

Is the Bible Sufficient to Understand the Bible? By Joshua Stucki

The title to this article might strike you as silly: “of course” – might be your response. However, it may surprise you how much the modern church has been gradually answering the above question with, “no”. Many may not even realize it.

Since about 1960, there has been a whole slew of “conservative” authors, preachers, and professors who have latched onto a new kind of Bible study: one where new information is allowed to reinterpret Scripture every decade or so, one building on another, until we have a Bible no longer interpreted by its own merit, but rather by uninspired information found outside of it.

To put it simply: people are interpreting the Bible by man’s interpretation of various outside pieces of information instead of relying on the Bible to explain itself, without the need of outside information.

Why does this matter? Everything from modern social movements (think LGBTQ, to various forms of feminism, to racism) to technology (think science, recent historical finds) to fundamental shifts in geo-political power (United States no longer being the only significant world power) has changed the world. They are also affecting understanding the Bible by many, because they are now interpreting it “in light” of all the above. This has resulted in a very different “Gospel message” than what has been common for nearly 2000 years.

What is one example? I think it is most helpful if we look at the most “innocuous” of these recent developments: women preachers/elders. This author realizes the sensitivity of this subject and the scope of this article could not possibly contain it so it will be sufficed to say the following at this point: other than certain wings of the United Methodist Church, there was never, in nearly 2000 years of church history, the commonality in women preachers like is seen today (greatly accelerating in the 1970’s, earliest known around the Civil War). What used to be a very uncommon thing, mostly found in certain remote United Methodist congregations, and naturally among the liberal “churches”, is becoming very commonplace. The pressures on even the most conservative (you could even say “theologically traditional”) of churches and Bible colleges to include women

worship leaders, women preachers, and women professors teaching adult men is immense and thus the change that is readily apparent today.

With all of the other “bigger” issues hitting the conservative church, such as the LGBTQ movement and abortion (the two classic conservative firewalls), is the discussion over women preachers even worth having?

It is that very question that is at the very heart of the all the issues cited above. The typical church attendee today is no longer primarily convicted by what the Bible says on a subject (barring any outside influence), but now the outside influence has us questioning if what the Bible says is really worth fighting for. That is the essence of the 1960’s movement forward – popular culture in judgment of the Word, instead of the Word in judgment of culture, as it always has been (until now).

In 2 Kings 22, King Josiah is 26 years old, having been king since he was eight (really). The king had just sent off a servant to a man named Hilkiah to do a routine accounting, Hilkiah reported to the servant who then reported back to the king that “I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord” (vs. 8). Hilkiah gave it to Shaphan the servant, who then read it to the king.

What did the king do? He “tore his clothes” (vs. 11) and commanded the book of the law of the Lord be reinstated as the law of the land. Josiah’s revival was great, and it is said *in Scripture* that “no king before him or after him was like him” (23:25) in his fervor to cleanse Israel of their idol worship unto the right worship of the one true God.

So church, there is only one question: are we going to return to the book, like Josiah did, or turn to culture, unto ever-changing ideas, putting the culture in judgment of the Word of God? How do we think that will turn out? How has it turned out for past cultures?

Instead, let us repent as Josiah did, and trust the Lord and His book. He can provide us revival only if we submit to Him! He is the author and perfecter of our salvation (Hebrews 12:2).