**The Inerrancy of the Bible, No. 4 – BD45-02**

This evening I’m going to be doing a lot of reading because I now want to go to documentation, and we want you to be very relaxed about that. I realize that sometimes it’s hard to hang in there to follow things that are being read, but I think you will have a frame of reference and an understanding—a personal point of view based on something more than “Rah-rah, this is what our team believes.” Every now and then somebody is not sure of what they should believe here at Berean church and they’ll come to me and say, “What do we believe about this?” It’s not quite what do we believe about this, but what does the Bible teach about this or this or this.

I suggested to you this morning that the critical issue concerning the Bible today is the debate over whether the Bible in its original manuscripts was without error. The cancer was begun by Semler in the middle of the 18th century when he proposed the proposition that it is a mistake to say that the Bible and the Word of God are one and the same thing. That’s where it all began. Once that idea was accepted by theologians, they were on a greased slide from which there was no return. Any time you accept the proposition that the Bible only contains the Word of God, and that some of what the Bible contains is erroneous, you are gone.

Now you won’t go so far as to deny the virgin birth of Christ. You won’t go so far as to deny the substitutionary atonement. You won’t go so far as to deny the deity of Christ and these basics. You will resist that, but those whom you teach and to whom you have infected with the concept that the Bible is a book that is errant, that is, that it has mistakes in it, will go beyond what you are willing to do, and I guarantee they will do it every time. Dr. Lindsell’s two books on this subject have clearly documented that this is exactly what has happened, and this is why there is the indignation against him.

I also pointed out to you that this condition has not developed without reason. This is a deliberate satanic plan. For over 200 years Satan has been developing a … movement in order to destroy the last vestige of a testimony concerning God on this earth, and particularly as we approach the end of this age and as humanity goes on into the tribulation. The first arm of that … movement was to establish emotionalism as the basic of relationship to God rather than knowledge and content of Scripture. That was hammered out link by link and I’ll not go through the details tonight. You can get that on the tapes up in the tape room. It culminated in our day in what is called the charismatic movement which is an instrument of satanic delusion and of satanic manipulation. It is however the basis by which Satan will unite all the religions and all the religious viewpoints of the world under the false prophet in the tribulation period.

The other arm of the … movement was the beginning of reason and the age of rationalism following the Renaissance where man’s mind was placed as the superior authority to the Bible. The Bible was declared to be a book which men had simply written on their own capacities. They were not supernaturally prevented from recording errors, and that the Bible therefore contained not only truth concerning God, but it also contained the error of people based largely upon the viewpoints of their day. That was called, and is called, the historical critical method of interpreting Scripture. That … movement has now closed in on the mainline denominations and on the kinds of evangelical schools that you and I think of, and we used Dallas Seminary this morning as an example of a school that we would be shocked to discover that they are teaching a historical critical approach to evaluating and interpreting Scriptures, and the consequent departure from basic doctrines. Dallas Seminary, of course, does not do that, but you get the feel that if somebody were to tell you that Dallas Seminary was doing that, that is what people who are in the congregation, for example, in the Southern Baptist churches are discovering when they hear that their seminaries that they had such confidence in are doing that, and that they are denying these basics.

Now we are not picking on the Southern Baptist Convention. It is used by Dr. Lindsell because it is a classic example of the deterioration that enters a denomination once its seminaries and its Bible colleges and its universities are permitted to have people on the faculty who hold to an errant Bible. The reason they reject inerrancy is because they accept the historical critical concept concerning Scripture—that it is not a book which was superintended by the Holy Spirit, but was produced by men and included those errors.

Well, the conclusions of higher criticism have been many times declared as a fiasco. The earlier higher critics used to love to use the expression “their assured results.” They would very … contemptuously look down on the Christian who would say, “But my Bible doesn’t teach that.” They would say, “My dear man, the assured results of scholarship have established this and this and this.” Such a fact of assured results was that it was not possible for Abraham to have mounted a military expedition such as described in rescuing Lot. Or that Moses couldn’t have written the Pentateuch because people didn’t know how to write in those days. Well of course in time archaeology disproved all those things. You can find old volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica which carry these assured results of the higher critics which are no longer assured or are they results. They have been proven devastatingly wrong.

