

# The Definition of Scripture (2LCF 1.2-1.3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] In the turn of the 16th century, the beginning of the 1500s, there was a monk who found himself very troubled with the things which were coming out of Rome.

That is from the Pope and company, namely of indulgences. Indulgences is something that Rome was teaching and there was a jingle which went along with this idea of indulgences.

And the jingle was, when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs. And the concept they were teaching is that when people put money in the coffers, when they pay money, then that Rome, that the Pope has the ability to free souls from purgatory.

Which brought up a lot of questions for this monk who you probably recognize as Martin Luther. But it brings up questions of where does this idea come from? Where does the idea come from?

First of all, that when money gets put in the coffer, that souls are sprung out of purgatory. Then also brings up the question is, where does the whole idea of purgatory come from? So by what authority, where is Rome getting these ideas?

[ 1 : 20 ] Now this was before there was a distinction before Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, but it is one of the first things which got it into motion.

So Rome is teaching about purgatory, this supposed place that after death souls go to to pay penance before they're able to go to heaven. But where does this come from? Where do they get this idea from?

And where do they have the authority to put this on the consciences of people? And then indulgences, the idea that if people pay money, that souls can be sprung from this so-called purgatory.

So where do these ideas come from? And how do they have the authority to do so? So we will dive into that this evening. But first, let's take a look at 2 Timothy 3, verses 15 to 17.

And that from childhood you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

[ 2 : 28 ] All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Lord, we thank you for your word. That we have divine testimony, supernatural revelation, that which is necessary for saving knowledge, faith and obedience, and also that which is sufficient for salvation and for faith and obedience.

I pray that you would illuminate your word to us and help us to grow in our knowledge of truth, and that we might grow as your people, not only in knowing and understanding your word, but to do your word.

I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So for our focus this evening, we're going to be looking at what scripture says about scripture itself.

And it will be according to the theology from the confession of chapter 1, paragraphs 2 and 3. So again, the confession takes the truths that are in scripture about a theological topic, and it brings it together to put it in one summary.

[ 3 : 48 ] And chapter 1 is on scripture. In chapter 2, we will see the definition of scripture. So last week, we saw that scripture is necessary, that while God does reveal things through nature, that God is, that God is to be worshipped, that we are sinful.

So, nature doesn't tell us what we need to know for salvation. So scripture is necessary, so we need to have whatever scripture is. But we also saw that scripture is sufficient.

Scripture is sufficient for what we need to know for faith and obedience, which means we don't need something more. So we don't need less than whatever scripture is, and we don't need more than

whatever scripture is.

So the question then remains, what exactly is scripture? So, first of all, we will look at the measure of truth, and the measure of truth is the canon.

Second of all, the manner of inscripturation. Inscripturation is a word for being written. The word scripture actually just means the writings, but we understand these writings as being the word of God written.

[ 4 : 53 ] So the manner of inscripturation is inspiration, and then thirdly, the imposter of revelation, and the imposter of revelation is the apocrypha. And not to get ahead of myself, but the apocrypha is where Rome gets the idea of purgatory.

Anyways, scripture is necessary, scripture is sufficient, but what exactly is it? How can we define exactly what scripture is? So first of all, the measure of truth, and the measure of truth is the canon. Now, the word canon, you might think of a really big gun that shoots a ball at pirate ships out in the ocean. But canon here, the context of the word canon here, is a measuring rod, or a ruler, or a norm.

So the canon is a standard by which things are measured. So when we consider scripture as the canon, scripture is the standard by which things are measured.

So let's say Rome comes up with this idea that there's this place called purgatory that souls go to to pay penance. How do we measure this to see if it's truth?

[ 6 : 03 ] Well, by the canon. The canon is the standard by which things are measured. We still haven't yet got to exactly what it is, but it is the canon. Now, in the second century, based on Marcion, Marcion didn't exactly like all of what scripture, particularly the Old Testament, spoke about the holiness of God.

So he had more of a cut-and-paste version. So as a response to that, a synod was called and addressed his cut-and-paste version, or this even method, cut-and-paste method of scripture, to, as this synod, acknowledge what scripture is.

