

Grace OPC High School Sunday Class Teaching Notes			
Year:	1 of 4		Date: 09/21/2003
Quarter:	1 of 4	Theology	
Lesson Title:	The Holy Scriptures - Part 4		
Lesson Purpose:	To examine the doctrine of Scripture so that we understand what it is, where it came from and how, together with its authority, completeness and its uses		

1. Introduction

What did we see last week about the Holy Scriptures?

- The authority of Scripture does not rest on any man or on any organization but on God alone. He is Truth and cannot lie and He tells us this is His Word and we are to obey it.
- Scripture contains many internal evidences that it is the Word of God and could not be a human production
- Nevertheless, a full assurance of its authority and infallibility come through the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, as he or she sets the Scriptures to the test of experience.
- God has completed His revelation in His Word and nothing should be added to it
- The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to a saving understanding of Scripture
- In some areas, where God's Word does not give specific rules, we are to proceed on the basis of general rules in the Bible, the light of nature and Christian prudence.

This week, we will look at the “perspicuity” of Scripture, its interpretation and its place as the final judge of all controversies in the church

2. The Perspicuity (transparency) of Scripture (WCF 1.7)

“The Bible is a plain book. It is intelligible by the people. And they have the right, and are bound to read and interpret it for themselves; so that their faith may rest on the testimony of the Scriptures, and not on that of the Church. Such is the doctrine of Protestants on this subject.

It is not denied that the Scriptures contain many things hard to be understood; that they require diligent study; that all men need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to right knowledge and true faith. But it is maintained that in all things necessary to salvation they are sufficiently plain to be understood even by the unlearned.”¹

2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, **15** and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, **16** as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Psalms 119:130 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

Therefore, we do not accept that any person or human office comes between the believer and the Word of God, to act as its sole and unquestioned, authoritative interpreter. Each believer is to search Scripture and determine what he or she is required to believe and do.

Acts 17:10 The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. **11** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.*

¹Hodge, C. (1997). *Systematic theology*. Originally published 1872. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

3. The interpretation of Scripture (WCF 1.9)

How should we interpret Scriptures in the light of all we have seen?

We have several weeks on this in the next quarter

For now, note several points:

We do not accept that there are many (manifold) interpretations of a given Scripture and that each man may have his own interpretation. Rather there is one true interpretation and this must be arrived at by comparing Scripture with Scripture. This is what we see happening in Scripture itself:

Acts 15:15 "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, **16** 'After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it,

If the Bible is fully inspired by God down to the words used in the original languages and is inerrant, what can we use to help us interpret the difficult parts of it? The easier parts!!

We do not interpret Scripture based on the views of men – though commentaries can be helpful

We do not depend on others to interpret Scripture for us and accept everything they say.

“The Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures is the only adequate expounder of his own words, and he is promised to all the children of God as a Spirit of light and truth. In dependence upon his guidance, Christians are of course to study the Scriptures, using all the helps of true learning to ascertain their meaning; but this meaning is to be sought in the light of the Scriptures themselves taken as a whole, and not in the light either of tradition or of philosophy.”²

4. Scripture is our Touchstone (WCF 1.10)

If Scripture is all that we have seen – inspired, inerrant, authoritative, the very Word of God, what else shall we use to resolve difficulties in the church? The traditions of men? Some human writings or teachings?

Therefore we never sit in judgment on Scripture; rather we humble ourselves and submit to its judgment and authority

5. Conclusions

- The essential truths of faith and practice contained in the Scriptures may be understood by the unlearned
- Each believer is obligated to study the word and interpret it for themselves and not to depend on any human agency as a final authority in Biblical interpretation
- The interpretation of the harder passages of Scripture is to be obtained by reference to the simpler passages that deal with the same subject.
- In view of its inspiration, inerrancy and authority, the Bible is our final rule and the judge by which all controversies in the church are to be resolved.

²Hodge, A., Hodge, C., & Hodge, A. (1996). *The confession of faith : With questions for theological students and Bible classes*. With an appendix on Presbyterianism by Charles Hodge. Index created by Christian Classics Foundation. (electronic ed. based on the 1992 Banner of Truth reprint.). Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation.