

Bibliology

Jonathan Anderson | Fall 2025



Institutes of
Theology

Topics Related to the Scripture

- Attributes of Scripture
 - Inspiration
 - Authority
 - Clarity
 - Sufficiency
 - Necessity
 - Relevancy
 - Inerrancy
- Canon of Scripture
- Preservation of Scripture
- Translation of Scripture



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The Word of the Lord

Bibliology: The
Authority of Scripture



On April 18, 1521,
Martin Luther stood
before Emperor
Charles V at the diet of
Worms, having been
asked whether he
would recant any of
the teaching in his
writings.



Martin Luther

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason—for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves—I consider myself convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one’s conscience is neither safe nor sound. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”



I. Why do we affirm the authority of Scripture?



A. The Authority of God

1. God's Intrinsic Authority as God

- He is the ultimate authority (2 Chron 20:6, Matt 28:18)



A. The Authority of God

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue

...in a biblical worldview, original and ultimate authority resides with God and God alone. God did not inherit his authority—there was no one to bequeath it to him. God did not receive his authority—there was no one to bestow it on him. God's authority did not come by way of an election—there was no one to vote for him. God did not seize his authority—there was no one from whom to steal it. God did not earn his authority—it was already his.



A. The Authority of God

1. God's Intrinsic Authority as God

- He is the ultimate authority (2 Chron 20:6)
- Every other authority is a delegated one (Rom 13:1, John 19:11)



A. The Authority of God

1. God's Intrinsic Authority as God
2. God's Rightful Authority as Creator
 - Genesis 1:1
 - Psalm 24:1
 - Isaiah 64:8, Romans 9:20-21
 - Revelation 4:11



A. The Authority of God

1. God's Intrinsic Authority as God
2. God's Rightful Authority as Creator
3. Christ's Recognized Authority as the Word of God
 - John 1:1-4, 14-18
 - Hebrews 1:1-2
 - Matthew 7:28-29, Mark 1:22, Luke 4:32



B. The Inspiration of Scripture

- *2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*
- Greek - *Theopneustos* – “God-breathed” (LSB)



B. The Inspiration of Scripture

- **2 Peter 1:20–21** *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
 - Human authorship - "*men... spoke*"
 - Divine authorship - "*men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*"
- "*Thus says the Lord*" – over 400x



Westminster Confession of Faith

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.



Robert Reymond

...the article states the sole reason why the Bible ought to be believed and obeyed: because God, who is truth itself, is in a unique sense its author, and therefore because it is the very Word of the one living and true God. In sum, it receives its authority from heaven; it requires no earthly advocacy in regard to the issue of its authority. Its authority is intrinsic and inherent; that is, it is self-validating. In no sense is its authority derived from human testimony.



B. The Inspiration of Scripture

Divine Author = Divine Author-ity

Gregg Allison

Biblical authority is a corollary of the inspiration of Scripture.



B. The Inspiration of Scripture

Paul Enns, Moody Handbook of Theology

Inspiration may be defined as the Holy Spirit's superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God's Word written—authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs.



C. The Illumination of the Spirit

- John 10:24-28 *"My sheep hear my voice..."*
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-15 *"We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God... But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things..."*



Westminster Confession

“We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.”



II. What is affirmed in the authority of Scripture?



A. Some Insufficient Affirmations

1. The Authority of Scripture is *Functional* – it is authoritative because of what it does
2. The Authority of Scripture is *Instrumental* – it is authoritative because God uses it
3. The Authority of Scripture is *Conferred* – it is authoritative because the church says it is
4. The Authority of Scripture is *Traditional* – it is authoritative because it has been viewed that way for centuries



A. Some Insufficient Affirmations

Gregg Allison

In one sense, these views contain some truth: biblical authority is functional, instrumental, conferred and traditional. However, individually and together, these ideas are incomplete. Biblical authority is first and foremost an ontological matter: it has to do with the very nature of Scripture itself.



B. A General Definition

Wayne Grudem

The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.



B. A General Definition

Joel Beeke

When we speak of the Bible's authority, we refer to its property as the Word of God to obligate its readers or hearers to entire submission. The Bible has authority as the rule for faith (what man is to believe) and behavior (what man is to do). Where the Bible teaches a doctrine or reports an event, it binds our consciences to hold it for truth. When it commands an attitude, affection, or action, it binds our consciences to obey.



C. A Helpful Clarification

Millard Erickson

As creator and source of all truth, God has the right to command belief and obedience from all human beings.... All Scripture is historically authoritative, that is, it tells us correctly what occurred and what God expected from specific persons at particular times and places. Some of Scripture is also normatively authoritative. That means that those parts of Scripture are to be applied and obeyed in the same fashion in which they were originally given.