The claims of the higher critics have destroyed of course the Bible as an authoritative book, and this has been the basis of liberalism. Now the point that Dr. Lindsell has made in his book has been that this higher critical approach to interpreting Scripture has now infected the mainline denominations and they have all succumbed. The Southern Baptists are thoroughly contaminated in all of their higher schools by this. The Missouri Senate Lutherans were thoroughly contaminated. They have salvaged themselves. They threw out the president. They threw out the faculty at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and now they are all firm staunch teachers of inerrancy. The Southern Baptists are now hanging in the balance. They’re about ready to go over the cliff and to terminate as a staunch testimony for God that they have been in the past.

**Dr. Harold Lindsell**

I want to update for you now by reading from The Bible in the Balance, the second book by Dr. Harold Lindsell that I urge you to read. I want to first of all read to you his summary section on what his first book was all about. Here are the basic theses that he proposed in that book, and this is what came as a bombshell to the theological world, and people jumped on him from all directions. They screamed bloody murder, particularly these who were guilty of doing the things that he said they were doing and having exposed them to the general public.

Point number one that he made is this: that the Bible teaches inerrancy. He says, “The battle for the bible asserted that the doctrine of biblical inerrancy is taught in Scripture just as justification by faith, the vicarious atonement, the deity of Christ, and other doctrines are derived from the Bible. So the doctrine of biblical inerrancy comes from the teaching of the Word of God. Those who object to biblical inerrancy have sought to distinguish between infallibility and inerrancy. In the book I stated that these words are synonymous. Professor Davis in his recent book, The Debate About the Bible, states the position this way: Infallibility consists in the truthfulness of Scripture about matters of faith and practice. Inerrancy includes all the phenomena of Scripture, not just matters of faith and practice. Therefore Dr. Davis believes that the Bible is infallible but not inerrant.

“This raised the question about the teaching of Scripture concerning its own truthfulness. The battle for the Bible asserted that Scripture teaches inerrancy. Paul in Timothy says that all Scripture is God-breathed. No Scripture is excluded from this definition. All Scripture is profitable. Error cannot be profitable. Thus all Scripture must be true. Peter says that the prophetic Word came as men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21). Holy men and the Holy Spirit were conjoined together to write the Word of God. Holy men can err, but the Holy Spirit cannot. It is His work that guarantees the truthfulness of what holy men wrote.

“Jesus said the Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35), and in that statement He certainly excluded nothing from the Old Testament to which He was bearing witness. His word that Scripture is unbreakable teaches us that inerrancy is true. He also said that before a jot or tittle could be removed from the Law or the Prophets, heaven and earth must first pass away (Matthew 5:17-18). This strong statement can be understood to mean that Scripture is trustworthy in all its parts. Of course there are many other places in the Bible where similar claims for trustworthiness are made.

“2. The second thesis established in the first book: The church has believed inerrancy through the ages.” Dr. Lindsell says, “… The church through the ages has believed and taught that the Bible is inerrant. This has been true of the Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant churches. One must ask, of course, whether the churches through the ages have been misled (mistaken) about this matter. Since the New Testament states that the Holy Spirit leads God’s people, it appears highly improbable that inerrancy would have been the consistent testimony of the church through the ages if this view is false, just as Trinitarianism, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead have been and still are taught. So we can conclude that the view of the Bible entertained by the church for two millennia is likewise true. Later in this book this issue will be probed from the perspective of objections which have been raised.

