

Doctrine of the Bible

The Ultimate Source of Authority of Scripture

1. The authority of the Bible rests upon the existence of God, which is why the starting point in Apologetics must begin with proving God's existence. Once the existence of God is established then the next point can be made: the God who is there is not silent. He has spoken to humanity in His Word. Unfortunately, it is the Word of God, the Bible, which is under assault today.
2. Beginning in the 19th century, there has been a vigorous attack on the Bible from without and from within the church in the form of Higher Criticism, and Lower Criticism.
 - Higher Criticism. In a widely arbitrary manner, Higher Criticism examines the content of each book of the Bible in order to take away the supernatural element and totally eliminate religion. Little is left standing. Genesis is legend, Exodus hardly more trustworthy, Joshua is a romance. The histories of Samuel and David are "written up" by a theocratic narrator. None of the Laws, even the Decalogue, are allowed to be certainly Mosaic. Monotheism is believed to have come in with Amos and Hosea; earlier, Yahweh was a "tribal" God. The Ark, tabernacle, priesthood, and feasts, as depicted in the Priestly Code, are post-exilic fiction.
 - Lower Criticism. Also called "Textual Criticism" deals strictly with the text of Scripture, endeavoring to ascertain what the real text of each book was as it came from the hands of its author; "higher criticism" concerns itself with the resultant problems of age, authorship, sources, simple or composite character, historical worth, relation to period of origin, etc. (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).
3. The critical attack upon the Bible has been used as an excuse to "vandalize" the Bible, according to the Dutch journalist, statesman, and theologian Abraham Kuyper (October 29, 1837 – November 8, 1920).
4. As a result of humanistic skepticism, and religious abandonment of the integrity of Scripture, the authority of the Bible is undermined to the point it is virtually dismissed by the church as a practical guide for godly living.
 - *2 Timothy 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

5. In order to re-establish the authority of the Bible, Christians must first accept, by faith, that the Scriptures are as they claim to be, God breathed. Christians must remember the source of the Scriptures. Consider the source
 - *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*
6. The reference to “all Scripture” is primarily a reference to the Old Testament, but included the “*graphe*”, the writings of the New Testament authors as well.
7. The New Testament writings are to be considered as inspired Scripture. Peter put the writings of Paul on the same level as the Old Testament canon.
 - *2 Peter 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*
8. It is proper to do this, for the Lord Jesus had taught that His disciples would be taught and led by the Holy Spirit, and they were.
 - *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*
9. All Scripture is given through the “inspiration” of God. The word is “*theopneustos*” (theh-op’-nyoo-stos), and means “God-breathed”. The idea is that the Scriptures are “breathed-out” by God. Technically, inspiration means to breathe into someone, so that what Paul is talking about is expiation.
10. What Paul is establishing in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the source of the Scripture. That source is the breath of God. The ultimate and original author of the Bible is God. The human agent only conveys the Word of God.