

1. Important we establish our source of authority for this theology class

- A. I think most in this room would say that has to be the Bible
- B. It's important you know why the Bible is authoritative? And to what extent?

I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURE**1. What does it mean when we say the Scripture has authority?**

"It means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God."

Transition: A radical statement - It's important we examine that in more detail to see why this is true

WHY THE BIBLE IS AUTHORITATIVE?**First: Because all the words in Scripture are God's words****1. This is what the Old Testament claims for itself**

- A. 100's of times you read the words "Thus saith the Lord."
 - 1). When a prophet said that they were claiming their words carried the authority of God Himself
 - a). Therefore what they spoke was not to be questioned – it was to be obeyed
Because disobedience to their words would be considered disobedience to God Himself
- B. You see this illustrated with Saul and Samuel

Samuel said to Saul: 1 Sa 15:3 (ESV) Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

 - 1). Saul didn't obey what Samuel told him – He spared the best of the animals etc.
Then came up with a lame excuse for disobedience – "to sacrifice to the Lord"

Samuel's response: 1 Sa 15:19 (ESV) *Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?* Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

 - 1). When Samuel spoke from the Lord it was considered the voice of the Lord

The judicial punishment: 1 Sa 15:23 (ESV) For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. *Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,* he has also rejected you from being king."

Point: The OT is God's Word and is authoritative – it is to be obeyed as if He told you personally

2. The New Testament also claims its words are God's words

2 Ti 3:16 (ESV) *All Scripture is breathed out (inspired) by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

- A. A comprehensive statement – not some – but *all scripture is God's Word – Old and New testament*
 - 1). Even though God used human agents to write down the words
God was so directing what was written that the final product was His words not man's

Peter put it this way: 2 Pe 1:20–21 (ESV) knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ⁽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.

 - 1). No prophecy was the result of a man's own imagination – "I think this is going to happen"
 - 2). These men spoke – or wrote - as they were moved by the Spirit
 - a). He directed them to write exactly what He wanted to be put there
- C. John explains how books written 50-95 years after the death of Christ could be accurate

Jn 14:26 (ESV) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

Jn 16:13 (ESV) When the Spirit of truth comes, *he will guide you* into all the truth...

- 1). Objection – how could these men remember what Jesus said after so many years
 - a). No problem! They were being directed by the Spirit who never forgets – perfect recall
 - b). He enabled the disciples to remember and record without error what Jesus said
- 2). That would be a valid argument if men were the authors – but they aren't
 - a). The Spirit who authored the Bible has perfect recall – omniscient

3. Summary: OT and NT have authority because they are the very words of God

- A. Therefore to disobey Scripture is to disobey God Himself

Why Paul said: 1 Co 14:37 (ESV) 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.*

John Calvin: Observe...that *the same reverence that we have for God is due also to the Scripture*, because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing of man mixed with it.

- 1). We are to have a reverence for Scripture – because it is God's Word to us.

Transition: So the Bible is authoritative because it claims to be the Word of God

- A. But we need more evidence than just the Bible saying it's the Word of God
- 1). Common question while witnessing "Why do you think the Bible is the Word of God?"

"Because it says so." "Don't other religious books claim the same thing? So how do you know?"

 - a). "I just take it by faith" "Don't people from other religions do the same?"
- B. Fortunately there is an answer to that - subjective and objective proofs that back up our claim
- 1). Evidence that sets the Bible apart from all other books
- C. We'll go through some of these evidences quickly – slow down with others
- 1). We'll start with a subjective truth and then move to objective

Transition: So we believe the Bible has authority because all the Words in Scripture are God's Words

- A. Now we begin looking at the evidence that proves they are God's Words

First: The Bible has authority in our life because it is the Word of God

Second: We are convinced the Bible is God's word as we read the Bible

1. The Holy Spirit bears testimony to our hearts

- A. The Spirit gives us an internal assurance that these are the words of our creator speaking to us
- 1). Apart from His work we won't accept the truth that this book is the words of God

1 Co 2:14 (ESV) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

2 Co 4:4 (ESV) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 - 2). But those who are the Lord's – who have the Holy Spirit – do recognize His voice in Scripture

Jn 10:27 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

 - a). We hear Him speaking to us through the Scripture – we are enabled to follow

Transition: Because this book is alive – the Spirit is using it in our lives – it does amazing things

