

DISCERNING WITH CONFIDENCE WHAT IS FROM GOD

"GOD'S WORD"

CANONICITY, CALLING, AND DIRECTION

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”IS GOD SPEAKING TO ME?”

”HOW DO I KNOW THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE?”

”DO I NEED MORE THAN SCRIPTURE?”

”HOW SHOULD I MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THINGS NOT MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?”

GENERAL REVELATION

General Revelation (Natural) occurs in creation and the human moral conscience (Romans 1-3)

- Nature (Romans 1:19-23, Psalm 19:1-6, Is. 40:26, Job 12:7-9)
- Humanity (Genesis 1:26-27, Ps. 8:2-6, Romans 2:14-15)
- God's providence (Acts 14:16-17, Acts 17:28, Matt. 6:26-30, Col 1:17)
- God's plan worked out (Ps. 75:6-7, Acts 17:26-27, Rom. 13:1, Heb. 1:1, Dan. 4:34)

SPECIAL REVELATION

Special Revelation (Supernatural) involves the miraculous work of God (Scripture and Jesus Christ)

- Direct Communication in the form of speech (Acts 9:4, 1 Sam. 3, Num. 12:6-8, Matt. 3:16-17, Acts 10, Acts 8:29) dreams (Matt. 2:12-13, Gen. 28:11-15, Dan 2:1, Job 33) visions (Ez. 8, 37, Dan 9:20-27, Zech 1-6, 2 Cor 12, Rev 1), angels (Dan 9:20-22, Zech 1, Matt 1:20-21, Luke 1:26-38, Acts 7, Gal 3:19) theophanies (Judges 6, Genesis 16:7-13)
- Miracles in the form of God's action in history. (Ex. 4:2-5, 1 Kings 11:20-39, John 5:36-37, Acts 2, 2 Cor 12).
- Jesus Christ, being the Incarnate Word of God is the ultimate revelation (John 1:1,14,18), but Scripture itself is a miraculous revelation (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 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. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Θεόπνευστος



IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE



Paul warns Timothy that false teachers are going to be deceived and be deceivers. Thus, he reminds Timothy to hold fast to Scripture.

DOCTRINE:

VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

The language of Scripture (verbal) throughout the whole Bible (plenary) is the very Word of God (inspiration).

Note: this does not mean that God dictated to the human authors, but rather that He supernaturally superintended the writers of Scripture, using their writing styles while ensuring that every word was exactly the Word of God.

FALSE VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

- Degrees of Inspiration (Theory that certain parts of Scripture are “more inspired.”)
 - The opposite is taught in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- Conceptual (Theory that the ideas are inspired, but not the words)
 - While Scripture includes conceptual revelation, revelation extends to the very words of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13, John 6:63, John 17:8 Ex. 20:1)
- Intuitional (Theory that God is not involved at all, that Scripture is just man achieving higher enlightenment)
 - Not taught in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- Illumination (Theory that God merely elevates natural religious perceptions in the writers of Scripture)
 - Not taught in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- Mechanical/Dictation (Theory that the writers of Scripture were merely passive agents as God dictates every word to them as secretaries).
 - While there are instances of dictation (Ex. 3:4, Dan. 4:31, Acts 9:5, Rev. 19:9), the bulk of Scripture was not written by such means. 1 Cor 2:13 reveals the role of the Holy Spirit, teaching the writer’s what to say, not telling them what to say. This is why we rightly see a variety of writing styles.
- Partial Inspiration (Theory that only parts of Scripture are inspired)
 - Not taught in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

2 PETER 1:19-21

19 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, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 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 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

10 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 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. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

USE OF SCRIPTURE



Since the whole of Scripture is God's Word and thus authoritative, it is useful for....

- TEACHING (DOCTRINE)
- REPROOF (CONFRONTING SIN/ERROR)
- CORRECTION (RESTORING BACK TO RIGHT LIVING AND DOCTRINE)
- TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
(DEVELOPING TO MATURITY IN THE FAITH)

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 **preach the word;** be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For **the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching,** but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a plaid shirt, reading an open Bible. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light source from the right, possibly a lamp, casting a glow on the person's hands and the pages of the Bible. The background is dark and out of focus.

”THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE COMPLETE,
EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”

DOCTRINE:

SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

WARNING:

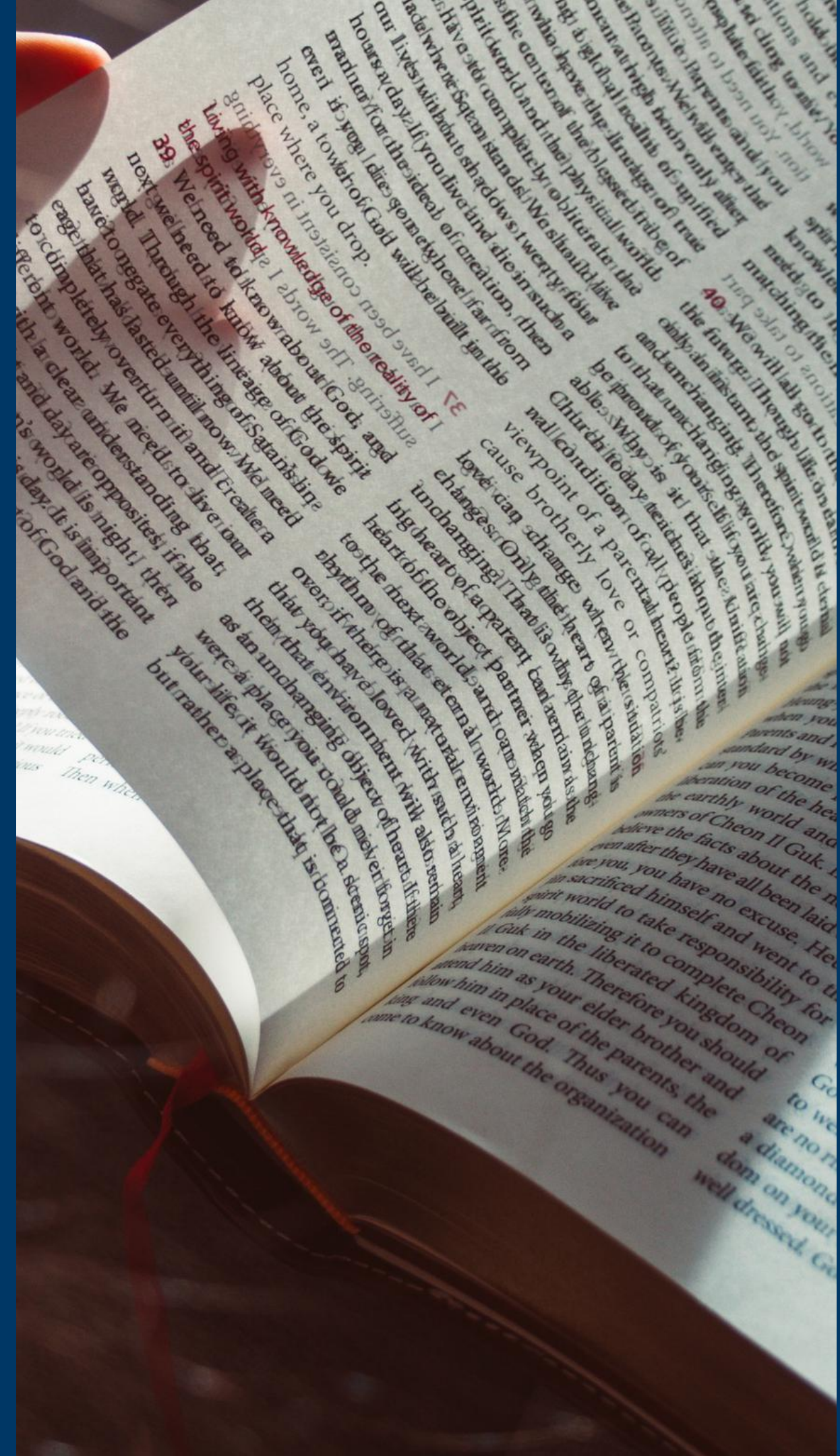
Times are coming (are here) when people will not listen to biblical teaching.

Subsequently, they will have "itching ears" and will accumulate false teachers that affirm their sinful desires, so that they can drift into myths.



