**The Inerrancy of the Bible, No. 6 – BD46-02**

Increasingly it is evident among Bible scholars and Bible teachers that there are indications in the Scripture concerning the nearness of the Lord’s return which are rapidly falling into place at a breathtaking pace. I don’t want to stop to go over those this evening, but they are absolutely fantastic. Studies which are being made that go back to the book of Daniel and take up these timetable elements which are recorded there, the book of the Revelation, and anchor points in time keep bringing everybody back to the decade of the 1980s and particularly the early years of the 1980s. It behooves us as believers to recognize that someplace along the line there is going to be a group of Christians who are the last generation, who are the ones who will be living when the Lord returns. That is the generation which will come under maximum attack and maximum fire in the angelic conflict.

The focal point of that attack by Satan will of course be the Word of God itself, to undermine its absolute authority, and that plan has been in motion for some 200 years now. The focal point will be the local church as an institution, to divert it from its teaching ministry. The focal point of that satanic attack will be the pastor-teacher himself, to undermine a gift which cannot just be passed on by apostolic hands to someone else, but to undermine that ability and to do whatever is possible to incapacitate pastor-teachers continuing in the ministry and functioning with that gift.

On all three accounts, the devil is running a campaign that’s winning and that’s having success. We’re looking particularly at the area of the attack upon the Scripture itself. As Satan brings together his plans of the end times, the one thing he must destroy is anybody being able to point to the Bible and for the Bible to be able to respond with authority to what people think, to cut down the human viewpoint of mankind with a declaration from a Bible that people have to pay attention to.

The people of the world are in rebellion against God. At the same time, they are exceedingly religious. Religion and divine viewpoint however, as you well know, do not usually go together in Satan’s world. Without a Bible with full authority to speak for God, religion can never align itself with God’s divine viewpoint. Only an inerrant Bible can carry the supreme authority of being the final voice in spiritual matters. Only the Bible, if it is an inerrant book, can tell us what is right and wrong relative to moral conduct. Only the Bible, if it is an inerrant book, can tell us for a certainty how a person can be saved. Only the Bible can lay out for us the principles of the role of human government. Only an inerrant Bible can spell out for us the divine institutions, the divine human relationships, which God has ordained for the preservation of the human race.

We have found that Christians and denominations and churches which have rejected the Bible doctrine of inerrancy, and the Bible does claim for itself to be an infallible book, those who have departed from the doctrine of inerrancy have lost all authority by which they can represent God in spiritual matters. This is what happened to the liberal denominations. The old liberalism discovered that it finally came to a position where it was absolutely defunct because they had no basis upon which to speak to people so that people would in turn respond and listen. They had no basis of being able to stand up and speak for God. They had so destroyed with the higher critical method the authority of the Bible.

Once a generation of teachers rejects the doctrine of inerrancy in some limited area—the first group always rejects in some limited area, like in matters referring to geography, to numbers, to historical sequences, and that sort of thing. Once they reject that the Bible was preserved supernaturally from error in all these areas, then subsequent generations will in time reject the authority of the Bible in areas pertaining to salvation and pertaining to conduct. This is the inevitable logical conclusion and the subsequent generations always tolerate carrying what the previous generation began, carrying it to its logical conclusions.

We have been using Dr. Lindsell’s second book, The Bible in the Balance, as a documentary which has been excellently written to bring together the evidences of how this works. Once you start down the road, you’re on a slide that’s covered with grease. You cannot stop. You cannot change your direction. You cannot return. We have been reading examples of confirmation from what Dr. Lindsell’s own experiences have been particularly with the Southern Baptist Convention since they were very definitely committed to inerrancy and were very definitely a biblical denomination. That has all changed.

