

Bible Theology Class - Session 2

The Authority of Scripture

What is authority? How can someone have authority?

Authority - The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience.

Does accurate or truth = authoritative?

Authority has to have some aspect of force. The threat of punishment is force. You don't want to get punished. But so is inspiring someone.

Whatever way that someone can get someone to do something, that is authority.

So how does Scripture have authority? Does Scripture derive its authority from the threat of hell?

All Scripture is God-breathed and is **useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness - 2 Tim 3:16

Scripture gets its authority from God. And a primary characteristic of Scripture is its **usefulness**. ESV says "profitable". There is some benefit or avoidance of negative consequences that you will get from obeying Scripture. It's very practical authority.

God is the one who created and designed us. He knows how it works.

If the designer of a machine gives you an instruction manual, that instruction manual derives authority from the fact that the designer knows how this thing works. If you don't use the machine the way the designer wants you to use it, it probably won't work very well and you could reap negative consequences.

Scripture gets its authority from Jesus. We follow Jesus first and foremost. Our allegiance is to him, but he quoted and respected Scripture.

- "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." - Matt 5:17-18

Jesus says that Scripture testifies about him. They are about him. So if you want to know and obey Jesus, you need to know and obey Scripture:

- "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**" - Luke 24:27
- "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; **and it is they that bear witness about me.**" - John 5:39

We don't obey Scripture like it's a set of laws that has the enforcement capability of hell.

A rulebook for a boardgame doesn't have any enforcement authority. The only reason why the rulebook has authority is because it's fun. The game designer designed the boardgame in a certain way. They playtested the game hundreds if not thousands of times and they think that this set of rules is the best way to play the game.

The Authority of Scripture is very different than how we westerners view authority... especially the authority of written law.

How deeply do you respect Scripture?

As protestants, Scripture is our highest authority. That means that if we figure out that Scripture says something, and the church has gotten it wrong for 1500 years, we should be very hesitant in doing this, but that means that Scripture is still correct, NOT 1500 years of tradition.

It means if we deeply believe that something is wrong, but Scripture says it's right, again we need to be very hesitant and careful, but at the end of the day, you respect Scripture. You have to overturn your own morality in favor of what Scripture says.

- Slavery (1 Peter 2:18-25, Genocide (1 Samuel 15:2-3)

Do you love Scripture?

As a church, we deeply deeply respect, but also deeply deeply love Scripture.

Psalm 119:9-16

This psalm shows how much and how deeply Jewish people loved Scripture. They **delighted** in Scripture. How many of you delight in traffic laws? But some people do delight in Harry Potter. Some people do delight in Star Wars and those stories change people's lives. They meditated on Scripture day and night. (Psalm 1:2)

Remember that the law (Torah) does not necessarily or even usually mean law code like traffic laws. It means instruction. It means guidance.

Jewish people treated Scripture like this. They were people of the book.

Jesus himself, everytime he spoke, Scripture quotations were coming out. He loved Scripture.

Scripture had melded itself into his mind, just like other Jewish people of the day.

We want to love Scripture this much. That's why we do Bible Study. Because we want the Bible to seep into us.

How do we determine what goes into Scripture or what doesn't go into Scripture

- Eastern Orthodox
- Catholic Bible
- Jewish Bible
- Protestant Bible

How was Scripture formed?

The New Testament was compiled through proximity or closeness to Jesus.

Jesus gave his authority to his apostles.

For the New Testament, we look for books that are written by apostles or people who were witnesses to Jesus' life or come from the disciples of apostles.

This is why when we translate we try to find manuscripts that are closest to the original.

The Old Testament is written and compiled in a very different way than the New Testament.

There were editors and there was no original. Translators do not try to find manuscripts that are closest to the original. There were many different versions of the OT.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were a bunch of scrolls that were discovered in the 1970s. They are dated to about 100 years before Jesus' time. And in those scrolls were 3-4 different versions of the Old Testament. They were all kept side by side.

If you notice in the Bible, the New Testament authors quote the old testament, but they don't actually quote them "correctly".

Matt 1:23 / Isaiah 7:14

Romans 9:33 / Isaiah 28:16

Scripture sets the agenda and asks the questions.

Is XYZ a sin?

Did humans evolve from apes?

Should we read the Bible literally?

- Ecclesiastes 1:5 "The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises."
- Galatians 4:24 "These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar."

Metaphor is embedded into language. All of language is metaphorical. Humans THINK metaphorically. You are thinking metaphorically right now. So we can't get away from metaphor and start thinking literally.

"Stand up for your rights."

Everything is thought of in terms of another.

There is no default understanding where we read the Bible literally first and only in certain places do we read it metaphorically.

Is the Bible inerrant?

Without error?