

Theology for Life
Faith Presbyterian Church
Lesson 2: Special Revelation & Liberty of Conscience

Opening Q: Is the Bible sufficient for life? Do we need more information from God to navigate life?

Review of Lesson 1

1. Confessional approach
2. General Revelation

Christianity is a religion based on knowing God. Central to knowing God is the understanding that God has clearly revealed himself to humanity.

Two types of revelation compared:

General Revelation

- a) Revealed in all of creation
- b) God uses ordinary means accessible to all people
- c) Reveals his power and divinity, Ps. 19
- d) Leaves all without excuse: all condemned, Rom. 1

Special Revelation

- a) Revelation by God's word and deed
- b) God uses supernatural means accessible to those to whom it comes
- c) Reveals his saving grace and plan of redemption
- d) Redeems those who receive it

Limits to Book of Nature

WCF I.1.a. *Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.*

B.B. Warfield on the limits of general revelation:

"The one is adapted to man as man; the other to man as sinner...The one has in view to meet and supply the natural need of creatures for knowledge of their God; the other to rescue broken and deformed sinners from their sin and its consequences....the two species...should not be set in opposition to one another"

"Without special revelation, general revelation would be for sinful man incomplete and ineffective, and could issue, as in point of fact it has issued wherever it alone has been accessible, only in leaving them without excuse (Rom i.20)"

Special Revelation

WCF I.1.b *Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*

Christ-Centered Revelation

Westminster explains that special revelation is specifically revelation about salvation. Its goal is to let us know the plan of redemption accomplished by Christ. In other words, whenever God

intervened to communicate to us in a dream, vision, theophany, prophecy, or miraculous act, the point of this communication is salvation.

This is how Jesus understood special revelation:

- Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.
- Luke 24:27 “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”
- John 5:46 “For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.”
- John 12:41 “Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.”

Mode of Revelation (How did God reveal redemption throughout history?)

Hebrews 1:1-2: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”

History of Redemptive Revelation

Patriarchal age-Theophany...God spoke to men through their senses; he appeared in physical form. (Burning bush Ex. 3, Sinai cloud Ex. 19, appearing to Abraham Ge. 15)

Prophetic age-inward prophecy...God spoke to men by movements of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

New Testament age-inspiration...through the medium of the written word, what may be called apostolic as distinguished from prophetic inspiration

Jesus Christ is a different type of revelation

“The entirety of the New Testament is but the explanatory word accompanying and giving its effect to the fact of Christ. And when this fact was in all its meaning made the possession of men, revelation was completed and in that sense ceased. Jesus Christ is no less the end of revelation than He is the end of the law.” Warfield

God now speaks to us through the Bible.

Inspiration

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

2 Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God...”

2 Peter 1:21 “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.”

“Carried along” doesn’t mean the author became possessed or controlled in writing. Warfield explains:

“...it was through an operation of the Holy Ghost on these men which is described as ‘bearing’ them. The term here used is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word...What is ‘borne’ is taken up by the ‘bearer,’ and conveyed by the ‘bearer’s’ power, not its own, to the ‘bearer’s’ goal, not its own.”

Does this corrupt the process? Many scholars have noted how each author brings his own voice to the writing, so that Jesus sounds like John in John's Gospel and like Matthew in Matthew's Gospel. Does human involvement taint it being God's word?

Warfield writes:

"And there is the preparation of the men to write these books to be considered, a preparation physical, intellectual, spiritual, which must have attended them throughout their whole lives, and, indeed, must have had its beginning in their remote ancestors, and the effect of which was to bring the right men to the right places at the right times, with the right endowments, impulses, acquirements, to write just the books which were designed for them. When 'inspiration,' technically so called, is superinduced on lines of preparation like these, it takes on quite a different aspect from that which it bears when it is thought of as an isolated action of the Divine Spirit operating out of all relation to historical processes..."