To update you on the matter, I have a letter which has been handed to me which was written by the pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Fayetteville, Arkansas on September 7th, 1979. It was written to the president of the school from which this pastor graduated, the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the Southern Baptist Theological seminaries in Kansas City, Missouri. It was addressed to the president of that school, Dr. Ferguson, and I’d like to read it to you. Here is a man in the field just a few months ago now that is in the ministry and has begun to put together two and two with his training, and what he is discovering taking place in his denomination, and thinking back upon what he heard in the classrooms of this Southern Baptist school, and leading him to some conclusions that propelled him to conclude he had to write a letter to ask some questions about professors who are currently teaching in this school, on the basis of what he heard in classrooms as a student. All of this completely confirms what Dr. Lindsell lays out in his book in his indictment of the seminaries and the Bible teaching institutions of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The letter says, “Dear Dr. Ferguson, By church action on September 5th, 1979, our church decided to share with you a very real concern about the statements and charges which have been made against our Southern Baptist seminaries that have professors who are teaching doctrines that are in conflict with the Bible and our statement of beliefs in the Baptist Faith and Message adopted in 1963. We appreciate the published statements coming from meetings of the seminary presidents that each of you share these concerns also and are eager to correct real problems which exist. We will continue to pray with you and for you that legitimate charges be met and corrected in a unified effort to retain biblical accuracy in our theology and in our schools and churches.

“The following are teachings heard by our pastor while attending Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and those faculty members responsible for presenting each theory:

“1. Dr. Morris Ashcraft: Several times I heard this man say in theology class, ‘We cannot expect modern intellectual scientific man to believe this or all of this.’ He was referring to the Bible, and in particular such things in the Bible as the creation account, Adam and Eve as the first man and woman, Noah and the flood account, Jonah and the whale, and other biblical accounts of this nature. He said of these things, ‘We know better than this.’

“It was in the summer of 1975, and I believe the class was 244. Dr. Ashcraft said, ‘The God of the Old Testament is not the god that I know.’ Then he went on to explain how this God would not kill people as we read of how God did in the Old Testament.”

I trust as I read these comments that you have now been well enough briefed on the higher critical viewpoint and on the conclusions concerning the Scriptures that you will recognize that these men are simply parodying exactly the conclusion of the liberal mentality of those who hold to the higher critical method. I could sit in a classroom under these men, or you could sit in a classroom under these men, and hear remarks like this, and immediately you would know without having to go up and ask him: “Do you believe in the higher critical, the historical critical approach of higher criticism to the Scriptures?” And you would know that the man would say, “Yes, I believe in that.” You would know without a doubt that he does not hold to the inerrancy of Scripture. You wouldn’t even have to ask him. That is what is being revealed here, and that is what concerns this pastor and this church. Continuing:

“In the discussion of demons, Dr. Ashcraft thought that Jesus was only going along with the people of his time. But we today know better. These things were only psychological diseases and problems that people had in the time of Jesus. This teaching tells me that he does not believe in demons, that he either thinks modern man is smarter than Jesus or that Jesus was a deceiver or liar. This is the idea of inspiration that I was taught by Dr. Ashcraft. Godly men of old wrote down the best they understood of the things of God and the revelation that God had given them, no that it was factual or true. Now today we read what they said as recorded in the Bible. We can be inspired by the Holy Spirit of God to find truth.” Now remember Semler’s first basic principle: The Word of God and the Bible are not one and the same thing. You have to find the truth in the Bible because some of it is not true. Continuing:

“Now that my friend puts inspiration down here with us, not in the beginning. In fact, depending upon who we are and how much faith we have, etc. determines how much we can accept of the Bible as truth. This of course totally disagrees with 2 Timothy 3:16 and the declaration of the whole Bible: ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.’ Dr. Ashcraft seems to use little statement found in our 1963 Baptist Faith and Message as a catch-all for his lack of faith and unbelief. It is that last sentence under the heading The Scriptures which read: ‘The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.’ I remember once he was commenting about something, and the reason he did not believe it or accept it in the scene given in the Scripture was because as he interprets it in Jesus Christ it was not so. Thus he was able to use this statement to discount and wipe out the above statement made under the same heading, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. With such a personal loophole, he is able to say he subscribes to our statement of faith, thus misleading the majority.” What this pastor means is that he’s using this phrase, “the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ,” and so he gets away from the statement without any mixture of error for its matter by saying that Jesus Christ is the truth. And according to Jesus Christ is the way he interprets what is true in Scripture, whatever that means.

“Number two: Dr. William Morton: In (course number) I-101, Dr. Morton made the statement that we know that the Israelites did not get the Law from God but from the folks about them; that is, they just took laws from nations and people of that day. They borrowed and God did not give it to them as we have recorded in Exodus 20 and following. He also said that Israel did not get the pattern and instructions for the temple or for the tabernacle from God, but from the nations and the people around about them.

