



Blueprints for Belief

Laying the Theological Foundations for Constructing Your Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith 1.1 – January 22, 2025

- **The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) 1643-1646**

"Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased."

Defense from Scripture

General Revelation is Insufficient for Salvation

- Romans 1:19-20
- Psalm 19:1-6

Scripture as the Special Revelation of God

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Hebrews 1:1-2
- John 20:31

Cessation of Former Means of Revelation

- 1 Corinthians 13:8-10
- Jude 3

Historical Support

Church Fathers on Scripture's Authority

- Athanasius (4th Century)
- Augustine (4th-5th Century)
- Irenaeus (2nd Century)

Councils and Creeds

- The Council of Chalcedon (451)
- The Reformation

Criticisms from Other Protestants

Criticism 1: Scripture Does Not Rule Out Continuing Revelation

- **Rebuttal:**
 - Hebrews 1:1-2
 - 1 Corinthians 13:8-10
 - Ephesians 2:20

Criticism 2: The Spirit Guides Believers Beyond Scripture

- **Rebuttal:**
 - John 16:13
 - 1 John 4:1
 - Historical abuses

Criticism 3: Scripture Alone Can Lead to Division Without Tradition

- **Rebuttal:**
 - Tradition
 - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
 - Perspicuity

Criticism 4: WCF Overemphasizes Cessation

- **Rebuttal:**
 - Acts 2:42.
 - Acts 2, Acts 10
 - 2 Peter 1:19-21

Criticism from Roman Catholicism

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Scripture and Tradition together form the deposit of faith, with the Magisterium as the authoritative interpreter.

- **Response:**
 - Mark 7:8-13
 - Acts 17:11
 - Athanasius at Nicaea

Criticism from Eastern Orthodoxy

Eastern Orthodoxy emphasizes the synergy of Scripture and Holy Tradition, viewing the latter as the living interpretation within the Church.

- **Response:**
 - Tradition
 - Matthew 22:31

- 1) Why is it important to distinguish between what general revelation reveals and what Scripture uniquely provides?
- 2) Do you think modern Christian practices sometimes elevate personal experiences above Scripture? How can we address this tendency within our communities?
- 3) How would you respond to someone who claims that Scripture alone cannot provide unity because of widespread denominational divisions?
- 4) How can we affirm the Spirit's ongoing work (e.g., illumination, guidance) without falling into the error of seeking new revelations?
- 5) What would you say to a Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox friend who argues that tradition should have equal authority with Scripture?
- 6) How can we honor the role of tradition (e.g., creeds, confessions) without elevating it to the level of Scripture? What is a healthy balance?
- 7) How can the doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency bring comfort and confidence in your personal walk with God?