CHARACTERISTICS OF SCRIPTURE

- Inerrancy (Psalm 119:142, 151, 160, Prov. 30:5, John 17:17 Matt. 22:29 Matt. 5:17-18, Matthew 24:35, John 10:34-35.)
- Authority (It's God's Word, John 14:15, 1 Peter 1:14)
- Sufficiency (2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- Animation: Brings life (Ephesians 6:17, Romans 10:17, 2 Timothy 3:15, James 1:18,21, 1 Peter 1:2)
- Preservation/Endurance (Ps. 119:89, 152, Matt 24:35, 1 Peter 1:23, Is. 40:8)
- Perspicuity/Clarity (2 Timothy 3:15, 2 Tim 3:16-17, John 17:17, Deut 13:1-5, Acts 17:11, Gal 1:8-9, 1 John 4:1-4)



PROBLEM: OVEREMPHASIZING TRADITION

“Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God . . .” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 97)

- Places Tradition on the same level as Scripture.
- Creates a problem when tradition drifts into error.
- Note 2 Thess. 2:15 and 1 Cor. 11:2 refer to keeping “traditions” but this seem to refer to memorized gospel creeds that were used to teach theology and later inscribed in Scripture. They do not refer to papal authority of extra-biblical practices.
- Jesus rebukes the pharisees for overemphasizing their tradition (Matt 15:1-6)
- Note: This is not limited to Roman Catholics.



PROBLEM: OVEREMPHASIZING "EXPERIENCE"

"None of us has a full grasp of Scripture, but we all have the Holy Spirit. He is our common denominator who will always lead us into truth. But to follow Him, we must be willing to follow off the map—to go beyond what we know. To do so successfully we must recognize His presence above all." -Bill Johnson (When Heaven Invades Earth, p. 76).

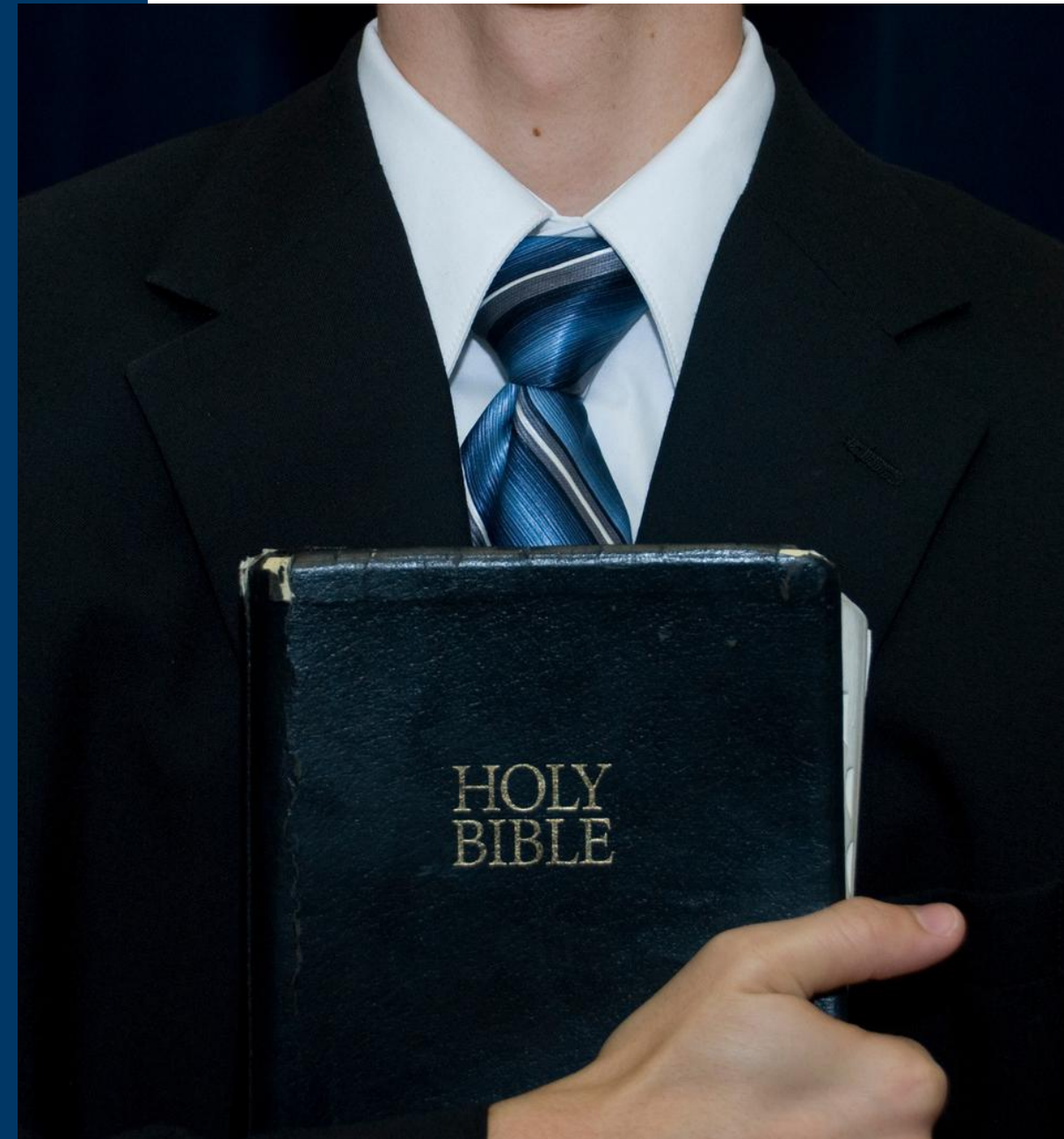
- Emphasizes experience and individual revelation over Scripture.
- Often leads to dangerous and cultish behavior.



