

Getting all we can from Scripture

Men's Bible Study at Park View

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Harold Miller

Session 7 - Biblical descriptions seem like errors?

Jesus showed strong trust in Scripture

Matt. 5:17-19

John 10:35

A main reason persons doubt that all Scripture is God's Word: some biblical descriptions seem like errors

Biblical "errors" may not be the Bible's fault, but ours. They may be resolved when we read the Bible as its authors expected it to be read

Example: Gen. 11:10-15 / Luke 3:35-36

Example: Mark 1:2-3 / Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3

The Biblical authors' standards of precision might be similar to our culture's expectations for oral precision

We must take a Bible author's words to be as precise and as imprecise as they were intended

"We must judge the truthfulness of Scripture in terms of its meaning in the cultural setting in which its statements were expressed." —Millard J Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 204.

Example: Matthew 19:16-22 / Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-25

- Possibly Jesus' actual words somehow combined elements of both versions
- Possibly Matthew deliberately adjusted his version

We might also compare biblical standards of precision to our culture's expectations for a "historically accurate" movie

Example: Joshua 10:40 / Joshua 23:7,12-13, Judges 1:21-36

Is it hyperbole (overstatement for effect) or is it lying?

Example: 1 Chron. 22:14

“deliberate and glorious hyperbole” —John Wenham

Example: 2 Chron. 17:12-19

A biblical text's meaning is not how we today hear these words, but how the original audience would have heard them

Questions for Table Discussion:

Share an idea that struck you during this session.

“A biblical description is truthful and trustworthy when we take it in the way it would have been taken in the author's own time and culture.” In what way is that formulation helpful? Not helpful?

Did some of the biblical examples we looked at today set you aback or shake your trust in the Bible? What difficulties still remain unanswered? Do you agree that we will end up paralyzed, never doing anything in life, if we wait for every question to be answered before we commit to do something?

Paul M. Zehr in his book *Biblical Criticism in the Life of the Church* (Herald Press; 1986) contends that the idea that Scripture is inerrant in scientific and historical details can be traced to Greek (Aristotelian) philosophy. He calls us back to the Hebraic approach to life which “is not as much interested in logic and proofs as it is in salvation, righteousness, peace, and obedience.” Is it possible that to communicate Scripture's authority to modern persons affected by Greek philosophy we need the concept of inerrancy?