

26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

QUESTION #1: HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT IS TRUE?

Q. In a world that despairs of ever knowing absolute truth, how can Christians claim to know the truth? By what standard is truth discerned?

A. The Bible uniformly testifies to itself throughout that it is the God-breathed truth, the standard of all knowledge.

1. THE AUTHORITY AND INERRANCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

For the Scriptures to be *the authoritative standard* against which all other truth-claims must be measured, we must first establish (A) where the Scriptures derive their authority and (B) why the Scriptures are never wrong.

A. AUTHORITY

Two key concepts establish the authority of the Scriptures: revelation and inspiration. *Revelation* means ‘uncovering’ or ‘unveiling.’ It is God’s act of self-disclosure, making himself known to us. Therefore the prophets of the OT could write, ‘thus says the LORD,’ and the NT authors could refer to the OT as what God has said (cf. Mt 19.4; Heb 3.7; Acts 4.24; 13.34; etc.). *Inspiration* is the process by which God speaks his words through human writers (2 Tim 3.16; 2 Pet 1.21).

Since the Scriptures are God’s own words about himself, breathed through his Holy Spirit, they are *the final and authoritative source of truth* regarding God, who himself is truth.

If the word revelation emphasizes God’s initiative in making himself known and inspiration denotes the process he employed, then authority indicates the result. Because Scripture is the revelation of God by the inspiration of the Spirit, it has authority over us. (John R.W. Stott)

B. INERRANCY

Inerrancy simply means this: since the words of Scripture are spoken by God, and since God cannot lie nor deceive (Num 23.19; Titus 1.2), the Scriptures are always true and never wrong in any way.

*Prov 30⁵ Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
Ps 12⁶ The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.
Ps 119¹⁶⁰ The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.
2Tim 3¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God*

C. POSSIBLE OBJECTION: CIRCULAR ARGUMENT

Some argue that to use Scripture to establish the authority and truthfulness of Scripture is illogical. On the other hand, if our whole point is that Scripture is the ultimate authority, what good would it be to use some other authority to prove Scripture’s authority? If Scripture is the Supreme Court of authority, why appeal to a Provincial Court?

If we appealed somewhere else (i.e. science, archaeology, etc.,) in effect we would make those things authorities over the Scriptures, since the Scriptures would depend on them for their authority. The words of Scripture have authority because God has spoken them, not because science agrees with them.

2. THE CLARITY, NECESSITY, AND SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES

A. CLARITY

Throughout the Bible, the authors of Scripture affirm the clarity of Scripture.

Ps 19⁷ ... the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

The basic truths about God and salvation that must be known and taught by God's people are simple enough for every person to understand and to teach to their children.

Deut 6⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

B. NECESSITY

While a basic knowledge of God and some of his attributes may be discerned from nature (Rom 1.18-21), God's self-revelation in Scripture is necessary for a knowledge of him that will lead to salvation. The famous image of God's revelation as a 'lamp' and a 'light' (Ps 119.105) testifies to our need: without it we are walking in the utter darkness of man's wisdom.

Rom 10¹⁴ But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? ... ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

C. SUFFICIENCY

'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 everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly' (Grudem). In other words, Scripture alone is necessary to give us knowledge of how to be saved, and how to live a God-pleasing life.

2Tim 3¹⁵ ... from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

What is included or excluded from Scripture is not arbitrary: God has both *veiled* and *unveiled* according to his wisdom.

Deut 29²⁹ "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

3. IMPLICATIONS & APPLICATIONS

A. TRUTH

John 17¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

B. AUTHORITY

If the words of Scripture are God's words, then to reject their authority is to reject God. The Scriptures carry God's authority.

C. DELIGHT

Ps 119¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. ... ¹⁷⁴ I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.