"...the human characteristics of the writers must, and in point of fact do, condition and qualify the writings produced by them, the implication being that, therefore, we cannot get from man a pure word of God...so any word of God which is passed through the mind and soul of a man must come out discolored by the personality through which it is given, and just to that degree ceases to be the pure word of God. But what if this personality has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is, for the express purpose of communicating to the word given through it just the coloring which it gives it? What if the colors of the stained-glass window have been designed by the architect for the express purpose of giving to the light that floods the cathedral precisely the tone and quality it receives from them?"

***Pop-Quiz*:** What is inspired?

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a) Events recorded | c) The writers |
| b) Our reading | d) The words |

The wonderful thing about this method of communication is that humans can understand God's word. It is clear, it may be challenging to understand, but it is clear. God worked this whole process so that we could effectively receive his word.

Wouldn't it be strange, after such a process to bring us scripture, that God would then make such words inaccessible?

WCF I.7. *All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.*

The Bible now records all of the special revelation that we need. It is an unfolding account of the progress of revelation about Jesus.

In reading the Bible we can get the sense that God was constantly speaking to his people. It is easy to forget that there are sometimes generations, even centuries, between acts of communication. Giving special revelation was an occasional activity. It came at significant moments in history when God intended to explain significant (epoch defining) acts.

“Redemption and revelation coincide...The usual order is: first word, then the fact, then again the interpretive word...We can observe that where great epoch-making redemptive acts accumulate, there the movement of revelation is correspondingly accelerated and its volume increased.” Geerhardus Vos

God supernaturally reveals for the purpose of salvation. We don't see God intervening to give us new information on general history or scientific knowledge or personal decisions. These are words to his people, not private communication to individuals.

Is this enough? Is the Bible really sufficient for my needs? How can I find out his will for my life? How can I have confidence that I am marrying the right person or choosing the right career? How does he guide me?

Sufficiency of Scripture

WCF I. 2. *Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments...All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.*

- **2 Peter 1:3** *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”*
- **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, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

God has given us all that we need for life and godliness. He tells us his will for our lives.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:3** *“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.”*
- **1 Peter 2:15** *“For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.”*

James Petty

*“The most important issues for God are moral purity, theological fidelity, compassion, joy, our witness, faithfulness, hospitality, love, worship, and faith. These are His big concerns. The problem is that we tend to focus most of our attention on everything else. **We obsess over the things God has not mentioned and may never mention, while, by contrast, we spend little time on all the things God has already revealed to us in the Bible.**”*

Richard Gaffin

“Nothing about us and our lives as Christians falls outside the scope of salvation in Christ. We are constantly and in all its aspects to ‘work out our salvation’ (Phil. 2:12), according to the canonical Word of God has given to his covenant people definitively, once for all, in conjunction with his definitive, once-for-all salvation...Scripture leaves no place for privatized, localized revelations for specific individual needs and circumstances.”

Continuing Revelation?

WCF I.1.c *“to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.”*

What is the principle behind Westminster stating that new revelation has ceased?

When Protestants deny that revelation continues, then, what they are also denying is that new, epochal events in the history of redemption continue. Positively, they are affirming that the great event, by which salvation is accomplished, has already taken place in Christ, and that the interpretation of that event by Christ's hand-selected apostles is sufficient to provide an understanding of it.

Gaffin writes:

"Perhaps the most sweeping perspective on this task of witness is provided by Ephesians 2:19ff. There Paul views the new covenant church (cf. vv. 11ff.) as the result of God's great housebuilding activity in the period between the resurrection and the return of Christ (cf. I Peter 2:4-8). In so doing Paul calls the apostles, along with Christ as the cornerstone, the foundation of the church-house (v. 20)...the apostles do supplement Christ's work, not by additional atoning, redemptive labors of their own, but by bearing witness to that work."

But, what about the Holy Spirit? Doesn't the Spirit continue to speak to people, leading us, and prompting us?