2. This book does IN US what no other book could do

- A. Because of that – the more I read the Bible – more I'm convinced it is God's book – can you relate?
- 1). You see what the Spirit does in you through this Book
- B. How else could you explain a 40 year love affair with one book – a book that grips the heart like this
- 1). I'll rarely read a book twice – this one almost daily – through it again and again
 - 2). This book was simple enough to nourish me when I was a new spiritual baby
Deep enough to still thrill me and stay out ahead of me after 40 years of reading it

- C. There is no other book like this – no other book impacts a life like this one does
- William M. Taylor:** When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, *because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty.*
- Thomas Brooks:** The Word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counsellor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you. The Word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, and a crown to crown you.
- 1). Amen! Amen! Amen! This book changes you – directs you – encourages you – speaks to you
- a). This book is alive – because the one speaking to you through it is alive
- Transition:** This is powerful for the Christian but it is subjective
- A. You can talk to a Mormon or a Muslim they'll say their book changes them too – not same but...
- 1). So we need some objective proofs too – there are plenty to prove this is God's book
- 2). There is a weight of evidence when combined crushes all other contenders
- B. I'll rush through most – I'd like to do a class on this later – really dig in

The Bible claims to be the Word of God – The Bible proves to be the Word of God because of its effect upon us

Third: The Bible is historically accurate

1. This is a great study – the Bible keeps proving itself over and over

- A. Archaeologist are constantly unearthing proof that silences the critics
- 1). It's getting to the point now – if it's history is questioned
- The answer is "Just wait" – it will be proven accurate – it always is
- B. Listen to the words of James Davis from **"Evidence that demands a verdict"**
- Concerning the many critics of the Bible. He says:** He used to wonder if what these men said was really true. I don't anymore; not since I began seeing how these contentions were disproven again and again by archaeology and science. I finally saw that the skeptics are the real enemies of the truth. They are the ones who have the biased attitudes and the dogmatic premises. They have all their accusations and never quit repeating them. *However, one by one, their accusations began to dwindle in number and potency as archaeology continued to objectively search and find facts. Eventually, I refused to even give critics the benefit of doubt and gave up confidence in them completely."*
- 1). The Bible has been criticized and tested thoroughly – and it always comes out shining
- 2). Many have set out to disprove the Scriptures but have ended up believers – they couldn't
- David Samuel:** Because we believe the Scriptures to be God's Word and we believe God does not lie, we begin by accepting all its statements, including those which are historical, as true, rather than suspending judgement about them until they are proved to be true.
- a). Because the Bible has proven to be so accurate
- I trust what it says even though it hasn't been proven yet – just wait it will!
- Transition:** Again this is a great study to see the historical and also the scientific accuracy of Scripture
- A. Next two are really powerful – where the Bible starts separating itself from the pack

Fourth: The Bible is internally consistent

1. Think of its contents

- A. 66 books – written by 40 authors who came from a wide variety of backgrounds
- From 3 different continents – written in 3 different languages over a period of 1500 years
- 1). Majority of these authors didn't know one another nor collaborate while writing the books
- B. Yet there is an amazing unity – a united message from Genesis to Revelation
- 1). Try that here in Irvine – 40 people with *same* background – *same* location – living at *same* time
- Ask them to express their thoughts on God – would be all over the place – no unity at all
- Point:** Yet the Bible is one story – one theme – Why? = there is only ONE author

- A. Many writers but only ONE author weaving His story through each one

Fifth: The Bible contains prophecies that were fulfilled 100's of years later

God said He would tell the future before it happened: Isa 42:8-9 (NLT) "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else. I will not share my praise with carved idols. (9) Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. *I will tell you the future before it happens.*"

1. The Bible has over 1800 prophecies in it – every one must be fulfilled precisely

Dt 18:21–22 (ESV) And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'—⁽²²⁾ *when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.*

- A. This is one of the things that set the Bible apart from every other book = prophetic accuracy

- 1). 1800+ prophecies – most have been fulfilled by now – so this is objective truth - fact

Transition: I want to look at two subjects I find fascinating to show you how amazing this book is

