

1689 Chapter 1: The Holy Scripture

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[0 : 00] Well, you should have a handout. If you don't, hold your hand up and we'll make sure you get one. A handout from our Confession of Faith, Chapter 1.

Grace Fellowship Church has adopted the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith as a faithful summary of what we believe the Bible teaches. And last week, on a conference call, I heard Paul Warshare tell us how much he appreciates the 1689 Confession of Faith and could wish that he had found it much earlier.

He tells how for many years in his Christian life he didn't know of its existence and so it took him many years to hammer out his theology and it evolved over the years until finally he came to where he is now and then found out that, oh, here's a statement of faith that says it perfectly.

Just what I believe. And so could have wished to have had that document earlier on in his life.

No doubt there was value in the struggle of pouring through the scriptures as there has been for many of you as you've come to appreciate the truths of God's word and we do gain much from it when we find it ourselves.

[1 : 25] But the Confession of Faith is just loaded with teachings on what the scriptures teach and then with the scriptures that we might go to the word of God and see these things taught in their proper context.

Well, we don't need to reinvent the wheel and so we're thankful to have these historic confessions of faith, the catechisms, helpful tools pointing us to what the Bible teaches.

And it reminds us that though we may be just uncovering them for ourselves like Paul Washer, yet Jesus Christ, the great prophet of his church, has never abandoned his church.

He's always been that great prophet teaching his church the will of God. So we shouldn't be surprised to find that, yes, these things were believed in 1689, and yes, they were believed in 89 as the apostles took the word from Jesus and the Old Testament prophets and preached it in their day.

So through the Holy Spirit, Jesus has been teaching and guiding his church right down through the 2,000 centuries since he has ascended.

[2 : 41] The faith once for all delivered to the saints. So today we're just going to do a quick run through chapter 1 of our confession on the Holy Scripture.

As I said, this is just a one-off message study that we're doing, as Jeremy will be back to finish his study next week. This was taken largely from the Westminster Confession of Faith, written about 20 years before the 1689.

And chapter 1 summarizes what the Bible says about the Bible. Some 40 different biblical texts are cited. It treats it in 10 different sections.

And we'll only have time to touch on the high points. But my aim is that it will increase our appreciation for the word of God and make us read it more, meditate on it more, memorize it more, hear it preached and taught more, and fellowship around it more.

So the headings that we'll be going through, I didn't write them in here, but they come from Sam Waldron's exposition of the 1689 Confession of Faith.

- [3 : 52] So the first paragraph, then, we could call the necessity of the Holy Scripture. If I spoke of the necessity of oxygen to live, then you would understand what is meant by the necessity of the Holy Scripture.

It's something we cannot have spiritual life without. Look at sentence one. The Holy Scripture is the all-sufficient, certain, and infallible rule or standard of the knowledge, faith, and obedience that constitutes salvation.

We only know the way of salvation through the revelation of Scripture. Now, the only reason we know anything about God at all is because God is a God who reveals himself.

If God had not spoken and shown himself to us, we wouldn't know anything about him. He's that far above us. We can't figure him out unless he talks to us, shows us himself.

And, blessed be God, he is a self-revealing God. He wants to be known and worshipped as God. Now, Scripture is only one of two sources by which we receive the knowledge of God.

- [5 : 13] What's the other source? Nature. Creation. The general revelation that we speak of in creation, and this being the special revelation in his word.

So, creation, the light of nature, providence, conscience, God has revealed himself in them. Turn to Psalm 19. It's a psalm where David celebrates these two books of God's revelation that he's given us, whereby we know him.

And the first part of Psalm 19 deals with the natural revelation, creation.

And then verses 7 to the end treat the scripture, the law of God, the two books then by which God reveals himself. Let's look at the first six verses, the revelation of God in nature.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech. Night after night they display knowledge.

- [6 : 25] There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth. Their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other. Nothing is hidden from its heat. This is creation's witness to its creator, God.

And notice all that is said about it. First of all, we see that creation is a theater in which God's glory is being portrayed. The heavens are declaring the glory of God.

Verse 2 tells us that this is a constant stream of information and knowledge that is going forth day and night. This knowledge is pouring forth upon humanity.

Verse 3 tells us that this revelation of God is in a form that all languages can understand. It's picture language.

- [7 : 38] So there is no speech or language where his voice is not heard and understood. Verse 4 tells us that creation's, this silent voice of creation, reaches to the whole earth.

That there's no part anywhere in God's world without it. It's universal revelation. And so he gives the illustration of just one preacher, the Son.

And he tells us that this preacher that's preaching day and night about truth about its creator, it makes its round daily, testifying to God its maker and his glory.