Revelation vs. Illumination

Illumination: "Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word" WCF 1.6

1. The Spirit destroys that enmity between rebellious creatures and God, which is the fundamental problem with interpretation, yet not completely. (Rom. 8:6-8, 1 Cor. 2:12-14)
2. The Spirit enables us to receive the truths of God (Rom. 8:5-8, 1 Cor. 2:9-15)

"The Holy Spirit plays a subjective, not objective, role in biblical interpretation. In reconciling our sinful hearts to God, he promotes within us a similar desire to love and serve God as we have to love and serve our natural parents. Further, he particularly gives us the desire to embrace and receive the things of God. In doing this, he makes us willing to work hard to understand scripture, and willing to embrace the conclusions of our study of scripture."

Our view is distinct from the view of Rome, which argued that the difficulty of understanding scripture aright was due to scripture's obscurity and perplexity; Protestants responded by saying the difficulty was due to our obscurity and perplexity. On the other side of the Reformers, battling from another direction, were the anabaptists, who joined Rome in claiming scripture to be intellectually unclear and in need of further revelation and information. Thus, the Holy Spirit is most necessary in removing that sin and love of sin which is that which effectively prevents us from embracing and receiving the things of God." T. David Gordon

Revelation: "unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, "The Holy Spirit does not give us insight into the correct interpretation of a given biblical passage. WCF 1

Caveat: in saying the Spirit does not do this, we are not saying He is incapable of doing this, nor are we denying that, in some extraordinary circumstance, He might do so, or even has done so. What we are denying is the propriety of expecting Him to do so. We are denying that belief that it is a regular part of His role in the present church-order to reveal to individuals the meaning of a biblical passage." T. David Gordon

What may we rightly expect from God the Holy Spirit? That He will increasingly take away our innate rebellion and hostility to the ways of God, which is the primary obstacle to our “receiving” God’s truths. In this way, He will “illumine” us, not by adding *content* to the objective revelation in scripture, but by subduing that rebellion which subjectively prohibits the truth from being received and embraced.

The Real Issue is One of Authority

Gaffin *“the New Testament makes no distinction between prophecy with and without binding authority, an assumption which we have tried to show is without support.”*

*WCF 1.6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either **expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture**: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.*

Good and necessary inference is the key phrase. It protects Christians from those who will overstep their claims of authority.

What is the danger of making “thus saith the Lord” claims? What might some examples be of appeals to God’s authority (not including claims of prophecy)?

Can there be prophecy without binding authority?

Westminster recognizes the power and authority of God’s word and the ways in which that authority can be co-opted for other agendas.

Authority is important in the Christian life. The problem is not with authority. God has given us his word as a way to govern us. It should bring conviction and compel us to obey. But, when pastors, leaders, or fellow Christians try to tap into that authority, we need to be sure that it can be derived from scripture by “good and necessary” inference.

1. Good and necessary: A pastor may give advice that is a good inference from scripture. But, if it is not also a necessary inference, he oversteps his bounds and abuses authority. A pastor could advise someone based on a principle from the Bible that a woman should not marry a certain man. But, he cannot bind her conscience by saying that it is sin to marry that man, or that scripture forbids it.
2. One may make a good inference from scripture that gambling is wrong and must be opposed by Christians. But, one cannot “by good and necessary consequence” state how it must be opposed: Protesting in front of a casino? Voting for candidates who oppose it? Boycotting football games where people gamble? Writing books? Trying to persuade neighbors? All may be legitimate applications, but if one determines they will not choose to boycott UF games that does not mean they have sinned.

Liberty of Conscience

WCF 20.1. *The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin; from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also, in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law. But, under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.*

2. *God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.*

How do we let others enslave our conscience? When do you use guilt to motivate others?

What would it mean to have “liberty of conscience” regarding the desires and expectations of others?

Liberty of conscience does not mean liberty from God’s authority. Scripture and the Confession recognize that God’s authority can be exercised by humans.

3. *They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

4. *And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another, they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And, for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity (whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation), or to the power of godliness; or, such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against, by the censures of the church.*

Canon: How Did We Get Our Bible?

I. Focusing the Issue

A. Canon – means “measuring reed” or “ruler” and refers to a standard. Today it typically refers to the list of accepted books.

1. The question is over which books carry the authority of being God’s Word.
2. Second, who gets to decide which books are in and what does that privilege say about their authority?

