Section: Doctrine of the Word of God (Bibliology)

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q23. Who wrote the Bible?**

The Bible was written by chosen men who were taught and carried along by the Holy Spirit.

* **Intro**

We discussed this a bit last week when we talked about the inspiration of scripture. I saved some of this information for us to see tonight.

Because of the time we spent in regards to the inspiration of scripture last week we won’t spend a large amount of time on this tonight. However before we dive into the other fun portion of the night I really want us to see this well. When it comes to these topics, one of my favorite theologian/pastors to learn from is Dr. James White. He has had extensive study in the area of textual criticism and so much of what I am sharing with you tonight is from his expert focus on the topic.

* **Carried along by the Holy Spirit:**

When our catechism answer states; the bible was written by chosen men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit, we ought to immediately think of God’s word that expressly states this. Open your bibles to 2 Peter.

**2 Peter 1:16-21 16For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” 18we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. 21For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

There are so many rich points in this short section of scripture. The passage begins with the authority of the Apostle Peter being rooted in his training from Christ Jesus Himself. Vs. 16, “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” See Peter’s claim to being an eyewitness. The declaration he is making here is that he isn’t sharing some myth passed down from generation to generation.

This isn’t another good fairy tale. This isn’t some cleverly design story that these men are trying to spread everywhere even at the cost of their own lives! No, Peter said we were eyewitnesses to His majesty! Peter was taught by God incarnate, the second person of the triune God head, Jesus Himself. When Peter says we were eyewitnesses to his majesty, he is actually referring to the mount of transfiguration where the glory of Jesus was displayed to the few disciples who were with Him. We know this is what he is referring to because of what he continues to say in the next verse. Vs. 17-18, “For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.” This moment was captured well by Matthew, in Matthew chapter 7.

**Matthew 7:1-9 1And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 5He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” 6When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” 8And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. 9And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”**

Wow, the disciples were eyewitnesses to the transfiguration of Christ. They literally saw Christ glorified in a way that no other man had seen prior to this. And look at verse 9 Jesus said, “do not tell anyone of this until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” Well fast forward to 2 Peter and here Peter is, finally having understood what Christ Jesus meant, and sharing this reality with those to whom he was writing.

Now what’s about to happen should really catch our attention. Verse 18 reads, “we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.” So in case you were wondering what Peter meant, he is stating very clearly that he was an eyewitness to this amazing event. Not only did he see Jesus in a transfigured, glorified state, he even heard the voice of God declare that Jesus was the Son with whom God was well pleased. They literally fell on their faces in terror.

However what Peter is about to say is really what blows my mind and I hope it bears the same weight for you tonight as you see it in the passage. Verse 19 says, “And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.” Did you catch it yet?

Peter said we literally heard the voice of God speak and saw Christ transfigured in majesty, but we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed! Peter you heard the voice of God yourself are you sure you have a *more fully confirmed word* from God? Peters answer is YESSSSS. Verse 20 confirms that this is Peters aim, “knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.” Church do you see what Peter said? Peter said we were eyewitnesses, I was one of the guys face down because I was trembling at the voice of God! That was me, BUTTTT we have something even greater than that. Something with even greater confirmation, that YOU WOULD DO WELL TO PAY ATTENTION TOO!!!!

Peter clearly proclaims that the scripture is an even greater confirmation than his personal hearing of the audible voice of God. Church the next time someone says they have a word from God just tell them, “No thank you, I have something greater than that” and hold up your bible. Feel free to point them to this passage and show them that Peter himself declared this.

Now that was not the main point as it relates to our topic tonight. However, you must see the weight and authority of what Peter declares in this passage. Verse 21 reads, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” Peter claimed right here that the letter He was writing and the scripture that they already had, was greater than the personal audible voice of God that he and the other two disciples were eyewitnesses too.