PROBLEM: "SOLO SCRIPTURA"

We hold to sola scriptura not "solo scriptura."
We affirm the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and Interpretation which states, "Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches..."

- There is value in biblically sound creeds, confessions, and teaching, though they must be subject to Scripture, not vice versa.
- Scripture does not speak to how to set a bone or engineer a bridge. When image-bearers make contributions to the sciences, we can use them.



CANONICITY OF BIBLICAL BOOKS

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT IS GOD'S WORD?

OT PROPHECY AND NT APOSTOLICITY

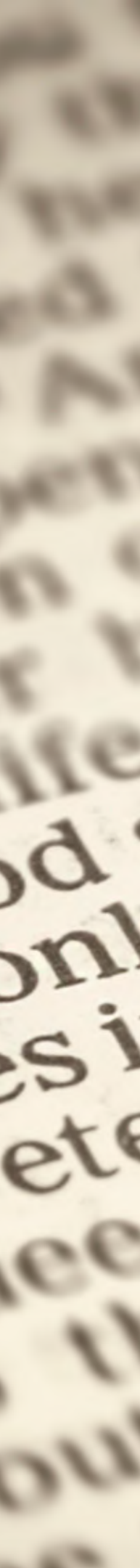
CANONICITY

OLD TESTAMENT CANON:

DETERMINED BY WHETHER OR NOT THE CONTENT WAS FROM A PROPHET FROM GOD.

NEW TESTAMENT CANON:

DETERMINED BY WHETHER OR NOT THE CONTENT WAS FROM AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST.



OT CANONICITY: PROPHECY

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil[a] from your midst. -Deuteronomy 13:1-5

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A PROPHET IS FROM GOD:

- Legitimate Sign/Wonder (Prophecy comes true)
- Faithful Teaching (Doesn't lead you to follow other gods)

PUNISHMENT FOR FALSE PROPHETS: DEATH

OT CANONICITY: PROPHECY

15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ 17 And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ 21 And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. -Deuteronomy 18:15-22

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING IF A PROPHET IS FROM GOD:

- Legitimate Sign/Wonder (Prophecy comes true)
- Faithful Teaching (Doesn't lead you to follow other gods)

PUNISHMENT FOR FALSE PROPHETS: DEATH

OT CANONICITY: PROPHECY

49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. -Luke 11:49-51

CEASATION OF OT CANON:

- God consistently sent prophets up to 420 BC (Malachi).
- Malachi is followed by "400 Years of Silence" in which the Jews did not have a prophet. This was a surprise both to them and to their neighbors.
- Jesus refers to the prophets from Abel (Genesis 4:4–8) to Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20–22). Note that in the Hebrew Bible Genesis was the first book of the Bible and 2 Chronicles was the last book (in their organization of the OT books)
- Note: the Apocrypha (called "Deuterocanon" by Roman Catholics) was written during this time, but is not referred to as Scripture by Jesus nor by the books themselves. The Apocrypha has historically been valued but not considered Scripture until the Roman Catholic Council of Trent tried to make it so in response to the reformation.

