

Colleyville Presbyterian Church

Westminster Confession of Faith: Week 2 - Of Scripture (chap 1-5)

December 4, 2022

**I.** 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 *inexcusable*;(a) yet are they not *sufficient* to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is *necessary* unto salvation;(b) therefore it *pleased* the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to *reveal himself*, and to declare that his will *unto his Church*;(c) 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;(d) which maketh the holy Scripture to be *most necessary*;(e) those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being *now ceased*.(f)

a. Psa 19:1-3; Rom 1:19-20; 1:32 with Rom. 2:1; 2:14-15. • b. 1 Cor 1:21; 2:13-14. • c. Heb 1:1. • d. Prov 22:19-21; Isa 8:19-20; Mat 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 1:3-4; Rom 15:4. • e. 2 Tim 3:15; 2 Pet 1:19. • f. Heb 1:1-2.

—Our God is a God who reveals himself

—What is “general revelation”?

—What can “general revelation” teach us? What does it fail to teach us? cf. WLC #2.

—The foolishness of “atheism.” Van Dixhoorn: “We should always remember that Christians should never be trying to prove the existence of God to unbelievers. We are reminding unbelievers of what they already know. Every person has been stung with a knowledge of God.”

—What is “special revelation”?

—Why is “special revelation” recorded in writing? What are the Scriptures about?

—Why is Scripture “most necessary”?

—What does it mean that “those former ways of God's revealing his will” have now ceased?

—Where are we to look to learn of God's revelation of himself? What should be at the heart of our worship of God? “

**II.** Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these: [All the books of the Bible]. All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life. (a)

a. Luke 16:29, 31; Eph 2:20; 2 Tim 3:16; Rev 22:18-19.

**III.** The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings. (a)

a. Luke 24:27, 44; Rom 3:2; 2 Pet 1:21.

*Michael Kruger on the Apocrypha:* “The Apocrypha are made up of two groups of writings, the OT apocryphal books, which are more well-known due to their inclusion in the Roman Catholic canon, and the NT apocryphal books. The OT apocryphal books were written in between the end of the OT and the beginning of the NT and were not considered canonical by the Jews of Jesus’s own time, nor by most of the early church fathers...It was not until the Council of Trent that the Roman Church officially declared the OT Apocrypha to be fully canonical. The NT apocryphal books, with one exception, were never contenders for inclusion in the Christian canon. This is because they were all written in the second or even third century. Many of them also include systems of doctrine that are antithetical to the doctrine included in canonical Scripture.”

**IV.** 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. (a)

a. 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19, 21; 1 John 5:9.

—Why should we believe what Scripture teaches and obey what it commands?

Letham: “Here the origin of Scripture, its being inspired by God, is the basis of the authority it exists over the church. In this, it does not depend on human testimony, including that of the church... Scripture’s authority depends whole on God, its author... It carries the authority of God himself, who gave it in order to commit to writing his revelation of himself and his will for the church, thus preserving it and propagating it.”

**V.** We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; (a) and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth *abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God*; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the *inward work of the Holy Spirit*, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. (b)

a. 1 Tim 3:15. • b. Isa 59:21; John 16:13-14; 1 Cor 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27.

—What does it mean that scripture is “self-authenticating”?

—Why do we need the Spirit ultimately to persuade and assure us of the truth and authority of Scripture? Why is this the most fitting source for our persuasion and assurance to come from?

Letham: “The Holy Spirit is the primary author of Scripture. The Bible is ‘immediately inspired by God [WCF 1.8],’ and it is the Spirit who carried its human authors along as they spoke from God (2 Pet. 1:20-21). It follows that the Spirit is best able to convince us of the truth of what he has originated. This is exactly what Jesus said would be one of the principal features of the Spirit’s ministry (John 16:12-15).”

Van Dixhoorn: “We were created to recognize truth, a gift that was misused, and then left tattered after the fall of humanity. However, God in his mercy has given us his Spirit who testifies to us as we read his Word that this is his revelation, his gift to us. The same Spirit who helps us to see Jesus as our Savior and Lord is the one who helps us to grasp the Word of life, recognizing its authority and trusting its promises.”