Now, it's not that nobody knew what scripture was until the synod decided what would or wouldn't be scripture. We'll get to that shortly, though. But the Baptist Catechism asked the question, what is the Word of God?

The scriptures is the writings, the Word of God written. What is the Word of God that is written? And the answer is, the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God and the only certain rule of faith and obedience.

So we still haven't got the specifics, but we're narrowing it down that there's an Old Testament and a New Testament, and that that Old and New Testament is the Word of God and the only certain rule of faith and obedience.

[ 7 : 31 ] So anything outside of this is not a certain rule of faith and obedience by which we will measure what is true and what is made up by the traditions of man.

Now, in our confession, if you have a copy handy, notice in chapter 1, paragraph 2. Chapter 1, paragraph 2 starts off by saying, And under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments.

We're off to a good start. We've got all the books that's contained, which implies that it is complete. The Old and New Testament, and if you have a copy in front of you, you'll see it goes on to list it. Old and New Testament, which are these. And it lists 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. And if you had a copy of the Roman Catholic Bible and the table of contents in front of you, you would see something different.

But they also include within it what we call the Apocrypha. But according to our confession, the Old and New Testament books, with a total of 66 books of what's listed in our confession, is the Holy Scripture, the Word of God, this rule, this canon, this norm, this standard by which truth is measured.

[ 8 : 56 ] So, if an idea comes up, such as, if you put money in the coffer, a soul will spring from purgatory, it is by these 66 books we will measure to see if this is truth.

And of course, we will not find that concept in these 66 books in the Old and New Testament. And it is complete. It is a closed canon, which means that there will be, after the death of the, the last death of the apostles, there will be no further scriptures.

The closed canon is complete. It is final. Everything that is necessary for saving knowledge, faith, and obedience is contained in these 66 books. It's not that after this, something else needs to come

for our knowledge, for obedience.

So, if during a prayer meeting, if somebody were to come in and say, I have had a prophecy, God has told me this thing that's not in scripture, and you need to change the direction of the church, we can know that it's absolutely not prophecy.

It is not authoritative. It is not scripture. And everything that God says is authoritative. There's kind of this concept out there that, well, if somebody has a prophecy, it's not as authoritative from scripture, but we'll see it as from God.

[10:06] But God, God can't speak without authority. Everything God says is authoritative. So, God's word, we can be assured, is authoritative, and anything outside of that is not authoritative, therefore, not the only certain rule of faith and obedience.

So, the traditions of Rome that are not contained in scripture are not the only certain rule of faith and obedience. So, next in this, in this first sentence here, we see scripture recognized.

So, scripture has been defined extensively and listed the 66 books of the Bible. And then, we need to understand that scripture is recognized. So, when I talked about that century, second century synod that had to address the cut and paste versions of scripture, they didn't decide, it wasn't up to them to decide what scripture was.

They were just addressing that issue. But scripture is recognized and that the church does not establish the canon, that synod did not establish the canon, but recognizes what is the word of God. It was what was, has always been recognized as the word of God, received as the word of God, but then, Marcion tried to cut and paste what was received and recognized already as the word of God and that had to be addressed.

[11:26] So, the church doesn't establish the canon, but recognizes what is the word of God. So, how, how did they do that? How does this synod recognize what was the word of God and what wasn't?

Well, some criteria that they used is that it had to be written by an apostle or written closely connected to an apostle. It had to have been immediately accepted by the early church as the word of God and in common use.

So, for example, in the mornings we're working through 1 Timothy, when 1 Timothy was written, read, and distributed, it was immediately recognized as the word of God and distributed and understood and in use as the word of God.

But, with time, there was also imposters or pretenders that presented there's this writing, this, this is from God, this is authority.

So, it had, but it wasn't immediately recognized as the word of God and it wasn't in use as the word of God. So, they had to examine it, see what it was and see that it was actually just pretenders.

[12:28] The other criteria is it had to be orthodox and it could not contradict Scripture. Scripture, the divine, the author of Scripture is God and God cannot lie or contradict himself.

heterodoxy or contradictions clearly delineated as not being from God. And books were questioned. Books that are in our Bible, some of them were being questioned at the time. For example, Hebrews was one of them because it was asserted that Hebrews might teach that you can lose your salvation and that is contrary to what the rest of Scripture says.