No place on earth is without its light and heat. So you see, this is natural revelation. It touches everyone in the world. So some might think, well, then if we have this glorious revelation that we've just seen described, maybe that's all we need.

Maybe that's all the pagan savage down in some remote rainforest needs. Perhaps scripture's not necessary after all. But sentence two tells us that though this natural revelation in creation is true, it's limited.

[8 : 58] Notice the second sentence. Although the light of nature and God's works of creation and providence give such clear testimony to his goodness, wisdom, and power, that men who spurn them are left inexcusable.

Yet they are not sufficient of themselves to give that knowledge of God and his will, which is necessary for salvation.

The light of nature, as great as it is, is not all sufficient. It doesn't tell us enough about God to save us, only enough to leave us without excuse and condemned.

Condemned because we've abused the knowledge that he has given us of himself in creation. Instead of taking what he's given us in creation and bowing before the creator with thanksgiving and worship and giving him glory, what do we do?

We serve the creature rather than the creator. We pray to the sun. We bow down to the moon. We take the created things and make them our gods and idols and live for them instead of him.

[10 : 08] That's Romans chapter 1. And Romans chapter 1 tells us that the revelation is getting through. That men do know God from the natural revelation.

It's not like they should know him. They do know him, Romans 1, 19 to 21 says. But the knowledge that they have been given of God, they keep trying to suppress and push down and ignore and neglect it, reject it.

So it's enough to condemn them as guilty before God, but it's not enough to save them. You can look at the stars every night for the rest of your life, and it will never spell out.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Natural revelation does not reveal the way to be saved.

And that's why the scriptures are necessary. Absolutely necessary. Another revelation must be made if we're to be saved.

[11 : 17] The benighted heathen are not and cannot be saved by only seeing the light of creation. They must hear the gospel that has been contained in the scriptures.

If they are ever to call on the Lord and be saved, Romans 10, 13 to 15. But you know, our need for further revelation, our necessity to have further revelation than just what God has given us, does not obligate God to give us more revelation.

It's not like, oh, he has to give us something more then. No, he doesn't owe us anything more because we've abused what he has given us. And so it's a marvelous mercy that God hasn't stopped with the natural revelation enough to condemn us all, but that he has in mercy revealed himself in scripture.

And that's what sentence three says to us. In consequence, because natural revelation is not sufficient for salvation, the merciful Lord, there it is, it's mercy, that from time to time in a variety of ways, he has revealed himself and made known his will to his church.

It's reminiscent of Hebrews 1, 1 and 2, that at various times and places and ways, God revealed himself to us in dreams and visions, all kinds of ways that in the past, God has spoken to us through voices there on Mount Sinai, his own voice boomed the Ten Commandments, through the prophets, through Balaam's donkey.

[13 : 04] God has been speaking down through history. And in these last days, he's spoken to us through his son. Now, the next verse says, and furthermore, or the next line says, and furthermore, in order to ensure the preservation and propagation of the truth and the establishment and comfort of the church against the corrupt nature of man and the malice of Satan in the world, he caused this revelation of himself and his will to be written down in all its fullness.

So we not only had Balaam's donkey talking and prophets talking and God talking from heaven at Mount Sinai and visions and dreams, God was pleased to write it down.

Why? To preserve the truth is one of the reasons he caused this revelation of himself and his will to be written down. You ever played the telephone game?

You sit in a circle and you whisper something to the one next to you, and by the time it gets around, it sounds like nothing that you said? Well, for the preservation of the truth, God wrote it down that it not be lost.

There were big epochs of time when it was passed down from one generation to the next because they were very careful in their telling the works of God from one generation to the next, and God's providence preserved the truth, but lest anyone fudge with the word of God, he had it written down in a way that doesn't change, and you can see it.

[14 : 44] Well, what did we hear God say on Mount Sinai? My memory's a little foggy. Oh, let's see, Exodus 20. Here it is. You see, the blessing of having the word of God committed to writing.

By the way, that's what scripture means, the writings, the written revelation of God. Sentence five follows, and the last sentence, and as the manner in which God formerly revealed his will has long ceased, all those ways of speaking, visions, prophets, Balaam's donkey, the holy scripture becomes absolutely essential to man.

So God is not speaking anymore as he once did. He now has spoken to us, and we have all that we're going to get from God until we see him face to face and hear from his mouth.

We trust, well done, good and faithful servant. So former ways of revealing himself have ceased. He now reveals himself through the written word of God, and that's why the scripture becomes absolutely necessary to man for their salvation.

Now this highlights, I'm taking more time on this first paragraph because it is full of wonderful truths, and let me just highlight them.

