

# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE:

The Nature of God's Word



# THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

- The Nature of God's Word (Scripture's Doctrine)
- The Makeup of God's Word (Scripture's Canon)
- The Preservation of God's Word (Scripture's Text)
- The Transmission of God's Word (Scripture's Translation, 3 Parts)
- The Interpretation of God's Word (Scripture's Meaning, 6 Parts)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- Revelation as Communication
  - General Revelation

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

<sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, <sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. <sup>6</sup> Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- Revelation as Communication
  - General Revelation

<sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- Revelation as Communication
  - General Revelation
  - Special Revelation

Reveals God's will, nature, and work, which is otherwise unknowable.



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- Revelation as Communication

- General Revelation
- Special Revelation
- Why as Communication?
- Centrality of Christ



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

## ▪ Revelation as Communication

- General Revelation
- Special Revelation
- Why as Communication?
- Centrality of Christ

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... (Hebrews 1:1-2)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors

Important to confess:  
Psalm 13:1-2

A Psalm of David.

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide  
your face from me? <sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul and have  
sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

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Important to confess:  
Lamentations 1:16

For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit; my children are desolate, for the enemy has prevailed.



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors

Limited by:  
Time  
Culture  
Humanity



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors

Limited, so error prone?

Errors of grammatical

Errors of spelling

Errors of “quotation”

Errors of prophecy

Errors of exaggeration



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

## ▪ The Authors of God's Word

### ▪ Human Authors

These are normal features of human communication, and do not strictly effect truth.

So not really “errors.”

Limited, so error prone?  
Errors of grammatical  
Errors of spelling  
Errors of “quotation”  
Errors of prophecy  
Errors of exaggeration



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors

However, if we are fixated on perfection in truth, these small “errors of human production” become much larger problems

Limited, so error prone?  
Errors of grammatical  
Errors of spelling  
Errors of “quotation”  
Errors of prophecy  
Errors of exaggeration

∴ We must be careful when we speak of the Bible being “inerrant” and “true”!



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

Rather [than simply affirming that Scripture is simply true and without error], it is better to affirm that Scripture is fully capable of accomplishing God's will in our lives. I think that this is the primary point of a passage like 2 Tim 3:16, which states that all Scripture is "God-breathed." Paul does not say this simply to point out that Scripture is true, which while good theology is much beside his point. But rather to point out that Scripture is "profitable...that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (v. 17). Certainly, Scripture could hardly be profitable without being true. The truthfulness of Scripture must be affirmed. Yet, Scripture is not just true, but, even better: it is good for us! "I am wearing shoes" is true, although not really profitable for anyone. Thus, Scripture is trustworthy to make us into what God wants us to be; to make us complete and holy and happy in Christ.



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

Thus, the more important point is that Scripture is:

Trustworthy

Profitable

Good

And, of course, Truthful



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the production of Scripture:



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the production of Scripture:

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the production of Scripture:

<sup>20</sup> Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the production of Scripture:

But, without strict dictation! (So, not all Spirit)

But, without just inspiring (So, not all human)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>13</sup> We are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the Israelites could not stare at the end of what was fading away, <sup>14</sup> but their minds were closed. For to this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains; it is not lifted, because it is set aside only in Christ. . . .



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors
- Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>15</sup> Even to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, <sup>16</sup> but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom...



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>18</sup> We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:13-18, HCSB)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit-- the Father will send Him in My name-- will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you. (John 14:26, HCSB)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors
- Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>26</sup> "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. (John 15:26-27)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

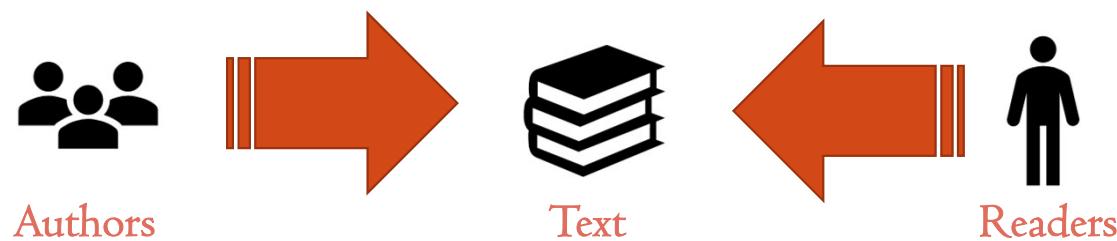
- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the reception of Scripture:

<sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:13-14)



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

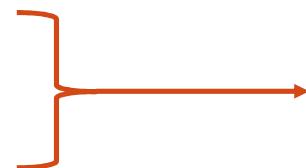
- The Authors of God's Word
  - Human Authors
  - Divine Author – Superintends the meaning of Scripture:



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

## ▪ The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors
- Divine Author



To focus only on the Spirit, and lose the human's role as Author, makes Scripture a mechanical dictation.

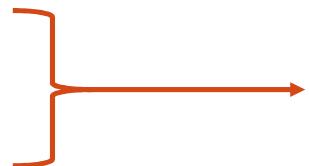
Therefore, we must always keep  
these two together!



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

## ▪ The Authors of God's Word

- Human Authors
- ~~Divine Author~~



To focus only on the human, and lose the Spirit's role as Author, makes Scripture simply a product of human will or exertion.

Therefore, we must always keep these two together!



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- An analogy: The Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union is something simple, yet profound:  
Jesus has two natures, human and divine, that combine in one person



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

## ▪ An analogy: The Hypostatic Union

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- **An analogy: The Hypostatic Union**

One and the same Word, Scripture, Revelation, Bible, to be acknowledged with two authors, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of the authors being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each author being preserved, and concurring in one Revelation and one Word...



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- An analogy: The Hypostatic Union
- Inconfusedly:

The human authors didn't become divine when they wrote. They were still very much human, and the Spirit didn't become incarnate in them.



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- An analogy: The Hypostatic Union

- Inconfusedly

- Unchangeably:

Time does not erase the essential nature of Scripture – that is, divine authorship of the OT does not become the dominating way to read the OT now



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- An analogy: The Hypostatic Union

- Inconfusedly
- Unchangeably
- Indivisibly:

Scripture does not have Spirit authored portions, and human authored portions. All of Scripture is Spirit/human authored



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- An analogy: The Hypostatic Union

- Inconfusedly
- Unchangeably
- Indivisibly
- Inseparably:

We do not need to believe that human authors understood all their words meant (see I Pet 1:12; I Cor 10:11), but we ought not to think that meanings of passages, intended by both the Spirit and the human author, are distinctly different. Rather, they are tied together, and in that sense inseparable



# THE NATURE OF GOD'S WORD

- Implications

- The importance of Revelation as communication
- The importance of the trustworthiness of Scripture
- The importance in knowing HOW Scripture is inerrant