“3. The Changing Scene: My third thesis was that biblical inerrancy has become the focal point for defection in the modern church. Just as the Christological controversy stirred the early church, and as justification by faith alone lay at the heart of the heart of the Protestant Reformation, so the trustworthiness of the Bible lies at the center of the theological struggle today. This is not to say that there were no opponents of biblical inerrancy for the first 18 centuries of the Christian era, but it does mean that the opponents of inerrancy constituted a small minority and the issue itself was not the centerpiece of any great controversy. I allege that the churches have been infiltrated in the last two centuries by a growing number of people who claim the Bible is errant. This is indisputable if for no other reason than that theological liberalism and neo-orthodoxy of the past century have openly and unequivocally torn Scripture asunder. But I did more than this. I claimed the present day evangelicalism is now being infiltrated by those who hold to an errant Bible. I pinpointed instances where this is true. I spoke of individuals, institutions, and denominations establish on the base of biblical inerrancy who now have in their midst those who disavow biblical inerrancy. I even went further than that. I claimed that once anyone departs from a commitment to biblical inerrancy he opens the door to disavow, either in principle or in practice of, other important doctrines of the Christian faith.

“In other words it is virtually impossible for anyone who in the beginning limits biblical inerrancy or infallibility to matters of faith and practice to hold this view consistently or persistently over a period of time. I presented evidence from the writings of some who later abrogated their commitment to infallibility in matters of faith and practice after having first departed from a commitment to biblical inerrancy. I did not then and I do not now claim it is impossible for an occasional individual to remain theologically faithful to the basic corpus of Christian truth except for inerrancy, but I make it clear that anyone who denies biblical inerrancy by that decision has already fallen into a Christological error. Since Jesus taught that Scripture cannot be broken, whoever denies what Jesus taught has a defective Christology. In other words, it is impossible to deny inerrancy without immediately and automatically falling into a Christological error as well. I went still further and prophesied that once inerrancy is abandoned, it inevitably results in further concessions and points in the direction of apostasy. I gave as a specific example the case of the Unitarian Universalists Association which is apostate. It is not a Christian church and cannot be a Christian church. That is one reason why even the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches do not number the Unitarian Universalist Association among their member churches.

“Two points must be made in this connection. I recognize how difficult it is for a Baptist, a Presbyterian, a Lutheran, a Methodist, or an Episcopalian to admit the possibility that his church could become apostate. I can only point out that it has happened, and I can only specify the signs which suggest that it is happening among some of the denominations around the world today. It is difficult to say when a particular church has become apostate, but even as Israel apostatized and as New England Congregationalism apostatized, so can churches apostatize today.

“The second point is that there still may be true believers in churches which are defective or even apostate. I would not wish to say that no member of an apostate church can be saved. I must assert however that whoever believes what an apostate denomination professes and teaches cannot be saved, just as Muslims and Buddhists cannot be saved, but there may be some among them who believe differently than what the denomination professes. They would be inconsistent of course. There would be no credible reason for them to remain within the fellowship of such a church. If a person who trusts Christ, inconsistent though he or she may be, is a member of an apostate body, that person is saved despite membership in the apostate body.

“Point number four: Who is an evangelical?” And this is where the furor was really raised by Lindsell’s book because there are apostate groups who have rejected inerrancy who still want to call themselves evangelical. “Perhaps the most complex and perplexing question I address deals with the definition of who is and who is not an evangelical. This particular discussion brought forth loud dissent and raised the hackles of some who which to be called evangelical despite their denial of inerrancy. I will postpone further discussion of this question until later but I will not avoid it. Suffice it to say that it is an important item on the agenda and requires further elaboration in response to the negative reaction occasioned by the intimation that those who deny inerrancy cannot really be an evangelical. I will discuss the issue fully later.”

When he did discuss it, the thing he pointed out was that the basic meaning of being evangelical is being true to Jesus Christ. To call yourself an evangelical must mean that you are a loyalist to Jesus Christ and to what He believes and to what He has taught. And since the Lord Jesus Christ has taught inerrancy, the Scriptures cannot be broken, not one part of it can pass away until all of it has been fulfilled, and since under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the book of Timothy tells us that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and Peter tells us that holy men of God were carried along in what they wrote by God the Holy Spirit: all of these are expressions of the mind of Christ. To deny that is to express a rejection to that extent of Jesus Christ. And rejection of Jesus Christ and what He has taught constitutes loss of the category of being an evangelical. I think Lindsell is very accurate in that. You cannot call yourself an evangelical in the meaning of that term historically if you deny what Jesus Christ has taught. Disloyalty to the person of Christ eliminates you from using that title.