“Number three: Dr. Pierce Metheny, Jr.: Dr. Metheny was my professor for Old Testament Survey—C120, C121, C122). Through his teaching and the texts used in these courses I share with you a few things taught: That the creation account in Genesis is a myth and fable. It did not literally happen as recorded in Scripture. We know better. Modern science tells us differently, and we know modern science to be correct. I was taught that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but by at least four different authors or sources known as JEPD. This theory is called Nielson Oral Tradition, or the JEPD theory. A compiler or compilers long after the time of Moses took these four sources written or oral traditions and compiled them into one which is what we have now in the Pentateuch. These four sources as recorded in the Bible conflict and disagree at times. In all this supposed conflict, error, myth, and legend, I was told I could sift through and find some spiritual truth.

“I was asked to write a paper on the first two chapters of Genesis. I used six liberal sources from the seminary’s library. I also was asked to state my views as well as these authors’ plus comment on what they said. I did, and I disagreed with them at many points. Dr. Metheny wrote these comments on my paper: ‘I don’t believe you gave your authors the benefit of an open mind to their views. I see a better exercise for you might have been a ten-page exposition of your own interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, as I cannot see any difference the reading of six scholarly commentaries made in your approach.’

“Let me tell you who some of these so-called scholars of wisdom were. G. Hinton Davies: He wrote the Genesis account of the Broadman Commentary Volume 1 First Edition which was pulled from sales and revised after it caused such an uproar and upheaval in the Southern Baptist Convention. Another scholar of wisdom of Ralph Elliott in his book, The Message of Genesis. This book also caused an uproar and upheaval in the convention. Because of the pressure and all he finally left Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. These are the types of scholars and scholarship I was asked to learn from.

“Number four: The late Dr. Burlan A. Sizemore, Jr.: He implied that there were many ways to God and salvation. He was asked in a religion class to clarify himself on this issue. I cannot recall his exact words or phrases but I was still left with the distinct impression that he believed there were many ways. In other words, his whole statement was vague and implied he believed that there were other ways or other religions besides Christ and Christianity that led to God and true salvation. Surely a man of his position and education could make himself clear and understood, unless of course he was trying to be a little vague for self-protection.

“A general statement: Let it be clear that I do not hate these men or others that are teaching similar doctrines. I have no axe to grind or personal vengeance to execute. I write because I am deeply concerned for my convention and its seminaries. You have asked us to write and lay down the complaints and charges through our state paper and at the 1979 Southern Baptist Convention. I am a 1976 graduate of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I am sure some will ask why I went there and why I stayed with this kind of teaching. I can answer this and will be glad to try to answer other questions you may have. Sincerely in Christ my Lord, Gary S. Urich, Pastor.”

Then he goes on to say, “We will be concerned about the clarification and correction of these circumstances in an effort to restore and maintain a sound theology at the seminary level. We would like to know what steps will be and are being taken to correct these errors in teaching.”

Now I have President Ferguson’s reply letter as well but I will not read that one to you because I can summarize it. If you are interested personally and would like to read exactly what the seminary president had to say in reputation to these very clear charges by an eye witness, you may check with Mr. Branyon and he will be happy to let you read this letter.

In short, what this letter does is to go into a statement on what fine Christian men these professors are and how devoted they are to serving God, but at no point does the letter deny that they were teaching these things. There is a slight implication that somebody maybe misunderstood them, but the whole gest of the letter is that these are fine fine fine men. They really want to see people go to heaven. They just love the Lord. As I read through the letter, Matthew 7:21-23 kept flashing in mind like a neon sign. “Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name and cast out demons and performed miracles.” And Jesus saying, “Depart from Me. I never knew you.” Where is the Southern Baptist Convention going to go? The president of a school is unwilling to face up and say, “Yes, our men have been teaching false truth. Our students are being contaminated, and we’re going to do something about it before we end up like the other great denominations who have lost their anchor point in Scripture. The reason these men are saying this is because they have accepted the higher critical view of Scripture—that it was a humanly produced book apart from supernatural elements.”

My first year in college was spent at Concordia Teacher’s College in River Forest, Illinois, a school of the Missouri Senate Lutheran Church. I remember in a class there hearing a professor say that the way you must view the Bible is as a book that stands alone. Then he illustrated this by saying that if you were to take all the books in the world that have ever been published, and you would have a huge floor space in which you would pile them up by categories, the Bible would have a category all its own. You could not put any other book with the Bible. It would stand alone because it is a book of supernatural production and no other book has so been produced. Those who follow the higher critical view that the Bible is a humanly produced book, and that’s all it is, have inevitably abandoned the doctrine of inerrancy, and have seen the Bible not as a book that stands in a unique category, but is just another book among all the other books that mankind has produced.