[16 : 17] We see the role of the two books of Revelation, don't we, in this first paragraph? That there is the revelation in nature and in the scripture. We see the absolute necessity of holy scripture for salvation, and the mercy of God in giving it to us after we had rejected his earlier revelation.

And then we see the confession's cessationist view of revelation, that the church is not now receiving any new revelations from God. Whatever men may say, that way of revealing himself has ceased, and now we have the scriptures.

And that's important in a day when so-called prophets and people are claiming, the Lord told me this. The Lord told me that. How many prophecies did we hear about President Trump winning the election?

How many prophecies have been made of Christ coming back in such and such a day? There's this claim that God is giving revelation and revealing himself directly to men.

And we see our confession repudiates it, and especially the Hebrews 1 and 2. And then it gives us an appreciation of the mercy of God, not only in giving us special revelation, but giving it to us in a written form.

[17 : 43] And 1 Kings chapter 13 brings this point home to me with power every time I read it. You may want to read it this afternoon. It's 1 Kings 13. Let me give you the story.

By the word of the Lord. So here's revelation. By the word of the Lord, a man of God came from Judah up to Bethel to speak a word of judgment from the Lord on the idolatrous altar that King Jeroboam had set up there.

So God sends this man of God with a message, go up to Bethel, and their curse, the altar that King Jeroboam set up and the whole worship that he has set up in the northern kingdom, not wanting his people to come down to Jerusalem, the place where God had chosen to have his altars, his altar and his temple.

Well, he's a prophet. He received this supernatural revelation directly from God. And he obeyed. And he went to Bethel. And he pronounced God's curse on the altar as the king was right there.

And the king didn't appreciate him cursing his altar. And he stretched out his hand and cried, seize him. And immediately his hand froze up so that he couldn't draw it back.

[19 : 02] And he then turned to the man of God and said, pray for me that my hand will be healed. And he did.

And he did. And his hand was restored. And then the king wanted the man of God to come home with him and eat and receive a gift from him. And the man of God answered, even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here.

For I was commanded by the word of the Lord, you must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came. So he rejected the tempting offer of the king and took another route home.

If only that was the end of the chapter. But there was a certain old prophet living there in Bethel, another prophet, who received direct revelation from God.

And his sons came home that day and said, Dad, you won't believe what happened at the altar today. And they told their father about the cursing of the altar and it split and about the king and what happened.

[20 : 18] And this old prophet said, saddle up my donkey, boys. I'm going after him. Which way to go? And he said he went that way.

And so he hurried after the man and found the man of God. The old prophet finds the younger man of God sitting under an oak tree. And he said, come home and eat with me.

I cannot turn back and go with you, he said, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I've been told by the word of the Lord, you must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.

temptation number two, successfully resisted by the word of the Lord. But again, it's too bad it doesn't end there because the old prophet answered, I too am a prophet, even as you are.

And an angel said to me, by the word of the Lord, bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water. But he was lying to him.

[21 : 31] So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house. What was it about the third temptation that caused the man of God to stumble?

What was the claim to have received a fresh revelation from God of his will? I too am a prophet and God told me through an angel, an angel gave me the word of the Lord, you're now to come home with me.

And that's all it took. He went home and while they were sitting with the man, with the old prophet, and while they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet.

Not a lie this time, the real word of the Lord to the prophet who had brought him back. And he cried out to the man of God there at the table who had come from Judah, this is what the Lord says, you have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you.

And he pronounced God's judgment on him and he got on his donkey and headed home and a lion killed him and then just stood there beside the donkey and the dead young prophet.

[22 : 51] A sign, an obvious sign of something strange is going on here. The lion is not feasting on the dead man nor on the donkey. And I get done reading a chapter like that and I say, thank you Lord for giving me all the revelation I need in a written form so that if anybody says the Lord said to me to tell you as they do, I can look at this unchanged, inerrant, unchanging book.

Aren't you glad you're not under the whims of a self-proclaimed prophet telling you as they have me, I have a word of the Lord for you. I like to tell them I do too.

66 books. It's all the word of the Lord and it's all I need. But it's absolutely necessary for our salvation as well as helpful to us in knowing what is the mind of the Lord, what is the thought of God about the matters that he's spoken.

Any questions on paragraph 1 of the confession? It's the longest paragraph and the one I wanted to spend the most time on. We'll just breeze through a few other high points. Okay.

Paragraph 2 is the identity of the Holy Scriptures. Well, what are these Holy Scriptures? And you can see the confession listed them. The 39 books of the Old Testament, 27 books of the New Testament.

