

Bricks and Mortar: The Doctrine of Scripture – Week 2

HOOK

Illustration: Playdoh – Press playdoh into a mold. One is shaped by the other.

Who's the mold (scripture or humanity), and who's the playdoh?

INTRO

2 Timothy 4:3 - *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions...”*

- **Jude 1:3b** - *...I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.*
 - Christians are called to fight against heresies which infect the church.
- **The newest heresy infecting the Christian church is Progressive Christianity.**

The Huffington Post: “Progressive Christianity is a ‘post-liberal movement’ within Christianity ‘that seeks to reform the faith via the insights of post-modernism and a reclaiming of the truth... by affirming the truths within the [Biblical] stories that may not have actually happened.”

- **Every reformation of Christian faith has sought to return the Church's teachings to scripture.** Progressive Christianity seeks to conform the Church's teachings to current cultural worldviews.

Progressive Christianity presents itself as being a more loving, tolerant, and attractive form of Christianity. However, it is as opposed to Christianity as cancer is opposed to the body. It works under the surface until it's robbed the faith of its **life-giving message**. It esteems Jesus as one of many ways to achieve a form of spiritual enlightenment downplaying the person, work, and exclusivity of Jesus. It creates a self-centered gospel of looking inward for god. You set the standard for right/wrong and dismiss any obligation to a higher authority. It encourages deconstructing your faith without offering any tools to reconstruct leaving its followers confused, answerless, empty, floating, hopeless, and without any stability to hold on to when life gets hard. For most, it's **an exit** from Christianity all together.

- **The U.S. Treasury** teaches their people to recognize counterfeit money by teaching the attributes of the REAL thing. **Tonight: The doctrine of scripture.**
 - **How does a Christian view the Bible?**

First of all, what is the Bible?

It is 66 books written in three different languages, by 40+ authors, from several countries, and diverse historical settings from 1440BC to AD100. They were historians, priests, governors, musicians, kings, prophets, a tax collector, a shepherd, a doctor, a tent-making theologian, and a few fishermen. Despite the differences of personalities, languages, locations, and time periods, they attested to the same God of the same character with the same purposes.

God spoke through these authors and gave them distinct puzzle pieces which profoundly and miraculously fit together. But the puzzle was incomplete. It was merely a frame until the One it prophesied, JESUS THE CHRIST, became its crowning center. HE is the “Author and Finisher of our faith.” (Heb. 12:2)

That COMPLETED puzzle, a phenomenon of continuity and power, is the awesome tapestry of God’s self-revelation to mankind. We call it the Bible.

IT HAS THREE PURPOSES:

1. To glorify God, 2. To reveal Him to us, 3. To equip God’s people

BOOK – How does a Christian view the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:14-16 - *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...*

What does “God breathed” mean? = The power of the Bible doesn’t come from moving rhetoric, wise advice, motivational anecdotes, moral philosophies, or clever life applications. **The power of the Bible comes from its Author’s identity: GOD.**

1. If the identity of its Author IS GOD, then **it’s true.**
2. If the identity of its Author is God, **it IS AS eternal & unchanging** as He is.
 - Governments, sciences, morality, and philosophies have changed over time, but the Bible has been constant and consistently changing people.
3. If the identity of its Author is God, then His word is **authoritative.**

Authoritative – If it’s God’s word, then scripture stands over us as the final authority in our lives. Our lives must be shaped BY IT. (**reference playdoh intro**)

- This is the defining line between Historical and Progressive Christianity.

- Every “What I think...,” “Means to me...,” “How I interpret...,” “I just don’t think...” is making ourselves the mold and scripture the playdoh.
- The Potter doesn’t conform to the clay. **It conforms to the will of the Potter.**

The doctrine of scripture is the first brick of Christianity which Progressive Christianity **removes** – and they absolutely **MUST** remove it to reshape Christianity into a religion they find appealing, and remake god in their image.

