

Steve Whitacre

SESSION 1 | The Sufficiency of Scripture

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE: ONE PART OF THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

- Because God's Word is inspired, it is inerrant and infallible.
 - It is **inerrant**:
 - It is **infallible**:
 - "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11).
- Four main characteristics of Scripture:
 - **Clarity**: "The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it." Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 108.
 - **Authority**: "The authority of Scripture means 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." Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 73.

- **Necessity:** “The necessity of Scripture means 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 God’s character and moral laws.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 116.
 - **Sufficiency:** “The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly.” Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127.
- “Of the four attributes of Scripture, this may be the one that evangelicals forget first. If authority is the liberal problem, clarity the postmodern problem, and necessity the problem for atheists and agnostics, then sufficiency is the attribute most quickly doubted by rank-and-file churchgoing Christians. We can say all the right things about the Bible, and even read it regularly, but when life gets difficult, or just a bit boring, we look for new words, new revelation, and new experiences to bring us closer to God... If we could only have something more than the Scriptures, then we would be really close to Jesus and know his love for us.” Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, 45–46.
 - “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 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, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing 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.” (2 Peter 1:16–21)
 - “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,” (2 Peter 1:3)

III. DEFINING THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

- “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:14–17).

- “Scripture makes us complete and ‘equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim. 3:16–17). We do not need to add to it to meet today’s challenges or subtract from it to mesh with today’s ideals. The word of God is perfect and complete, giving us all we need to know about Christ, salvation, and godliness.” Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, 45.
 - “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” (Psalm 19:1–2).
 - “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:13–17).”
- “*Scripture is always clear enough for us to carry out our present responsibilities before God.* Like clarity, sufficiency is an ethical doctrine. It takes away excuses for disobedience. When we violate God’s commandments, we cannot claim that they were unclear, or that they were insufficient.” John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 623 (author’s emphasis).
- “To affirm the sufficiency of Scripture is not to suggest that the Bible tells us everything we want to know about everything, but it does tell us everything we need to know about what matters most. Scripture does not give exhaustive information on every subject, but in every subject on which it speaks, it says only what is true. And in its truth we have enough knowledge to turn from sin, find a Savior, make good decisions, please God, and get to the root of our deepest problems.” Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, 54–55.

IV. THE EFFECTS OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

- **Confidence**
- **Joy**
- **The gospel for all of life**

- **Eagerness** (to read and know your Bible)

V. CONCLUSION