

BIBLIOLOGY:

DEVELOPING A LOVE FOR GOD'S WORD

WEEK 5: THE NECESSITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- **Class Schedule:**
 - September 13: Introduction and General/Special Revelation
 - September 20: Inspiration and Authority
 - September 27: Inerrancy and Infallibility
 - October 4: Canonicity and Clarity
 - **October 11: Necessity and Sufficiency**
 - October 18: Illumination and Interpretation

NECESSITY

“God ensured that his words were preserved in writing because they are a matter of life and death. Eternal life and death.”¹

John 6:59-71 You have words of eternal life

- Difficulty and doubt of some disciples (59-63)
 - Spiritual Words of Life (63)
- Denial and betrayal of some disciples (64-65)
- Departure and wandering of some disciples (66)
- Dedication and of some disciples (67-69)
 - Words of Eternal Life (68)
 - Words that bring Saving Faith (69)
- Dividing Line and devil: betrayal part 2 (70-71)

John 6:68-69 ~ [Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”](#)

¹ Barry Cooper, *Can I Really Trust the Bible? And other questions about Scripture, truth, and how God speaks,*, 31.

- We need these words.
- We need this truth.
- As discussed in General and Special revelation, because of man's sinful state through the fall and in order to restore fallen humanity to fellowship with Himself, it was essential that God reveal the way of salvation and reconciliation.

Review: General and Special Revelation

- What are the types of general revelation?
- What are the types of special revelation?
- Man is absolutely dependent on God's special revelation in the Scriptures in order to obtain a true knowledge of the gospel and His plan of salvation, which cannot be learned through general revelation.

Knowledge of God

- Without Scripture, **man has a limited knowledge** of the existence and expectations of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:5 ~ *like the Gentiles who do not know God;*

- Yet Scripture also says that man does know God, but suppresses the truth and do not honor Him as God
Romans 1:18-19 ~ *men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*

Romans 1:21 ~ *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

- Thus, man must hear the content of Scripture to understand the **personal knowledge of God**, not just knowledge *about* God.

Romans 10:17 ~ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

- **General Revelation is not and cannot be saving in its effect (Andrew Snider).**
 1. Scripture *never testifies* that general revelation is sufficient to bring about salvation in a sinner's life. Special revelation must accompany general revelation in order for saving faith to occur.
 2. Scripture testifies that man is dead in sin (Eph 2:1) and that no one seeks after God (Rom 3:10-12).
 3. Scripture teaches that General Revelation is partial and obscured by sin (Rom 8:19-22).
 4. Scripture teaches that General Revelation is the condemnation of the sinner (Rom 1:18-21).
 5. Scripture teaches that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6).
 6. Scripture teaches that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:9-10, 13, 17).

- **Without Scripture, we do not truly know God**

1 Corinthians 1:21 ~ God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the ^[a]message preached to save those who believe.

- **If we do not obey Scripture, we do not know God and there are eternal consequences**

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 ~ retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power

- Unless we do not adhere to the Bible, we will not grow spiritually, it is the source of spiritual wisdom and knowledge and the means by which we know if we are walking in a manner pleasing to God (Col 1:9-10)

1 Peter 2:2 ~ like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

Wayne Grudem summarizes:²

1. The Bible is necessary for the knowledge of the gospel (Rom 10:13-17)
2. The Bible is necessary for maintaining spiritual life (Matt 4:4; Deut 32:47; 1 Peter 2:2)
3. The Bible is necessary for certain knowledge of God's will. We can know with certainty what God's will is for our life (Ps 119:1; 1 John 5:3)
4. The Bible is NOT necessary for knowing that God exists (Ps 19:1; Acts 14:16-17; Romans 1:19-21)
5. The Bible is NOT necessary for knowing something about God's character and moral laws through general revelation (though general revelation in no way communicates the gospel, motivating our proclamation)

Implications:

- General Revelation is insufficient to provide the knowledge of God and of his will and the essentials of salvation.
- Special revelation has ceased (Hebrews 1:1-2). What about new revelation?
- Robert L. Raymond: "Holy Scripture is necessary certainly for salvation and a knowledge of God's will for his church... but necessary also for justification of all knowledge and of personal meaning itself."³

² <https://www.waynegrudem.com/test/2006/012906.pdf>

³ From New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith, <https://www.monergism.com/bibles-necessity>

- To quote every young person in a classroom, “Do we really need this? Will we use it in the real world?”
- What is the danger of saying you believe the bible but in actual life not picking it up and needing it and obeying it?
- What about other sources of teaching that don’t contradict the Bible? Do we need them?
- What about creeds, confessions, sermons, great books *about* the Bible? Do we need them?

Matthew 4:4 (quoting Deut 8:3) ~ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

Words of Scripture? Are they optional?

Deuteronomy 32:47 ~ For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And **by this word** you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

John 6:63 ~ the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life

SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

“The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127).

- In other words, we only find God’s Word for us in the Bible.
 - we have what we need, and what we need we can trust God gave to us.
- God has spoken (Hebrews 1:1)
- Very few today IN the church would deny that we do need the Bible. But the question remains for some, do we also need MORE THAN the Bible?
- John 20:30-31 ~ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.
- More could have been written but wasn’t. It was enough.

Biblical Defense of Sufficiency

- We are losing the battle over sufficiency when we want more experience, still small voice of God, visions, dreams, or knowledge.
- We need to recover a confidence in the sufficiency of God’s word.