B. The debate is mostly about the NT canon. There is strong evidence to conclude that the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible/Masoretic Text was complete by the time of the NT.

1. Books called “Apocrypha” or “Deuterocanonical” were largely recognized as uninspired and not authoritative.

2. Not until the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 did the Catholic church include some of these books into the list of authoritative texts.

C. Most of the questions of canon have to do with the NT, which will be our focus from here on.

II. Popular Theories on How the Canon Formed and the Criteria Used

A. Canon by Oppression: (Church Authority) Many have claimed that the Bible was established to promote the teachings of the more powerful Christians.

The DaVinci Code

Prof. Teabing, “many scholars claim that the early church literally stole Jesus from his original followers, hijacking his human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power.”

1. Most common theory is that the Council of Nicea in 325 chose their favored books and banned ones they disagreed with.

2. No record of any discussion about the canon at the council.

3. No church council gives any type of authoritative declaration until the Council of Trent in 1546.

4. It wasn’t that the church didn’t have a Bible until then, but could it be that no one needed a church council to decide what everyone already knew?

B. Canon by Orthodoxy: Church decided which books got into the Bible based on which best fit their theology.

1. But, the NT is filled with challenging books that make theologically controversies common. The church seemed to unintentionally create controversies because of the diversity.

2. They did a poor job of it if the church created a canon to eliminate controversy.

C. Canon by Pragmatism: The Church included the books that were the most practical for the church as a whole.

1. The fact is the church never did find James particularly useful! Nor Jude, nor 2 Peter, nor 2 and 3 John, nor even Philemon! Yet each was included from early on.

D. Canon by Strict Apostolicity: The Church choose books solely on the claim that these books were written by the apostles.

1. They include Hebrews which doesn’t claim apostolic authorship.

2. Why didn’t they keep other letters of Paul? We know he wrote others; what happened to them?

E. Self-Authenticating Canon: self-attesting AND self-establishing

1. If these books really were inspired by God, then they were God’s word as soon as they were penned. And, this is actually how we see the Bible take shape.

2. The history of the formation of the Bible was not the history of decisive decrees. It was the history of slowly recognizing and acknowledging authority that was already there.

3. The scriptures are “self-authenticating” meaning they did not rely upon individuals, authorities or councils to gain their legitimacy...they were intrinsically authentic.

4. And self-establishing: the books did not rely upon others to determine that they were Bible-worthy.

The scriptures create, establish, and define the church, the church did not create the scriptures.

“Apostolicity,” “antiquity,” and “orthodoxy,” are not criteria by which the church autonomously judged which documents it wanted, but qualities the church recognizes in the

voice of its Savior. Likewise, "liturgical use" and "church consensus" are reflections of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Charles Hill

III. Can This Argument Be Proven? Let's look at evidence that demonstrates this was how Christians understood the Bible.

1) The NT teaching by apostles is how the Old Testament said it would happen (and the apostles believed it)

Acts 13:46 and following. Paul and Barnabas quote Isaiah 49:6

"For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles [who is the light: apostles; how are they a light: their word], that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." All this was predicted by Isaiah how it would come about.

See Acts 10:38-43 and Acts 26:22-3. The apostles point out this was always the plan, though not immediately recognized.

2) Jesus gave the apostles this task. Jesus in Matthew 10:40 and John 13:20 says, *"whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."*

3) Apostles themselves understood their words to be more than advice. They were the very words of God. 2 Peter 3:16 Peter says of Paul. 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul's words are the Words of God.

4) Early Church practice

a) Colossians 4:16, they are told to pass this letter around to other churches

b) Ephesians has all the hallmarks of a circular, intended to be distributed

5) Other evidence

- Irenaeus in 160 AD in France states that there are just four Gospels.
- Tatian way over in Syria in 160 AD composes the *Diatessaron* a harmony of the Four Gospels
- At no point [especially very early on] were people debating about which Gospels were authentic or authoritative.
- See chart

IV. Word-Deed-Word Pattern

A. Throughout the course of God's dealings with humanity, word-revelation has accompanied His redemptive acts in history.