He said that no man ever prophesied of his own will. Rather these men spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The truth contained within our bibles was written by men, who were carried along by God the Holy Spirit. These words of truth, church, are not just clever words of men. They are the words of God written by men who were trained and carried along by the Holy Spirit. As we stated last week these are God’s words. When we really believe this to be true, we will hold to their authority and inerrancy. We can do this because the scriptures come from God, and because God by His very nature is inerrant and authoritative. The scriptures are infallible because God is infallible. They cannot fail to do what they are purposed to do because God cannot fail to do what He has purposed to do. God cannot deny Himself. If He has set His mind/will to do something, it must be done.

* **New Testament authors believed they were writing scripture:**

One common argument from fallen man against Scripture is that these authors never believed the letters they were writing were actually going to be taken as scripture. However, when we look at what the writers themselves said in their writing, it is obvious that they believed they were writing scripture. It is clear they believed their letters were meant to be taught as God’s authoritative words. Peter says as much in 2 Peter;

**2 Peter 3:15-16 15And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.**

Notice two things, first Peter refers to Paul’s writing as scripture and therefore authoritative. Second, if we pay close attention to Peters words here it is clear he believed he was writing scripture also. In verse 15 Peter said, “just as our beloved Paul **also** wrote to you.” Wait a minute, when Peter says Paul **also** wrote to you, we need to see that Peter is calling this letter, (his own writing) the same thing he is about to call the writings of Paul. This is why he says, “Paul **ALSO** wrote.” The only viable thing that the word “also” can relate to here is Peters own letter.

Peter says. “Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, **as they do the other Scriptures**.”

Peter clearly calls Paul’s letters, and therefore his letter here, scripture. If we read Peters words here, we cannot begin to believe the lies being pushed forward by people who claim these guys didn’t even know we would read these letters as scripture.

So, what about Paul? Well our key passage last week, 2 Timothy 3:15-16 gives us the answer to this question.

**2 Timothy 3:15-16 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.**

Paul uses two different words here when he makes reference to the scriptures. He uses one term when he says “sacred writings” (which are obviously the Old Testament writings because Timothy had known them since he was a child and the NT writings had not been available to Timothy then). And Paul uses another term for Scripture when he says all scripture is God breathed. In fact, Paul does this exclusively. See the contrast between vs. 15 and 16. We find the word sacred writings and scripture. In vs 15 Paul uses the word “grammata” in reference to the sacred writings, and in verse 16 he uses the word graphē in reference to all scripture. The word “grammata” had specific reference to the Old Testament.

When Paul used the term grammata, which literally means writings, he exclusively used it to refer to the Old Testament scriptures. Paul used this term 50 times in the New Testament and always applied this term to the OT writings. Paul never uses the term grammata any other way. When Paul used the word graphē he intended for us to see that this was including the new writings in the same category as the old writings.

When Paul uses the term grammata in vs 15 it is clear that the OT writing is what Paul is referring too. So when Paul uses graphē in verse 16, he is clearly including more than just the OT, otherwise he would simply use the same term grammata in both spots. Instead Paul uses the word graphē, in fact Paul only uses this term twice in the NT. Both times he uses it, he is referring to more than simply the OT text. We see Paul do this in:

**1 Timothy 5:18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”**

Paul uses the term “graphē” here, and gives 2 citations from scripture. The first citation is from Duet. 25:4, however the second citation is not found in the OT. You will find it in Luke 10:7 though. Paul refers to Luke chapter 10 as scripture. Because he is referring to both the OT and the NT in this passage he calls it graphē. Paul clearly designates this New Testament Gospel from Luke to be on the same level as Deuteronomy when he called them both graphē. Paul never used the word graphē when he spoke specifically and solely of the OT writings.

This means that it is clear that Paul referred to the New Testament writings, including his own letter, as God breathed. This is what he said in 2Timothy, “all graphē is theopneustos.” When Paul says scripture is God breathed, he declares that the NT scripture is God’s breathed just as the OT is God breathed. When Paul says “all graphē,” he uses the word “all” as an adjective that modifies the word scripture. Scripture, all of it (OT and NT), is God breathed as a characteristic.

