

Chapter Five: The Authority of the Bible

The Lord's Authority

God's Word is to be believed and obeyed.

The Lord's Control

God's speaks with power.

The Lord's Presence

God's speech is his self-expression.

The Authority of the Written Word

Revelation that is to be preserved —
Deut 6:6-9; Jude 3

Deuteronomy: "The Treaty of the Great King" (Meredith Kline)

- Preamble: Covenant Mediator (1:1-5)
- Historical Prologue: Covenant History (1:6-4:49)
- Stipulations: Covenant Life (chs. 5-26)
- Curses & Blessings: Covenant Ratification (chs. 27-30)
- Succession Arrangements (including living & documentary witnesses): Covenant Continuity (chs. 31-34; see esp. 31:26)
- http://www.covopc.org/Kline/Deuteronomy_Zondervan_Dictionary.html

In praise of God's Word — Ps 19:7; 119

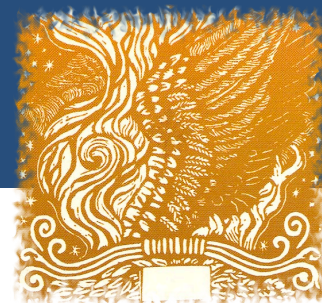
Jesus & the OT — Mt 3:4,6,7 ("it is written"); Mt 5:17-19 ("not a jot or a tittle"); Jn 5:45 ("Moses wrote of me"); 10:33-36 ("the Scripture cannot be broken")

The apostles & the OT — Ro 3:2 ("the oracles of God"); 2Tm 3:15 ("Holy Scripture"); Jas 2:8 ("the royal law"); Ro 15:4 ("for our instruction"); 2Tm 3:15-17 ("God-breathed"); 2Pt 1:19-21 ("no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man...")

The NT

- "The New Testament is just as word-centered as the Old Testament" (p. 64)
- Jn 6:68 ("You have the words of eternal life");
- A once-for-all tradition (1Co 15:2-3; 1Th 2:15; 3:6; 1Tm 6:20; 2Tm 2:2; 2Pt 2:21; Jd 3)
- Paul's letters — 1Co 14:37 ("what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord"); to be read to the churches (Col 4:16; 1Th 5:27); the basis for church discipline (2Th 3:14); the test of those who claim to be prophets or to have the Holy Spirit (1Co 14:37)
- Paul quotes Luke's gospel as an authoritative word from God (1Tm 5:18; see Lk 10:7)
- Peter puts Paul's letters on a par with "the other Scriptures" (2Pt 3:16)

The voice of the early church — "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as there is time" (Justin Martyr, *1st Apology* 67).



Canon

The “measure” of Christian teaching

- Straightforward acceptance of OT canon in use in Jesus’s day
- Criteria for acknowledgement of NT writings: apostolic origin or authorization; consistency with other Scripture — also: universality of use & antiquity of use

Transmission

Preaching & Teaching

Autographa — Scripture simply does not promise a perfect copying process. “... eventually, there will have to be a role for human thought, reason, even science” (p. 67).

Inerrancy

What it means: “What Scripture says is true, never false.”

What it doesn’t mean: “excess precision”

Why it’s necessary: “Therefore you can rely on it.”

Problem passages: For some, there are at least plausible explanations. Others challenge us to believe in God’s word even though there are problems (Ro 4:20-21; see also Heb 11:17-19; Gen 22:5)

Clarity

“The basic message of salvation is sufficiently clear that anyone can understand it, either by reading it himself or by using ordinary means of grace, such as talking to a pastor.” (p. 69)

Necessity

“Without God’s Word we have no relationship with him... the Lord is by definition one who gives authoritative commands.... Without his Word we have no authoritative promises either, so he cannot be our Savior” (p. 69).

Sufficiency

What it means: “... in Scripture we have all the words of God we need.”

What it doesn’t mean: that we don’t “need knowledge from outside Scripture, too.” (p. 70). That’s as true for theologians as it is for radio engineers, programmers, administrators, and on air personnel. Amen.