D. The Principle of Sola Scriptura

- The Roman Catholic View
 - The authority of the magisterium/church tradition
 - The Scripture is received on the authority of the church



D. The Principle of Sola Scriptura

- The Protestant Response
 - All doctrine and practice must come from the Scripture, not the teaching of the church (*Acts 17:11*)
 - The Scripture is the foundation for the church (*Eph 2:20*)



Westminster Confession of Faith

The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.



Martin Luther

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason—for I believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves—I consider myself convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one’s conscience is neither safe nor sound. Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”



III. What potentially undermines the authority of Scripture?



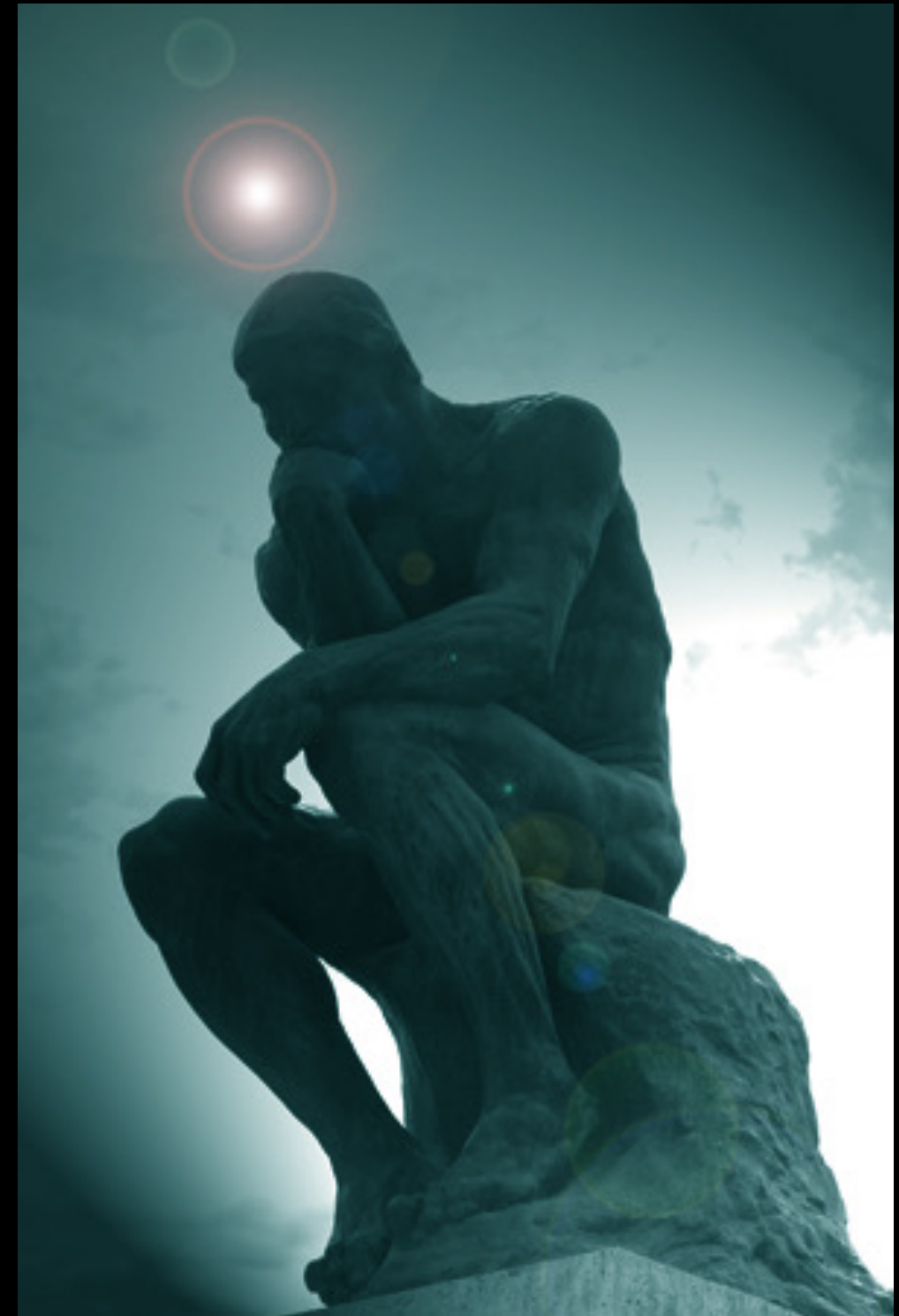
A. The Church or Tradition

- Catholic vs. Protestant (Sola Scriptura)
- Jesus vs. Pharisees
- Must be careful that what is taught, believed and practiced comes from the Scriptures (Acts 17:11)