There was a survey taken of what Southern Baptist Students believe. I think it would be interesting to pass this on to you just to update you. A survey was made about the students at Louisville Southern Baptist Seminary. On page 172 of Dr. Lindsell’s book, he says, “A sample breakdown of the response for those who were studying for the Master of Divinity program tells a more complete story. One of the question was this: Does the devil actually exist? There were four possible answers the respondent could choose from. He could say that the statement was completely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true.” Now these are men who are going to pastor Southern Baptist churches. They are students in the most prestigious seminary in the Southern Baptist Convention. “The answers given were: 6% of those students said the statement was not true (there is no devil). 16% said it was probably not true. 20% said it was probably true. 58% said it was completely true.

“Another statement said, ‘Jesus was born of a virgin.’ 55% said this was completely true. 22% said it probably was true. 17% said it probably was not true. 6% said it definitely was not true.

“Another statement said, ‘Jesus walked on water.’ 17% said it was probably not true. 6% said it definitely was not true.

“In response to the question of holding the Bible to be God’s truth, 39% said it was absolutely necessary to hold the Bible as being God’s truth. 21% said it was probably necessary. 25% said it was possible not necessary to hold the Bible as being God’s truth. 23% said it was not necessary to view the Bible as God’s truth.

Now that pretty well tells the story. These men come into the seminaries, unless they had a contaminated pastor in their local church who has already put them on the course of the consequence of the viewpoint of the higher critical historical critical method, they themselves come in as blanks. There is one thing you learn in seminary circles and that is that a student who goes through a program of any seminary is forever indelibly stamped by that seminary. It is very very difficult to go through a course of training at a seminary and to be able to remove yourself from the influence of that program of instruction. It inevitably is deeply stamped within the thinking of the students. Therefore, these students are reflecting what their seminary has indeed taught them.

On page 175, Dr. Lindsell speaks about what the future is going to be of the Southern Baptist Convention. The president of the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville said that what Dr. Lindsell had written in his book about the Southern Baptist Convention was simply poppycock. Lindsell’s very apt summary here as to the future of the Southern Baptist Convention is that if this direction is not immediately reversed, if these professors are not removed from teaching authority, if pastors are not removed from pulpits if they do not hold to inerrancy, the Southern Baptist Convention will, within the mediate future, completely deteriorate as a biblical institution and become a liberal denomination just as has been true of all other denominations before it. So Lindsell’s position, again, is that once you start in that direction and you tolerate this kind of teaching, there is very little chance of reversing the process.

Another example that we gave you that Dr. Lindsell has given us is Fuller Seminary. Fuller Seminary, since the first book came out, has tried to do all kinds of things to evade the fact that it has abandoned the position that it once held for inerrancy. I want to show you where Fuller Seminary has come now today. This is 1980. The first book was published in 1975. So they’ve had about five years to deal with this problem. One passage I want to read to you is what Dr. David Hubbard, the president of the seminary, has to say concerning their view toward Scripture. This is on page 193 where Dr. Lindsell quotes him. Hubbard says, “We recognize the importance that the word ‘inerrancy’ has attained in the thinking of many of our scholarly colleagues and the institutions they serve. We appreciate the way in which most of them used the term to affirm that the Scriptures is indeed God’s trustworthy Word in all it affirms.”

Note the phrase, “… in all it affirms,” not in all it teaches. I want you to be real smart in this congregation to this tricky use of language, “… in all it affirms.” It so happens that Billy Graham ran a great evangelical conference of evangelists at Luzon, Switzerland. They made a statement of faith that the issued that they as evangelists would subscribe to. It created quite a furor because there were some men like Francis Schaeffer who refused to sign it because they it used this kind of language relative to Scripture. This put Graham into a frap because he wants to present that “we all love one another and we’re all united as Christians” front. Several of these men that are very influential in the Christian world simply said, “We’re not about to sign a statement like that.” Pressure was put upon them, and unfortunately the appeal for unity prevailed so that Dr. Schaeffer and other men had to sign it with mental reservations of interpreting to themselves what this statement meant.

