

The Authority of Scripture

* **AUTHORITY:** The Doctrine of the Authority, including Inerrancy, of Scripture as a corollary of the inspiration of Scripture, states that the **God-breathed Scriptures are wholly true in all things that they assert in the original autographs** and therefore **function with the Authority of God's own words.**

* *Titus 2:15*¹⁵ *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

* What word stands out in Paul's statement?

* Paul is saying that Titus' responsibility is to speak with _____.

* Preachers aren't story tellers, or even theologians as they preach God's truth.

* They are primarily an explainer

* Their primary responsibility is not simply to share insights - or act as a counselor.

* Teaching _____ with _____ is primarily what a preacher does.

* We can consider a preacher as a type of "commander".

* The word "Authority" is the word *epitag*, and every other time it is used in the New Testament it is translated "Command" or "Commandment."

* Here the translators took some liberty -- instead of saying, "*These things speak and exhort and reprove with all "commandment,"*" they changed it to "*authority.*"

* It's like saying to the preacher, "You are to speak as one who commands."

* *1 Tim 4:11*,¹¹ *Command and teach these things.*

* There is to be a tone in the proclamation of the Word of God that is the tone of commandment.

* Following this thought, let's look at the preaching of Jesus.

* Having completed the great Sermon on the Mount - recorded for us in *Matt 5-7*, He concludes in *vs 27*, then we're told ...

* *Matt 7:28-29*²⁸ *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that **the people were astonished at His teaching,***²⁹ *for **He taught them as one having authority,** and not as the scribes.*

* What amazed them?

* He spoke with a commanding tone.

* Also in *Mark* -- *Mark 1:22*²² *And they were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

* Jesus spoke with Authority because **He is the God of all Authority.**

* The Doctrine of Authority boils down to one primary question: How does one become convinced that the Bible really is the Authoritative Word of God?

* How does a person become certain that Scripture is the truth of God conveyed through the process of inspiration & **that it thereby has the right to exercise authority over one's life?**

* The idea of a God who has Authority over all & His Word is the Authoritative direction for life, both in the flesh and eternally, has always been a battleground.

* So, let's begin with an accurate definition:

* Authority (Dictionary): The power or right to enforce obedience; moral or legal supremacy; right to command or give a final decision.

* The biblical worldview holds that **ultimate authority resides with God and God alone.**

* God did not **inherit** His Authority – there was no one to bequeath it to Him.

* God did not **receive** His Authority – there was no one to bestow it on Him.

- * God did not **come by** His Authority by election – there were no voters.
- * God did not **seize** His Authority – there was no one from whom to take it.
- * God’s Authority becomes obvious & unquestionable based on specific considerations:
 - 1) God created the heavens, the earth and all that exists (*Gen 1-2*)
 - 2) God owns the earth, all it contains & all who dwell on it
 - * *Ps 24:1*¹ *The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.*
 - 3) Since all is God’s, he can do with it as He wills – He has told us that in the end, He will consume it all
 - * *2 Pet 3:10*¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*
- * To accept this truth is as simple as accepting the fact of God Himself
 - * *Rom 13:1*¹ *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.***
 - * Here we see clearly that ¹⁾ God is the source of all Authority as well as ²⁾ the principle of divine delegation (*Job 34:13; John 19:11*)
- * The OT explicitly testifies to God’s Authority
 - * *Ps 62:11*¹¹ *God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: **That power belongs to God.***
 - * *2 Chron 20:5-6*⁵ *Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,⁶ and said: “O LORD God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and **do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?***
- * The NT attributes the same authority to the Lord Jesus - Declaring after his resurrection --
 - * *Matt 28:18*¹⁸ ***all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.***
 - * Paul affirmed: *Phil 2:10*¹⁰ *that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,*
 - * Jude states: *Jude 25*²⁵ *To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, **be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen***

Secondary Sources on the Authority of Scripture

- 1) Rational Evidences
 - * Historical reference to people, places and events
 - * Evidence that the walls at Jericho fell flat
 - * Artifacts confirming the existence of historical persons & occurrence of events
 - 2) Church Authority
 - * Over time there has been declarations by Church Counsels, early church fathers and significant ecclesiastical bodies
 - 3) Bible’s existential impact on the reader that always accompanies genuine saving faith.
- * **Each of these are subjective leaving it up to the individual to determine the ultimate Authority of God and His Scriptures based on his or her own evaluation standards.**
 - * They may provide supportive evidence, but are inadequate to be considered as a solely justifiable reason or ultimate truth.
 - * Thus we conclude that such **Ultimate Proof of Truth MUST be the Testimony of Scripture itself.**