But upon examination, the context, the Greek grammar, it becomes very apparent that that's not what it's saying. There's a distinction about us and then it changes to them and then it goes back to us and things of salvation.

So, Hebrews was recognized as the Word of God and met all the criteria. So, some books were challenged and there were many other pretenders that just surfaced which had to be examined and ruled out.

[13:38] So, the measure of truth, we have the canon, the 66 books of the Bible and then next we see the manner of inscription. So, what is the Word of God?

it is the 66 books of the Bible that was received and in use but how did the Word of God become the 66 books of the Bible?

How were these 66 books written? And the answer is by inspiration. And you've probably heard that word and recognized it from the text we read earlier.

In 2 Timothy 3.16, it says all scripture is given by inspiration of God. So, it is given by inspiration but what does this word inspiration mean?

So, next in our confession we see scripture defined intensively or in other words its origin the origin of scripture. If scripture is the Word of God and the Word of God are these 66 books how did we how did these 66 books become written to begin with?

[ 14 : 51 ] What is the origin of them? So, if you continue in your confession in chapter 2 that's right in chapter 1 paragraph 2 it says all of which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

So, of course we derive that from 2 Timothy 3.16 but what exactly is inspiration? Essentially inspiration is the role of the Holy Spirit in the composition of scripture.

Another way to put it is God breathed. These words that were written are God breathed and we affirm verbal plenary inspiration and that both the thoughts contained in scripture as well as every word contained in scripture is God breathed or is from God.

Now, Richard Muller wrote a very useful dictionary on Greek and Latin theological terms and on inspiration he wrote that the inspiration of human authors and hence of the text written by them in no way deprives them even momentarily of their reason their usual forms of expression or the thought patterns typically of their time and history and specific culture.

So in Timothy it starts off by saying that it's written by Paul or you might go to 1 Peter which is written by Peter or the Gospel of John is written by John so there's all these various human authors but collectively together we have the word of God.

[ 16 : 29 ] So by inspiration while God is the author of all of scripture the human authors it's not like they went into a trance like they were sitting there and their eyes rolled back in their head and they went into a trance and mechanically wrote words that they were unaware of what they were writing they were very aware of what they were writing they had an inspired judgment and because they were aware of what they're writing we see different styles according to each author so Paul would write differently than Peter and you see their styles throughout their letters so you see the distinctiveness according to the human author but by inspiration there's the infallibility that it's without error and cannot err according to the divine author as these human authors were inspired or moved along by the Holy Spirit but there's a little bit more to it than that which we'll get to but I want to go back to Muller to finish what he wrote he said inspiration provides a guarantee of the truth of the text and of its authority and matters of faith and practice so while there were human authors because take Paul was Paul infallible no was Peter infallible no

Peter denied Christ they probably at times wrote things and made an error and had to write it out they were humans they were sinful humans and they're not infallible but God is infallible so because it is inspired by God then each what's contained in scripture we are guaranteed of the truth of the text and of its authority because God is the author so its authority and matters of faith and practice so inspired by what means how exactly did it if it wasn't if they weren't in a trance how exactly did it happen that there's this divine truth that was communicated or inspired to these human authors and that they were able to write out the word of God written by what means did that take place now in in 2nd Peter 121 it says holy men of God spoke so speaking of the authors of scripture holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit but we get a little bit more detail in John 14 25 26 and Jesus speaking to his disciples to the apostles he says these things I have spoken to you while being present with you so Jesus who is without error and infallible talked about talked about his kingdom and taught the disciples perfectly and the apostles about these things so these things I have spoken to you while being present with you and then he goes on to say but the helper the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name he will teach things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you so Jesus taught them infallibly the Holy Spirit is sent and brings to mind brings to remembrance all the things that Jesus infallibly taught them and the Holy Spirit teaches them all things and leads them into all truth as they write out the word of

God written and then we also see scriptures subsequent! authority notice in the confession it says the rule of faith and life scripture is the rule the measure of truth the rule of faith and life scripture is authoritative as a rule for faith and life because of its author being God the origin being from God so this helps us understand the concept of cherry picking texts to try to prove a point our confession it'll have proof texts!