- We do not evaluate SCRIPTURE according to your EXPERIENCES. We must evaluate EXPERIENCES according to SCRIPTURE.
- God takes quite serious **additions** and **subtractions** to what he has given.
- Deuteronomy 4:1-2 ~ “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.
- Prophecy that does not come to pass is punishable by death because it leads people away from God.
- Deuteronomy 13:1-5 ~ ⁴ You shall **follow the Lord your God and fear Him**; and you shall **keep His commandments**, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So **you shall purge the evil from among you**.
- 2 Peter 2:1 ~ But **false prophets** also arose among the people, just as there will also be **false** teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.
- Revelation 22:18-19 ~ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone **adds to them**, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone **takes away from the words** of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

Scripture doesn't speak to every issue or claim to speak to every issue...

- We will not learn how to change oil, make a decision about your career.
- Sufficient to guide you on what it does claim, and gives direction in wisdom regarding your decisions.
- Doesn't comment on world events, your relationships, or the weather.
- But it 100% gives God's wisdom which can be applied to every situation.
- Scripture gives us the correct perspective from which to view all of life and every situation.
- There isn't an aspect of life which is exempt from understanding what God has spoken.

“Scripture is sufficient to give me a rational ground for thinking about anything and everything on the assumption that this world and everything in it make sense. Further, no matter what my calling or abilities, the Scriptures are sufficient to teach me principles that will enable me to think and act in a God-honouring way when I am engaged in any activity or vocation.” ~Sinclair Ferguson

Books and Sermons are Subject to Scripture:

- God gives gifts (Eph 4) to help us, expose what Scripture says about our life and walk.
- We are insufficient and need to know the Word of God, and we can read other books about the Bible because they don't nullify the value of Scripture but encourage us in depending on Scripture.
- Therefore, we need help along the way, reading, listening, and being sharpened by how they direct and guide us according to Scripture.
- Their authority is Scripture, not their words!

Threats to the Sufficiency of Scripture

Charismatic Movement

- Fresh revelation is also necessary. Continual words from the Lord.
- The problem is what words are authoritative? When one person hears from the Lord, is it authoritative for all people? Or just that brother or sister?

Pragmatism

- What works... Best business practices and practical success guide how to run the church.

Psychology

- How we care for people has been redefined.
- Common sense, life experience, practical suggestions, observations, listening without correction, and finding answers from within characterize the nature of instruction in psychology and integration models.
- The change offered and the diagnosis given cannot be simply behavior modification or catharsis, nor identifying the disease with labels.
- We must depend on Scripture to define how we change through confession and repentance, through a renewing of the mind, using scripture to instruct, diagnosing our problems according to biblical concepts and labels, with the goal to glorify God.

Social Justice Movement

- The justice God describes is as much about punishment of evil as it is about doing good to the poor. We cannot just redistribute wealth and privilege to be faithful to the justice of God.

Creedalism/Confessionalism

- While we must believe something (Latin, *credo*, I believe) and confess what we believe (Romans 10:9 ~ [if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart...](#))
 - Preservation of Scripture and confirmation of its meaning are as helpful as these very notes.
 - But we must deny that any human tradition or experience is equal to Scripture (2 Peter 1:19).
 - Men and the words of man are not in judgement over Scripture, but subject to it.

TMS Statement on Hermeneutics regarding Creeds and Confessions:

ARTICLE XXXII: SCRIPTURE AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION:⁴

WE AFFIRM the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura*, that Scripture alone is the ultimate, absolute, and infallible rule for faith and practice—the sole norming norm which is not normed.

WE DENY the mischaracterization of *sola Scriptura* that denies the existence of legitimate subordinate norms which are themselves normed by Scripture.

WE AFFIRM that all other forms of spiritual authority, including historic creeds, doctrinal confessions, local church pastors, teachers, and Bible commentators are subject to Scripture.

WE DENY that any creed, confession, pastor, teacher, or commentator is equal or superior to Scripture.

WE AFFIRM that, though Scripture is the supreme governor and final arbiter of Christian doctrine and duty, the creeds and confessions of church history can help protect believers from veering into heresy and false teaching.

WE DENY that such a use of creeds and confessions is at odds with the doctrine of *sola Scriptura*.

WE AFFIRM that, insofar as the ancient creeds (i.e., the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Chalcedonian Creed) accurately represent biblical truth, they possess a derived authority that has historically defined the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy. We further affirm the ministerial use of church history: while subordinate to Scripture, it is valuable for faithfully guiding believers, particularly in the defense of sound doctrine.

WE DENY the magisterial use of tradition and reject any system that places tradition on a level of authority higher than or equal to the Word of God (Mark 7:1-13). We further deny the notion that church history is of no value for believers today.

ARTICLE XXXIII: THE CHECKING PRINCIPLE

WE AFFIRM that, while no era of church history is without fault, students of Scripture should consider whether or not their interpretation of the biblical text aligns with the conclusions of faithful believers throughout church history. The student of Scripture should be suspicious of espousing novel interpretations and exegetical conclusions that have never been espoused, or that have been espoused only by those who had departed from orthodoxy.

WE DENY that church tradition is inerrant or determinative of the meaning of Scripture. We further deny that teaching not found in a specific church tradition is automatically disqualified.

⁴ The Master's Seminary Faculty, "The Master's Seminary Statement on Hermeneutics," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2026): 181. This is an important document on par with the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy; you can find it linked on our website at www.mbcmi.org/TMS.Bible

Conclusions

- Will we rest on the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation and sanctification?
- What are we most prone to add to scripture?
- God works through people- Humans are used to proclaim the divine! The issue of sufficiency banks on the source and its authority!

“The sufficiency of the Gospel to save does not preclude the need for Christians to proclaim the Gospel!” (Matt Waymeyer)
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1 Corinthians 4:6 ~ Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in **us you may learn not to exceed what is written**, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.