

## The Doctrine of the Word (Part 3) The Authority and Necessity of the Bible

### Definitions of the Authority of the Bible

“The phrase ‘the authority of Scripture’ must be understood to be shorthand for ‘the authority of God as he speaks through Scripture.’ . . . The authority of Scripture is a statement about what God did in authoring Scripture, and about how he continues to act in relation to Scripture.” - Timothy Ward

“The idea 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.” - Grudem

### Biblical Basis for the Authority of the Bible

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, - 2 Tim. 3:16

21 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. - 2 Pet. 1:21

### *Sola Scriptura* and the Reformation

- “At the time of the Reformation, ‘the Bible alone’ excluded the Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, or the Pope, as equal or superior in authority and effectiveness to the Bible.”

### Implications of this Doctrine

- All of the words in Scripture are completely true and without error. This is known as the inerrancy of Scripture.
  - “When all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences.” - Paul Feinberg
- God’s Word is the ultimate standard of truth and is our final authority.
  - This doesn’t mean that Scripture is our only authority. The Church (creeds, confessions, teachers, etc.) and truths from other fields are helpful and should be able to speak into our lives.
  - This does mean that every other authority is fallible and must submit to Scripture.

## **Definitions of the Necessity of the Bible**

“The idea that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God’s will, but is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about his character and moral laws.” - Grudem

“When it comes to the necessity of Scripture, the necessity is due more to mankind’s condition than to some form of constraint on God. The Creator willingly chose to address human beings, who possessed no power to compel Him to communicate with them.” - William Barrick

“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 unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which makes the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.” - WCF 1.1

## **Biblical Basis for the Necessity of the Bible**

29 The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. - Deut. 29:29

4 But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” - Matt. 4:4

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. - Rom. 10:17

## **Implications of this Doctrine**

- The necessity of the Bible does not diminish the reality or power of general revelation. All people have some understanding of God’s existence and character through creation and their consciences. However, Scripture nowhere indicates that people can know the way of salvation through such general revelation.
- “The Bible is necessary for salvation, then, in this sense: one must either read the gospel message in the Bible for oneself, or hear it from another person. Even those believers who came to salvation in the old covenant did so by trusting in the words of God that promised a savior to come.”