

A TRIBUTE TO DR. JOHN C. WHITCOMB

As I would write my monthly Earnestly Contending Letter and send it to Dr. Whitcomb, he would (almost every month) call me about some grammatical mistake I had made. He never called me out on any theology, but he certainly did on grammar. I called him “Eagle-Eyed John” which I think he appreciated. But the thing I most loved about John was his love of the Word and his love of the God of the Word.

Few people have had more of an impact on my spiritual life than Dr. John C. Whitcomb. He was a professor at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana for 39 years. He is perhaps best known for co-authoring the book titled “***The Genesis Flood***” with Dr. Henry M. Morris.

This book is a classic that launched the modern creationist movement around the world. In addition, Dr. Whitcomb authored many other books and spoke widely around the world. I would highly recommend his books.

The Self-Authenticating Nature of Scripture

When I was in Bible College I had a professor who taught that in order to prove the Bible, one has to start OUTSIDE of the Scripture. Otherwise, he reasoned, you are presenting a “circular argument”. In contrast, Dr. John Whitcomb visited our school and presented a series of messages emphasizing “the self-authenticating nature of Scripture”. This affirmed what I believed and strengthened me in the faith.

Dr. Whitcomb emphasized, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (Rom. 10:17). He started with the Scripture itself emphasizing that the Spirit working through the Word is powerfully sufficient! (cf. Lk. 16:31). Thus, Dr. Whitcomb, using the Scripture, reinforced in my life the fact that the Bible is supernaturally powerful and fully adequate in the battle for the TRUTH. God’s truth is self-authenticating!

The Sufficiency of Scripture

A number of years ago when the “Counseling Movement” was taking the evangelical church by storm, Dr. Whitcomb was one of the leading voices decrying the integration of psychology with the Bible. He strongly warned against allowing the infiltration of human wisdom that corrupts the purity and thus undermines the sufficiency of Scripture. Praise God for a man who with clarity and conviction dared to stand up and say (and APPLY) that

the Bible is sufficient for everything we need pertaining to life and godliness (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15-17, 2 Pet. 1:3-4).

The Perspicuity (Clarity) of Scripture

In defending the idea of a “Young Earth” Henry Morris and John Whitcomb insisted on taking the Bible for what it plainly teaches.

They appealed to what is called “the perspicuity of Scripture” emphasizing that the Bible is sufficient for all believers to understand the straight-forward teaching of it. They emphasized what is called the golden rule of interpretation: ***“If the plain sense makes good sense then seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense.”***

For example, Dr. Whitcomb wrote: *“A creation ‘week’ of six indefinite periods of time would hardly serve as a valid or meaningful pattern for Israel’s cycle of work and rest, as explained by God at Sinai in the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:9-11). How inconsistent to say that God worked six long ages (Exodus 20:11) to serve as a pattern for man to work six literal days (Exodus 20:9)!”*

A KEY mentor of mine through the years in leading me to EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH was Dr. John C. Whitcomb. I praise God for his consistent and unwavering stand on a **HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE!** That drove his entire ministry for many years and by God’s grace I hope and pray to follow in that train.

Dr. John Whitcomb has a son named David who wrote a book about his dad titled, “A Good & Faithful Servant”. Dr. John was still living when he wrote it, and so he delivered him a completed copy of the manuscript to edit. His son writes in the introduction of the book...

“Dad immediately began editing the final chapters. At 10.00 p.m. on February 4, 2020, my brother heard him working and entered his living area to see why he was awake so much later than usual. Dad turned to him, handed him an edited chapter, and said, ‘Here, I am now finished!’ He then went to bed and awoke in heaven.”

I thank the Lord for Dr. Whitcomb, for his many years of faithful ministry, that he finished WELL! All glory to God!

“Defend the Bible? I would as soon defend a lion! Unchain it and it will defend itself.” (A summary of the repeated emphasis made by **Charles Spurgeon**)