For arguments sake, there is an important clarity to take note of here. Paul said all scripture is God breathed. He isn’t referring simply to the writers of scripture as being carried along by God in their writing. Rather he takes it a step further for clarities sake and says their writings are God breathed. All scripture, old and new, are God’s very words. Scripture is inspired in its entirety. Scripture was written by men trained and carried along by the Holy Spirit and scripture itself, the original words these men wrote, are God breathed from the first to the last. A common argument is that men wrote the scripture and they were inspired by God, but the words themselves are not necessarily God’s words. This argument dies at the passage the Paul wrote to Timothy.

Implications and applications:

Scripture has its origin in God and this is the basis for its authority. The Spirit used the inspired human’s own character, experience, and writing style and yet the words brought about were still the very words of God.

Remember, without God giving us Scripture, we would be hopeless. Praise God for His revelation!

This leads us to our next question.

**Q24. Can we trust the Bible?**

Yes. The Bible is completely true and without error in its original manuscripts.

* **Canon of Scripture**
1. Why does canon matter?

How many of you know what the canon of scripture is? Don’t worry I’m not going to call on you to share I just want to ask out loud and let that awkward nervous feeling flood over you in an attempt to get your attention. The canon is the collected works of the Holy Bible. The biblical canon consists of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament.

One of the most attacked components of our faith is the Bible. One of the most attacked parts of the bible is the Canon. Christians we must be prepared to give an answer to those who would attempt to cause doubt in us by understanding what the Canon is and how we’ve come to possess the canon we have. That’s why this topic is so important. This is an area that many believers really just don’t have any understanding about. I grew up in church all my life and no one taught me what the Canon was or how we came to have the Canon of Scripture we have today. In order to truly understand the answers to these questions we need to have a foundational understanding of what the canon is.

* **The Canon of Scripture Is a Theological Issue First and Foremost**

Now when it comes to the canon of scripture we **MUST** begin with this understanding; the canon of scripture is a theological issue first and foremost. It is not first and foremost a historical issue. Let me unpack that a little for you. What is or is not considered canon in our bible is **NOT** first and foremost an issue of who decided in **history** these certain writings would or would not be canonized.

James White has written: “We need to start off by realizing we are talking about the Canon of Scripture. As we have already seen, Scripture is theopneustos, God-breathed; to say we are talking about something unique is to master the art of understatement. Scripture does not simply drop down out of heaven like rain to be gathered up and organized by man. The nature of Scripture determines the canon of Scripture; that is, the canon must be defined in light of what Scripture is. If Scripture is (1) God-breathed and (2) given for the purposes revealed within its own revelation, then vitally important conclusions must be drawn from these two truths, conclusions that deeply impact our understanding of the canon and its function. The reason I raise these issues is simple: I believe we must determine the divine view and purpose of the canon before we can have any basis upon which to discuss the human side of recognizing and understanding the canon.”

What tends to happen is people ask well “WHO” determined what should be in the bible? The common thought is that at some point in history people sat together and said, next up on the docket is Matthew, yeah or nay? Okay that’s seven yeah’s and two nay’s looks like Matthew is in, okay what about Luke? That’s not actually what happened. It didn’t happen that way because there wasn’t a need for it to happen that way. God creates canon by inspiring some writings and not inspiring other writings. For example, God *inspired* the letter of Paul to Titus, He did not “inspire” C. S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia.

(Remember, the way “inspire” is being used in this discussion is very specific, as we saw last week) So, not everything written is *inspired* by God, however some things that were written were God breathed, so some writing is most certainly inspired. Therefore we must have a canon of the inspired words of God.

Quoting James White: “In the early history of the church there were events and people that gave impetus and rise to the formalization of the canon list. These things could be viewed as being used of God to prompt His people, the Church, to give serious consideration to providing to all concerned a listing of the books which the Church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, received as authoritative. Let it again be noted that it is not being stated that the books, by being considered canon, received authority. Rather, it was the process whereby the church recognized the authority already inherent in the books by virtue of their inspiration. As F.F. Bruce has said, ‘One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and general apostolic authority, direct or indirect.’”