NT CANONICITY: APOSTOLICITY

- Jesus appointed apostles to teach His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19–20; John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:13; 17:25–26).
- The apostles understood this role and functioned accordingly. (Acts 15:28; 1 Cor 2:4–5, 12–13; Gal 1:8, 15; Eph 2:20; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Pet 3:16; Rev 22:18–19; etc.).
- This is why Paul defends his apostleship, pointing to the fact that his speech was not by human wisdom but by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:4–5) and pointing out that he was an eyewitness sent by Christ with the Corinthian church as a testament to his apostleship (1 Cor. 9:1-2).
- Apostles affirm one another as writers of Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).
- Ephesians 2:20 refers to the church being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Old and New Testament representatives of God, delivering His Word) with Christ as the Cornerstone. There is no mention of additional representatives of God.

CEASATION OF NT CANON:

- The Apostolic Fathers (Church leaders who knew the apostles) universally cited New Testament books as Scripture and universally agreed that the biblical canon was closed when the last of the 12 died.
- For 2,000 years the Church has been in universal agreement that the canon is closed.

EARLY CHURCH ON NT TEXTS

APOSTOLICITY

“Let nothing be innovated, says he, nothing maintained, except what has been handed down. Whence is that tradition? Whether does it descend from the authority of the Lord and of the Gospel, or does it come from the commands and the epistles of the apostles? For that those things which are written must be done, God witnesses and admonishes.”

-Cyprian of Carthage (210-258 AD), Epistle 73

EARLY CHURCH ON NT TEXTS

APOSTOLICITY

”But if there be any (heresies) which are bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, that they may thereby seem to have been handed down by the apostles, because they existed in the time of the apostles, we can say: Let them produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that [that first bishop of theirs] bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor some one of the apostles or of apostolic men,—a man, moreover, who continued steadfast with the apostles. For this is the manner in which the apostolic churches transmit their registers: as the church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter. In exactly the same way the other churches likewise exhibit (their several worthies), whom, as having been appointed to their episcopal places by apostles, they regard as transmitters of the apostolic seed.”

-Tertullian (155 - 240 AD), The Prescription Against Heretics 20, 21 and 32



**HOW DO I KNOW IF GOD
IS SPEAKING TO ME?**

"IS GOD SPEAKING TO ME?" (ONLY IN SCRIPTURE)



THE PHRASE "GOD TOLD ME" SHOULD NOT BE USED BY ANYONE WHO DOESN'T MEET THE BIBLICAL CRITERIA FOR PROPHET OR APOSTLE.

This means that no one in our present era should say "thus saith the Lord." Scripture has no category for verbal special revelation from God that is God's Word. Since the canon is closed and Scripture is sufficient, we should not look for "new revelation." However, God does provide illumination of Scripture and direction for decisions even now.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE PRESENT ERA

- Conviction (Jn. 16:7-11, Heb. 11:7, II Cor. 3:2, Mt. 5:16)
- Regeneration (Mt. 19:28, Titus 3:5, I Pet. 1:3, 23)
- Illumination (1 Cor. 2:12-16, 1 John 2:27, Ephesians 4:1-16.) The Holy Spirit can give personal guidance in relation to Scripture. This is distinct from new truth (“revelation”) as the canon is closed, but the role of the Holy Spirit to illuminate Scripture applied to daily living and edification of one another is critical in our present age.
- Filling and Fruit (Gal. 5:16, Gal. 5:25)

CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY DOES NOT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL PROPHECY.

