

A source of Our Confidence

The Word of God

The Authority of Scripture

The Clarity of Scripture

The Necessity of Scripture

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Wednesday Noon Bible Study
FOLHOW Prayer Line

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The Authority of Scripture

What Does Scripture Say About Confidence?

When we think of the word “confidence”, we often focus on words such as trust, a belief in one's powers or abilities, or a private and confidential communication.

Yet for the born-again child of God and Christ-follower, confidence has much greater meaning because our confidence does not come from our own relentless belief in ourselves, our personal power, our resources, or the people we know. Our confidence matures from an ever-growing dependence upon God. God-confidence means depending completely upon God and His strength to handle the “things” in our lives. It is not about a personal strength or the belief we put into earthly things. For a follower of Christ, confidence has a much deeper meaning.

Throughout the Old and New Testament, scripture after scripture proclaims not only the source of what we understand as confidence and outcomes for individuals of all ages and at each stage of their faith journey as confidence for who God is and what God continuously does for those who seek him. Over the coming weeks, let us look further into how scripture teaches about confidence.

The term “confidence” evolves from a transliteration from the Hebrew, Betach, for which we understand concepts such as refuge security, safety, trust, assurance.

As we bring our study of Elijah in I Kings to a close, let us transition to exploring both Old and New Testament scriptures focusing on the confidence and assurances gifted to us as Children of the Most High God.

From: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

CONFIDENCE (Noun, or Verb with “have”), CONFIDENT (-LY)

Denotes “persuasion, assurance, confidence.

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The Word of God and the Faithfulness of God Are Foundations for Our Confidence

The major teachings of the Bible about itself can be classified into four characteristics sometimes termed attributes: (1) *the authority of Scripture*, (2) *the clarity of Scripture*, (3) *the necessity of Scripture*, and (4) *the sufficiency of Scripture*. Most Christians would agree that the Bible is our authority in some sense. But in exactly what sense does the Bible claim to be our authority? Also, how do we become convinced that the declarations of Scripture as God's Word are true?

Webster's Dictionary describes the word authority as **power to influence** or **command thought, opinion, or behavior**. This online source goes on to define authority as **persons** who are in **command**.

Do you observe a sense of authority in the following scripture ?
What do you hear as motivation for this scripture?

Psalm 119:4

New King James Version - You have commanded *us* to keep Your precepts diligently.

The Amplified Bible - You have ordained Your precepts,
That we should follow them with [careful] diligence.

The Complete Jewish Bible - You laid down your precepts for us to observe with care.

How Does Scripture Describe Its Authority?

The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

What the Bible Claims for Itself

There are frequent claims in the Bible that all the words of Scripture are God's words.

1. In the Old Testament, a frequent introductory phrase reads, "Thus says the LORD," and this phrase appears hundreds of times. In the world of the Old Testament, this phrase would have been recognized as identical in form to the phrase, "Thus says

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king . . .,” which was used to preface edicts of a king to his subjects, an edict that **could not** be challenged or questioned but that simply had to be obeyed.

2. Therefore, when the prophets say, “Thus says the Lord,” they are claiming to be messengers from the sovereign King of Israel, namely, God himself, and they are claiming that their words are the absolute authoritative words of God. When a prophet spoke in God’s name in this way, every word he spoke had to come from God, or he would be a false prophet:

Examples

Numbers 22: 38	Deuteronomy 18: 18 – 20	Ezekiel. 2: 7; 13: 1 – 16
Jeremiah. 1: 9; 14: 14; 23: 16 – 22; 29: 31 – 32		

Also, in the Old Testament God is often said to speak “through” the prophets. Thus, what the prophet says in God’s name, God Himself has spoken. Thus, to disbelieve or disobey anything a prophet says is to disbelieve or disobey God himself.

What Messages Are in These Scriptures		
1 Kings 14: 18; 16: 12, 34	Jeremiah 37: 2	Zechariah 7: 7, 12
1 Kings 13: 26 with v. 21	1 Kings 21: 19 with 2 Kings 9: 25 – 26	2 Kings 9: 36; 14: 25
1 Samuel 15: 3, 18		Deuteronomy 18: 19
1 Samuel 10: 8; 13: 13 – 14; 15: 3, 19, 23;	Haggai 1: 12	1 Kings 20: 35, 36

While, by themselves these verses do not claim that all the words in the Old Testament are God’s words, these verses refer only to specific sections of spoken or written words in the Old Testament. But the cumulative power of these passages and hundreds of other passages that begin with the phrase, “Thus says the Lord,” demonstrate that within the Old Testament we have written records of words that are said to be God’s own words. These words make-up large sections of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, multiple passages indicate that all the Old Testament writings are considered as God’s words. II Timothy 3: 16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (NIV).

Paul here affirms that all the Old Testament writings are “theopneustos” which means “breathed out by God.” Since the writings are considered as “breathed out,” the phrase “**breathing**” is understood as an **image** for **speaking the words of Scripture**. The consideration

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is that for every word of the Old Testament, God is the one who spoke (and still speaks) it, although God used human representatives to write His words. II Peter 1: 21 says that none of these prophecies ever came by the thoughts or brilliance of man," but that "*men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*" Peter does not intend to completely deny human personality in the writing of Scripture but rather to say that *the ultimate source of every prophecy was never a man's decision about what he wanted to write.* Rather **man was the conduit through which Holy Spirit's action in the lives of prophets carried out God's plan** according to God's purpose and His divine authority and desire for His creation. The authority for what is written in the Holy Scriptures is the choice of God and God alone.

Many other New Testament passages speak in similar ways about sections of the Old Testament. Matthew 1: 22, restates the Old Testament from Isaiah 7: 14 "what the Lord had spoken by the prophet." Matthew 4: 4 repeats Deuteronomy 8:3 when Jesus says to the devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". In the context of Jesus' repeated citations from Deuteronomy to answer every temptation the enemy used to try his divinity, the words that proceed each statement from Jesus was a declarative statement affirming that the written Scriptures of the Old Testament were "from the mouth of God". While the words of the author in Genesis 2: 24, are not attributed to God in the Genesis narrative, they are quoted by Jesus in Matthew 19:5 as words that God "said."

Therefore...

1. In what ways does the Bible claim to be our authority?
2. How do we become persuaded that the claims of Scripture to be God's Word are true?
3. How do we help others understand the authority of scripture as God's Word?
4. Describe the relationship of biblical authority and *confidence* to our lives as believers in Christ.

Resources:

The Holy Bible

The Great Doctrines of the Bible, The Doctrine of the Scriptures -Williams Evans

Systematic Theology – Wayne Grudem