

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 1 – “Of the Holy Scriptures”, Message # 14 –
“The Authority of the Scriptures”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class,
by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 22nd, 2019.**

Paragraph 4 – The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

2nd Peter 1: 19-21; 2nd Timothy 3: 16; 2nd Thessalonians 2: 13; 1st John 5: 9

Let me give you this proposition to help us to think about this powerful reality of the Authority of the Scriptures.

1. The Authority of the Scriptures rests upon the fact that God Himself, who is Truth itself, is the Author of it.

2nd Peter 1: 12-21 – “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, (about what it means to be a true Christian) though you know and are established in the present truth.” “Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.” “Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” “For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.” “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

I want us to think together this morning about the authority of the Holy Scripture, the authority for which the Bible ought to be believed. The Bible ought to be believed because it is God’s book. It is not the production of a man, or many men. These 66 books written over thousands of years period of time, by many human authors, were not the production of men apart from God, for as we see here in these verses, “prophecy never came by the will of man, (in other words it did not originate with men determining to write the Scriptures on their own) but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”. It was God the Father who ordained that they write them, and it was God the Holy Spirit who was right there in their mind and heart with them, directly inspiring them, directly enabling them to know and write down the very words that He would have them to write down, so that we would know the things that God the Father would have us to know; particularly about our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Savior of Sinners, and the One upon whom all of our salvation depends. We must be correct that it is right to receive the Scriptures as authoritative for every area of our faith and practice, or we do not have eternal life.

The apostles, and those who wrote down the gospel records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Peter says, did not follow cunningly devised fables, when they made known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in their books of the Bible. Peter, James, and John, were eye-witnesses of Christ's majesty when they beheld Him transfigured, and heard a voice which came from heaven, when they were on the holy mountain. And so, when Matthew in Matthew 17: 1-8, and Mark in Mark 9: 2-8, and Luke in Luke 9: 28-36 wrote these things down, they wrote them down according as it was related to them by the Holy Spirit of God, in connection with the apostle's eye-witness testimony. Indeed, in verses 14 and 15 Peter says that he knew that he was going to have to put off his earthly body (my tent he calls it) soon, he would be careful to make sure that we, his readers, would always have a reminder of these things which the Holy Spirit and he deemed to be most important, that therefore he wrote them down.

God used the prophets, God used the apostles, not only to speak the word to their own generation, but as they were being directly inspired of God, they wrote it down so that all subsequent generations of people would have it and benefit from it. This was God's intention in the giving of it. Only God could be the Author of the Holy Scriptures when so many writers were spread out over several thousand years period of time, and yet they all agree in their writings concerning the fact that God is one God, and that there are 3 blessed Persons subsisting in the Divine Essence. They all agree in pointing to Christ as being the Savior of the World, in both Old Testament and New. All the writers agree in receiving and writing extensively concerning the moral expectations of what is right and wrong in connection with the law of God, His holy standard of righteousness which was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. In each of the 66 books we find more fully elaborated for us the truth that God is holy and He would have us to be holy.

And so, Peter here, in his relation of the Transfiguration tells us that he "received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And further in all of the accounts of the transfiguration which are given to us in the gospels, Moses and Elijah appeared as well to the apostles and thus the law and the prophets bore witness that Jesus was indeed the Son of God and the Lord of Glory. And so, Peter says, that we have the prophetic word that he received and heard confirmed. He wrote these things down and thus they are confirmed for us in the Holy Scriptures, of which he was one of the human authors. He says that we would do well to heed the Scriptures; that is, to consider that God's authority is behind the writing of them, and the authority of God Himself is in the very words of God which were written down, so that we might receive what was written as God's very word and God's very will, for what we should believe on every subject pertaining to life and godliness.

As he says in verse 3 of this same chapter 1 of 2nd Peter, "His divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." So, the authority of the Scriptures is that it is God who is giving men knowledge that He wants them to have about Himself, knowledge which He wants us have about ourselves. He has given us knowledge about how He created the world, and how everything including man was very good. He tell us about how sin entered the world through Adam, and about His glorious plan of salvation which He gave in nutshell form to Adam and Eve that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. He gave to us through many of the major and Minor Prophets as well as in the Psalms and the Decalogue, prophetic glimpses of how He was going to send His only-begotten Son into this world; how He would take to Himself

a true human nature and a reasonable human soul and body, and how He would suffer, bleed, and die on the cross for our sins.

The authority of the Scriptures is that God stands behind what He Himself commands, and what He Himself has promised, what He Himself explains concerning everything that He has created, and how any person comes to know Him personally. In other words, all true ideas about God, and life, and godliness, are found in the Scriptures. God declares Himself and His will in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures cannot be broken. The reason that we should believe in proof-texting is because God's authority is behind and in the Scriptures, establishing the truth with power to the minds and hearts of the reader or hearer.

I remember before I was converted to Christ that I was becoming curious about what it meant to know God, and I got ahold of a copy of Augustine's *City of God*. I was enjoying reading various sections of the book, but I couldn't help but notice that every major idea and point that Augustine was making, every subject that he wrote on, everything that he asserted to be true, he backed it up with Scripture. I said to myself – Why does he do this? He writes as though he considers the Bible to be the ultimate authority for everything that he says. And then it came to me, no doubt being re-inforced to me by the Holy Spirit: Paul, that's because it is an authority because God's authority is behind it and in it. It is therefore the ultimate authority, and you would do well to receive it in that holy way. This, I believe, was the Holy Spirit striving with me, to bring me to this important truth, that the Scriptures are God's authoritatively giving to all of mankind His mind, His will, and His heart, in words that we can understand, so that we might receive it, and be saved and then live our Christian life to God according to the truth of His word.