PROV. 3:5-6

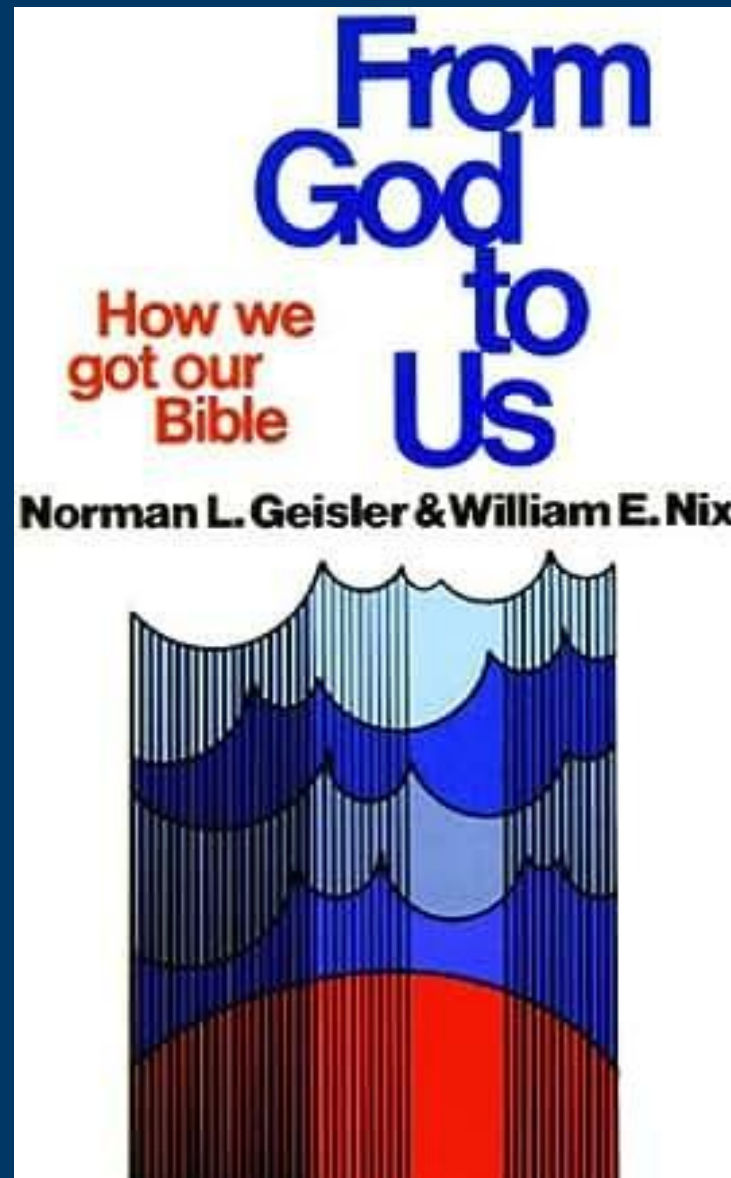
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