Originally it actually was in the Westminster Confession when it was written for Parliament it didn't have the proof texts The Parliament said we want some references so when there is something like a confession or a systematic theology and there's proof text the idea behind it isn't that that text is all you need to look at but it's saying go to the commentaries on this text and the commentaries on

this text will more fully explain so it's actually to direct you to the commentaries to get the greater understanding because the authority of scripture is all of scripture so the whole idea of cherry! [ 21 : 23 ] picking a text to have a concept and then try to cherry pick a text to prove it is first of all it might be wrenching that text out of its context and second of all what does all of scripture say about it and this whole concept of cherry picking is actually what the Sassanians used to do and they were heretics and heretics used this concept of cherry picking like Arius could take a verse in scripture and isolate it wrench it from its context and rule out the rest of scripture and try to assert that Jesus Christ wasn't eternally God that there was a time when the!

was not which is heresy and how did he present this idea how did he as a false teacher convince people of it by cherry picking texts out of their context so the problem with cherry picking of proof texts is it doesn't consider the authority of all of scripture what all of scripture the scope of scripture as a whole speaks about that doctrine that idea so all of which it is the rule of faith and life all of which are given by the inspiration of God all of scripture is given by the inspiration of God not just a text to cherry pick so it's the authority of all of scripture and third the imposter of revelation the imposter of revelation is the apocrypha and chapter one paragraph three deals with it notice paragraph three says the books commonly called apocrypha not being of divine inspiration are no part of the canon or rule of the scripture and therefore are of no authority to the church of God nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings the apocrypha is historic human writings!

but it's not inspired by God it's not the word of God written Luke I'll just read quickly here Luke 24 27 and 44 Luke 27 sorry Luke 24 27 and 44 says and beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself so this is on the road to Emmaus where Jesus used the Old Testament so the Apocrypha was written in the intertestamental period after Malachi and before Matthew so it would be the Old Testament but Jesus when he taught about himself he used beginning at Moses and all the prophets which is representative of the

Old Testament then notice also in verse 44 he says then he said to them these are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me he doesn't reference the Apocrypha now the Hebrew Bible our Bible is our Old Testament and our Bible is organized a little bit different than the Hebrew Bible which is more so to say the law of the prophets and the writings is to speak of all of the Old Testament according to the Hebrew Bible which did not contain the Apocrypha so why is the Apocrypha rejected as the word of God why is it seen as the imposter of revelation well first of all there's there's no internal evidence in the Apocrypha claiming to be the word of God rather an claim to be the word of

[ 25 : 33 ] God it was not written by prophets the Apocrypha itself does acknowledge that prophecy ceased during the intertestamental period that is the last 400 years before Matthew before Matthew was written before the coming of John the Baptist and of Jesus so after Malachi there's 400 years where the spirit of prophecy ceased!

And the Apocrypha acknowledges that but yet the Apocrypha was written during that period through which there was no revelation where prophecy ceased also the New Testament at no point quotes the Apocrypha as being scripture it doesn't quote it at all as I mentioned it's not in the Jewish Hebrew canon and there was no early church consensus receiving it as the word of God there were some who considered it might be the word of God but there was no consensus as were what we have the Apocrypha contains factual and chronological errors as well as doctrinal issues Jerome who is considered an authority of scripture called them non-canonical and not suitable for doctrine and Roman Catholics themselves did not define so the Roman Catholics assert that the Apocrypha is canon is the word of God written but they didn't define it as such until the council of Trent in 1546 in response to the reformation in response to for example Martin Luther who wrote his 95 theses about how Rome's ideas about these things and indulgences and purgatory is wrong so where does Rome get these ideas from it's not from scripture they get it from the Apocrypha so the question comes down to is the Apocrypha the word of God to justify these ideas coming out of Rome and the answer is no so then what is it what exactly is the Apocrypha well it's historical writing and there is some benefit to historical writing but just because there's benefit doesn't mean it's the word of God that it bears inspiration so the Apocrypha is of no authority to the church of God this is what our confession says of no authority to the church of God nor to be any otherwise

approved or made use of other than as other human writings which is what it is it's historic human writings during the intertestamental period and this is important because scripture guards theology and conscience!

