

“Half Truths” by Pastor Adam Hamilton

Session 4: God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It

October 27, 2024

4:00 PM

Opening Activity – “God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It” on the Web

Take a few moments to search the internet on your phone or on your electronic device for items – bumper stickers, t-shirts, hats, etc. – that has our half-truth printed on it, or some version of it.

- Which one did you find the most creative?
- What variants of our half-truth did you find?
- Would you be willing to put one of these bumper stickers on your car?

This afternoon we will examine whether this statement represents biblical truth, and if not, how one arrives at the Bible’s deeper and more complex truth.

Session 4 “Half Truth”: God said it, I Believe it, That Settles it.

Opening Prayer

Holy God, we give thanks that through the words of the Bible, you speak a Word to us. Guide us as together we seek to discern your will for our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Session 4 Video – “God Said it, I Believe it, That Settles it.”

- Hamilton suggests that when we talk about “inspiration”, there are many different ways of defining how God speaks to the biblical authors. How would you explain the “inspiration” of Scripture? How do you respond to the idea that the ways biblical writers were inspired by God differed from writer to writer?
- What does Hamilton have to say about the translation of Scripture? What factors come into play that might influence how a passage is translated? What questions does a translator have to ask? What questions do we, the readers of Scripture, need to ask?

Scripture Focus...

Today will likely be the first and LAST time you study today’s focal passage...

(1) Deuteronomy 23:12-14.

This passage is part of the section of the Law that lays our sanitary, ritual, and humanitarian precepts. The Israelites were in the wilderness prior to entering the Promised Land. God was dwelling in their midst, and in order that God not witness anything deemed “indecent”, such as human elimination, the people were asked to go outside their encampment to relieve themselves.

- Hamilton tells us that in the 1880’s, sermons were preached on this passage. Why?
- Name more recent inventions and suggest ways in which today’s preachers may be interpreting Scriptures to address these.

Book Study and Discussion...

Examine Anachronisms in Scripture

- **Take a Look at the list of prohibitions under the heading “Going to Extremes” on page 110.**
 - Raise your hand if you would have to alter your lives in some way if you were to follow just this small list because, “God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It.”

Explore Interpretation on Two Issues

Some issues discussed in the Bible, such as sanitary rules, may be related to customs of the time rather than to deep and enduring truths. Two important issues that fall into this category are the treatment of women and the institution of slavery.

Small Groups – Women in the Bible, Slavery in the Bible

1. Read the information Hamilton provides in Chapter 4 about each issue (p. 116 – 120).
2. Answer the following questions...
 - a. What does the Bible have to say about it?
 - b. What was the context for such statements?
 - c. Is there any additional information in the Bible that seems to contradict such statements?

Follow Up Questions...

- Where and why does Paul seem to be contradicting himself with respect to the role of women?
- How do you respond to the suggestion that Paul was trying to calm things down in the face of controversy resulting from the greater equality of women in the early church? Does this seem to be a reasonable explanation for the apparent contradictions? Any other plausible explanations?
- How did advocates of slavery in the United States interpret scriptures that addressed slavery?

- Nowhere in scripture is there categorical condemnation of human slavery. Why do you think this is so?

The Half Truth in “God Said It”

“God said, it, I believe it, that settles it” is a less-than-ideal way for Christians to read Scripture, because it focuses on a half truth rather than helping persons to seek the deeper truth. Look at this statement...

Every word of the Bible was dictated by God and recorded by the hands of human writers.

How do you believe the Bible came to be, in the form that we have it today, starting from the beginning? Does this statement reflect your belief and understanding of how it happened?

- Paul uses a word that does not seem to appear in the Greek in the Bible anywhere else: *theopneustos*. This means, “inspired by God.” We see this in 2 Timothy 3:16. What do you think Paul meant when he said this? How might we interpret the word with respect to the way Scripture was written?
- What does Paul contend is the purpose of Scripture?
- In what ways does Scripture function for you? How do you experience God speaking to you through Scripture?

The Half Truth of “That Settles It”

Let’s look at the first couple pages under the heading, “The Problem with “That Settles It” (p.126-130)

- What are some times when Jesus interpreted the Scriptures in new ways?
- Based on your reading of the book and the Bible, what was Jesus inviting his listeners – and us – to do?
- Why did Paul preach that the law on circumcision no longer applied?

- Paul was a Pharisee who was rigorously schooled in the Law, and yet he parted from the Law in the case of circumcision. Why do you think he did so, and what does it tell us about Paul's beliefs?

The Definitive Word of God

For Hamilton, and for each of us, there is an important lens for interpretation: the life and words of Jesus.

- What are some examples from Scripture that, measured against Jesus' life and words, we might choose to let pass?
- While stressing the importance of Bible interpretation, Hamilton notes the danger in picking and choosing Scripture. What is the danger?

Closing Thoughts...

Each week, we have been coming up with phrases or statements that would be better to hear than the half truth that we are focusing on. What statement would be better than, "God Said It, I Believe It, That Settles It."

Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 before we close in prayer.

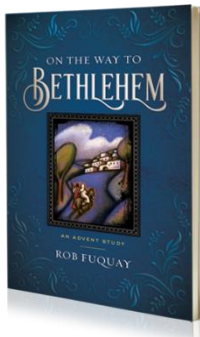
Closing Prayer...

Let's close in prayer...

Dear God, how grateful we are for your love and grace. How grateful we are that you gave us the Scriptures as a gift, for us to know you and know your purposes and will. How grateful we are that you sent Jesus Christ to be the Word made flesh. Help us to understand the Scriptures. O God, when we look at Jesus, we see you. Help us to be people after his own heart. Help us to be people who read the Scriptures, study them, memorize them, and seek to live them as they align with the person and the teachings of Jesus. Amen.

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Session 5 – Love the Sinner, Hate the Sin
Sunday, November 10 4:00 PM

New Advent Study!



“On the Way to Bethlehem”

By Pastor Rob Fuqua

Pastor Rob Fuquay provides insight into the geographical and historical significance of locations and characters through whom the Christmas drama unfolds.

December 1 (4:00 PM) – Rome: A Place of Longing

December 8 (5:00 PM) – Jerusalem: A Place of Waiting

December 15 (4:00 PM) – Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity

December 22 (4:00 PM) – Bethlehem: A Place of Humility

January 5 (4:00 PM) – Persia: A Place of Return
