

Authority of Scripture

- Religious authority
- Sources and norms
- Typologies of biblical authority

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Religious Authority

- External principles of authority:
 - Sacred book (Bible)
 - Authoritative person (perhaps founder; Jesus)
 - Community (church, tradition)
- Internal principles of authority:
 - Reason
 - Experience (including private word from Spirit)

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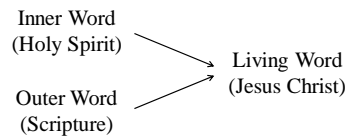
Religious Authority

- Catholicism and Orthodoxy – Scripture and community (tradition).
- Protestant Reformers – *sola scriptura*.
 - Final authority.
 - Inner witness of the Spirit (experiential element).

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Religious Authority

- Anabaptists: authority of Christ.



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Religious Authority

- Protestant scholasticism: Scripture only.
- Classical liberalism: reason.
- Neoorthodoxy: experience.
- Wesleyan tradition: Scripture, tradition, reason, experience.

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Sources and Norms

- We all make use of various sources of authority.
 - What is/are our norm(s)?
 - Norm: standard, rule against which other things are measured.
 - Most Protestant traditions: Bible is norm.
- Gordon Fee: Bible as “primary penultimate authority.”

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Sources and Norms

- Swartley: Biblical authority can't be separated from authority of Christ.
 - Biblical authority is personal.
 - It's that of a relationship (with Christ).
 - It's lived out in community (body of Christ).
 - It demands a response of obedience (to Christ).

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Authentication of Scripture

- Distinguish issues of authority from issues of interpretation.
- Biblical authority is not an end in itself.
 - The Bible points beyond itself to the author of life (John 5:39-40).
 - Our lives are our strongest testimonies to our view of biblical authority.

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Typologies of Biblical Authority

- In what does biblical authority consist?
 - Kelsey: doctrine/concepts; recital and narrative; event and expression.
 - Gnuse: Inspiration; salvation history; existentialism; Christocentrism; limited authority.
 - Platcher: set of true propositions; a transforming word; the narrative of God's identity.

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Typologies of Biblical Authority

- Four basic models:
 - Scripture as inspired propositions.
 - Scripture as event/encounter.
 - Scripture as history/story/witness.
 - Scripture as prototype/source (limited authority).
- The Bible (1) *is* (2) *becomes* (3) *witnesses to* (4) *contains* the Word of God.

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