

## II.II THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES: 1 Thessalonians 2:13 - Shepherd School

### I. OPENING RAYER: All.

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### III. SERMON:

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES: 1 Thessalonians 2:13

#### INTRODUCTION.

- (i) God revealed Himself and His will through dreams and visions (**Hebrews 1:1**).
- (ii) God revealed Himself and His will through the Spoken Word—the words of the Prophets and Apostles.
- (iii) God revealed Himself and His will through the Incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 1:2**).
- (iv) God reveals Himself and His will through nature (**Romans 1**).
- (v) God also reveals Himself through the written Word—the 66 books from Genesis to Revelation (**2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13**).

**CON(TEXT).** **1 Thessalonians 2:13** "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers."

**DOCTRINE.** The Scriptures come *through* men, *from* God, and they work *in* believers.

**OUTLINE.** Three main truths to make note of in this verse, then I will give you practical helps to both best read and hear the Word.

### I. THE SCRIPTURES COME *THROUGH* MEN (1 Thessalonians 2:13a).

**1 Thessalonians 2:13a** "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, *which you heard from us*,"

- **Jeremiah 1:9** "Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth.

And the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.'

– **2 Corinthians 4:7** "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

– c.f. Acts 17:1-9

**Q.** Do you know and affirm this? Does your wife know and affirm this? Do your children know and affirm this? Does your small group know and affirm this? Does your church know and affirm this?

## II. THE SCRIPTURES COME *FROM* GOD (1 Thessalonians 2:13b).

**1 Thessalonians 2:13b** "you accepted it not as the word of men but as *what it really is, the word of God,*"

– **2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is breathed out by God..."

– **2 Peter 1:20-21** "[know] this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

**Q.** Do you know and affirm this? Does your wife know and affirm this? Do your children know and affirm this? Does your small group know and affirm this? Does your church know and affirm this? **Do you and they labor to live like it?**

## III. THE SCRIPTURES WORK *IN* BELIEVERS (1 Thessalonians 2:13c).

**1 Thessalonians 2:13c** "which is at work in you believers."

**Q.** Do you know and affirm this? Does your wife know and affirm this? Do your children know and affirm this? Does your small group know and affirm this? Does your church know and affirm this? **Do you and they labor to live like it?**

## IV. HOW TO READ THE WORD OF GOD WITH MOST PROFIT (Selected Scriptures).

**I) Respect and admire all of Scripture (Psalm 19:10).**

– **Psalm 19:10**

"More to be desired are [the Scriptures] than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb."

- *LIKE EVERY CROSSING OF A T AND DOTTING OF AN I WAS PENNED FROM CHRIST'S HAND AND THE INK WERE HIS BLOOD.*

**II) Search the Scriptures with intensesness of mind** (John 5:39; Acts 17:11).

- **John 5:39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. . ."
- **Acts 17:11** "Now [the Berean] Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."
- *LIKE DIGGING FOR GOLD.*

**III) Believe the Scriptures to be the Word of the Eternal God** (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:18-19).

- **2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is breathed out by God."
- **2 Peter 1:18-19** "18 We ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place. . ."

**IV) Delight in the Scriptures as your Spiritual Medicine** (Jeremiah 15:16).

- **Jeremiah 15:16**  
"Your words were found, and I ate them,  
and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart,  
for I am called by your name,  
O Lord, God of hosts."

**V) Memorize the Scriptures** (Psalm 119:11).

- **Psalm 119:11**  
"I have stored up your word in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you."

**VI) Seek transformation, not only information** (1 Thessalonians 2:13c; Psalm 37:31).

- **1 Thessalonians 2:13c** "which is at work in you believers."
- **Psalm 37:31**  
"The law of his God is in his heart;  
his steps do not slip."

**VII) Expect a blessing from God during and after reading** (Ephesians 1:17; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

- **Ephesians 1:17** "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. . ."
- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10** "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."

