

The Authority of Scripture

The Westminster Confession of Faith begins with the following statements:

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 they are 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 maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth Himself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

Definition: The authority of Scripture means _____ the words in Scripture are God's words and to disbelieve or disobey _____ word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

Why do we teach the authority of the Scriptures?

- The Bible _____ to be the Word of God.

Additional Considerations

1. The Bible is _____ accurate.
2. The Bible is _____ consistent.
3. The Bible contains fulfilled _____.
4. The Bible has had profound influence in human _____.
5. The Bible is responsible for changing the _____ of a multitude of individuals.
6. The Bible is of _____ depth.

Objections

1. The words of Scripture are _____ - _____, meaning no one can prove the Bible to be the Word of God because the claim cannot be independently verified.

Answer: the Bible cannot be proved to be God's Word by some appeal to higher authority. For an appeal to _____ authority would make the Bible subject to that authority.

2. Self-attesting is _____ reasoning.

Answer: Any _____ authority is subject to circular reasoning. The burden of proof for rejection of an absolute authority should be on the prosecution, not the defense.

3. The Bible is full of _____ and _____.

In dealing with alleged errors and contradictions, we need to apply good _____ and _____ thinking through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

God is our principle _____ as our Creator. The Bible is the Word of God. Therefore, to disbelieve or disobey any Word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

Discussion Questions

1. What can we know about God without the Bible?
2. What can we know about because we have the Bible?
3. 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?
4. Where did Cain get his wife?
5. Did Judas hang himself or did he jump off a cliff?
6. What other alleged contradicts or errors have you been confronted with?
7. What are some implications of the Bible being authoritative?