You see the standards used to recognize the canon of God have been revealed to us in scripture. What this means is that the text itself, reveals to us, if it belongs in the canon. The questions we would ask any writing proclaiming to be from God are such; does the text measure up? Does the text contradict itself or other scriptures? Are there crazy things in the text that reveal it is clearly not a revelation from God? Canon is not about a group of men in history who sat down and decided this not that. The text has revealed itself to either be written by men carried along by the Holy Spirit (proving it’s of the canon) or written by men carried along by their own thoughts (proving it’s not of the canon).

Man’s knowledge of the canon is passive. Man does not seek to **create** the canon but rather to **recognize** it. So this means that arguments or disputes about canon cannot in any true way destroy the actual canon. No matter what scripture is argued against, God has spoken, and by so doing there is a canon, a collection of God’s work.

You see God has a purpose for His word. Therefore, surely the identity of what is and is not a part of this scripture will be as much of a concern of God’s work as the preservation of the text of the scripture. God is going to preserve the text and lead His people to recognize His true text.

The Roman Catholic Church declares their canon, including the Apocrypha, to be authoritative because they have a higher power and the higher power, whether the church or the pope, has decided that their text is authoritative. You know what’s interesting, the Mormon Church also makes the same argument. They claim they have a prophet who told them their canon, their prophet said their text is authoritative because their supposed prophet Joseph Smith had simply said so. If you recall our apologetics series nearly every false religion in the world says the same thing, we have a revelation from the true god and we know it is from the true god because we have a prophet who has verified this new revelation.

In fact many of the world’s false religions actually claim that the bible is a true revelation from God as long as it agrees with the text they now have. For example in Islam they claim that the Koran is the true revelation of God. However Mohammed had also claimed in his writing of the Koran that the bible (OT and Gospels) was a true revelation of God as well. So now Muslims would say in the areas that the bible agrees with the Koran it is God’s revelation but where it doesn’t agree it is actually false and the Koran is correct. Now I bring this up for a very simple clarity. God in the Old Testament claimed that any future revelation would line up with His word or it would not be from Him.

**Isaiah 8:20 To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.**

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5 “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.**

It isn’t hard to gather from these texts that any words that do not line up with Scripture are not to be trusted. In fact, at one time, God required that false prophets should be put to death for their false speaking.

Falsehood is what you have with the book of Mormon, the Koran, and the New World Translation of scripture from the Jehovah’s witnesses. They have all declared to have a prophet who revealed some new revelation, however each of those prophets have been proven to be wrong and the new revelation they declare to have, totally and utterly contradicts the previous revelation from Scripture. It isn’t hard to see why we would declare the book of Mormon to not be God’s true word. God declares multiple times He alone is God, the book of Mormon declares that you can become a god one day. We can see the same examples from the Koran and from the NWT of Jehovah’s witnesses.

Just consider this, how did the godly Jewish leader know, that the scriptures he had, were the word of God? How did the Godly Jewish leader know, 50 years before Jesus came and affirmed that reality? This is an important question guys pay attention to the answer because I’m hopeful that this will solidify what I’ve been trying to unpack for you. How did the man of God know prior to Christ coming, that the scriptures they had were the very words of God? Jesus held men accountable to the scripture’s, so surely Jesus believed they should have known what was God’s word, and what wasn’t. So how did they know?

You see to anyone who is looking for some kind of supernatural revelation that Isaiah and 2nd Chronicles were scripture prior to Christ quoting from them as such, it won’t be found. Rather what is true is that the scriptures were given to build up the people of God and so the people of God can discern what God has given to them as His word. This is why Jesus held these men responsible. They should have known, because of the writing itself, that the books were Gods writings. The theological testimony of the writing itself proved its canonicity.