- A. Prophecies about Israel and about the Messiah

2. Prophecies about Israel

I'll give you the Scriptures – you can look them up at home

The prophecies to a rebellious nation

- A. Dt 28:63-64 - God prophecies if Israel rebelled He would scatter them throughout the world
- B. Lev 26:31-32 - After the dispersion the land would become desolate
- C. Dt 28:65 - The Jews would be persecuted wherever they went
- D. Is 49:14-16 - The Lord would preserve them through it all and would restore them
- 1). Written 1000's of years before they occurred but each one did occur
- 2). They were scattered all over the world – persecuted everywhere they went
- But through it all God preserved them as a people

The prophecies regarding Israel's restoration and return

- A. Amos 9:14-15 - Israel would regain the land
- 1). Happened in 1948 – only time in history a people have lost their land and regained it
- B. Is 66:7-8 - The nation of Israel would be reborn in one day (regain their land in a day)
- Is 66:7–8 (ESV)** "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. ⁽⁸⁾ Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? *Shall a land be born in one day?* Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her children.

The Events of May 14, 1948

- 1). Jews declare independence for Israel as a sovereign nation for first time in some 2000 years
- 2). On that same day a United Nations mandate expired, ending British control of the land
- 3). Few hours later - SAME day United States issued statement recognizing Israel's sovereignty
- a). That was followed by other nations

Point: Modern Israel was literally born in a single day

This shocked the world. One writer wrote: "This re-birth astounded the world. Never before had an entire race of people, widely scattered around the world, without a homeland, re-establish itself as a nation and in one single day, as well! *Israel is the only nation with this unique, historical experience.*

Now listen to this. He continues: Historians and theologians before this event were generally of the view that God's Word in the Old Testament on gathering and restoring His people as a nation back on the land He promised them, were not to be taken literally, *because it simply was just not possible.* When a race of people is scattered among nations, they usually are assimilated into other cultures and communities, *which renders their coming together as a nation virtually impossible.*"

Transition: But wait there's more

- C. Jer. 23:78 - After regaining their land – God said He would call the Jews home – regathered
- 1). This call went out to the Northern Jews in the 70's and 80's
 - a). Remember the mass exodus of the Russian Jews back into Israel – God drawing them back
 - b). 1999 the same thing happened – a dramatic exodus from the North back into Israel
 - 2). But Jeremiah says they will come from all the countries - and they are
 - a). Listen to what Benjamin Netanyahu said after the Paris shootings
Charlie Hebdo and the Jews targeted in the Deli market
 - b). January 2015 - He made a public appeal to the Jews in France and in Europe
That they would be welcomed with open arms if they chose to immigrate to Israel
 - 1a). This was echoed by others in his administration
 - c). Then in February 2015 – after the shootings in Copenhagen – He strengthened the call
“The wave of terror attacks can be expected to continue, including anti-Semitic, murderous attacks. *We say to the Jews, to our brothers and sisters, Israel is your home and that of every Jew. Israel is waiting for you with open arms.*”
 - 1a). Amazing how God is using all this to call His people home
- D. Jer 31:10 – God would watch over His people like a shepherd
- 1). 2500 years earlier God said He'd regather His people
Then promises when they return He would watch over them like a shepherd

Question: Has that happened?

- 1). Since they've been home they've been involved in 3 major wars: 1948, 1967, 1973
- 2). Each one surrounded by enemies – greatly outmanned and greatly out armed
 - a). Forced to fight on 3 fronts – something U.S. says it can't do in a war
 - b). Not only did Israel prevail in each war they captured additional land
- 3). God has called them home and God is watching over them as a shepherd watches over His flock

Point: All these amazing prophecies about Israel – the only nation in history this has happened too

- A. If this isn't God's book – what do you do with them? How do you explain them?

The Prophecies about the Messiah

Just going to take eight out of the 300+ written 100's of years before the fact

- A. Micah 5:2 -The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
- B. Is 40:3-4 - The Messiah would be preceded by a messenger
- C. Zec 9:9 - The Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey
- D. Ps 41:9 - The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend
- E. Zec 11:12-13 - The Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver
- F. Zec 11:12-13 - Those 30 pieces would be thrown down in the Temple and used to buy the potter's field
- G. Ps 22:16 - The Messiah would be silent before His accusers
- H. Ps 22:16 - The Messiah would be crucified

Thought: Some argue it's possible for a man to fulfill these prophecies by chance