Now, the next section I want to read to you contains the objections specifically that were raised to this first book. So as you read the book now, you have an overview of what you’re going to find in the first. Here is the explosion that followed, and he summarizes the particular areas of attack. Then in this second book he will go into detail with those particular responses.

“Here I will speak only of general objections to my book. Later I will speak specifically about objections raised by particular individuals and will indicate what their objections are. But at the outset it is important to say an explanatory word about some of them. The list must include what the critics failed to do and say as well as what they did do and say. I need not address myself to the people who agreed with the theses I deduced. But I will speak to certain non-reactions which are significance.

“Number one: No one has produced evidence to show that my basic claim that the evangelical camp has been infiltrated with the non-inerrancy viewpoint is untrue. Indeed the opposite has happened. A number of people who claim to be evangelicals have openly affirmed an inerrancy or infallibility limited to matters of faith and practice.

“Number two: My book did not show how deep or how pervasive the shift against inerrancy really is among evangelicals. The responses to the book indicate that my basic claim was conservative. There are more evidences of departure from inerrancy than I was aware of.”

That is a very important point, and that is one thing that became very clear in the reactions against Lindsell’s book. The disease among the kinds of schools that you and would be ready to support, the kinds of seminaries, and the kinds of institutions of learning have been deeply infected by the rejection of inerrancy.

“Number three: There are those who say that to raise the issue of inerrancy is wrong in principle and perverse in intention. Some have intimated that spite rather than conviction lies at the root of the matter. This of course is a judgment on the heart for which there is no answer. God and God alone at last must judge the intentions of the heart.

“Number four: It has been said that to raise the issue of inerrancy is divisive.”

Now that is a code word. You must learn that word just as some of those other code words: simplistic, non-alternative, etc. Those are all code words to cover error. This is a favorite response for those who do not want to be exposed that they are teaching error, to say, “Well, you’re being divisive. You’re setting one Christian up against another Christian.” The implication of that is that’s bad. Where Jesus Christ said, “I came into the world to be divisive. That’s a problem, isn’t it? He said, “I’m going to set a mother against her daughter; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a father against his son; a father-in-law against his son-in-law; and, right down the line. And the thing I’m going to divide and set them one another on is the basis of whether they accept or reject my truth.” Truth is inherently divisive.

Interestingly enough, one of the men who brought this is one that all the seminary students and theological students are well-acquainted with the name, Carl Henry, who is indeed a very sound and good theologian, and who happened to be Lindsell’s best man it Lindsell’s wedding. He has been on faculties with him. Henry took Lindsell to task that he should not have written this book and made an issue over this subject because it’s divisive. It’s hard to believe that Carl Henry would make such a ridiculous statement, and the unity had at any price should be so precious to him. But then Henry has been contaminated by the neo-evangelical frame of reference viewpoint that Billy Graham has promoted, that what we must do is to include liberals in our fellowship and try to have a broader association with these who disagree with us and these who want to improve society. And that we’re therefore going to have a broader outreach to these people, and therefore they do not like to come back to these issues which were the battle ground of the 1920s which separated liberalism from fundamentalism very clearly and very distinctively.

There has always been a very ignorant accusation that fundamentalists have not been socially minded. Yet it is the fundamentals, not the liberals, who have formed the orphanages, who have formed the hospitals on mission fields in foreign countries, who have brought relief to human suffering of one kind and other; and, who have educated people in how to elevate people in their economic status and their economic position. But they have done it within the context and on the framework of the fact that the Word of God is alive and powerful, and that man lives not by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. So it has been the fundamentalist missionaries that said first you get your mind and you get your thinking straightened out with doctrine. Then God can take you from there and get you straightened out in your economic lifestyle, in your moral lifestyle, in your social relationships, and everything else down the line that will elevate you from an animal level to the image and likeness of God in which you were created.