Primary Source on the Authority of Scripture

- * The doctrine of the Authority of Scripture is rooted in the doctrine of God
 - * This means that all things that the Scriptures assert are wholly true, both in the OT, the Scriptures of Jesus and the apostles, and the NT including the writings of the apostles.
 - * So far as the original autographs have been faithfully copied, translated, and passed down, Scripture is inerrant in its reproductions.
 - * This inerrancy means that all things that the Scriptures assert function with the Authority of God's own Word for Christians.
- * These words from Benjamin B. Warfield highlight just how important the doctrine of Authority in its Inerrancy is for the church:
 - ** The trustworthiness of the Scriptures lies at the foundation of trust in the Christian system of doctrine, and is therefore fundamental to the Christian hope and life ****
 - * Abandon it, and the entire Christian system of doctrine now rests on a shaky foundation.
 - * That is because without it, our assurance in Scripture's full truthfulness and total trustworthiness is thrown into question.
 - * Doubt would naturally follow for the preacher of God's Word: "How can I know whether the passage I am preaching is reliable?"
 - * Much is at stake - Faith and Practice readily depend on whether we can trust God's Word and whether it is God's Word at all or in its entirety.
- * The description of God and the titles applied to Him demonstrate His absolute Authority over all of His creation. He is identified as ...
 - * **Creator of All Things:** *Gen 1:1*¹ ***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***
 - * **Lord:** *Deut 10:17*¹⁷ ***For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.***
 - * **God Almighty:** *Gen 17:1*¹ ***When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.***
 - * **Eternal, Immortal & Only God:** *1 Tim 1:17*¹⁷ ***Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.***
 - * **Omnipresent:** *Ps 139:7-12*⁷ ***Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me; ¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You***
 - * **Righteous:** *Ps 92:15*¹⁵ ***To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.***
 - * **Wisdom is Unsearchable:** *Rom 11:33-36*³³ ***Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.***

* **Sovereign:** *Ps 89:11; 90:2*¹¹ *The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world & all its fullness, you have founded them ...*² *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth & the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

* This Authority is conveyed to man and is an unalterably authoritative message:

* *Deut 4:1-2*¹ *Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.*² *You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

* *Prov 30:5-6*⁵ *Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.*⁶ *Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

* *Rev 22:18-19*¹⁸ *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;*¹⁹ *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

The God of Truth

* If God is Scripture's author, then we cannot separate the character of the divine author from the character of His divine speech.

* As we've noted in past weeks, Scripture has many human authors or "penmen", but it ultimately **originates from One Divine Author.**

* God and the text are distinct – Since the text is His act of speech, it should not surprise us that it reflects his character.

* Communicable attributes characterize his communicable speech, and truthfulness is one of them. As **the God of truth & the God who is truth - He speaks the word of truth.**

* Hence the Psalmist could say that the God whose way is "perfect" communicates a word that always "proves true" and, for that reason, is a comfort to those who trust in it for their salvation (*Ps 119:96; 119:160*).

* The text reflects the Truthfulness & Authority of its divine author – therefore it too is True.

* Authority Remains even though Penned by Fallible Humans

* Apart from the Spirit's superintendence, any human author would be fallible - But since it's the **Spirit of God**—also called the **Spirit of Truth** – That carries along these human authors, **What they say is what God says** – Proven by comparison of current w/ ancient manuscripts

* *John 15:26*²⁶ *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

* God's omnipotent and sovereign direction of all things also work in His securing and transmitting the Authority of His Eternal Word over time.

* If we, as Christians, believe the Son of God himself can become incarnate yet without sin in order to communicate a saving word to us as the Word, then carrying along the biblical authors so that they speak truthfully is a small thing by comparison.

* *2 Pet 1:20-21*²⁰ *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,*²¹ *for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Jesus' View of the Scriptures

* Jesus and the disciples treat the Old Testament Scriptures with utter trust and reverence, never with suspicion towards their Authority.

- * Even Jesus's Jewish opponents did the same.
 - * While Jesus and the Jews had strong disagreements over how the OT was to be interpreted and whether Jesus is who he says he is, never—not once—do they disagree as to whether the text interpreted is trustworthy.
- * Jesus brings a unique credibility to the issue as well as he is the Son of God himself.
 - * Beyond assuming trust in Scripture, both in its details and as a whole, the inerrancy of Scripture shines brightest when Jesus expresses his belief that God's covenant promises in the Scriptures have come true in his own life, death, and resurrection.
 - * In Jesus Christ God's intent, as given by His word in the scriptures, has proven true.
- * The truthfulness of God's Word, along with its lifegiving power, has been manifested in he who is the way and the truth and the life
 - * *John 14:6*⁶ Jesus said to him, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*
 - * *John 14:16-17b*¹⁶ *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth*
- * God is faithful - all His promises find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- * **The gospel itself is proof that not one word of God has failed.**

Inerrancy and Authority

- * There are some, for example, who affirm Scripture's inspiration but reject its inerrancy.
- * The limited inerrancy view sounds, at first glance, evangelical: "I believe Scripture is true in its message of faith."
 - * But on further investigation, this position denies Scripture is true in all that it asserts.
 - * Yes, it is true in its gospel message, but beyond that it may err in its specifics.
- * Ironically, this view claims it can still herald *sola scriptura*, as if Scripture is still the final authority.
- * This view cannot claim Scripture is its final *inerrant* authority, which is what the church has always assumed in proclaiming *sola scriptura*.
- * The key difference between a Full Inerrancy view and the Limited Inerrancy view.
 - * **The Full Inerrancy View:** "All Scripture is our Inerrant Authority."
 - * **The Limited Inerrancy View:** "Only when Scripture addresses matters of faith is it our Inerrant Authority."
- * Notice, the Limited Authoritative Inerrancy View can only (consistently) claim *sola scriptura* when Scripture puts forward its main message.
 - * At other times, it is not inerrant and cannot, therefore, been the final authority.
- * This is NOT. what the Reformers meant by *sola scriptura*.
 - * When Luther protested Rome and took his stand on the authority of Scripture at a Diet like Worms, it was inerrancy (among other things) that distinguished his cause.
 - * Luther made the bold claim that while Popes and Councils err ---- Scripture does not.
- * It is because Scripture alone is inspired by God that it is also inerrant, sufficient, and the Christian's final **Authority**.