something in the name of the Lord Jesus means to do it by His authority. We must ask if our worship practices are those that Christ has authorized. Too often, rather than letting Christ reign over them, they decided to allow humans to rule over them and decide what will be acceptable in their worship practices to God. Today, all forms of worship (singing, the Lord's Supper, giving, etc.) are no longer under the rule of the King but rather are under the rule of those who have set themselves up to replace the rule of the King in the Church. Sometime they are elders and other times they are preachers. When we accept their decisions regarding our worship to God, we fail to allow Christ to reign in the Church.

Christ also desires to reign in our lives individually! Again we often reject His rule in our personal lives. We allow the gods of time, work, and recreation to rule our lives. We can even be as those in OT times who became "busy here and there." They were busy but not about the things of most importance.

Yes, Israel chose a human to rule over them rather than God. But we must take note and learn from those things written aforetime lest we ourselves also choose the rule of men over the rule of God in the Church and in our lives.

*John F. Board
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