So: “Point number four has been said that to raise the issue of inerrancy is to be divisive. This requires some sort of response. The first and most obvious response is that I did not create the problem. I only drew attention to its existence. Those who hold to a viewpoint which contradicts the historic position of Christendom and their denominational doctrinal statements as well as those of their educational institutions are the ones who have brought about the new reality. On the other hand, I do not run away from the fact that there is a sense in which raising the issue is divisive. If to stand for the truth of Scripture is divisive, then I am divisive. So be it. If a Christian must choose between theological compromise which will hurt both the faith and the believer who are subverted by error or silenced in action and consent to error, then the answer is plain enough. What I have done even though in good conscience is wrong if it can be shown that: a) evangelicalism has never insisted on inerrancy which is patently untrue; or, that b) it is wrong to divide evangelicals even though heresy lies at the root of the division. I think the conclusion is clear.

“Point number five (of objections raised to the first book): A number of people have been embarrassed by the book. I called attention to their deviations. Embarrassment was inevitable. I suspect I might be angry myself given similar circumstances. No one likes being brought before the tribunal of truth even when the intention is remedial and the hope is entertained that the surfacing of truth will produce reformation and renewal. It involves the necessity of facing the situation openly and honestly. If the truth of my allegations is acknowledged certain inevitable consequences flow from the acknowledgement. It may cost the recipient the loss of support, confidence, and rapport with his constituency. It usually requires an explanation and some sort of response to offset the negative reactions. I do not see how embarrassment can be avoided except by unpardonable silence.

“Number six: The assertion has been made that unity will be fractured by my book. It raises the old question of the peace and the purity of the church. This usually comes down to the question of whether a Christian group, be it a denomination, an institution, or a parachurch operation should ever have its peace fractured. The answer depends upon one’s opinion about the body as an inclusivist organism. In other words, is there anything in the Christian faith of such magnitude that its denial is a cause for division?

“For example, can a church include in its fellowship theists and atheists. I can only say that when the purity of the church or group is the issue, then peace must play a secondary role. Peace at the expense of theological purity means a denial of what is foundational to the existence of the body. Certainly the peace of the body should not be disturbed by differences of opinion about inconsequential items. But if the issue is of signaled importance, there is no choice. One must defend the purity of the body even though the peace of the body will be disturbed as a consequence. When the physician discovers an incurable cancer in the patient’s cancer, he must disturb the peace of the body by radical surgery to remove the cancer. This figures apt with regard to the Christian body when it has been infected with theological or spiritual cancer.

“Number seven: The charge has been leveled that my book has been written lovelessly—that it was polemical (an attack). If I was or am lacking in love I can only apologize and hope to do better in this volume.” Incidentally, this is another code word. Learn the code word “love.” That’s another code word for, “You’ve exposed my error. You’ve exposed me to the light of truth, and I don’t like it and I’m embarrassed. You’re not very loving when you do that. This is precisely what the Pharisaic leaders of Jerusalem said to Jesus Christ when He said, “You boys are nothing but a bunch of dead corpses in whitened tombs all beautiful on the outside. You’re nothing but a bunch of slithering sneaking serpents. That’s what you are.” That was the truth, and they said, “Jesus, you’re not very loving to talk like that.” … The charge has been leveled—lacking in love.

“But when it comes to the questions of irenics (a seeking to make peace—trying to smooth the waters) and polemics (which is attack of error), another picture emerges. I tried to be irenic (peaceful). I may have been polemic (attacking). In either case there is room for both the ironical and the polemical in church history. And when the battle wages hot, charges and countercharges often become the common coin of the day. I will show that those who object to the viewpoint I adhere to have themselves said some rather bitter things. I realize how offensive my allegations must be to them, and I can appreciate how sanctification can be challenged when responding to allegations we dislike.

“The other side of the coin with respect to love must be presented. We are commanded to love our enemies, and if this be true, we are surely to love those who are not our enemies, but with whom we are in disagreement. Love however is not the only attribute of God. He is holy, just, and righteous as well. The love of God cannot annul His other attributes. All of them are coordinate with each other. None cancels out the others, and all of them together function without disagreement or confusion. One of the attributes of God has to do with divine anger. Jonathan Edwards preached his famous sermon Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God. He was biblical when he did this. It is the spurning of the love of God that produces the anger of God. ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son,’ but when the gracious offer in Jesus is spurned, then the offender experiences the wrath of God rather than the love of God. The wrath of God is often slighted by some who have a rather unbiblical view of the love of God.