**VIII) Resolve to believe every promise** (Joshua 21:45; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Peter 3:9).

- **Joshua 21:45** "Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."
- **2 Corinthians 1:20** "All the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."
- **2 Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

**IX) Resolve to obey every command** (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; Psalm 112:1).

- **John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
- **1 John 5:3** "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."
- **Psalm 112:1** "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments!"

**X) Resolve to avoid every bad example** (1 Corinthians 10:6-13).

- **1 Corinthians 10:6-13** "6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.' 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, 10 nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages

has come. 12 Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

**XI) Resolve to run from whatever is warned against** (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 10:14).

- **1 Corinthians 6:18** "Flee from sexual immorality."
- **1 Corinthians 10:14** "Flee from idolatry."

**XII) Resolve to imitate every good example** (Hebrews 12:1).

- **Hebrews 12:1** (*right after the Hall of Faith*)  
"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. . ."

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### III. SONG:

*B r e a k* (start back at 7:10pm)

**IV. 1689 Confession:** Ch 17. Par 1-3 (finish by 7:35pm)

**V. DISCUSSION** (finish by 8pm)

*Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1) discussion*

**The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity**  
by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)

*Questions for Meditation and Discussion*

- \*1. What do we mean by the "authority" of the Bible?
2. What is the basis of the Bible's authority?
- \*3. Explain and critique the Roman Catholic Church's claim regarding the authority of the pope.

- \*4. How does God convince us that the Bible is the authentic Word of God? What role does the church play in this process?
- 5. Why is it not "unscientific" to rely on the testimony of written documents?
- \*6. What response does the authority of God's Word call for in us?
- \*7. How does the Bible show us that it was intended to be read not just by scholars but by ordinary people with their children?
- \*8. What is the "perspicuity" of Scripture? How is it taught in the Bible?
- \*9. How should the doctrine of perspicuity produce anticipation in those who read the Bible? How might it help you to approach your own reading of the Bible with greater anticipation?
- 10. What implications does scriptural perspicuity have for the translation of the Bible?
- \*11. How can scriptural perspicuity guide us in the interpretation of the Bible?

*Questions for Deeper Reflection*

- 12. Augustine said, "I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church." What truth does this statement contain? How must we balance that truth with other truths, also affirmed by Augustine?
- 13. Someone says to you, "Your religion is so authoritarian. Preachers just quote the Bible and demand that everyone agree with them. That's oppressive. I believe that everyone has the freedom to make his own choices." How do you respond?
- 14. How might the doctrine of perspicuity be abused to justify neglecting the preaching and teaching ministry of the church? What is a balanced approach?

## *The Ten Commandments* **discussion**

### *OBEDIENCE*

#### **Study Questions**

1. According to Watson, what is the primary duty God requires of man, and why is obedience described as the "life-blood of religion"? Support your answer with references from the book and Scripture.
2. Watson contrasts obedience with sacrifice using 1 Samuel 15:22. Explain

why he says "to obey is better than sacrifice," and discuss how this applies to modern religious practices that prioritize rituals over heartfelt obedience.

3. What is the rule of obedience according to Watson? Why does he warn against "will-worship" or traditions not grounded in Scripture, and what examples does he provide?

### **Discussion Questions on the Ingredients of Acceptable Obedience**

4. Watson lists six ingredients that make obedience acceptable to God: free and cheerful, devout and fervent, extensive, sincere, in and through Christ, and constant. Choose one and explain its importance, using Watson's analogies or biblical examples.
5. Why does Watson emphasize that obedience must be "free and cheerful" rather than grudging? How does cheerfulness reflect love in our service to God, and what might grudging obedience look like in everyday life?
6. Discuss the idea that obedience must be "extensive," reaching all of God's commands. Watson mentions hypocrites who obey some commands but neglect others. Can you identify examples from the Bible (e.g., Herod or the Pharisees) or contemporary life where this partial obedience occurs?
7. What does Watson mean by obedience being "sincere" and aimed at God's glory? How can wrong motives (like gaining applause) spoil our actions, and what role does the heart play in true obedience?
8. Explain why obedience must be "in and through Christ." How does this relate to Watson's reference to King Uzziah's story, and what does it teach about relying on our own merits versus Christ's?
9. Watson describes true obedience as "constant," like the fire on the altar. What challenges might cause obedience to falter, and how can believers maintain constancy amid afflictions?

