

Systematic Theology Core Seminar

"The Doctrine of the Word"

Week 02 09.20.2023

INTRODUCTION | PSALM 119:97-104: "OH, HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW..."

I. **The Canon ("measuring reed" or "rule") of Scripture**

A. Old Testament Canon

- Threefold division affirmed by Jesus (Luke 24:44)
- Other books (such as Apocrypha) not included

B. New Testament Canon

- God acts, then provides written interpretation of his acts
- Distinction between accepting a book's authority (happened immediately) and finalizing a list of the canon (took longer)
- Non-biblical books present radically different messages

- Early believers didn't "choose" books but "received"/ "inherited" them

C. Early church criteria to demonstrate a book's legitimacy

1. Apostolicity
2. Antiquity
3. Conformity to the rule of faith (orthodoxy)
4. Universality

D. Implications

- The Church didn't create the Bible; the Bible created the church.
- The canon is closed.

II. **Attributes of Scripture**

On revelation, The Gospel Coalition Foundation Documents:
Confessional Statement

*God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God, who, by his Spirit, has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings **alone** constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error **in the original writings**, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the [Good News].*

1. The Divine Inspiration of Scripture: Scripture is God's Word.

(2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

2. The Inerrancy and Infallibility of Scripture

3. The Clarity of Scripture: God's Word is Understandable.

(Psalm 19:7, Deut 6:7)

4. The Necessity of Scripture: God's Word is Indispensible.

(Rom. 1:19, 2:14, 10:14-17)

5. The Sufficiency of Scripture: God's Word is Enough.

(2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Book Recommendations: *Doctrine of the Word*

- Greg Gilbert, *Why Trust the Bible?* (Crossway, 2015)
- Barry Cooper, *Can I Really Trust the Bible?* (Good Book Co., 2014)
- C. E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels?* (Oxford Univ., 2010)
- John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (P&R, 2010)
- John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, 3rd ed. (Wipf & Stock, 2009)
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* chaps. 2-8 (Zondervan, 1994)
- J. I. Packer, *"Fundamentalism" & the Word of God* (Eerdmans, 1958)
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), available online at http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf