

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

A systematic study of the major doctrines of Scripture.

Topic 1 – The Doctrine of Scripture

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The Doctrine of Scripture

- Second London Baptist Confession of Faith – Chapter 1
- The Inspiration of Scripture
- The Authority and Perspicuity of Scripture
- The Inerrancy of Scripture
- The Preservation of Scripture
- Teaching and Preaching the Scriptures
- Translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into English

The Inspiration of Scripture

- 2 Corinthians 2:⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸ which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

The Inspiration of Scripture

- 2 Corinthians 2:¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. ¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. ¹⁶ For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- Inspiration refers to the process by which God has revealed Himself.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- 2 Peter 1: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- Zechariah 7:12 Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- Inspiration refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit extending to all the parts and the whole of the original writings of the Scriptures.
- Letters/Words/Books – Matthew 5:18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
- Revelation and Inspiration – God is infinite, man is finite. God has perfect knowledge, man has imperfect knowledge and biases. Mankind cannot even know what nature truly reveals without the Scripture.
- 2 LBCF - The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself...

The Inspiration of Scripture

- General Revelation – God’s witness of Himself through Creation
- Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- Special Revelation – God’s revelation of Himself directly and in detail.
- Psalm 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes 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 and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward. 12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- Special Revelation
- Direct Acts
- Dreams and Visions
- Christ's Incarnation
- Scripture – composed over a period of 1500 years by forty different human authors.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Agents of General Revelation in nature will one day perish.
- The Word of God, as Special Revelation, will not pass away.
- Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.”
- Matt. 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.
- Psalm 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The means of General Revelation in nature was cursed and is in bondage to corruption and decay. Special
- Special Revelation is inspired by God and is always and will remain perfect.
- Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.
- Psalm 119:140 Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it.
- Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Main Views of Inspiration:
- Dictation Theory – God gave the human authors of Scripture the precise words to write, as if dictating it to them. The authors then were merely tools in God’s hand, like a pen used to write on a page. They penned the words verbatim. This did happen at times, like Moses writing the 10 Commandments as God told Him what to write, and like John on Patmos being told by Jesus what to write to the churches. However, if the Bible was dictated we would expect one style, one vocabulary, and no individuality from the different authors in language and style. Just the opposite is seen in Scripture as every book of the Bible offers clear evidence of the writer’s personality. Each author has his own style, language, and vocabulary.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Main Views of Inspiration:
- Partial or Conceptual Theory – God never gave the authors the exact words to write, but instead gave them general ideas and impressions which they put down in their own words. God set the trend of revelation but left the authors free to write whatever they wanted. Those who hold this view also believe that this is why the Bible (in their opinion) contains so many mistakes and errors. This denies that God inspired the very words of Scripture and teaches that the Bible is not the Word of God, but contains the Word of God.
- The Scriptures contradict this view, telling us that the Word of God is completely truthful, and Jesus affirms that the Scriptures are truth. (Psa. 119:43, 160; John 17:17). God forbids tampering with His Word and tells us that “every Word of God proves true” (Prov. 30:5-6). In the Law, Writings, Prophets, and New Testament, God repeats the injunction against altering the words of Scripture.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Main View of Inspiration:
- Natural Theory – This view holds that the authors of Scripture found inspiring thoughts and ideas for what to write within themselves, as if their writing was a natural talent or gifting.
- This view denies the claim of Divine authorship that runs throughout the Scriptures.
- It is doubtful that very smart, spiritual men would write denunciations of wise, gifted people! If this theory is true, the authors often condemned themselves.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Main Views of Inspiration:
- The Verbal, Plenary View (every word) – This is the Biblical view. God through His Spirit inspired every word penned by the authors as those men original wrote them (the original autographs). Inspiration describes the process of Divine causation behind the authorship of Scripture as it refers to the direct act of God on the human author that resulted in a collection of perfectly written revelation. The Spirit used the personality, vocabulary, knowledge, style, and historical context of each writer to produce divinely authoritative writings. The Scriptures then are the product of both the human author and the Holy Spirit working together.

The Inspiration of Scripture

- The Verbal, Plenary View: “All Scripture is breathed out by God” (2 Tim. 3:16)
- God produced the Scriptures by influencing the human author’s own thoughts.
- The Process of Inspiration: Many and Varied! Some wrote exactly what God told them to write, some included their own thoughts, some researched and recorded what they learned (Luke), while others wrote eye witness accounts (Matthew, Mark). Some Biblical writers had dreams or visions (John in Revelation).
- At times the author dictated to a secretary (Jeremiah, Paul).
- “Holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (1 Peter 1:21)
- “All Scripture is inspired by God (God breathed)” (2 Tim. 3:16)

The Inspiration of Scripture

- Proofs of Inspiration:
- The Scriptures affirm thousands of times that its words are the very words of God.
- The OT records direct speech from God, speech from God through a prophet, and dictated passages.
- The NT confirms that the OT is inspired in its entirety as stated by Jesus and the Apostles.
- The NT also gives clear witness of itself as being the Word of God.
- Jesus used Scripture (OT) in all matters of doctrine and practice and defined it all personally as truth. He also on several occasions validated the historicity of the Scriptures.
- Jesus promised the Spirit, who would lead the Apostles into “all truth.”

The Inspiration of Scripture

- John 16:12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”

The Inspiration of Scripture

- To disbelieve or disobey the Word of God is to disbelieve and disobey God Himself. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- Written Scripture is our Final Authority.