Here is a great example. How many of you have ever heard of the gospel of Peter? Most often if you hear of it, people call it the “lost” gospel of peter. Well in this supposed lost gospel, at the account of Jesus’s resurrection, it describes Jesus as being taller than the clouds. It also claims that Jesus wasn’t the only one in the tomb. The cross that Jesus was murdered on also walked out of the tomb with Jesus (who knew the cross was put in the tomb). Strange right? Well it gets stranger, when the cross came out of the tomb behind the giant Jesus, it spoke. Church does that sound at all like it should be considered scripture alongside the other gospels? It doesn’t take much to see how this book is not a part of God’s word. It doesn’t fit, the writing given does not build up the church, and in many parts the gospel of Peter contradicts the true word of God. As does the extra writings of Mormons, Catholics, etc…all of them contradict Scripture in various ways.

So why do we believe the 66 books of the Old and New Testament belong in the canon of scripture? Because these books are congruent, they are consistent with each other, they lift God high as the primary point and purpose of the lives of His created. There are clear teachings and theologies that can be seen from the books that we have. They have a purpose of building up the people of God and a focus on God’s glory. If they are God’s word then they won’t contradict, they won’t be useless, they will have a purpose, and Gods people will acknowledge them as God’s word. The theological testimony of the writing itself proved its canonicity.

There was a time when these things weren’t questioned, my great grandparents generation used and quoted scripture all the time without it being questioned, however that time has passed. If you cannot provide answers to these questions or train your children up to know and understand how to answer them, then you and or you children will most certainly be unable to defend your faith at some point in your life. Or worse yet your children will go off to college and get fed to the wolves of a world that is anti-God and anti-objective truth.

So remember, the canon was not decided by some group of higher authorities within church history contrary to what others have claimed. These books have been recognized from the time of their writings and have continued to be recognized by God’s people since then. They meet the standards that God himself has declared throughout His word. The theological testimony of the writing itself proved its canonicity.

Canon is first and foremost a theological issue. When you remember this it will be the great foundation of your defense of the faith. Let’s consider one of the pop culture arguments against scripture.

The Divinci code was a popular book that got turned into a popular movie. The major error in this story is the idea that a church council came together and settled the canon of scripture by deciding and declaring what was canon. The book claims that the council of Nicea in 325 was a council that settled the canon. It was actually in the 390’s that the canon was “settled” so to speak. The error of the Divinci code book was the idea that there were all these books, and each one of them were equally valid and equally authoritative and the counsel just left the ones they didn’t like out and kept the ones they wanted. This is simply not true.

On the flip side of that, what is also not true is that when John finished the book of revelation, angels appeared out of the heavens and gently floated down the complete book called the bible containing all 66 books and this landed in John’s hand boom there you go. The actual church process of canonization was the process of the church recognizing what books are indeed in and what books are indeed out, however this was a reality recognized by God’s people, not dictated by God’s people through some council. The church, through a process of time and study recognized what books or letters were truly scriptural canon—again, with the primary marker being theological.

We spent a good chunk of time looking at New Testament claims to being scripture, what about the OT? In the book of Joshua we see the reference to the book of the law, we see that it is to be followed, and it is to be at the center of the life of God’s people. The Prophets of the OT are consistently dependent upon the Pentateuch.

In the New Testament Christ quotes from the proverbs and claims that God spoke. Christ himself recognized many books, including proverbs as scripture. When Jesus was on the road to Emmaus He referred back to the law and the prophets and unpacked how all these scriptures pointed to Him.

**Luke 24:25 25And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. 32They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” 44Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.**

The law, the prophets, and the psalms, are the three sections of the Hebrew bible commonly called the TANAK. The Torah-law, Nevi'im-prophets, Khetavium-writings.

Now Jesus didn’t list the 39 actual books of the OT. What He does do is this, He uses the familiar term that everyone at that time would have understood to encompass the entirety of the Old Testament. You see the New Testament writers recognize the Old and the New Testament letters and quote them or refer to them as scripture. We have covered this in detail already so I won’t spend a lot of time here. What we can see clearly is that the writers of the New Testament and the saints of the old and new testament time, including Christ Himself seemed to have no problems agreeing and Identifying what is and is not God’s inspired word.

