

Theology 1 Study Guide  
WCF Chapter 1, Section 1.b-6, The Nature and Sufficiency of Scripture

**2Tim. 3:16** All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. (c.f. *Pss 53:6, Gen. 2:7*)

**2Pet. 1:19** So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, **21** because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

**Heb. 1:1** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** 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.

- I. **The Question of Inspiration:** ...to commit the wholly into writing... (1.1b) ...being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic... (1.8)
  - The work/gift of Holy Spirit
  - Verbal Inspiration: God created/breathed out of people (distinguished from “author inspiration” or “reader response inspiration”—liberal and neo-orthodox respectively)
  - Plenary and Progressive: “the whole” from beginning to end, a work in progress—implication in Bible Interp
  - Confluent: divine-human interaction notwithstanding—e.g the miracle of incarnation in inspiration. *Work in which God by his spirit through human writers gave us His Word... utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers (CS Art. 7,8)*
  
- II. **The Question of Infallibility/Inerrancy:** ... it is to be received because it is the Word of God (1.4), ... high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture... (1.5)
  - What this means, and doesn't mean: *It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses (Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy, Article 9)*
  
- III. **The Question of Cessation:** ... those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased... (1.1b), ... unto which nothing at any times is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men...” (1.6)
  - *Heb. 1:1-3—God “spoke”... not “speaks”*
  - *Eph. 2: 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.*
  - *Rev.22:18 ...if anyone adds to them...*
  - The Word-Deed-Word Principle of Inscripturation.. where “Redemption and revelation coincide....( Geerhardus Vos)
  
- IV. **The Question of Canon:** ...are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament (1.2) c.f. 1:5.
  - Canon from “reed” as a tool for measurement... that which is the “rule” or “ideal standard” against which all things can be measured—“rule of faith and practice”
  - *Lost Scriptures?? Excerpts from Dan Brown's DaVinci Code, chapter 55:*
    - *A product of man, not God”*
    - *False testimony*
    - *By men who possessed a political agenda to solidify their power base*
    - *Commissioned and financed by Constantine*
    - *“the gospels they attempted to destroy have been discovered as a part of an ancient library of Coptic Scrolls and highlight the glaring discrepancies and fabrications of the modern Bible*

*Based on Scholarly works such as Elaine Pagels:*  
*Now that scholars have begun to place the sources discovered at Nag Hammadi, like newly discovered pieces of a complex puzzle, next to what we have long known from tradition, we*

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*find that these remarkable texts, only now becoming widely available, are transforming what we know as Christianity.<sup>1</sup>*

- Orthodox Response (c.f. Canon Revisited... CPC Study Center/Resources)
  1. Recognized vs. Conferred by Church
  2. Test of OT Witness: “the prior rule of faith” already in tact by 1<sup>st</sup> century (Marcion Controversy settled in mid-second century! C.f. Thus the importance of the OT Interpretation of Christ ministry and message! (c.f. OT of OT: Ex.20:1, NT of OT: Mt.4:1-11,
  3. Test of Apostolicity: (c.f. 2 Peter, Eph. 2, )  
*John 15:26* “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, 27 and you will bear witness also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”
  4. Bottom up vs. Top Down—“the battle was waged not in the fourth century but in the middle of the second century, wherein the “winners” were not the politically advantaged... e.g. AD 140
  5. Canon mostly “settled” by 200 AD and formally ratified ecumenically in 350 AD at the synod of Laodicea.

V. **The Question of Authority:** ...all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life... (1.6) c.f. 1.10

- Reformational “soli scriptura”
  1. Ecclesial application: by positive institution
  2. Individual application: by negative institution
- Ultimate authority vs. Interpretative Authority
- the so called “regulative principle”

VI. **The Question of Believing in Scripture:** ... whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of god: yet notwithstanding... is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. (1.5)

- Scriptural Testimony
- Ecclesial Testimony
- “Spiritually appraised” or “internal” testimony– thus “faith seeking understanding” vs. “understanding seeking faith”

*1Cor. 2:14* Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are **spiritually** discerned.

**Q and A:**

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<sup>1</sup> Elaine Pagels. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*

*Addendum: On the Apocrypha*

(Taken from [www.churchplantingvillage.net](http://www.churchplantingvillage.net))

After the Old Testament canon had been recognized by the Jews as being officially closed, and prior to the New Testament period, there arose a section of literature called the Apocrypha. This word literally means “that which is hidden” and consists of 14 books.

