

Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter 1 - Of the Holy Scripture

1.1. General & Special Revelation

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 unexcusable;

YET are they NOT sufficient
to give that knowledge of God, and of his will,
which is necessary unto salvation.

Therefore it pleased the Lord, (at sundry times, and in divers manners),

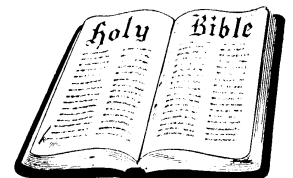
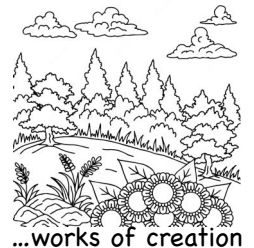
TO REVEAL himself, and
TO declare THAT his will unto his church;

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:
which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary;
those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

- A. God has revealed Himself to ALL people (General Revelation).
 - a. "light of nature" -
 - b. What we CAN know through creation -
 - c. What we CANNOT know through creation -
 - d. Romans 1:19-20, 32; 2:1, 14-15
 - e. Psalm 19:1-3
 - f. What is the inherent DILEMMA in which this leaves us?
- B. God has revealed Himself (in a "special way") to His Church (Special Revelation)

Christianity is a
religion of



1.2. The Canon of Scripture

A. What IS Holy Scripture - “the Word of God written”

B. Meaning of the word “Canon”?

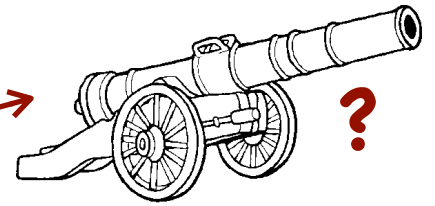
1) OT canon process

2) NT canon process

C. “...given by the *inspiration* of God”

D. *Limited* to these 66 books -

E. What to do if the TOC of your Bible differs...



Books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS										NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS																									
LAW					HISTORY					POETRY					PROPHETS																				
Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy	Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1 Samuel	2 Samuel	1 Kings	2 Kings	1 Chronicles	2 Chronicles	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther	Job	Psalms	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes	Song of Solomon														
PROPHETS										GOSPELS					LETTERS																				
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentations	Ezekiel	Hosea	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah	Micah	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians	Colossians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus	Philemon	Hebrews	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	Revelation

1.3. The Apocrypha

A. Written during intertestamental period

B. What are the Apocrypha? Are they of any value to us?

C. The issue is that of *authority*

1.4. The Authority of Scripture

A. THE Question: Why should we obey Scripture?

B. Connection between *receiving* the Word, *believing* it, and *obeying* it (John 5:24)

C. Bible's authority == a moral obligation to believe.

D. Sproul: “Throughout church history, the supreme attack of the world, the flesh, and the devil against godliness has been an attack on the authority of God’s Word.”

E. Where are those attacks most evident today?

1)

2)

3)

F. R.C. perspective -

G. Reformed perspective -

H. Neo-orthodox perspective -

I. How important is it for us to know (with certainty) that (all) Scripture is GOD’s Word?

YOUR WORD



IS TRUTH
JOHN 17:17

1.5. The Witness of Scripture (How Do We Know for Certain?)

We may be **moved** and **induced** *by the testimony of the church* to an **high** and **reverent esteem** of the Holy Scripture. 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 does* **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.

A. The **evidence** is ABUNDANT.

- 1) "testimony of the church"
- 2) "heavenliness of the matter"
- 3) "efficacy of the doctrine"
- 4) "majesty of the style"
- 5) "consent of all the parts"
- 6) "scope of the whole => to give all glory to God"
- 7) "full discovery...of the only way of man's salvation"
- 8) "incomparable excellencies...entire perfection thereof"

B. Yet it can never give the **persuasion** and **assurance** we need. We must have:

- 1) "the inward work of the Holy Spirit"
- 2) "bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts"



1.6. The Sufficiency of Scripture

The **whole counsel of God concerning ALL things NECESSARY**

for his own glory,
man's salvation,
faith and life,

is **EITHER** expressly set down in Scripture, **OR** (by good and necessary consequence) may be deduced from Scripture:

unto which **NOTHING** at any time **is to be ADDED**, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, OR traditions of men.

NEVERTHELESS,

we acknowledge the **inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary** for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: *and*

that there are **some circumstances** concerning

the worship of God, and

government of the church, (common to human actions and societies,)

which are to be ordered

by the light of nature, and

Christian prudence,

according to the general rules of the Word,
which are always to be observed.

A. What does Scripture give us?

- 1) Does it tell us everything about everything??
- 2) If not, what then, DOES it tell us? What does it GIVE us? How does it HELP us?
- 3) Two ways that we receive everything we really need (from Scripture):
 - a.
 - b.

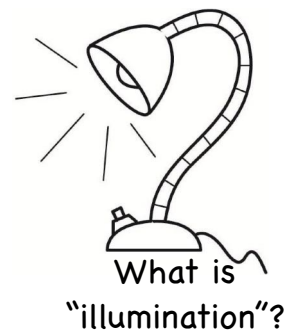
B. Nothing is to be ADDED

- 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 2) Hebrews 1:1-3a

C. "inward illumination of the Spirit" necessary for saving understanding

- 1) 1 Corinthians 2:12, 14-15
- 2) John 6:45
- 3) Ephesians 1:18

D. We live...not ONLY by what we find in the WORD, but also by what we find in NATURE.



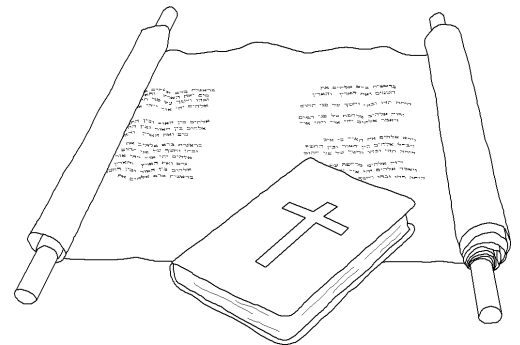
1.7. The Clarity of Scripture

- A. Not all things are equally *plain* or *clear*
- B. What IS plain and clear? To whom?
- C. Major issue during the reformation
- D. Basic rule for interpreting the Bible:
- E. "...due use of the ordinary means"?

"If the Lord spare my life,
 ere many years, I will cause
 a **boy who drives the
 plough** to know more of the
 Scriptures than you do."
 William Tyndale

1.8. Original Languages

- A. We have a right to have the Bible in our own language ("the vulgar language")
- B. Importance of the original manuscripts
- C. What can we KNOW that God has done with His Word throughout the ages?



Original languages of the Bible?

- 1. OT: _____
- 2. NT: _____

1.9. Rule of Interpretation

- A. Most BASIC rule of interpretation of Scripture: Use Scripture to interpret Scripture.
- B. "...which is not manifold, but one"
- C. When a passage is difficult to understand, what can we do to gain a right understanding?

Beginning

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was^a formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

- 1:1
- In 1:1-2
- Job 38:4;
- Ps 90:2;
- Isa 42:5;
- 44:24;
- 5:12, 15;
- Ac 17:24;
- Heb 11:3;
- Rev 4:11

What are these?

1.10. Rule of Interpretation

- A. We only have one "supreme judge" by which all religious controversies can be determined - it is NOT the Church, it is NOT by collective vote, it is NOT the Pope...it is only by Scripture itself.
- B. Can the Church speak infallibly? If not, how can it speak with authority?