B. Secular or Human Wisdom

- Skepticism
- Evolution
- Psychology
- Feminism
- Social Justice



C. Our Feelings or Experiences

- What feels right to us rather than what God's Word clearly says
- A dream, vision, impression or emotional experience
- 2 Peter 1:16-21



IV. What are the implications of the authority of Scripture?



A. For Every Christian

1. We must rightly respond to God's Word as to God Himself (Is 66:1-2)
 - a. Humility
 - b. Reverence



Our God has Magnified His Word – Tom Pennington

Our God has magnified His Word, just as He has His name,
Complete and holy, sure and true, eternally the same.
Until the earth shakes off its frame, the stars their courses stray,
The smallest letter, slightest stroke will never pass away!

Man's wisdom and his glory fail, as grass they fade and die,
But God's truth always will remain, "the saints and angels cry!"
O Lord, we tremble at Your Word, and from our hearts believe.
Help us to guard, love and obey the treasure we received!



A. For Every Christian

1. We must rightly respond to God's Word as to God Himself (Is 66:1-2)
2. We must firmly believe what is taught in God's Word (1 Thess 2:13)
3. We must carefully obey all that is commanded in God's Word (Deut 28:1, James 1:22-25)



B. For the Church

1. A Commitment to Preach the Word (2 Tim 4:1-4, Tit 2:1, 15)
2. A Commitment to Guard the Truth (1 Tim 3:15, 2 Tim 1:13-14)
3. A Commitment to Obey the Word (1 Tim 3:15)
 - a. Worship (Regulative Principle)
 - b. Biblical Leadership
 - c. Church Discipline



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The Word is a Lamp

Bibliology: The Clarity
of Scripture



I. Why do we affirm the clarity of Scripture?



A. The Scripture as Revelation

- **Deuteronomy 29:29** “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”
- **Psalms 19:7** The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
- **Isaiah 45:19** I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in a waste place’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright.



B. The Communication of God

- The Wisdom of God
- The Power of God
- The Inspiration of Scripture



B. The Communication of God

Robert Reymond

As a logical corollary to the Bible's representation of its revelatory and inspired nature, the purpose of this entire activity on God's part was to reveal his ways and works in a comprehensible manner to those to whom his revelation originally came. He "spoke and wrote" in order to be understood.



B. The Communication of God

Wilhelmus Brakel

as He [God] speaks [to mankind], He is as desirous to be understood clearly as when man uses speech to express his thoughts to others.... The Bible is written in the language of man.



C. The Illumination of the Spirit

- John 10:24-28 *"My sheep hear my voice..."*
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-15 *"We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God... But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things..."*



II. What do we NOT mean by the clarity of Scripture?



The Clarity of Scripture does Not Mean

- A. All Scripture is Easy to Understand (2 Pet 3:15-16)
- B. It is Unnecessary to Study Scripture (Ezra 7:10, 2 Tim 2:15)
- C. We do not Need Others to Teach us the Scriptures (Ezra 7:10, 2 Tim 2:15)



III. What do we mean by the clarity of Scripture?



Westminster Confession

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all (2 Pet. 3:16): yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them (Ps. 119:105, 130).



The Clarity of Scripture

A. The Central Truths of Scripture are Clear

- All necessary doctrine for salvation (2 Tim 3:15)
- All things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3)

B. The Scriptures can be Understood by all Believers

C. The Scriptures can be understood through the ordinary means of language



IV. What are the implications of the clarity of Scripture?



Because the Scriptures are Clear

A. All Mankind is without Excuse

- “Have you not read...” (Matt 19:4, 22:31)
- The issue with man’s lack of understanding and reception of God’s Word is not because of any issue in God’s Word (Rom 1:18-23, 2 Cor 4:1-6)



Because the Scriptures are Clear

- A. All Mankind is without Excuse
- B. We can truly know God and His Will (Deut 29:29)
- C. We should all spend time in God's Word (Josh 1:8, Ps 19, 119)
- D. Parents should Teach their Children God's Word (Deut 6:7-9, Eph 6:4)



Because the Scriptures are Clear

- E. We should work to see the Bible translated for all the peoples of the world.
- F. We should interpret the Bible using the Literal-Grammatical-Historical Hermeneutic



Psalm 19:7-11

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

