

# Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

## Class 2: *The Doctrine of Scripture*, part 1

*"... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

John 17.3

### I. Why are we starting with the doctrine of Scripture?

*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 inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times & in divers manners, to reveal himself & to declare his will unto his church; and afterwards, for the better preserving & 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 makes the **Holy Scripture** to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*

Westminster Confession of Faith 1.1

### II. How can we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

*How does it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?*

*The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but **the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God.***

Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A #4:

### III. How has God spoken to His people?

#### 1. Directly (audibly/verbally) in the Old Testament ...

415x "Thus says the Lord ..."

49x "... God said ..."

258x "... the Lord said ..."

4x "... God spoke ..."

62x "... the word of the Lord came to me ..."

29x "... and he said to me ..."

#### 2. Directly (audibly/verbally) in the New Testament ...

8x "... and he said to me ..."

16x "... the Lord said ..."

3x "... God said ..."

4x "... God spoke ..."

### 3. Through the prophets

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets ... Hebrews 1.1*

Some examples of God speaking to & through the prophets ...

- *"Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exod. 4:12).*
- *God assured Moses, "I will raise up for [my people] a prophet like you . . . and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him" (Deut. 18:18).*
- *The Lord said to Jeremiah, "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer 1:9).*
- *God commissioned Ezekiel by saying, "You must speak my words to them" (Ezek. 2:7).*
- *Many of the OT prophetic books begin with the words, "The word of the LORD that came to . . ." (Hos. 1:2; Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Jonah 1:1).*
- *Amos claimed, "This is what the LORD says" (Amos 1:3).*

### 4. In & through His Son

*... but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

Hebrews 1.2

## IV. Did the Old Testament recognize its own authority?

*Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people.  
And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."*

Exodus 24.7

*Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken; the Rock of Israel has said to me:  
When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God...*

2 Samuel 23. 1-3

## V. Does the New Testament affirm the inspiration & authority of the Old Testament?

*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 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, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3. 14-17

## VI. Did Jesus recognize/acknowledge the authority of the Old Testament?

### 1. Jesus recognized the OT as authoritative

- 7x Jesus said, "... have you not read ..."
- Jesus accepted the OT's 2 main divisions (as well as the place of the Psalms)

*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.*

Matthew 5.17

*Then 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." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer & on the third day rise from the dead ...*

Luke 24. 44-46

### 2. Jesus recognized the extent of the OT Scriptures

*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me ...*

John 5.39

### 3. Jesus frequently used the OT in His teaching ministry

*... from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'  
So they are no longer two but one flesh.*

Mark 10. 6-8

*You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal,  
Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'"*

Luke 18.20

*He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."*

Luke 10. 26-28

*This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ““You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.”*

Matthew 13. 13-14

- See also Mark 2. 25; 12.10; Matthew 12.42; 13. 13-14; 24.15; 9.13; 12.40; 26.31; 11.

#### **4. Jesus acknowledged that OT people really existed**

*Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.*

John 8.56

*I tell you, many will come from east & west & recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob in the kingdom of heaven ...*

Matthew 8.11

*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, & they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.” He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, & those who were with him?”*

Matthew 12. 1-3

- See also Matthew 6. 29; 12.42; 17. 11; Luke 4.27; 11. 49-51

#### **5. Jesus believed that the OT stories were true**

*Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.*

John 7.22

*Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”*

John 6.31

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, <sup>42</sup>saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup>He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, <sup>44</sup>“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””?*

Matthew 22. 41-44

- See also Matt 12. 3-4; 8.4; 5. 11-12; 10. 14-15; 11.21-22; 24. 37-39; 12. 38-41; Luke 6. 26; 17.32

## 6. Jesus spoke of OT prophecy being fulfilled

*And Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*

<sup>18</sup> *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

<sup>20</sup> *And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

Luke 4. 16-21

*And Jesus said to them, “Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”*

Mark 9. 12-13

- See also Luke 21. 21-22; Matthew 11.10

## 7. Jesus appealed to the OT as a basis of faith & authority

*... Jesus answered, “It is written,” Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

Matthew 4.4

*Jesus answered them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.*

<sup>30</sup> *For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

<sup>31</sup> *And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: <sup>32</sup> ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”*

Matthew 22. 29-32

- See also Matthew 19. 4-6; 23-1-3

## 8. Jesus believed the OT to be the Word of God

*He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’*

Matthew 15. 3-4

## VII. How do we know the New Testament is inspired?

*And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother 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.*

2 Peter 3. 15-16

*To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband ... To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her.*

1 Corinthians 7. 10, 12

*If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*

1 Corinthians 14.37

*For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."*

1 Timothy 5.18