

Theology 1 Study Guide

WCF Chapter 1, Section 1.b-6, The Nature and Sufficiency of Scripture

2Tim. 3:16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. (c.f. Ps. 33:6, Gen. 2:7)

2Pet. 1:19 So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, **21** because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Heb. 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- I. **The Question of Inspiration:** ...to commit the wholly into writing... (1.1b) ...being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic... (1.8)
 - The work/gift of Holy Spirit
 - Verbal Inspiration: God created/breathed out of people (distinguished from “author inspiration” or “reader response inspiration”—liberal and neo-orthodox respectively)
 - Plenary and Progressive: “the whole” from beginning to end, a work in progress—implication in Bible interpretation
 - Confluent: divine-human interaction notwithstanding—e.g. the miracle of incarnation in inspiration. *Work in which God by his spirit through human writers gave us His Word... utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers (CS Art. 7,8)*
- II. **The Question of Infallibility/Inerrancy:** ... it is to be received because it is the Word of God (1.4), ... high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture... (1.5)
 - What this means, and doesn't mean: *It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses* (Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy, Article 9)
- III. **The Question of Cessation:** ... those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased... (1.1b), ... unto which nothing at any times is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men... (1.6)
 - *Heb. 1:1-3—God “spoke”... not “speaks”*
 - *Eph. 2: 20—built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.*
 - *Rev.22:18—if anyone adds to them...*
 - The Word-Deed-Word Principle of Inscripturation.. where “Redemption and revelation coincide....(Geerhardus Vos)
- IV. **The Question of Canon:** ...are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament (1.2) c.f. 1:5.
 - Canon from “reed” as a tool for measurement... that which is the “rule” or “ideal standard” against which all things can be measured — “rule of faith and practice”
 - *Lost Scriptures?? Excerpts from Dan Brown's DaVinci Code, chapter 55:*
 - *“A product of man, not God”*
 - *False testimony*
 - *By men who possessed a political agenda to solidify their power base*
 - *Commissioned and financed by Constantine*
 - *“the gospels they attempted to destroy have been discovered as a part of an ancient library of Coptic Scrolls and highlight the glaring discrepancies and fabrications of the modern Bible”*
 - *Based on Scholarly works such as Elaine Pagels:*

Now that scholars have begun to place the sources discovered at Nag Hammadi, like newly discovered pieces of a complex puzzle, next to what we have long known from tradition, we

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find that these remarkable texts, only now becoming widely available, are transforming what we know as Christianity.¹

- Orthodox Response (c.f. Canon Revisited... CPC Study Center/Resources)
 - 1. Recognized vs. Conferred by Church
 - 2. Test of OT Witness: “the prior rule of faith” already in tact by 1st century (Marcion Controversy settled in mid-second century! cf. Thus the importance of the OT Interpretation of Christ ministry and message! (cf. OT of OT: Ex.20:1, NT of OT: Mt.4:1-11,))
 - 3. Test of Apostolicity: (cf. 2 Peter, Eph. 2)
John 15:26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, 27 and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”
 - 4. Bottom up vs. Top Down — “the battle was waged not in the fourth century but in the middle of the second century, wherein the “winners” were not the politically advantage, e.g. AD 140
 - 5. Canon mostly “settled” by 200 AD and formally ratified ecumenically in 350 AD at the synod of Laodicea.

V. **The Question of Authority:** *...all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life... (1.6) cf. 1.10*

- Reformational “regulative principle”
 - 1. Ecclesial application: by positive institution
 - 2. Individual application: by negative institution
- Ultimate authority vs. Interpretative authority

VI. **The Question of Believing in Scripture:** *... whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding... is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. (1.5)*

- Scriptural Testimony
- Ecclesial Testimony
- “Spiritually appraised” or “internal” testimony– thus “faith seeking understanding” vs. “understanding seeking faith”
1Cor. 2:14 *Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are **spiritually** discerned.*

Q and A:

¹ Elaine Pagels. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*