1. God's confrontation of Adam and Eve after their sin, His covenant with Abraham, His dramatic redemption of Israel from Egypt, His establishment of the Israelite monarchy, His judgment in exile, and then His restoration — all were followed by new revelation from God to His people.

2. Just so, when the promised Messiah came to redeem His people, a new and generous outpouring of divine revelation naturally followed (2 Tim. 1:8-11; Titus 1:1-3).

B. Prophetic passages such as Isaiah 2:2-3; 49:6 and Psalm 2:8, indeed, predicted a time when the light of God's grace would be proclaimed to all nations.

1. Jesus Christ, though He was the light of the world (John 8:12; 12:46), never in His adult life left the land of Palestine.

2. He did bring light to the nations, of course, but it was through chosen apostles, whom He commissioned to be His authoritative representatives (Matt. 10:40: "Whoever receives you receives me").

3. These men were specially endowed by the Holy Spirit to "remember" Jesus' words and works (John 14:26; 16:13-14) and to bear witness to Him "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, see Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:48; John 17:14, 20).

C. That this witness would eventuate in a new collection of written Scriptures — Gospels, apostolic history, letters, and prophecy — complementing the books of the old covenant follows naturally both from the pattern of God’s redemptive work in the past (mentioned above) and from the actual writing ministry of some of Jesus’ apostles and their associates in the accomplishment of their commission.

D. Canon is Closed in Principle

1. Because of nature as deriving from apostolic commission -- the canon is inherently closed.
2. It is necessarily limited to apostolic deposit (foundation) committed to the church. Ephesians 2:20

V. What can we say about Thomas and other “alternatives to orthodox” documents?

A. Picture of authoritarian “winners” selecting books to help their cause has no basis

B. These texts are not expansions of Christianity, but competing religions

- The Gospel of Thomas has no support of ever being recognized as authentic or authoritative.
- Thomas is found with other Gnostic writings and displays clear Gnostic tendencies. Gnosticism was an early Greek philosophy that came about at least 100 years after Jesus and would have placed Jesus far afield from the Palestinian Judaism of the rest of the NT.
- It doesn’t broaden our Christianity, it lessens it.

C. Many “other Christianities” died-out without the help of the church

- Some of these movements failed on their own merit. For example, the Montanists totally miscalculated the end of the world. Thus becoming a laughing stock.
- Even Bart Ehrman contends that the Ebionites and the Marcions died out more as a result of internal weakness and lack of popularity than by external pressure.
- It has often been said that one of the best ways to assure oneself of the canonicity of the New Testament writings is to read some of their rivals.

D. The books of the NT and the Christianity it expresses was not unique or divergent from the story of the OT.

1. Luke 24 the risen Jesus explains that all the Law and Prophets were about him. Other NT writings explain Jesus in the context of the story of Israel.
2. Using drama as a metaphor, the NT can be seen as improvisation (more than restating) yet not ad-libbing. Vanhoozer writes:
“Ad-libbing is the theatrical equivalent of heresy, where one person stubbornly insists on going his own way instead of playing the game. True improvisers work together; they are ‘one body’ who all contribute to the outcome of the play: “True genius in improvisation lies in the players’ achieving a creative harmony...”

“Indeed, one might say that the whole New Testament is an improvisation upon the Old. For, *what makes the whole Bible a unified canon is the unified action at its heart, and what gives the unified action closure is the recapitulation of all that has gone before in Jesus Christ.*”

E. This frames heresy, divergent Christianities, and non-canonical texts.

“A church that cannot experience heresy probably doesn’t have any commitments, any identity, any character. The possibility of heresy is simply the negative expression of a church’s having a confession of faith.’ Still, the purpose of doctrine is not to rend but to *mend* the body of Christ. It is therefore important to see that it is *false* teaching—heresy—that is the debilitating disease, the cancer in the body of Christ.” Kevin Vanhoozer

If we are to ever believe that God has spoken through scripture and it is not just a human invention, then Christianity is defined by the texts received and not the other way around (texts defined by our Christianity)