

# The Authority of Scripture

1. By authority we mean that the Scriptures, and only the Scriptures, have the *right to require* certain attitudes and activities of the believer.
  - a. The authority of the Scripture is based on *inspiration*. Inspiration is a quality of the written word of God (the Scriptures) which renders it authoritative, and therefore infallible communication from God as to its ultimate source.
  - b. The attitudes and activities of the believer are required by Scripture and are not optional. Scripture has the authority to tell the Christian what to think and how to act to please God through life.
  - c. Authority implies understandability. The Scriptures were written to be understood. The responsibility of the individual believer is to place himself in the position or the original recipients of God's communication in order to understand the meaning of the text.
2. An understanding of the authority of Scripture produces a certain type of godly dogmatism. Such dogmatism is certainty concerning the truth of Scripture, and a willingness to continue studying Scripture so as to modify the understanding of God's revelation to mankind.
  - a. It is not a dogmatism of arrogance but of certainty regarding biblical statements that causes the mature believer to stand fast. It includes a reliance on the enlightenment of God to come to understanding.
  - b. This dogmatism is not a dogmatism of opinion, but of a solid foundation of biblical understanding with a willingness to be influenced by a continued study of Scripture using correct exegetical and interpretive methods. It is neither arbitrary nor unchangeable.
3. An understanding of Scriptural authority renders all other authorities secondary.
  - a. Christians owe allegiance to political authority only so long as it does not violate biblical authority. Believers are to obey governmental authorities even when those authorities perform actions contrary to biblical truth, unless the believer is required by those authorities to so act. Christians are required to maintain Scriptural practice at all costs, including the violation of those laws that require the believer to act in an unbiblical way.
  - b. Scientific opinion is only authoritative if it is consistent with biblical statement. No scientific theory or hypothesis may be used to influence or even determine the meaning of a passage of Scripture.