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We Believe in Biblical Authority

Jason K. Lee

Cedarville University, jasonlee@cedarville.edu

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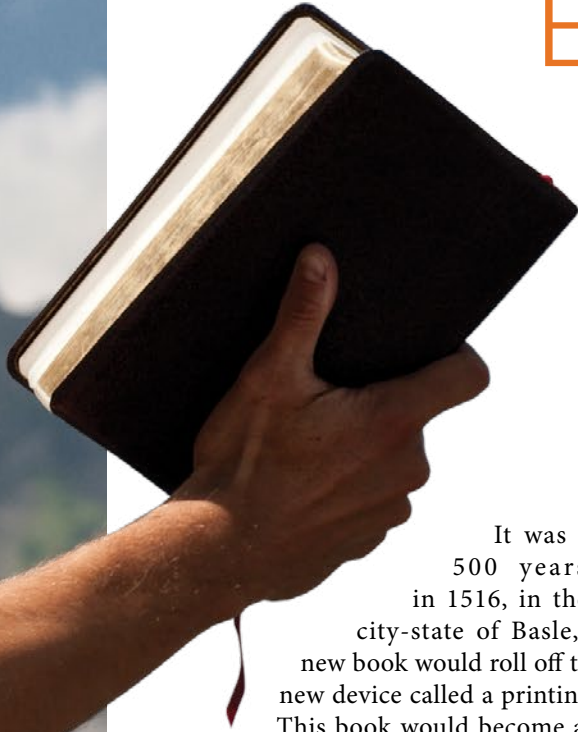
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We Believe in

Biblical Authority

by Jason K. Lee



It was exactly 500 years ago, in 1516, in the Swiss city-state of Basle, that a new book would roll off the still-new device called a printing press. This book would become a “best-seller” throughout Europe and in 30 years would revolutionize the whole continent. This work by the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus was titled *Novum Instrumentum*, but would be better known by the title of its later editions, *Novum Testamentum*, the New Testament. Commonly known as Erasmus’ Greek New Testament, this edition of the Bible included not only the anticipated Latin text, but also the New Testament in Greek.

CHANGED WORLD

Studying the New Testament in its original Greek would eventually have profound impact on professors and pastors, including those named Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale, Calvin, and Knox. These Reformers would rally around the theme of “Sola Scriptura” (Scripture as the only authority) as a chief piece in the Reformation that would change politics, literature, art, culture, education, and, of course, the church. Sola Scriptura challenged the great thinkers in universities, courtrooms, palaces, city councils, and cathedrals to wrestle with the implications

of the authority of the Bible in every area of life, culture, and society. Several decades later, biblical authority would be a guiding principle for the American colonies.

Founded in 1887, Cedarville University has inherited this rich tradition of biblical authority. The Cedarville motto declares that our work is

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“For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ,” so we stake our claim to the tradition of the great Reformers before us. Just like the Reformers, the founders and previous leaders of Cedarville University have led the charge of recognizing the effects of biblical authority, not just on church life but in every arena of thought and culture. Biblical authority not only presses us onward to cultural engagement, but it also guides the particular type of engagement and its ultimate end. Our commitment to the Word of God leads us to extend the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

TRANSFORMED LIVES

How does a commitment to biblical authority actually shape the decisions and daily activities

at Cedarville? Cedarville's Doctrinal Statement says, "The Bible, as the sufficient Word of God, has authority over the church and the Christian's life and thought" (cedarville.edu/doctrinalstatement). However, such a commitment holds little value if the people and practices of Cedarville are not actively submitted to the Word of God. There are four chief areas at Cedarville University that display how biblical authority guides the Cedarville experience: daily chapel, biblical integration, the Bible minor, and campus life.

DAILY CHAPEL

Daily chapel is the heart of Cedarville and, therefore, sets the pulse of the campus. So, as the Bible is preached in chapel, it constantly has the opportunity to shape the lives of students, staff, and faculty. If the Bible is preached, but not honored, then false doctrine sets in. If the Bible is honored, but not preached, then self-righteousness sets in. From the President's chapels to those of our guest speakers, the Bible's authority is on display in the song selections, Bible readings, and chapel messages.

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

If daily chapel is the heart of Cedarville, then the academic programs are its head. As an academic institution striving for excellence, Cedarville's courses maintain the same commitment to biblical authority as the daily chapels. Cedarville resists the secular notion that scholarship must be devoid of any influence of biblical authority. Instead, Cedarville University has two areas of academic commitment to biblical authority: biblical integration in every course and the Bible minor. All Cedarville University professors strive to demonstrate how the Bible's authority and sufficiency affect their field. Biblical integration is not taking the Bible and mixing it in with other axioms from the arts or sciences. Instead, biblical integration is an ongoing theological task of wrestling with how the authoritative truths of the Bible guide one's thinking and contribution to his or her field.

BIBLE MINOR

Cedarville professors lead the way in explaining how biblical authority causes them to affirm, reject, or even redeem elements of their disciplines, and they equip students to do the same. A chief element of helping students recognize the place of biblical authority in their own lives is the Bible minor. The goal of the Bible

minor at Cedarville University is to equip every student, regardless of his or her major, with the biblical and theological foundation to "Be Bold" ambassadors for Christ in a secular culture and in their local churches. From the Bible minor, students learn the biblical and theological data they need to join the professors in their majors in engaging their specific fields through integration and Gospel witness. By teaching the authority of the Bible, Cedarville's Bible minor is designed to help students affirm biblical faith as their own, for life.

CAMPUS LIFE

The fourth area that displays biblical authority builds on the previous three. Biblical authority is not just seen in chapel and in classes, but it also pervades campus life at Cedarville. As disciplers and encouragers, our resident directors and resident assistants help promote biblical authority in daily life in the residence halls.

Our student organizations are challenged to think biblically about their reason for existing and to set service goals that are guided by biblical principles. Our athletes compete aggressively on the court or field, but they also write prayer notes to opposing teams and look for opportunities to use athletics as a platform for Gospel witness. Biblical authority means that some things are bigger than the game or our own preferences for how to spend free time. All students are given an opportunity to join discipleship groups (d-groups), where they learn more about how the Bible's authoritative teaching shapes them for their present and future roles as friends, family members, employees, citizens, and church members.

At Cedarville University, we believe in the authority of the Bible because in it we find God's truthful revelation of Himself. When we submit to the Bible's authority, we are submitting to God and embracing His message to us.

Jason K. Lee is Dean of the School of Biblical and Theological Studies and Professor of Theological Studies at Cedarville University. He earned his Ph.D. in historical theology.



To watch Thomas White's chapel messages on this topic, visit cedarville.edu/scripturesufficient or cedarville.edu/godhasspoken.