

Agros

Find, Train, Support

Theology of Scripture Workshop
September 24, 2022
Holton, KS

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all the he has and buys that field.”
Matthew 13:44

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Theology of Scripture Workshop

Personal Position Statement

At the end of the workshop, write your own personal position statement on the Theology of Scripture. You are encouraged to interact with and include verses, quotes, and terms from the workshop sessions. A useful format would be 1) what you believe Scripture is, and then 2) what you believe about the characteristics of Scripture (S.C.A.N.).

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Theology of Scripture Workshop

Session 1 – The Authority of Scripture

1. Exegete the true doctrine

Read Luke 24:25-32, 44-47; 2 Pet. 3:14-17; Eph. 2:19-22. Discuss/write answers to: according to these passages what is included in the “Scriptures”?

Read 2 Tim. 3:16-17. Discuss/write answers to: what does “breathed out” mean and how does it help you understand what the Scriptures are?

Read 2 Sam. 23:1-2; John 14:25-26; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; 1 Cor. 2:14. Discuss/write answers to: to whom is the breathing out of Scripture especially attributed? Why is that important?

Based on the above write a 1-2 sentence definition of the authority of Scripture.

2. Refute the false doctrine

Listen to an *autonomous* objection. Discuss/write a response that defends the authority of Scripture.

Listen to a *scientific* objection. Discuss/write a response that defends the authority of Scripture.

Listen to a *tradition* objection from 2 Thess. 3:6. Discuss/write a response that defends the authority of Scripture.

3. Synthesize with other doctrine

Read Rom. 13:1-5; Acts 15:6-29; Col. 3:20. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

What are other lawful authorities recognized by the Bible?

What relationship does the authority of God's Word have to each of those authorities?

Pick one of those lawful authorities and discuss the limits of their authority prescribed by the Bible.

Read Matt. 15:1-9. Discuss/write answers to: what role does the Bible's authority have in the way we worship God?

4. Consult the Church's doctrine

Read the following quotes and discuss/write answers to the question(s) that follow:

"Not even the least of the divine and holy mysteries of the faith ought to be handed down without the divine Scriptures. Do not simply give faith to me speaking these things to you except you have the proof of what I say from the divine Scriptures. For the security and preservation of our faith are not supported by ingenuity of speech, but by the proofs of the divine Scriptures" – Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD)

Discuss/write: what might be an area of personal conviction that you have that is not supported "by the proofs of the divine Scriptures"?

"It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books" – *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #120

"The church is more ancient than the scriptures, and that the scripture is not authentic but by the authority of the church" – John Eck, *Enchiridion of 1585*

Discuss/write: why would you agree or disagree with these statements?

"But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture" – *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21.1 (1684 AD)

Discuss/write: how does the way we worship demonstrate our understanding of the authority of the Bible?

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Session 2 – The Necessity of Scripture

1. Exegete the true doctrine

Read Jude 3; 1 John 5:13; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:6-13. Discuss/write answers to: What do these passages tell us about the Bible?

2. Refute the false doctrine

Kevin DeYoung writes, "The doctrine of the necessity of Scripture reminds us of our predicament: the One we need to know most cannot be discovered on our own. And it assures us of a solution: this same ineffable One has made himself known through his word." (p. 86)
Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

Where else can we turn to know this?

Can creation reveal this to us? Can our own inner spirituality? Why/why not?

Does God speak to us in other ways than by creation and Scripture? If so, how? If not, why not?

3. Synthesize with other doctrine

The doctrine of sin (hamartiology). Read Rom. 1:18-25. Discuss/write answers to: What does this passage tell us about man's sin?

The doctrine of God (theology proper). Read John 1:1, 16-18. Discuss/write answers to: What do these passages tell us about God?

The doctrine of salvation (soteriology). Read Rom. 10:13-17. What does this passage tell us about salvation?

The doctrine of sanctification. Read Deut. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3. Discuss/write answers to: What do these passages tell us about new life in Christ?