Fuller Seminary deliberately used the word “affirm” so that it can have a loophole to make you, who are contributing to that seminary think that they believe that the Bible is God’s Word without error. “… in all that it affirms. When inerrancy refers to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches through biblical writers, we support its use. Where the focus switches to an undue emphasis on matters like the chronological details, the precise sequence of events, the numerical allusions, we would consider the term misleading and inappropriate.”

Dr. Lindsell says, “Here Dr. Hubbard gave away his case. Inerrancy is satisfactory so long as it does not include chronology, allusions to numerical figures, or matters of science and the cosmos. He simply cannot accept the Bible which is inerrant in all its parts. It is very clear after all is said and done that Dr. Hubbard teaches that Fuller Seminary’s viewpoint is that the Bible, when it deals with matters of salvation, is without error. When it deals with anything else, it has many errors in it. The original of Fuller Seminary, you might be interested in, had this to say about the Bible: ‘that it is free from error in whole and in part.’ The new statement of Fuller Seminary says this: ‘Scripture is an essential part and trustworthy record of the divine disclosure. All the books of the Old and New Testament given by divine inspiration…’” Notice that it says that those books “given by divine inspiration,” which leaves the implication that some were not. “’… are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith of faith and practice. They are to be interpreted according to their context in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through them in living power.’”

Notice that it says, “… reverent obedience to the Lord.” Would you take issue with that? To interpret the Bible in reverent obedience to the Lord? Doesn’t that sound good? Couldn’t you say, “Hallelujah Amen” to that? “… in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks to them in living power.” Well that just happens to be exactly what Dr. Ferguson of Midwestern Seminary said of one of his professors—he interprets the Bible in terms of the leading of Jesus Christ.

In the new statement, Dr. Lindsell says, Fuller Seminary no longer says that the Bible is the infallible Word of God—the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It simply says the Bible is the “word” (with a lower case “w”) of God. Then it adds that infallibility is limited to matters of faith and practice. Thus whatever does not constitute a matter of faith and practice can and does contain error.

Now, the thing that infuriated Lindsell’s critics toward his first book is that Lindsell says that once you start on this road, those who follow you will not only be satisfied to limit the fallibility of the Bible to these so-called peripheral areas, but they’ll begin to question basic doctrines. They have a professor at Fuller Seminary now whose name is Paul King Jewett. I want to read you Dr. Lindsell’s comment on the teachings of Dr. Jewett. He continues on the faculty of Fuller Seminary though, as you will see, he has departed now not just from peripheral matters, but from matters that are at the heart of Biblical doctrine.

Lindsell says, “Of all the articles in the special issue of Theology News and Notes, none is more important than those pertaining to Dr. Jewett. Everyone interested in the Fuller situation should get a copy and read it carefully. In it the reader will find the full confirmation of my second allegation that Fuller Seminary has breached its new statement of faith in the case of Paul King Jewett who denies the infallibility of Scripture in regard to a matter of faith and practice.”

This is the point that Lindsell is making, that with this professor, he doesn’t even subscribe to their new statement of faith that tried to get away from inerrancy. This man has taken the next step where he’s even breaking the one that they have now. The seminary itself has now born testimony to this fact. Dr. Jewett has said that in Ephesians 5, the apostle Paul tells us that which is not true. He has argued that Ephesians 5 conflicts with Galatians 3:28. He thinks Paul in Ephesians has given us a rabbinic ruling which is really false teaching when measured by Galatians. He does it on the basis of the use of the analogy of faith principle in the interpretation of Scripture. An ad hoc committed was appointed by the board to investigate Dr. Jewett’s book, Man as Male and Female. Their report was published in Theology News and Notes. In their findings and recommendations the committee had this to say: “The committee acknowledges that some application of the analogy of faith hermeneutic may be consistent with Article III (that is, of the Fuller Seminary current doctrinal statement), but does not feel that this principle permitted the texts of Scripture, specifically Genesis 1:27, Galatians 3:28, 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2, and Ephesians 5, to be handled in a manner in which Dr. Jewett followed. A little later the committee said, ‘Dr. Jewett’s approach to the authority of the apostle Paul has left him and the seminary to misunderstanding and responsible criticism to the extent that Dr. Jewett may be interpreted to say that Saint Paul’s teachings in 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2, and Ephesians 5 was in error, or that Saint Paul was a faulty theologian at these points in interpreting the Old Testament. The committee sharply disagreed with him.’”