### **Discussion Questions on Disobedience and Incentives to Obey**

10. Watson identifies two main reasons for disobedience: lack of faith and lack of self-denial. How does unbelief act as Satan's "dragnet," and what practical steps can someone take to combat these barriers?
11. In what ways does obedience make us "precious to God" as his favorites? Discuss the blessings Watson promises in estates and souls, and how this counters the idea that obedience leads to loss.
12. Why does Watson call disobedience an "irrational" and "destructive" sin? Use his arguments about God's power and the consequences in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 to explore the equity and justice in obeying the one who sustains us.

## **Application and Means to Obey Questions**

13. Watson suggests two means to foster obedience: serious consideration and earnest supplication. How does considering God's commands as "not grievous" but beneficial change our perspective, and what promises (like Ezekiel 36:27) can we turn into prayers?
14. Reflect on a personal area where obedience to God feels challenging. Based on Watson's teaching, how might applying one of the ingredients (e.g., fervency or constancy) or means (e.g., supplication for the Spirit's help) make a difference?
15. As a group, discuss how this chapter challenges cultural views of religion that emphasize personal fulfillment over submission. What one takeaway from Watson's treatise could transform your approach to daily obedience?

## *LOVE*

### **Study Questions (Comprehension and Key Concepts)**

1. Watson states that the summary of the Ten Commandments is love, specifically "with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). Explain how this summarizes both tables of the law (duties to God and to man). Why does Watson say God "will lose none of our love"?
2. Define love to God according to Watson. What is its "formal nature," and how does he illustrate it with the idea of "delighting" in God (e.g., Psalm 37:4 and the bride with her jewels)?
3. What is the antecedent (prerequisite) of love to God? How does Watson describe the role of knowledge and the Holy Spirit in kindling this love? Why does he say that without knowledge of God, there can be no love?
4. List and briefly explain the six qualifications Watson gives for how our love to God must be (sincere, for himself, with all our might, active, superlative, constant). Choose one qualification and provide the biblical support or illustration Watson uses.

### **Discussion Questions on the Qualifications of Love**

5. Watson warns against divided love ("God will have the whole heart") and compares it to not dividing a child. How might a divided heart show up in modern Christian life (e.g., loving God alongside sin, worldly pursuits, or self)? What does it mean practically to love God "with all our heart"?
6. Discuss the difference between loving God "for himself" (his intrinsic excellencies) versus loving him for his benefits (e.g., corn and wine). Watson calls the latter "a harlot's love." How can believers examine their

motives to ensure their love is sincere and not mercenary?

7. Watson says love to God must be "superlative," above all other loves (e.g., estate, relations, even father and mother—Matt. 10:37). He uses the analogy of oil swimming above water and the story of the daughter giving suck to her father. How does this challenge cultural or familial priorities today?
8. Why must love to God be "active" and "industrious"? What examples does Watson give (e.g., Mary Magdalene, the labor of love in 1 Thess. 1:3)? How does this connect to the idea that true love sets the head studying, hands working, and feet running in God's ways?
9. Watson compares constant love to the perpetual fire of the Vestal virgins or the pulse that beats as long as there is life (Cant. 8:7; Eph. 3:17). What "waters" (e.g., persecution, neglect, worldly love) might quench love today, and how can believers keep it rooted and burning?