LOOK

A PROGRESSIVE OUTLOOK ON THE BIBLE (4 of 16) Excerpts: by *Rev. Roger Wolsey*
(a United Methodist pastor who directs the Wesley Foundation at the University of Colorado at Boulder)

#2: “We don’t think that God wrote the Bible. We think it was written by fallible human beings... Hence, **we don’t consider it to be infallible or inerrant.**

#6: We realize that there is **no “objective, one, right way” to interpret a passage....**
...Each person interprets the text via their own personal experiences, education, upbringing, socio-political context, and more.

- **Which is the playdoh, and which is the mold?** In their worldview, you are authoritative over scripture. YOU are to view the Bible through the **lens** of YOUR philosophies, opinions, logic, and emotions. **BUT** scripture, if it IS the word of God, demands we view our logic, philosophies, opinions, and emotions through the **lens** of scripture.

a. Illustration: Big sunglasses with interchangeable cards.

- i. Cards: “Philosophy, Politics, Science is king!, My opinions/feelings, I have a gay friend I really love, God wants me to be happy, other religions, I was hurt by a church/pastor, TikTok video I watched, My fave YouTube preacher.”
- ii. Include: “Bible” and read the previous cards.

#11: We employ a **hermeneutic of compassion, love, and justice.** A hermeneutic is “an interpretive lens” and intentional filter. The hermeneutic of love...

- The tool of **hermeneutics** is NOT choosing an “interpretive lens.” It’s trying to NOT have a lens. It’s the pursuit of understanding what the author is actually saying. The meaning of any passage is limited to the author’s meaning, and not to be “interpreted” as what I think it means.
- A lens of “love” is a faulty lens skewing what they read and creating a **doctrine which tolerates sin.** **What are the 3 purposes of the Bible?**

#14: We follow Jesus' example in being willing to reject certain passages & theologies in the Bible and to affirm other ones. (He did it a lot)"

- **That's an outright lie!** **Matt.5:18** – Jesus said *“not one jot or tittle...”*
- Progressive Christianity downplays or dismisses any texts of the Bible which don't align with their personal views. Their teaching is that an individual gets to decide for themselves what they want to keep or throw away.
- **Why shouldn't we be able to pick & choose parts of the Bible to agree with?**
 - a. **Augustine of Hippo** was contending with a heretic named Faustus who was attacking the validity of the bible. After debunking every one of Faustus' claims, he concluded, “You ought to say plainly that you do not believe the gospel of Christ. For to believe what you please, and not to believe what you please, is to believe yourselves, and not the gospel.”

Two of the most common ways they undermine scripture are:

1. By saying that scripture throughout time has been changing. They'll say, “Over time, the human understanding of God has become more accurate giving them a higher view of God and His will than even the Biblical writers had.”

- **Problem:** This makes God's self-revelation subjective to human opinion. Any attempt to make man the determiner of God, makes man god.

2. By claiming the extraordinary events in the life of Jesus were merely metaphors to teach love and morality. They'll say, “Jesus didn't die and resurrect literally. His 'resurrection' meant spiritual enlightenment which he wanted his followers to have. In fact, the earliest readers knew the biblical writers intended to write metaphors, but later, out of ignorance, Christians began reading them as literal. So, we're shedding our ignorance & reading the Gospels the way they were intended.”

- **Problem:** **2 Peter 1:16** - *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

However, the Bible is NOT, as Progressive Christians teach, a collection of moralistic principles and ideas. You could find similar principles scattered in other religions and philosophies. NO, it's the collected testimonies (*“we were eye-witnesses”*) of literal events (the death/resurrection of Jesus), and the explanation of what **THEY mean** (doctrine). It is the greatest “good news” the world has ever known.

Can we trust the Christian Bible?

If Jesus resurrected, then He is GOD. It certified Jesus' identity and validated all He ever said and stood for. So, how did Jesus view the Bible?