* **Open or closed canon?**

Many people have asked why we can’t still add to the canon of scripture. The common thought is, “what’s the problem with God still communicating to His people in such a way that the canon can continue growing?” Why is our canon closed, why don’t we include any of these other writings as canon? Well again to lean on the great help of Dr. James White I am going to summarize a small section from his book “Scripture Alone,” that covers this topic.

Under the title **“AN OPEN CANON?”** James White unpacks the reality of our closed canon and why it is that way today.

An important theological and apologetic consideration: Is the canon of Scripture open or closed? That is, might there someday be eighty books of Scripture, or a hundred, rather than sixty-six, or is the canon a closed entity, without possibility of addition? For some this question is merely a fun theological brain-teaser, something along the lines of “What if we found a lost epistle of Paul—would it be included in the Bible?”

But for others it is far more than mere speculation: Mormonism believes in an open canon, the possibility of “latter-day revelation,” and on that basis seeks to have the Book of Mormon and its other scriptures accepted within the canon. Speculation on this topic has enjoyed varying popularity with each generation down through the course of history.

Remember what I had said earlier about people claiming various gnostic gospels as being “lost scripture.” Well that whole concept that there are supposedly lost scriptures would actually claim that though God was capable of Inspiring scripture so as to provide for His church guidance and instruction and encouragement; then, having inspired His Word, God was incapable of protecting and preserving it and leading His church to recognize it for what it is. Arguing that God might wish to give more Scripture at a later point is one thing; charging God with delinquency of duty in light of His own stated purposes for the giving of Scripture is simply without any foundation in His truth as taught in the Bible. From a biblical perspective of God’s sovereignty, the idea of “lost scripture” is an unambiguously self-refuting concept.

So what about the concept of “continuing revelation” in the form of new Scripture from God? The idea is popular not only among those who wish to include their “revelations” in the canon, but also among those who use “the Lord spoke and said to me” formula with regularity. So what response can be offered to those who believe the canon itself remains open? The previous considerations are again relevant. One would have to hold a view of the church that allows for a complete revision of its purpose beyond that envisioned by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the revelation of God in Christ, at best, would have to be considered either partial or liable to further future elaboration. This is not what the apostles themselves taught. Note these words from Hebrews: God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (1:1–2) There are two modes of revelation noted by the writer: that which was spoken “long ago” and that which has been spoken “in these last days.” The old way was directed to “the fathers” and utilized the prophetic writings.

That which has been given in the last days is “in His Son.” The rest of Hebrews in numerous ways demonstrates the supremacy of Christ over everything that was part of the “old way”; therefore, envisioning a time when the revelation made in Him will be supplemented or even eclipsed by some new revelation would require us to abandon belief in the finality and supremacy of the revelation of God in Christ. The “last days” would have to be modified to allow for some later period when revelation would again need to be provided, as if the original provision was insufficient for the church. This, of course, is the fundamental drive behind all such allegedly “new revelation,” which would likewise require a redefinition of the church and its mission (also common among those seeking to add to the canon). By contrast, if one accepts the New Testament’s own teaching concerning both the perpetuity and nature of the church and the finality of God’s revelation in Christ [and His first century apostolic mouthpieces], the concept is seen to be inconsistent with the canon as it exists.

In my own language what White is getting at here is that the scripture testifies to Christ as being the greatest revelation from God. God spoke to us through his prophets long ago, but in the last days and in a much greater and clearer way, God revealed Himself to us in the God-man Jesus Christ. Christ came and spoke, taught, and prophesied *and* He commissioned a relative few for a very limited time to continue this for Him. These relative few lived during and immediately after His death, resurrection, and assentation.

Theologian Michael J. Kruger: “Jesus had commissioned his apostles “so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority” (Mark 3:14–15). When Jesus sent out the twelve, he reminds them that “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matt 10:20). Thus, he is able to give a warning to those who reject the apostles’ authority: “If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words…it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town” (Matt 10:14).

In sum, the apostles had the very authority of Christ himself. They were his mouthpiece. As such, their teachings, along with the prophets, were the very foundation of the church. Paul describes the church as “built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets” (Eph 2:20). If the church wanted to know the true Christian message, they would always need to look back to the teaching of the apostles [since the true Apostles were empowered by Christ to speak His words].”