The apostle Paul was not loveless when he took issue with Peter over the question of circumcision. He says, “But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned (Galatians 2:11). Obviously Peter was wrong about circumcision and clearly even an apostle could be wrong when he was not writing Scripture. Paul pronounce judgment on his fellow apostle and went so far as to say that Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity (Galatians 2:13).

“Now these are hard words, but it would be imprudent to suggest that Paul who spoke so harshly did not love Peter. Indeed he manifested the deepest love when he provided the correction Peter needed. Love demanded that something be done to counter Peter’s error. Toward the end of his life Paul stood before Ananias the high priest, although he did not know that he was the high priest. When Ananias commanded that Paul be struck, Paul said to him, ‘God will strike you, you white-washed wall. Are you sitting to judge me according to the law and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?’ (Acts 23:3) Did this mean that Paul was defective in his love? Jesus called the Pharisees: hypocrites, fools, blind, serpents, generation of vipers, murderers, and persecutors (Matthew 23:1-39). Surely speaking the truth is not in itself loveless. Did not the redeemer’s heart bleed for these people, and did He not die to redeem them too?

“Saul of Tarsus in his opposition to Jesus was one of those Pharisees who later consented to Stephen’s death, and Jesus died for him and saved him. Jude spoke some hard words about those who apostatized. Paul likewise spoke hard words when he described what some people will be like in the last days. Moreover in the case of Alexander the coppersmith, he said, ‘He did me great harm. The Lord will requite him for his deeds’ (2 Timothy 4:14)

“One of the most telling words of Paul in Scripture comes from the passage in Timothy on biblical inspiration: ‘All Scripture is profitable for reproof, for correction.’ (2 Timothy 3:16) Sometimes reproof and correction should be sweet. Sometimes it should be stern. Still other times it must include a word of judgment. Again and again the apostle made a defense for himself and for his actions. If he was called upon to defend himself, how much more should we be willing not only to defend ourselves but also to defend the written word of God against attack and disbelief?”

That was the picture presented in the first book. These were the objections raised. The most important thing for you to note is that nothing that Lindsell documented as existing in these various schools such as fuller seminary has been proven wrong. He has not been taken to a court of law for slandering anybody. He has not been proven to be in error. The evidence was there.

**The Southern Baptist Convention**

Now getting back to the specifics as they exist in the Southern Baptist Convention. I think it would be only fair that we let the leaders of that group speak for themselves to give you an idea of what it is that Lindsell has pointed out. What Lindsell pointed out was that over a matter of some years, Southern Baptist institutions permitted in their schools of higher learning men to be on the faculty who had rejected the doctrine of inerrancy. His point is that once they did that, they opened the doors to these men not only denying that the Bible was the Word of God (but simply contained the Word of God), they then opened the door for these men by their reasoning to judge what was the Word of God and what was not. The methods that they used are the methods of historical criticism—the higher critical method which begins with the basic concept that the books were not supernaturally produced, but that they were simply produced by men and that God only came into the picture when they talked about something that had to do with faith—what you believe about God and practice, but not anything else.

Then the next step was that these men, as they continued using this approach to the analyzing of Scripture, as a book that had just evolved in history and the setting of the times: the next step was that these men found that there were certain things that the Bible taught about God that their reason, as men in the tradition of the Renaissance, could not accept. These men who on the one hand are still claiming to be believers of the Bible now went beyond a mistake in geography, a mistake in history, or a mistake of some number, and were now saying that something that an apostle taught was a mistake.