Dr. Lindsell says, “The committee pronounced adverse judgment on Dr. Jewett. When its careful phrasing is looked at, the committee said Dr. Jewett had breached the doctrinal statement of Fuller Seminary. Now the question was, what would the committee recommend to be done about it?”

Here is the answer: What they’re referring to is what Paul said about the authority of the man over the woman in the marriage relationship, and so on. Here’s what the committee recommended to do with this professor at Fuller Seminary, who is still there, and who now breached not only peripheral matters but actually hard core matters: “The committee while maintaining its disagreements and regret of some portions of Man as Male and Female, which appear to question the authority of the apostle Paul (and it is well to note that later we will see that at least one of Dr. Jewett’s colleagues does not believe that Paul wrote the book of Ephesians in the first place), recommends that the seminary take no other action in the light of Dr. Jewett’s proven integrity, his longstanding contribution to the upholding and teaching of biblical faith at Fuller, and his reassurance of loyalty to the Fuller doctrinal standards.”

So what did they do when they found him teaching false doctrine? They said, “Well, he’s a fine sincere man. He has told us he’s really for our school. And he’s a man of integrity. Therefor he can teach any false doctrine he wants. How far can you go with that? Just as far as the committee will let you. And when you say that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute that had an affair with Jesus Christ, it’s OK as long as the committee says that this is a man of integrity and he’s telling you what he sincerely believes.

Dr. Lindsell says, “Here is a tangled mass of conflicting data which forms no coherent pattern. Dr. Jewett, they agreed, was guilty. The seminary doctrinal statement had been breached. But they said that Dr. Jewett is a man of integrity, a good teacher, and a longtime employee of the school. So they sacrificed the statement of faith on this basis to permit the continuance on the faculty of a man who openly contradicted the confession to which he appended his signature. But since he did not really think he had done anything wrong, even though the committee did, they agreed to forget the whole matter.”

One of the Fuller trustees added his word: “The committee and the seminary are intent on confirming the complete inspiration of Scripture and the words used by Scripture itself, and on continuing their quest to learn more fully what it means. In other words, the completely inspired Bible has no untruth in it in the matter of faith and practice, but they will do nothing about the professor who says that it does have such untruth, even though the seminary is committed to a trustworthy Scripture limited to matters of faith and practice if not in matters of historical scientific fact. But we shall see shortly that Dr. Jewett is not alone, and if he were to be separated from the institution, there are others of whom he, the students, the trustees, and the administration have knowledge, who would also have to be separated from the school. It would constitute a wholesale departure and breakup of the faculty if it were to be carried out.”

So what Dr. Lindsell is saying is that if Fuller Seminary were to deal with this man as they should have dealt with him and said, “You’ve breached our doctrinal statement, you are teaching what is false, what is contrary to the clear statements of Scripture, you have challenged the authority of the apostle Paul himself in major doctrinal areas: If they did it to him, they would have to do it to others on the faculty.

Now before we take up what Lindsell had to face then as to what in the world are we going to call ourselves, since these people at Fuller Seminary call themselves evangelicals, after Billy Graham’s choice and under his leadership: What are we going to call ourselves who believe in an inerrant Scripture so that we can distinguish ourselves from the people in the pews who are going to begin to catch on to these problems; who are going to begin to catch on to these conflicts.

**Fundamentalism**

Well, first of all, that raises the question: What is meant historically by fundamentalism? At the end of the 19th century, one of the things that happened in the providence of God was a great movement back to study of the Bible. This was expressed in great Bible conferences which were led by terrific teachers such as C. I. Scofield of the Scofield Bible Notes fame. These men found themselves increasingly the spokesmen against the consequences that were invading great denominations of the historical critical method begun by Semler. So increasingly, particularly in the 1920s, the lines became very clearly drawn between liberalism and fundamentalism. But the basis, the identifying features, of fundamentalism actually came to a climax at a conference at Niagara, New York in 1895 in which these scholars put together a statement of what constitutes a New Testament Christian. Their point was that fundamentalism represents the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. It represents what the Bible calls a Christian, and that you cannot call yourself a Christian in the New Testament sense if you deny certain fundamentals.