- **First**, He quoted the O.T. as scripture constantly. He even said not even the smallest parts would "pass away." (Matt.5:18) = the whole thing is scripture.
- **THEN**, He said it ALL pointed to Him: Lk. 24:44 - *"Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."*
 - They are the 3 sections of the O.T. = **"All the scriptures points to ME!"** His claim was proven by His fulfilling them with His life, death, resurrection.
 - **Alistair Begg: "We find Christ in all the Scriptures. In the Old Testament He is predicted, in the Gospels He is revealed, in Acts He is preached, in the epistles He is explained, and in Revelation He is expected."**

THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

- **Revelation** – (Scripture is Top-Down) He is transcendent and spirit. We are finite and physical. The only way we could know Him is if He revealed Himself to us. So, while we were helpless, God reached to us and offers salvation.
- **Inspiration** – The H.S. led the authors to write God's revelation correctly.
 - **1 Peter 1:20-21** - *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
 - Whoever's hand was writing, they were taught and guided by the H.S. to transmit God's words to us.
- **Illumination** – The H.S. gives us, the reader, understanding of what God has revealed through the inspired writings of the authors.

IF IT IS INSPIRED BY GOD, IT HAS 5 ATTRIBUTES

1. NECESSARY– Nature points to our Creator, but we **need** scripture to point to our Redeemer. There is no hope for salvation without it!

- **Illustration: Imagine visiting a beautiful art gallery of an artist you respect.** You are able to admire their talent and even discern some of the artist's personality, but then the painter comes out from behind the scenes. They speak to you and invite you to coffee. It changes everything about your relationship to them. The anonymity has evaporated, the distance is gone, and there's opportunity for friendship.

2. CLEAR – “A baby can swim in it, but an elephant can drown.” – Dr. Vance

- You can come to the Bible as a new Christian and the H.S. will reveal it to you.
- **Jer.29:13** - *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.* It will not fail to lead an honest seeker to knowing God and having salvation.

3. SUFFICIENT – Scripture is all a believer needs to know God, to be equipped for every occasion in life, and be prepared for heaven.

- We don't need other philosophies, motivational speeches, or fortune cookies.
- **2 Tim. 3:16-17** - *All Scripture is breathed out by God [...] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
 - Scripture is sufficient for **salvation, transformation, and proclamation.**

4. AUTHORITATIVE – Because its Author is the Omnipotent, Sovereign Creator of the Universe, His Word stands over us and demands our obedience.

- If this bothers you, the root of sinful rebellion may still be in your heart. True Christians have given complete loyalty to the Kingship of Christ. Nothing less than God's word has final authority in our lives.

5. BEAUTIFUL – These are the beautifully, intricately expressed words of God.

- **Illustration of a diamond:** We hold it up and examine it from every angle.
- We can spend a lifetime mining the scriptures and never reach the bottom. All the lifetimes of study of all the Jesus-followers who have gone before us have not revealed all its revelations of who God is and His great works.

FURTHER INQUIRY

To learn more about how scripture came into our hands, listen to Book of Books.

TOOK

Scripture being challenged is nothing new. **What was the first scripture ever?**

Adam and Eve (**Gen.2:16**): God spoke a message of freedom and instruction to them. *“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

What was the tempter's first deceit?

Genesis 3:1-6 - “...*Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?*” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“**You will not certainly die,**” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it **your eyes will be opened**, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

- **satan’s tactic was to call into question the validity of God’s word!**
- Progressive Christianity’s mantra is, “doubt everything about the Bible. You’re a fool if you trust it. Search other religions and philosophies for enlightenment and ‘truth.’ They will make you wise.” The enemy hasn’t changed his tactics.

Let go of being committed to “your truth,” and choose to be committed to **THE truth (whatever it is).** Search for what is stable, lasting, defensible, objective – construct your faith on what is Rock-solid.

RECAP

- The Bible has 3 purposes: To glorify God, for us to know Him, and to equip us.
- If scripture is God-breathed, it is true, it is eternal, and it is authoritative.
- Christians view culture, politics, morality, & etc. through the lens of the Bible.
- Scripture is “top-down.” Revelation (from God), Inspiration (written via the Holy Spirit), and Illumination (the same Holy Spirit gives understanding).
- Scripture has 5 attributes: It’s 1) Necessary, 2) Clear, 3) Sufficient, 4) Authoritative, and 5) Beautiful.

Challenge 1: Ask yourself, what lens do I read scripture through?

Challenge 2: Read and study the Gospel of John.

Challenge 3: Become an active listener during sermons. Bring your bible and notebook to stay engaged.