4. Consult the Church's doctrine

Read the following quotes and discuss/write answers to the questions below.

"The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. The light of nature and the works of creation and providence so clearly demonstrate the goodness, wisdom, and power of God that people are left without excuse; however, these demonstrations are not sufficient to give the knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for salvation. Therefore, the Lord was pleased at different times and in various ways to reveal himself and to declare his will to his church. To preserve and propagate the truth better and to establish and comfort the church with greater certainty against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and the world, the Lord put this revelation completely in writing. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing his will to his people have now ceased." – *Second London Baptist Confession* (1689 AD)

"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; 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." – *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1643 AD)

"We believe that every word in the original manuscripts of the Bible (66 books) is the only inspired written revelation given by God himself. It is without error or falsehood, the final source of truth, and the supreme authority on all matters it addresses. The Scripture is to be obeyed in all it requires, and it will be the final standard by which all people will be judged by God." – *Confession of FBC Holton, KS* (2007 AD)

What is the same/different between these statements?

How do they affirm or deny what we have discussed in this session?

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Session 3 – The Sufficiency of Scripture

1. Exegete the true doctrine

Read Rom. 10:17; Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Tim. 3:14-15; Jam. 1:18, 21; 1 Pet. 1:23. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

What are some major repercussions of downplaying the sufficiency of Scripture?

What does Jesus use to guide and nourish the Church? And what do we imply when we look for spiritual guidance and life beyond what he uses?

Read Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Pet. 1:3 Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

What is the importance of the sufficiency of Scripture for daily obedience to God?

If the sufficiency of Scripture is an “ethical doctrine,” as Kevin DeYoung writes (p. 45), in what ways does it impact the daily living of those who trust and follow Jesus?

2. Refute the false doctrine

It is a popular teaching today that God’s revelation was not final in the Bible, but that he has continued revealing truths throughout history. Respond to this teaching, consulting Deut. 4:2; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19.

How should we respond when people claim they have received a new revelation from God? Consider 2 Cor. 4:6 and Jude 1:3 in your answers.

What is a proper response to someone who claims that the Bible is outdated, and therefore it is necessary for us to make it relevant to our modern culture?

3. Synthesize with other doctrine

The doctrine of the Church (ecclesiology). Read 1 Cor. 16:15-18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17. Discuss/write answers to the following questions.

Does the sufficiency of Scripture mean that Christians should reject all other authorities over their spiritual lives? Why/why not?

If the Bible commands us to submit to the authority of a local church, how does this affect our doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture?

The doctrine of salvation (soteriology). Read John 19:30; Rom. 8:1-4; Heb. 1:1-4; 10:11-14. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

Is Christ's work of redemption sufficient and complete? If not, what more do we need from him?

Has God sufficiently revealed Christ's work of redemption? If not, what more needs revealed?

How would denying the sufficiency of Scripture relate to the sufficiency of redemption? Can you have one without the other?

4. Consult the Church's doctrine

Read through the selected portions of important Christian confessions and creeds, then discuss/write answers to the following questions:

How does my local church compare in relation to the Church's historical commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture?

What are some specific areas both personally as well as in my local church where a greater commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture needs to be made?

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Session 4 – The Clarity of Scripture

1. Exegete the true doctrine

Read Deut. 6:6-7; 30:11-14; Neh. 8:8; Psa. 19:7-11; Isa. 45:18-19; Matt. 19:4-6; Acts 17:11.
Discuss/write answers to: how would you describe *Scripture itself* based on these passages?

Read Acts 8:30-31; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:7. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

Are all Scriptures equally clear and understandable? Why/why not?

How would you describe Scripture to harmonize these verses with the previous verses?

Read Deut. 29:29; Acts 17:2-3; Rom. 10:5-9; 1 Cor. 15:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 6:1-2.
Discuss/write answers to: which doctrines do these passages teach will be clearest in Scripture?

2. Refute the false doctrine

Listen to a *mystical* objection that uses Acts 17:27 and 2 Cor. 12:2-4. Discuss/write a response that defends the clarity of Scripture.

