

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

Sandy Springs OPC • Pastor Ganzevoort & Elder Robson • January 9, 2022

CHAPTER I: OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

1. Necessity of Scripture

- A. Necessary because sinners need more than **general revelation**
general revelation comes through natural means: creation, providence, “light of nature”
general revelation declares God’s existence (WLC 2), goodness, wisdom, and power
general revelation is enough to hold all men accountable, but not to save them from sin
passages to consider: Psalm 19:1-6; Acts 17:24-29; Romans 1:18-20
note: Christian believers do not replace or outgrow general revelation!
- B. Necessary because **special revelation** needs to be preserved and shared
special revelation comes through supernatural means (“sundry times...divers manners”)
special revelation declares God’s character and will: “that” which is needed for salvation
special revelation was given to the church
special revelation has been inscripturated to aid the truth—and church—against enemies
passages to consider: Psalm 19:7-11; Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:14-17
- C. Necessary because other forms of special revelation have ceased (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2)

2-3. Contents of Scripture

- A. “Holy” because they’re “the Word of God written” (cf. 2 Peter 1:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
- B. Grouped into two “testaments” (i.e., covenants)—*note the ongoing validity and value of the OT*
- C. Sixty-six books...depending on how you count—*note the variety of genre and provenance*
- D. Inspired by God as the rule of Christian faith and life
- E. Apocryphal books are not inspired, and hence not in the canon
- F. Mere human documents lack Scripture’s authority and usefulness

4. Authority of Scripture

- A. It ought to be believed and obeyed
- B. Based on its divine authorship (“thus says the Lord”), not on human authority or tradition

5. Recognition of Scripture

- A. Arguments and evidences may move us
testimony of the church
self-evidences
 - “heavenliness of the matter”: Scripture’s profound subjects
 - “efficacy of the doctrine”: Scripture’s power to change people (Hebrews 4:12)
 - “majesty of the style”: Scripture’s literary and logical excellence
 - “consent of all the parts”: Scripture’s internal consistency
 - “scope of the whole”: Scripture’s comprehensive focus on God’s glory
 - “full discovery of the way of salvation”: Scripture’s soteriological thoroughness
 - “many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof”
- B. Our full persuasion is by the inward work of the Holy Spirit
contrast this with Mormonism, et al.: “by and with the Word”
we need persuading because we are sinful, biased, spiritually dead (1 Corinthians 2:14)
Scripture is the Holy Spirit’s voice and tool (cf. Ephesians 6:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6)
the Holy Spirit’s sovereignty (cf. John 3:8) means not all readers alike will be persuaded

6. Sufficiency of Scripture

7. Clarity of Scripture

8. Language of Scripture

9. Interpretation of Scripture

10. Supremacy of Scripture