Systematic Theology I — Student Handout

Chapter 4: The Four Characteristics of Scripture — (1) Authority

What You Should Learn From Today's Lecture:
• Define the authority of Scripture in biblical terms.
• Understand how the Bible claims that its words are God's words.
• Recognize that to disbelieve or disobey Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.
• Explain how believers become persuaded of Scripture's authority through the Holy Spirit.
• Understand why other evidences can help but are not finally convincing.

1. Explanation and Scriptural Basis

Definition of the authority of Scripture:

Key Bible claim: Scripture's words are God's words:

2. The Bible Claims That All Its Words Are God's Words

Old Testament pattern ("Thus saith the LORD" / prophetic speech):

New Testament teaching about Scripture being God-breathed:

3. To Disbelieve or Disobey Any Word of Scripture Is to Disbelieve or Disobey God

What this means for belief and obedience:

Why faithful preaching must center on Scripture:

4. How We Become Convinced Scripture Is God's Word

The Holy Spirit's inward witness as we read Scripture:

Why this does not come apart from the text of Scripture:

5. Other Evidence Is Helpful but Not Finally Convincing

Examples of helpful evidences (list from lecture):

6. Scripture Is Self-Attesting and the Highest Authority

What "self-attesting" means:

Why appeals to a "higher authority" undermine Scripture's authority:

Things to Know (Exam Review Section)

1. The authority of Scripture means that to disbelieve or disobey Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.
2. The Bible repeatedly claims that its words are God's words.
3. The prophets spoke with God's authority when they spoke in God's name.
4. All Scripture is God-breathed and therefore authoritative.
5. Jesus and the apostles attribute Old Testament Scripture directly to God.
6. New Testament writings were recognized as Scripture (God-breathed) alongside the Old Testament.
7. Final conviction of Scripture's authority comes by the Holy Spirit as we read Scripture.
8. External evidences may help remove obstacles, but they cannot finally persuade apart from the Spirit.
9. Scripture is self-attesting and stands as the highest authority for truth.
10. Divine authorship does not require dictation as the only method God used.
11. A question on the exam will ask if you did the assigned reading.

Closing Summary

Chapter 4 teaches that Scripture is God's Word in such a way that its authority is God's authority. The Bible's claims about itself, the witness of Christ and the apostles, and the Spirit's inward persuasion give believers confidence to trust and obey every word God has spoken in Scripture.

ASSIGNMENT
Read Chapter 4 — THE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF SCRIPTURE: (1) AUTHORITY