### **Discussion Questions on the Visible Signs of True Love to God**

10. Watson lists seven visible signs of love to God: desire after him, discontent without him, hatred of sin, sympathy/grief over what grieves God, laboring to make him lovely to others, weeping for his absence, and willingness to do/suffer for him. Pick two or three signs and discuss how they evidence genuine love. Are any particularly convicting or encouraging?
11. One sign is that love to God leads to hating sin because it separates us from him (Psalm 119:128). Watson says we cannot love health without hating poison. How does this hatred of sin manifest in daily life, and why is laughing at sin incompatible with love for God?
12. Discuss the sign of laboring to render God lovely to others (e.g., the spouse in Song of Songs 5:10-16 praising Christ). Watson says true love cannot be silent but will be eloquent in praise. How can believers today "commend" God to draw others to love him?
13. Watson describes the grief of a loving soul when God withdraws his presence (e.g., Mary weeping in John 20:13, or crying "My God is gone!"). Contrast this with those content without God's presence. What does this teach about spiritual vitality versus spiritual deadness?

### **Application and Exhortation Questions**

14. In the "Use" sections, Watson addresses those with "not a grain of love" to God and exhorts believers to love him fully. Why does he call lack of love spiritual death? How does he argue that God desires our love not because he needs it, but to make our hearts better (Prov. 23:26)?
15. Watson promises great advantages to those who love God (e.g., 1 Cor.

- 2:9; betrothal in Hos. 2:19; joy over us in Zeph. 3:17; a crown in James 1:12). Love is the only grace that abides in heaven (1 Cor. 13:8). How do these incentives motivate obedience and combat worldly distractions?
16. What practical means does Watson suggest to cultivate and maintain love to God (e.g., waiting on preaching, begging for a loving heart, using ordinances as fuel)? Pick one and discuss how to apply it personally or in community.
  17. Reflect personally: In what area of your life is your love for God most challenged (e.g., divided affections, lack of fervency, contentment without his presence)? Based on Watson's teaching, what one step could you take to kindle or preserve this love?
  18. As a group discussion closer: Watson says love is "the soul of religion" and "the queen of graces." How does this chapter reshape our understanding of the Ten Commandments—not as mere rules, but as flowing from and sustained by love for God? What one takeaway could transform your daily walk?

## Closing Prayer

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## SYLLABUS

📖 SHEPHERD SCHOOL - SEASON TWO (2026) - THE WORD, THE GOSPEL, & THE LAW 📖

WEEK	Scripture	Book I <i>(read before)</i>	Book II <i>(read before)</i>	1689 Confession	Certificate Essays	Certificate Exposition
1. 2/12	2 Timothy 2:1-7	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO
2. 2/19	1 Thessalonians 2:13	<b>The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity</b> <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>Obedience &amp; Love</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 1 Par. 1-3		
3. 2/26	Isaiah 8:19-20	<b>The Properties of the Written Word, Part 2: Necessity, Unity, Efficacy</b> <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 352-370)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 12-29)</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 1 Par. 4-5		
4. 3/5	Psalms 19:7-11	<b>The Properties of the Written Word, Part 3: Inerrant Veracity</b> <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 371-382)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 29-43)</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 1 Par. 6-8		First Draft Exposition Due *Certificate path will meet an extra night this week
5. 3/12	2 Timothy 3:15-17	<b>The Properties of the Written Word, Part 5: Sufficiency</b> <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 395-408)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>The Right Understanding of the Law</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 1 Par. 9-10		
6. 3/19	Matthew 19:17 + Romans 2:14-15	<b>Introduction + The Essence of God's Law</b> <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 1-24)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>The First Commandment</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 19 Par. 1-2		
7. 3/26	Matthew 5:17-20	<b>Christ and God's Law + The New Testament and God's Law</b> <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 25-46)	<b>The Ten Commandments</b> <i>The Second Commandment</i> by Thomas Watson	<b>1689 Confession</b> Ch. 19 Par. 3-5	Short Essay on the Sufficiency of the Scriptures *1,000-1,200 words	