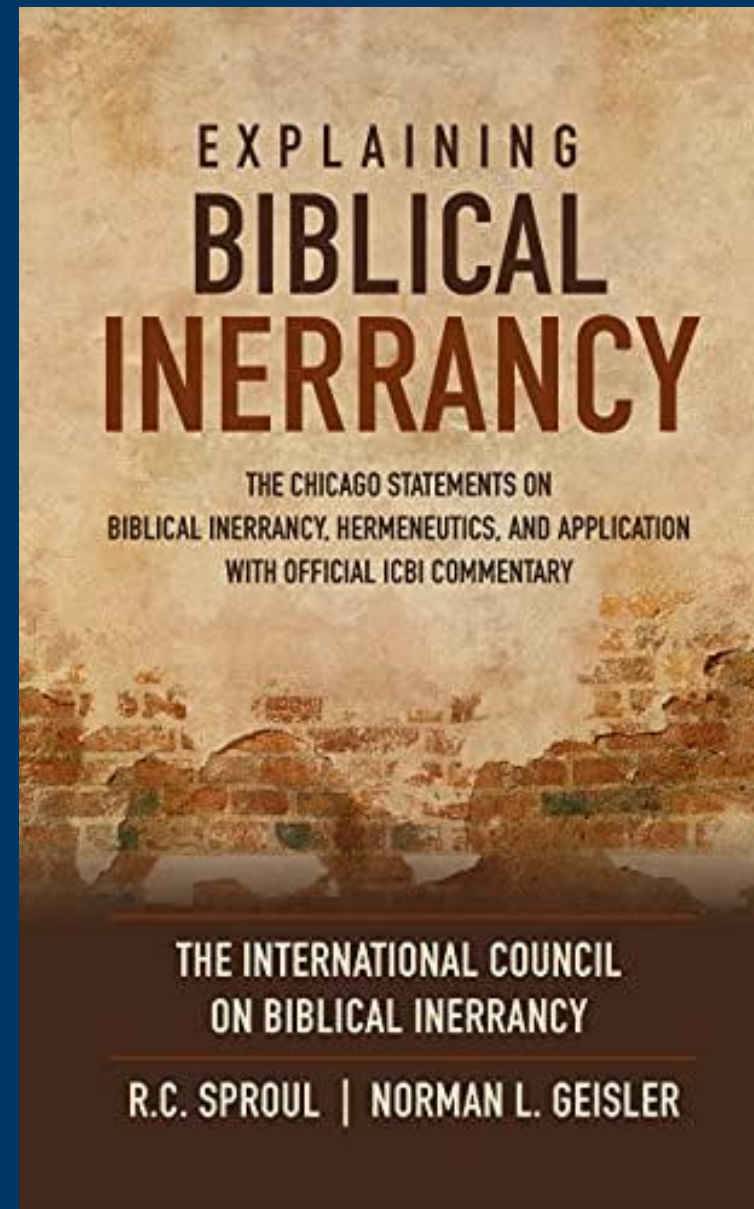
PSALM 37:23-24

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:



From God to Us
by
Geisler and Nix

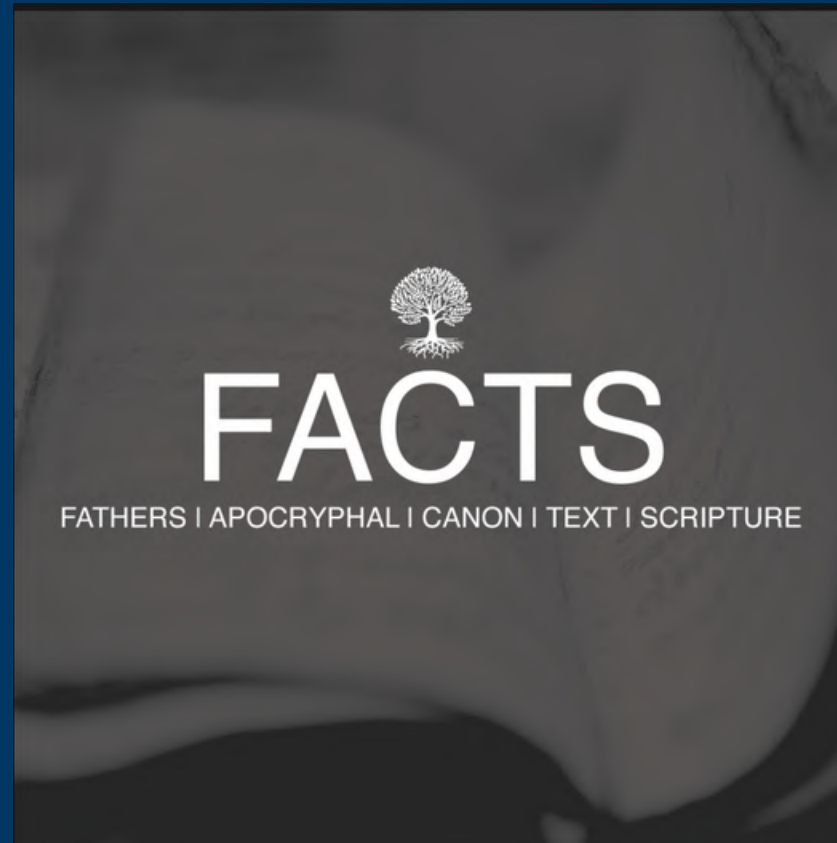


Explaining Biblical Inerrancy
by
Geisler and Sroul



Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and Interpretation

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:



FACTS
with
Stephen Boyce



The Dividing Line
with
James White