I. The Contents of the Apocrypha

- A. 1 Esdras – This book covers much of the material found in Ezra, Nehemiah, and 2 Chronicles but it also includes a fanciful story concerning three Jewish servants in Persia. They were all asked a question by King Darius concerning what the greatest thing in the world was. One said wine, another replied women, while the third claimed truth was. He won, and when offered a reward, suggested the King allow the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
- B. 2 Esdras – This contains certain visions given to Ezra dealing with God’s government of the world and the restoration of certain lost Scriptures.
- C. Tobit – Tobit is the story of a pious Jew (Tobit) who is accidentally blinded (by sparrow dung) and is later healed by an angel named Raphael, who applies a concoction of fish heart, liver, and gall to his eye.
- D. Judith – This is the story of a beautiful and devout Jewish princess who saves Jerusalem from being destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s invading armies. This she does by beguiling the enemy general through her beauty, then returning to Jerusalem with his head in her handbag!
- E. The remainder of Esther – There are additional inserts to this book to show the hand of God in the narrative by putting the word *God* in the text. The word *God* does not appear in the Old Testament book of Esther.
- F. The Wisdom of Solomon – This book has been called “The Gem of the Apocrypha,” and is one of the loftier books of the Apocrypha.
- G. Ecclesiasticus – Also called “the Wisdom of Jews, the Son of Sirach,” it resembles the book of Proverbs and gives rules for personal conduct in all details of civil, religious, and domestic life.
- H. 1 Maccabees – This historical account of the Maccabean period relates events of the Jews’ heroic struggle for liberty (175 – 135 B.C.)
- I. 2 Maccabees – This work covers in part the same period as 1 Maccabees but is somewhat inferior content-wise.
- J. Baruch – Supposedly written by Jeremiah’s secretary, Baruch, it contains prayers and confessions of the Jews in exile, with promises of restoration.
- K. The Song of the Three Children – Inserted in the book of Daniel, right after the fiery furnace episode (Dan. 3:23), It contains an eloquent prayer of Azariah, one of the three Hebrew men thrown in the fire.
- L. The story of Susanna – This story relates how the godly wife of a wealthy Jew in Babylon, falsely accused of adultery, was cleared by the wisdom of Daniel.
- M. Bel and the Dragon – This is also added to the book of Daniel. The book contains two stories:
  - 1. The first concerns how Daniel proves to the king his great god Bel is a dead idol and that the Bel priests are religious crooks.
  - 2. *Unger’s Bible Handbook* describes this event in the following words:  
The other legend concerns a dragon worshiped in Babylon. Daniel, summoned to do it homage, feeds it a mixture of pitch, hair, and fat, which causes it to explode. The enraged populace compels the King to throw Daniel in the den of lions where he is fed on the sixth day by the prophet Habakkuk, who is angelically transported to Babylon by the hair of his head while carrying food and drink to the reapers in Judea. On the seventh day the King rescues Daniel and throws his would-be destroyers to the hungry lions. (p. 459)
- N. The Prayer of Manasseh – This is the supposed confessional prayer of wicked King Manasseh of Judah after he was carried away prisoner to Babylon by the Assyrians.

II. Reasons for Rejecting the Apocrypha – “Why don’t you Protestants have all the books of the Bible in your King James Version?”

- A. The Apocrypha was never included in the Old Testament canon by such recognized authorities as the

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Pharisees, Ezra the prophet, etc.

B. It was never quoted by either Jews or any other New Testament writers.

C. The great Jewish historian Josephus excluded it.

D. The well-known Jewish philosopher Philo did not recognize it.

E. The early church fathers excluded it.

F. The Bible translator Jerome did not accept them as inspired, although he was forced by the pope to include them into the Latin Vulgate Bible.

G. None of the 14 books claim divine inspirations; in fact, some actually disclaim it.

H. Some books contain historical and geographical errors.

I. Some books teach false doctrine, such as praying for the dead.

J. No apocryphal book can be found in any catalogue list of canonical books composed during the first four centuries A.D. In fact, it was not until 1596 at the Council of Trent that the Roman Catholic church officially recognized these books, basically in an attempt to strengthen its position, which had been grievously weakened by the great reformer Martin Luther.