



Blueprints for Belief

Laying the Theological Foundations for Constructing Your Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith 1.6-1.10 – February 19, 2025

6. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

7. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

8. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

9. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

10. The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Summary of Doctrine

- 1.6 – Sufficiency of Scripture
- 1.7 – Clarity of Scripture
- 1.8 – Preservation and Translation
- 1.9 – Interpretation of Scripture
- 1.10 – Supreme Authority of Scripture

Defense from Scripture and Church History

1.6 – The Sufficiency of Scripture

- Scripture:
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Deuteronomy 29:29
 - Galatians 1:8
- Church History:
 - Athanasius and Augustine
 - The Reformation

1.7 – The Clarity of Scripture

- Scripture:
 - Psalm 19:7
 - Deuteronomy 30:11-14
 - 2 Peter 3:16
- Church History:
 - John Chrysostom and Augustine
 - The Reformers

1.8 – Preservation and Translation

- Scripture:
 - Isaiah 40:8
 - Matthew 5:18
 - Acts 2:6-11
- Church History:
 - The Masoretic scribes and New Testament copyists
 - The Septuagint (LXX) and Vulgate
 - The Reformation prioritized vernacular translations.

1.9 – Scripture Interprets Scripture

- Scripture:
 - Luke 24:27
 - 1 Corinthians 2:13
 - Acts 17:11
- Church History:
 - Augustine
 - The Reformers

1.10 – The Supreme Authority of Scripture

- Scripture:
 - Matthew 4:4
 - John 10:35
 - Acts 5:29
- Church History:
 - Irenaeus
 - The Council of Nicaea (325)
 - The Reformers

Roman Catholic Critique

1. Insufficiency of Scripture
2. Magisterial Authority

Response:

- “It is the original lie of Satan that God, speaking in His Word, needs an interpreter to give man infallible guidance.” G.I. Williamson
- Tradition is valuable but is subordinate to Scripture
- The Church is under Scripture

Eastern Orthodox Critique

1. The Church as Interpreter
2. Conciliar Authority

Response:

- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
- 2 Peter 1:21

Protestant (Lutheran & Anglican) Critique

1. Overemphasis on Deduction (1.6)
2. Undermining Tradition (1.10)

Response:

- Jesus and the Apostles reasoned from Scripture
- The Confession affirms the value of councils and tradition but makes them subordinate to Scripture.

Discussion Questions for Next Week:

1. The doctrine of **Sufficiency of Scripture** (1.6) states that everything necessary for salvation, faith, and life is contained in Scripture. How does this shape your approach to making decisions in your daily life? Do you sometimes look for guidance outside of Scripture when facing difficult choices?
2. How can churches encourage **ordinary believers** (not just pastors or scholars) to feel confident in studying Scripture for themselves, given the doctrine of **Scripture's clarity** (1.7)?
3. Many people today reject the idea that truth is **fixed and absolute**. How does the doctrine that Scripture is **infallible and the supreme authority** (1.10) equip you to engage with a culture that values personal experience over objective truth?
4. Some Christians believe that Scripture is **insufficient**, needing to be supplemented by tradition, mystical experiences, or personal revelation. How would you respond to someone who says that the Bible alone is not enough for knowing God's will?
5. The Reformers insisted that **Scripture interprets Scripture** (1.9). How does this principle help us avoid common errors in Bible study? Can you think of examples where people have misunderstood Scripture by taking a verse out of context?
6. How does the understanding that **Scripture is God's Word and will never pass away** (1.8) bring comfort and assurance in a world full of uncertainty?
7. What are some **practical habits** you can develop to ensure that your beliefs and decisions are shaped by Scripture rather than personal feelings, cultural trends, or traditions?