

An Exposition of the 2nd (1689) London Baptist Confession

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1.1 *The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible (a) rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience; although the light (b) of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. (c) Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto (d) writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*

(a) 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Ephesians 2:20;

(b) Romans 1:19-21; 2:14-15; Psalm 19:1-3;

(c) Hebrews 1:1;

(d) Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-20

1. The possible reasons for the addition... *"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience"*

- a. It may have been fortified against the Quakers
- b. It may have been fortified against Roman Catholics
- c. It may have been fortified against Paedobaptists

2. The "rule"... *"The Holy Scripture is the only... rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience..."*

- a. *Rule*: "A standard... a criterion, test, canon" (Oxford English Dictionary)
- b. The *rule* is Scripture and Scripture is the rule.
- c. Scripture is the *only* rule – a unique status applying only to the Scriptures.
 - i. Over general revelation/ the light of nature
 - ii. Over personal revelation and new revelations of the Spirit
 - iii. Over the Apocrypha
 - iv. Over the Pope & tradition
 - v. Over imaginations and devices of men
 - vi. Over suggestions of Satan

3. The nature of the only rule... *"The Holy Scripture is the only **sufficient, certain, and infallible** rule"*

- a. Scripture is the only **sufficient** rule
 - i. It contains every necessary teaching for humanity's saving knowledge, saving faith, and obedience.
 - ii. All other forms of revelation (light of nature, etc.) are insufficient to teach us about salvation, faith, and obedience.
 - iii. Sufficiency of scripture defined in the LBCF 1.6: The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

- iv. The doctrine of the sufficiency of the Scripture is the conclusion that in God's word, we have been given everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4). In other words, the Bible contains all that we need in order to know God's will and live a life that is pleasing to Him. The sufficiency of the Scripture is also closely related to the authority of Scripture. To say that the Bible is sufficient, is to say that the Bible is *the* source of wisdom that we are committed to trusting in and that all other sources of wisdom are subject to it. Scripture alone is sufficient for interpreting itself and there is no authority outside of the Bible by which the Bible is to be interpreted.

b. Scripture is the only **certain** rule

- i. It is certain, meaning it is a sure, faithful word.
- ii. Certainty = inerrancy... There are no errors – it is free from falsehood, fraud, and deceit.
- iii. The doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture is the conclusion that the Bible, in its original form, is without error and contains nothing false. There is nothing untrue whatsoever in the biblical text.

c. Scripture is the only **infallible** rule

- i. Far stronger than “certain”/ “inerrant”...
- ii. Not only is it without error, but it cannot err – that would be an impossibility.
- iii. Can be distinguished from inerrancy/certainty, but can't be separated.

4. The sphere of the rule... *“The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of **all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience**”*

- a. Saving knowledge: The objective doctrine necessary to know God as Savior.
- b. Saving Faith: The subjective/ personal apprehension of the objectively revealed gospel in conversion and throughout life on this earth.
- c. Obedience: The twin grace accompanying saving faith, which is manifested in repentance (ch 15)
- d. Note: The primary purpose of the scriptures is to reveal saving knowledge to men (but not the only purpose)

5. Back to necessity... *“The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience... **which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary**, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.*

- a. The scripture is most necessary because the canon of scripture is closed.
- b. The scripture is most necessary because it is the only rule – there is no other authority on this level.
- c. The Scripture is most necessary because it is the only perfect, unfailing standard.