So here were the fundamentals that they put forth and which have basically (these first five—there actually were 14), but these basic five are traditional identifying marks of the fundamentalists. And Lindsell knows this. That’s why we shall see Lindsell says there’s only one thing for us to do. We’ve got to get away from using the word “evangelical” because that’s a contaminated word. The liberals use that. The people who believe a Bible with mistakes use that. Consequently, that word is meaningless. It really has always been meaningless. It has been a wishy-washy word, but since the Niagara conference and those great Bible conferences, many of them prophetic conferences at the end of the 19th century, the word “fundamentalism” has always had content. That’s why Billy Graham hated it. That’s why the neo-evangelicals hated it. That’s why when they wanted to have a rapprochement to the liberals they hated the word “fundamentalism.” Billy Graham said, “I’m not a fundamentalist. I’m an evangelical.” What were they looking for? They were looking for a word which would not offend the liberals. By the time the battles of the 1920s were fought, and the dust had settled, there was no doubt in the minds of the people in the pews what a fundamentalist stood for and what a liberal stood for. If you wanted to approach a liberal, you could not say, “I’m a fundamentalist.” He would wipe you right out. When Graham and his boys decided, “We want to be accepted by the liberal community. We want to be able to work with the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches, they recognized that they could not carry the title of “fundamentalist” because that had definite meaning. So they went to an evasive of “evangelical” which could mean anything to anybody.

Point number one of the five basics of fundamentalism was, as you would expect, the inerrancy of Scripture. They said you cannot call yourself a Christian in the New Testament sense if you do not hold to an inerrant Bible. They said that’s what inspiration means, and that’s what the Bible teaches about itself, that it is without mistake.

The second point was the deity of Christ. The Bible very clearly teaches that Jesus is the Son of God. These men said you cannot call yourself a New Testament Christian if you do not hold to the deity of Christ. Fundamentalists all believe that Jesus Christ is God.

Number three was the virgin birth. They said you cannot call yourself a New Testament Christian if you deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. He was supernaturally born. Now of course that was very important because you had to have a Savior who did not have a sin nature. The only way He could escape the genetic defect of the sin nature, which is passed on through the father’s sperm, is for Him to be born, as the Bible indicates, without a human father. That is the significance of the virgin birth. When the liberals wanted to make Jesus just another natural man like any other man, they had to get rid of the virgin birth concept. That was a supernatural element, and the higher critical view that these liberals function on did not permit any supernatural idea.

The fourth point was the substitutionary atonement—the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. That is, that salvation was provided not by human effort, but it was provided by God sacrificing His own Lamb in our behalf vicariously, substituting for us—substituting Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world on behalf of the human race. So man again could not save himself. He had to have Christ who dies spiritually and physically in his behalf.

The fifth point of the basics that identified fundamentalism was the physical resurrection—the physical resurrection and future bodily return of Jesus Christ. That was very important because if He is not raised from the dead, there could be no hope for us to be raised from the dead.

So here it was. When anybody used the word “fundamentalist,” five factors with content came immediately to the mind. You knew that a fundamentalist believed in the inerrancy of Scripture. You knew he believed that Jesus Christ was God. You knew he believed that Christ was supernaturally virgin born. You knew that he believed Christ came as a substitute for us to pay the price of death on our behalf. You knew that he believed in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ and in His future bodily return to this earth—that He is a man in heaven, and because He is a man in heaven, we too will follow Him as human beings, men in heaven.

Very briefly I’ll name for you the other nine points that constituted the identifying of fundamentalism. These were the basic five that they worked from, but they actually had nine others that they also added to identify a New Testament Christian. One was the doctrine of the trinity. Another was the fall of the historical character Adam—that Adam was a person in time and space, and he actually fell into sin. Another was the need of a new birth spiritually—a person must be born again spiritually, implying that he was born spiritually dead. Another one was the full deliverance from moral guilt—that what Christ had done was that He had delivered us from moral guilt and we have no worries about moral guilt whatsoever. A fifth one was the assurance of salvation—that it is not a questionable thing that we may hope for, but that we know we have. Number six was the centrality of Jesus Christ in the Bible—that Christ is the issue with God, not our religion. Number seven was the principle of walking the Christian life by means of the Holy Spirit. Number eight was the resurrection of all human beings, believers and unbelievers alike—everybody physically resurrected, who has ever lived. And number nine was the principle of the ripening of this present age for catastrophic divine judgment.

Those nine points were added to this statement of what constitutes a fundamentalist. These five were at the core. If you do not believe in these, you cannot call yourself a New Testament Christian.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1980