

# The Authority and Clarity of Scripture

Indelible Grace Church Sunday School, May 16, 2021

## **The Authority of Scripture**

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 itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God. (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.4)

### The Scriptures are the actual words of God

*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 3:16–17)*

*And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. (1 Thessalonians 2:13 )*

*If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. (1 John 5:9 )*

*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 1:21)*

### Scripture reflects the character of God

*God, who never lies... (Titus 1:2)*

*It is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:18)*

### Every word in Scripture is true.

*Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5)*

*Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. (Psalm 119:89)*

## The Clarity of Scripture

The doctrine of the clarity (perspicuity) of Scripture affirms that in his Word God has spoken so as to be understood; Scripture is understandable... God has spoken in his Word with sufficient clarity so as to be understood, believed, and obeyed. (Mark Thompson)

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them. (Westminster Confession of Faith 1.7)

### Basis: Scripture testifies of the infinite God

<sup>8</sup> *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*  
<sup>9</sup> *For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*  
<sup>10</sup> *“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
<sup>11</sup> 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 55:8–11)*

<sup>19</sup> *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, <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> 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 1:19–21)*

### Scripture can be understood by all

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:6–7)*

*The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. (Psalm 119:130)*

## The Illumination of the Spirit

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." (1 Corinthians 1:18–19)*

*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)*

## Our Responsibility

*If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. (John 7:17)*

*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25–26)*

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5–6)*

## Reading and interpreting scripture needs to be done well

*And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. (2 Peter 3:15–16)*

<sup>11</sup> *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:11–14)*

## The Study of Scripture

Hermeneutics - the study of correct methods of interpretation (How will I correctly interpret scripture?)

Exegesis - the process of interpreting a text of scripture (What did God mean to communicate through the text? What was the author's original intent?)

### How to read the Word

1. Read the Word reverently
2. Read the Word prayerfully
3. Read the Word collectively
4. Read the Word humbly
5. Read the Word carefully
6. Read the Word Christologically
7. Read the Word obediently