

Part II – The Doctrine of the Word of God
Section 3. The Authority Scripture
Section 4. The Inerrancy of Scripture

3. *The Authority of Scripture*

3.1. Definitions

Wayne Grudem – “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are _____ in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any _____ of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.”

Westminster Confession – “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be _____ and _____, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon _____ (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and is therefore to be believed, because it is the word of God.”

Millard Erickson – “By the authority of the Bible we mean that the Bible, as the expression of God’s will to us, possesses the _____ supremely to define what we are to believe and how we are to conduct ourselves.”

The Idea of Authority

A person or text has authority if it is a source of reliable _____ on a subject.

A person or text has authority if it possesses the _____ to enforce rules or give orders.
Authority demands belief and obedience.
Scripture demands belief and obedience.

3.2. The Authority of Scripture

The authority DOES NOT reside in the testimony of any _____ or _____.

The Bible ought to be believed and obeyed because _____ is its ultimate author.

3.2.1. Common Arguments for the Authority of Scripture

- Many writers over 1500 years producing a unified document.
- Miracles performed by its writers
- Lord, Liar, Lunatic argument
- Historical accuracy
- Fulfilled prophecies
- Historical and world-wide influence
- Textual magnificence

3.2.2. Are Arguments like this useful?

They point to _____ we would expect to be true of words from God.

They reassure us in our affirmation of Scripture as God's word.

They provide a basis for urging others to _____ the witness of Scripture.

But ultimately they do not _____ others to accept Scripture as the authoritative word of God.

3.2.3. Scripture is Self-Attesting

By its own _____

By its own _____

3.2.3.1. The Claims of Scripture

1. "Thus says the Lord" occurs hundreds of times

2. Various other texts

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is _____ by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (ESV)

2 Peter 1:21

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from _____ as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

"It was not Peter's intention to deny human volition or personality but rather to say that the ultimate source of every prophecy was never a man's decision about what he wanted to write, but rather the Holy Spirit's action in the prophet's life." (Grudem, 75)

Matthew 1:22-23

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

Quote from Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

*no “thus says the Lord” but Matthew claims these are God’s words

Matthew 4:3-4

And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

*What “proceeds from the mouth of God” are the written Scriptures, which Jesus is quoting to Satan. (Grudem, 75)

Matthew 19:4-5

[Jesus] answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”

*This quote from Genesis 2:24 consists as words of the writer (Moses), but Jesus attributes them to God.

Mark 7:9-13

For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.”

*What “Moses said” is “the word of God.”

Acts 1:16

“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.”

*Words of psalms 69 and 109 are designated as Scripture, words of David, and words of the Holy Spirit.

For numerous other examples see Grudem, 75-77

3.2.3.2. The Power of Scripture

Jeremiah 23:29

Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a _____ that breaks the rock in pieces?

Isaiah 55:10-11

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Psalms 19:7-11

The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

**“The Holy Spirit speaks in and through the words of the Bible to our hearts and gives us an inner assurance that these are the words of our Creator speaking to us.” (Grudem, 77)

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 16:13-14

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

“because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.”

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those who love him”—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ

Whether it was the spoken word or the written word, it is by the word. The word is powerful to the conversion of souls.

3.3. *The Authority of Scripture: Conclusion*

3.3.1. So how do we discern the authority of Scripture?

1. By Grace
2. By the work of the Spirit
3. By the experience of reading/hearing the Scripture.

“The Christian believes the Bible to be the Word of God in the last analysis on the testimony which God Himself gives respecting this matter in His Word, and recognizes that Word as divine by means of the testimony of God in his heart. . . . The final ground of faith is . . . the authority of God which is impressed upon the believer in the testimony of Scripture.” Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 82.

3.3.2. Implications of Biblical Authority

1. To disbelieve or disobey the Scripture is to disobey God.
2. All Scripture is completely true and without error (inerrant).
3. The Scripture is the ultimate standard of truth and our final authority.

3.3.3. The Inerrancy of the Bible

3.3.3.1. Definition: Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. (Grudem, 90)

Original Manuscripts – not the copies! And yet by use of textual criticism determining what is original brings us to a certainty that what we have today is the word of God.

3.3.3.2. Inerrancy is not compromised by affirming the following:

1. The use of ordinary everyday, non-technical speech.
2. The use of loose quotations.
3. The use of unusual grammatical constructions.

3.3.3.3. Problems with Rejecting Inerrancy:

1. The human mind is a higher standard of truth than God’s word.
2. Everything is up for questioning.

Practical Application

1. If you want to persuade someone that the Bible is God's Word, what do you want that person to read more than any other piece of literature?
2. Who would try to make people want to disbelieve something in Scripture? To disobey something in Scripture?
3. What is the best way for you to deal with anything in the bible you do not want to believe or obey?
4. Can you say that when you read the Bible you hear the voice of God speaking to you as in no other book?
5. Is there anything you believe simply because Scripture teaches it while you know of no external evidence? How do you think Jesus looks at that?
6. Why such a big debate over inerrancy?
7. What is the impact on people who grow in their apprehension and understanding of the Bible? How does it seem to affect their trust of the Bible?
8. How do you feel about the doctrines of authority and inerrancy?
9. When there is a doctrinal controversy in the church, what are the personal dangers facing those whose position is more consistent with Scripture?
10. How do you respond to someone like Brian MacLaren?

Memory Verse

Psalm 12:6

The words of the LORD are pure words,
like silver refined in a furnace on the ground,
purified seven times.