- A. Probably same folk that say evolution is possible if given enough time

The odds of only these 8 prophecies being fulfilled by chance

- A. Mathematicians figured this out: 1 in 10 to the 17th power – 1 in a 10 with 17 zeroes following it!
- B. Let's illustrate what that means – supposed I take a bag – put 10 silver dollars in it
 - 1). I mark 1 and blindfold you – stir them up and ask you to pick out marked one – 1 in 10 chance

- a). Difficult – could take a while but certainly not impossible
- 2). Put in 20 you have a 1 in 20 chance – put in 100 and you have a 1 in 100 chance
 - a). Now we might be here forever before you finally reach in and grab the right one
- C. That's only 1 with 3 zeroes – we have to add another 14 zeroes
 - 1). We have to forget about only 100 silver dollars in a small bag
We need to replace the bag with something the size of the state of Texas
And we need enough silver dollars to cover the whole state to a depth of 2 feet
 - 2). Now mark one of those silver dollars – blindfold somebody
Tell them they can travel anywhere they wish – then blindfolded they reach down and pick one

Question: What chance would they have of that being the right silver dollar?

- A. The same exact chance that these 8 prophecies could be fulfilled by any one man by chance
 - 1). That somebody without divine intervention – without God controlling all the events
Could just happen to do all of that
- B. That is only 8 of the over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled

Point: Let's get back to our odds - the odds of anyone fulfilling 8 prophecies 1 in 10 with 17 zeros

- A. What if we up that number to fulfilling 48 prophecies by chance
 - 1). We don't have enough zeros – 1 in 10^{157} power – 1 in 10 with 157 zeros after it
- B. GET THIS - It is considered mathematically impossible for something to occur by chance
once odds get above 1 in 10^{50} – at that point the chances are so minute that there is no chance
 - 1). *So anybody fulfilling 48 prophecies is 3 times harder than impossible*
- C. This is one of the reasons why prophecy is such a great evidence of God's existence
And of His book being His book – divinely authored
 - 1). You look at the prophecies about Israel and the Messiah
SO mathematically impossible – the only explanation is this MUST be God!
 - 2). He said what would happen then controlled all circumstances so it did happen

Thought: Man wouldn't have the nerve to say - if anybody says what's going to happen and it doesn't
That person is a false prophet – don't listen to them
Then put 1800+ prophecies that put them under that test

- A. ONLY GOD WOULD DO THAT – and only God could do that
 - 1). There is no other book that has the nerve to make that claim – only the Bible
 - 2). Only it can make that claim because it's author is in control of all things
 - a). Foretelling what is going to happen then orchestrating events so it does happen

Transition: We're running out of time – let me just mention a few more – skim over the top

- A. Just mention them so you know they are proofs – suggest you look them up – do some study

Three More Evidences That These Words Are God's Words

Sixth: The Bible has influenced the course of history more than any other book

- A. The teaching of the bible changed our calendars – BC – AD
- B. In many cases the teachings of the Bible influenced man's laws

Seventh: The Bible has changed the lives of millions of individuals throughout history

- A. The testimony of the Bible's power is heard again and again
 - 1). Addicts rescued – marriages restored – violent haters turned peaceful
 - 2). Every new Christian is another miracle – another product of the Bible's message
- B. Every person who truly knows God and walks with God is a testimony of the Bible's divine power

1 Pe 1:23 (ESV) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

**SUMMARY: Add all this together – powerful case with plenty of evidence
That proves subjectively and objectively this is God's Word**

1. If it is God's Word then it has authority in our life

- A. And to disobey it is to disobey God Himself

2. How do we know it is God's Word?

- A. Because the Bible tells us that it is the Word of God
 - B. We Are Convinced the Bible Is God's Word as We Read the Bible – The Spirit bears testimony
 - C. Because of the historical accuracy of the Bible
 - D. Because of the internal consistency of the Bible – 40 authors with one theme
 - E. The prophetic accuracy of the Bible – 1800+ prophecies – written 1000's of years before - fulfilled
 - F. The influence the Bible has had on history
 - G. The lives changed miraculously by the Bible – every believer is a miracle – born through the Word
 - H. The depth and beauty of the Bible
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CONCLUSION

God's Written Word Is Our Final Authority

1. God gave us a book – He expects us to read it – study to understand it – obey it

- A. It's very pages ring with the tones of God's voice
 - 1). It has as much authority when you read it as it would if God appeared to you personally

2. Here is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice

- A. This will be our textbook as we go through this class