This attack, for example, upon what the apostle Paul taught concerning women and the order and the relationship between husbands and wives. That is the direct result of the higher critical method. When President Carter said that he believed the apostle Paul was mistaken in what he taught in Scripture concerning women, the reason he said that is because Reinhold Niebuhr, who was a devotee of the higher critical method is the chief theologian who influences him. He is indeed one of the chief theologians who influences the men who are on the faculty of the higher schools of education and seminaries in the Southern Baptist Convention. What President Carter is reflecting is what the leaders of his own denomination believe. That’s where he got it. He didn’t get it by the fact that he’s teaching Sunday School down in Plains, Georgia; he’s reading the Bible and suddenly he realizes that the Bible is saying things that could not be true. He assumed that there were two men who wrote Isaiah on the basis of the higher critical teaching of the men who lead his denomination and who teach in their schools. The president assumed that the apostle Paul was reflecting rabbinical concepts concerning women, and not what Jesus or God thought about women, and that Paul picked up his rabbinical background and he incorporated it in the Scripture. Well, if President Carter discovered that it’s because his teachers had told him that on the basis of their discovery through the higher critical method.

Now do these men really teach this? Have they really defected not only from peripheral matters, but to those things, but to those things which are the heart of doctrine? Let’s start with a man named Dr. John R. Claypool and I’m just going to quote now from Lindsell’s book. He wrote a doctorate dissertation at what is the leading seminary in the Southern Baptist Convention, the one at Louisville, Kentucky. Here’s what he concerning the subject of everlasting punishment on page 152:

“First it hardly seems fair to meet everlasting punishment for sins committed in time. Even when the infinite majesty of the God against whom the sin is committed is duly considered, the consequences seem out of proportion to the offense. Second, this position leads to an eternal dualism in the spiritual universe. Evil is not totally destroyed, but only confined and appropriately punished. Instead of God’s finally winning a total victory over evil, the end of things results in an eternal stalemate. Third, the everlasting punishment of wicked individuals serves no constructive purpose for God or for man. If the point of no return has been reached, what purpose is there in perpetuating this kind of existence? We are reluctant to accept the theory of everlasting punishment.”

Now this is a man who has done work at this seminary for the doctoral degree and wrote this as part of his dissertation and was indeed granted that degree. You are never granted a doctoral degree unless the dissertation that you have written in the theological seminary is acceptable to that institution. Now that tells you a lot about the viewpoint of the professors at the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville.

Of course, I hope you caught the implication of his question, “What purpose is there in perpetuating this kind of existence (eternal punishment) because of the justice of God?” That’s the same question that the Jehovah Witnesses have asked. The Jehovah Witnesses have concluded there is no purpose and therefore they teach annihiliationism—that God is going to simply annihilate out of existence all those who rejected salvation, and that they will not even be in existence. That’s a satanic concept directly from historic criticism. I’m not going to take the trouble because I know this congregation is well aware of the fact that the Bible does teach exactly everlasting punishment. It does teach precisely that concerning the lake of fire. All you have to do is check the book of the Revelation in chapter 20 and you’ll find very ample evidence that this is exactly what the Bible teaches of the matter of eternal punishment.

But the higher critical method and rationalism of the Renaissance man has concluded that this could not be true of the God that this man by his reason envisions. Let’s go to another quotation. This one is concerning a man whose name is Wayne Wood. He is a professor at the Louisville Seminary. Here’s what he said about the snake in the Garden of Eden: “Just as misguided is the attempt of every literalistic mind …” And by the way, that’s another code word—literalistic mind. You need to understand that code word. That means that you’re stupid, backward, dumbbell, inane, and also crazy because you believe that the Bible should be read just like you read your morning newspaper, and that if it says the Ayatollah Khomeini has just taken a bath then that’s what it means. Instead these people say, “No, you must say, ‘The Ayatollah has taken a bath.’ What could that mean? He has purged his soul. He has thought clean thoughts. He has sought to arise to the higher levels of consciousness.” And you just go on your own to see what it means when it says the Ayatollah took a bath today. No, you read your newspaper and you understand what that means. Alright, so when they say, “literalistic mind,” that is an insult, and he’s trying to put you down for believing what the words of the Bible mean.

“Just as misguided is the attempt of every literalist mind to make every detail of these stories literal fact. Some people are determined to make the serpent in Genesis 3 a literal snake. People who insist on making him a literalistic snake are denying the Bible itself.”