the theology by which we know and understand God and salvation faith obedience how the church ought to conduct itself and our conscience is guarded by scripture so what's the problem what's the problem then with if Rome wants to say that the apocrypha is scripture and to burden people's consciences with these ideas of purgatory and indulgences to burden people with the idea that when a coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs well the problem first of all is salvation it teaches a different way of salvation salvation by works and this is error this is not only error but it's damning to believe that we are saved by our own works that we are justified by our own works is a damnable heresy and a person is still lost in their sin and still needs to hear the gospel that we are saved by being united to

Christ by being washed in his blood and receiving his righteousness as our mediator what else is the problem with the concept of the apocrypha well this whole idea of penance paying penance or giving alms to atone for sin this is error which they justify it by the apocrypha and that's why they say the apocrypha so when Martin Luther confronted these errors in Rome they had to justify it somehow so they justify it by what's written in the apocrypha the only way to atone for sin is through Christ's satisfaction of sin satisfying divine justice on the cross and the third problem is purgatory where exactly does this idea of purgatory come from it comes from the apocrypha and it is error there is no second chance after death to pay penance to pay off our sins either a person is still in their sins and condemned or they're in

[ 30 : 35 ] Christ and will be seen according to Christ's righteousness so it's either our sins or Christ's righteousness there's no alternative we're either fully forgiven as Romans 8 1 says there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus because Christ's atonement is sufficient for the sins of his people there's no further penance that needs to be paid in Christ so some concluding uses to take out of this first of all I'm going to ask the same question I asked last Lord's days what's at stake and the answer is the same answer that I man is to glorify God to enjoy him forever the salvation of man this is something you do not want to get wrong is the eternal condition of one's soul right living to

God how ought we know to conduct ourselves well according to scripture what is scripture and what isn't scripture scripture is necessary and sufficient and then living blessedly forever!

Are we justified before a holy God by our faith or is it by works and you will notice that Rome teaches something other than what is historic orthodoxy right from the church and even right from Genesis 3 15 in the promised skull crushing seed of the woman the doctrine of salvation justification by faith or justification by works this is something that is of utmost importance and it's not a matter of denominational splitting of hairs so it's not like well if that Roman Catholic church wants to teach that your justification is based on your works to the end then that's just a denominational difference it's not it's not a denominational splitting of hairs it is a primary foundational issue by which one will either be eternally condemned or acquitted on the day judgment because of the righteousness of Christ so understanding by how one is justified before God is of utmost importance and our confession in chapter 11 when we get there speaks of that and the catechism summarizes that justification is an act of God's free grace it's not a work of our own but it's an act of God's free grace where he pardons us all of our sins no sins need to pay penance afterwards he pardons us all our sins and accepts us as righteous despite our sin he accepts us as righteous in his sight not because of our works but only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone not received by our merit by our works but received by faith alone and third and final concluding use is can we really have confidence in the truthfulness of scripture scripture is necessary scripture is sufficient scripture is authoritative but is there error in it is there error in that which it tells us we need to know for salvation or for faith or for obedience can we really have confidence in the truthfulness of scripture there will be arguments that come up you will in your lifetime hear some form of arguments that in some way or another tries to cause doubt on confidence of the truthfulness of scripture and sometimes unfortunately that's by even those who claim to but ask the question who said what is in scripture who said that this is true while there are the human authors we have gone over the origin of the word of

God which the human authors have written and that origin is God the Holy Spirit through the Holy Spirit so it was God who said it and then the question then comes next is did God really say and

that has been the age old attack against authority of God's revelation did God really say and there will be arguments that are brought up but yes scripture says that but did God is that really what God said is that really what God means or does that really apply today and there will be all sorts of arguments whether they'll say that was just for then it doesn't apply now whatever the argument may be the same question it just comes in different forms is did God really say yeah that's what's in scripture but did God really say so we want to be grounded and be confident in the truthfulness of scripture and the confidence that we have the confidence that we have in

[ 36 : 02 ] God's essence and perfections is the same confidence we can have in his divine testimony God is eternal God is infinite God is holy God is righteous God does not lie God does not change and that confidence that we can have in God's essence and in God's perfections is the same confidence we can have in God's testimony what God has revealed to us because God is the origin and author let's pray