As we’ll study more, when these specific few pasted away, the new revelation from God ceased.

As the 1689 Christian Confession says “The Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God’s former ways of revealing his will to his people **have now ceased**.” That is the orthodox Christian position: God has ceased giving new revelation with the end of the Apostles first century living ministry.

If there is more revelation (beyond the Old Testament, Christ, and His specific first century apostolic mouthpieces) it would deny God’s design for giving revelation through Prophets, Apostles, and Christ Himself and that simply is not feasible. Back to Whites writing on the topic.

Someone [may] suggest that changing times have made it necessary for God to give new revelation, but the Scriptures teach that God is eternal and has infallible knowledge of the future; He surely knew every situation the church would face when He inspired the Scriptures long ago. Are we to believe that He is incapable of giving a revelation that would be sufficient throughout the church age? The Spirit of God is able to apply the principles and truths of the inspired Word to our hearts just as He did in past generations, and while our technology may be far ahead of our ancestors’, our hearts and minds are the same. We remain the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, with the same needs and desires.

Church, because the Scriptures are rooted in the God who breathed them into existence, we must see that they will also be a true reflection of God’s character. That is why, as I said last week, we can trust the Scripture to be Inerrant, because God is Inerrant (He never errs). Scripture is Infallible, because God is infallible, He will accomplish all His Holy Will! The Scriptures are Authoritative because God is authoritative, one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Church, we submit to God’s word as a way of bowing the knee now until we have the great privilege to bow before our Lord on that glorious day! If these are true because they are rooted in God then the reality that scripture still speaks and is sufficient for our time today must also be true because the all-knowing God has prepared them for such a time as this. He is not responding to us in time as if He did not know what we would be facing today.

God knew what would happen in our day, God has given us all that we need in His word.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

Church, God declared that the scripture is sufficient that the people of God may be complete equipped for every good work. These are the same good works that God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them, see Ephesians 2:10. If God can create the good works beforehand for those whom He would save then He can surely breathe out His word for us beforehand and they still be sufficient for us today to complete the works He created for us. Church, God is always consistent, He is immutable meaning He does not change. He gave us His word, and through it, proclaimed that it is sufficient. The canon is closed because we have all that we need for life and Godliness.

**1689 Confession of Faith**: “The whole counsel of God concerning everything essential for his own glory and man's salvation, faith, and life is either explicitly stated or by necessary inference contained in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is ever to be added to the Scriptures, either by new revelation of the Spirit or by human traditions.

Let me close with this, a few months ago I tried to have a calm and loving conversation with someone who visited our church. This person was very frustrated that we believed God to have spoken in His word sufficiently. They said that they simply could not live if God didn’t speak to them personally, outside of Scripture, daily. If that was actually true then God’s word which declares to be sufficient is false. We know that’s not the case! Please hear me say this with love and concern for your hearts and your eternal walk with God, if you feel or even believe you have experienced something that is contrary to what the Word of God declares to be true, the Word is not wrong, rather it is our feelings or what we thought we experienced that is incorrect.

The argument this person continued to make as I addressed them with God’s word was that there is no way I can know that God does or doesn’t speak to them because it is a private, personal revelation. Church this is the same argument that the Mormons make and that Joseph smith declared in the book of Mormon to be the litmus test of true belief. He declared that if you would pray you would feel a burning in the bosom and this would prove that the god Joseph Smith wrote about is true. Please be very aware when someone says *you* are the deciding factor of what is true, your feelings are the proof of what is or is not correct. This kind of subjective worldview is not in line with God’s word.

Church, God revealed Himself to us the greatest way possible by taking on flesh Himself as the second person of the triune God in the incarnation. This is why the last revelation that Christians consider to be of the canon comes from those men who were commissioned by Christ Himself. There is no greater way that God has decided to reveal Himself. We can trust that His revelation in the Son and the eyewitness testimony of Jesus’s disciples is sufficient for us to be complete men and women of God. His word has said as much!

Let’s pray!