A few years ago they made a movie called the Bible. Some months ago they showed it on television. I thought it was terrific. It was going to be done from one end to the other. It started with the first segment, through Abraham, etc. … It started with creation in the Garden of Eden. The thing that was impressive was that here was a production from Hollywood that was accurate. You just sat there and you couldn’t believe it. Everything it showed was just exactly the way it was recorded in the Bible. I read a review of it in a liberal publication. It said, “The movie currently being shown at theaters, The Bible, is obscene.” I said, “Man, I sure must have missed something.” The only thing I could think of was they showed Adam and Eve au naturel, but they had leaves all over them. I mean you got the picture in the garden, but not quite. They do it better today now on television. But what’s obscene. Then it went on to explain: “The movie treated the biblical record in a totally literalistic way.”

And what did this man say? A professor at a school that teaches and prepares men for the ministry to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to get people saved—what did he say about the serpent in the garden? “People who insist on making him a literalistic snake are denying the Bible itself.” He could have said, “That’s obscene because you are taking the literal language of the Scriptures and you are treating it as if that is actually what really happened, that Satan used this animal as his means of communication with the woman.

Well, of course, there’s one step more. If the snake isn’t real, why should we think that Eve is real, let alone Adam? And certainly Cain and Abel. Well, where do you think they go folks? Here’s exactly where they go: After you get rid of the snake, then you get rid of Adam and Eve. They’re not historical either.

Baptists take pride in the fact of personal freedom of conscience. They do not believe in creeds. They believe in the Bible as their only creed. Their beliefs are not being posed upon them by a superior authority. As Dr. Lindsell pursues that subject, he says, “Let’s just ask it. Now let’s just really question it. Is there nothing that Baptists believe?”

Will Baptists, for example, say that homosexuality is a fine lifestyle and taught by the Scripture? No, they don’t. Well, then there is something Baptists believe about sex, at least. Then what about the deity of Christ? And so on down the line. Of course they do very definitely believe. What if somebody is being called to the pastorate of a church and he says, “I believe Jesus Christ was the illegitimate son of Mary and a … Roman soldier?” Well, you know very well that a Southern Baptist church isn’t about to call a man to its pulpit if it has any integrity at all who says that. Well, then Baptists do believe certain things. So this is another code way of saying, “You can’t tell me what to believe. You must tolerate all of my variations against Scripture.

Alright, bibliolatry—this worship of the Bible: This is another bunch of moldy salami. Here’s the book, the Bible: Are you worshipping these pages—this book of the Bible? I was reared in Lutheranism. When I was a junior-aged kid, I remember one time in the city of Chicago during the wintertime. Church was over and it was one of these big churches that had a stairway in front, and it had concrete bannisters. It had a level place and I sat down on it and it was cold. So I put my Bible there and I sat on my Bible, because the does warm the soul, and that seemed to fit the bill. A lady came by and saw me sitting on the Bible and she said, “You’re sitting on the Word of God?” She made me get off that Bible. Now that is bibliolatry. That is worshipping the book. She didn’t care to what happened to some parts of my anatomy, but the Bible—we worship that. Well, that is nonsense. That is not what we do, because we believe the contents of the Scripture. But that is one of those subtle arguments of men who want to be negative.

By the way, do I need to tell you that all of this is summed up by the one phrase, “negative volition?” You’re talking about intelligent trained men who have negative volition toward the Word of God. Do you see how serious negative volition is? Do you see how eternal the consequences are and how destructive they are? It begins in a little way. But do you see why I keep hacking away at being very careful about not being negative to what you are taught from the Word of God? It does have serious consequences.

Our time is up. For next time: I’ve been given today a letter which was written by a pastor in a Southern Baptist Church who is a graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the convention seminaries, in Kansas City, Missouri. The point of this letter from this pastor is that he reviews the things that he was taught by professors at this seminary. He describes them—professors and specifically what they taught him in class. He is writing to the president of this seminary, and he is asking him to respond to the fact that what these men have teaching is contradicted by the Bible, and is indeed a rejection of what the Bible teaches, and why this is permitted. Then I have the letter of the president of the seminary and his response. I want to read both of those to you next time because it will tie up very beautifully the double-talk. There is a forked tongue speaking here to the people in the congregation.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1979