Listen to a *pluralism* objection that uses Rom. 14:22 and 1 Tim. 6:3-5. Discuss/write a response that defends the clarity of Scripture.

Listen to a *Roman Catholic* objection that uses 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11. Discuss/write a response that defends the clarity of Scripture.

3. Synthesize with other doctrine

The doctrine of salvation (soteriology). Read Exo. 19:5-6; Mal. 2:1, 6-7; 1 Pet. 2:4-5, 9; Rev. 5:9-10. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

When God saves his people, what do they become? Does it apply to all or a select few?

What are the responsibilities of those who hold this office?

If we believe in the priesthood of all believers, how does that relate to the clarity of Scripture? Can we reject one and accept the other? Why/why not?

The doctrine of God (theology proper). Read Job 26:14; Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-34; Jer. 9:23-24; John 17:3. Discuss/write answers to the following questions:

Can we comprehend God exhaustively? Why/why not?

Can we know God certainly and truly? Why/why not?

How does God's incomprehensibility and knowability relate to the clarity of Scripture?

4. Consult the Church's doctrine

Read the following quotes and discuss: How does this relate to the clarity of Scripture? Agree or disagree? Why?

"Thou hast the Scriptures, [Paul] says, in place of me. If thou wouldst learn anything, thou mayest learn it from them. And if he thus wrote to Timothy, who was filled with the Spirit, how much more to us!" – John Chrysostom (347-407 AD)

"Just as the divine Word exercises prudent persons by mysteries, so, for the most part, it refreshes simple persons by the surface sense. Indeed, it is surely like a river, if I may say so, which is wide and deep, in which a lamb may walk and an elephant swim. Thus, as the fitness of each individual passage requires, so the level of exposition is carefully varied." – Gregory the Great (540-604 AD)

"It is true that for many people much [of Scripture] remains abstruse; but this is not due to the obscurity of Scripture, but to the blindness of indolence of those who will not take the trouble to look at the very clearest truth." – Martin Luther (1525 AD)

"Indeed, Scripture exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their color, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste." – John Calvin (1536 AD)

"It is one thing for there to be in Scripture difficult passages whose difficulties can be mastered, but another for there to be insuperable difficulties, which cannot be understood no matter how painstakingly they are investigated. Peter speaks of the first, not of the second kind (II Peter 3:15 [16])." – Francis Turretin (1623-1687 AD)

"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* (1643 AD)

"... a plain, honest ploughman, who reads no book but his Bible, and has no teacher but the God to whom he prays in secret, stands abundantly fairer for the attainment of true skill in divinity... Those things which are necessary for him to know, shall be made so plain, that he shall not mistake them; and those things with which he is not so *immediately* concerned, shall at least teach him humility..." – John Newton (1725-1807 AD)

“How Firm a Foundation”

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.”

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.”

“When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.”

“E’en down to old age all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when grey hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.”

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake!”

Words from *Rippon's Selection of Hymns* (1787; alt.; mod.); music:
Traditional American melody; J. Funk's *A Compilation of Genuine
Church Music* (1832); public domain

“Psalm 119:33-40”

(Tune: “*O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*”)

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way
of thy precepts divine,
And to observe it to the end
I shall my heart incline.

Give understanding unto me,
so keep thy law shall I;
Yea, ev’n with my whole heart I shall
observe it carefully.

In thy law’s path make me to go;
for I delight therein.
My heart unto thy testimo – nies,
and not to greed, incline.

Turn thou away my sight and eyes
from viewing vanity;
And in thy good and holy way
be pleas’d to quicken me.

Confirm to me thy gracious word,
which I did gladly hear,
Ev’n to thy servant, Lord, who is
devoted to thy fear.

Turn thou away my fear’d reproach;
for good thy judgments be.
Lo, for thy precepts I have long’d;
in thy tru – th quicken me.

Words from *The Psalms of David in Metre* © 1998, 2015 Trinitarian
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Mason (1839); public domain