[24 : 30] And all these books are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule or standard of faith and life. Everything you need to know for salvation, everything you know, you need to know as to what to believe and what to do.

It's all here in these 66 books. That's the claim. Now, that's the second claim on the all-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, but he'll bring it up later.

They bring it up later in another paragraph. But this is all we need. Notably missing are the apocryphal writings that are included in the Roman Catholic Bible and other Bibles as well.

And paragraph 3 explains why that is. The books commonly called the apocrypha were not given by divine inspiration and are not part of the canon or rule of Scripture.

Therefore, they don't possess any authority in the church of God and are to be regarded and used in the same way as other writings of men. Doesn't mean we throw them in the garbage can and say there's no value in it any more than books that you read that aren't one of the 66 books.

[25 : 35] They're written by men and they may hold a certain amount of helpful material. And so that's how we regard the apocrypha writings. Paragraphs 4 and 5 speak of the authority of Holy Scripture.

What is it that gives this book authority? And we must say that these confessions came forth during the time of the Reformation.

So behind the scenes, many of these statements are aimed at the Roman Catholic Church. In contradistinction from what Rome teaches, this is what we believe the Bible teaches.

And obviously this one on the authority of Scripture is a critical one as well. Paragraph 4 is telling us that it doesn't receive authority when the church by some vote of its cardinals and popes say, this is the word of God.

We don't need them weighing in on it for it to have authority. It has its own authority. It is the word of God and because it is what it is, it has authority. When God speaks, He speaks with the authority of the Creator because that's who He is.

[26 : 49] So we don't need a church to say we recognize these books and they recognize more than 66 and all their traditions as authoritative. And that's what is being said in paragraph 4.

Number 4, the Scripture is self-authenticating. Its authority does not depend on the testimony of any man or church but entirely upon God its author who is truth itself and is to be received because it is the word of God.

It's self-authenticating. In other words, it authenticates itself. And we can see this happening right within the Scripture itself. As you read the New Testament, it authenticates the Old Testament, doesn't it?

It quotes the Old Testament as being the word of God. So there's places where Moses said certain things in the Old Testament but when the New Testament is speaking about what Moses says, it says, as God says.

In other words, what Moses says is what God says. What the prophets said are what God says. And so the New Testament authenticates the Old.

[28 : 08] And that was the Bible. The Old Testament was the Bible that our Lord used and preached from. And so the New Testament authenticates the Old Testament.

And so we see this self-authenticating word of God. all Scripture is God-breathed.

All Scripture is of divine origin, not from man. All Scripture is permanent, unbreakable, authoritative, as written.

Many of the texts you see there that back up those statements. So, paragraph 5 or point 5 deals with the question, how do we know the Bible is the word of God and therefore authoritative?

And so it says there may be many other supporting reasons for holding the Scripture in high esteem. It's heavenly contents.

[29 : 12] We find things in here that we would not know had God not revealed it to us. Things that no man could ever know are here revealed to us.

How did the world get its start? Well, no man was there to see it. So we find things here explaining things that only God would know.

That's showing something of the authority of the Scripture. It's power to change lives. We have seen this book and the message of the Gospel of Christ that it contains totally revolutionize the disciples' lives and your life and my life.

There is some unique power and authority in this word. we see fulfillments of prophecy. Hundreds of prophecies that were made in the Old Testament fulfilled to the letter in the New Testament.

Again, there's something unique about this. Not one out of every three coming true. You find this stuff, don't you? Somebody said something and, oh, look, we had this hurricane and maybe that's what they were talking about.

[30 : 29] No, we have things written down with such detail. 700 years before the crucifixion that they gambled for Jesus' clothes.

What's the likelihood of that? It's there and then we see the fulfillment of it. That not a bone of his body was broken and it's fulfilled.

They broke the other bones of the two men that were crucified but not his. What the Lord said happened. So we see these things about the Bible, the unity of the Bible.

That though it's 66 books written by 40 some different authors over a period of 1,500 years on different places of the world yet it's one message and the longer you read the Bible the more you appreciate that truth.

It all fits together. How did all these different people write their books and letters and it all says the same thing?

[31 : 41] No contradictory statements. And so in these ways we find that yes, these are supporting arguments we might say that show to us that this book is unique.

It is authoritative. But we do not depend upon those things for the authority of Scripture. It has authority.

It is the Word of God whether you recognize it or not. And the fact of the matter is that God by His Spirit causes His children to recognize it so that 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 13 the apostle is thanking God.

Why God? Because God's the one who convinces men that His Word is true. And he thanks God. We also thank God continually because when you receive the Word of God which you heard from us you heard us speaking.

But you received it, you accepted it not as the Word of men but as it actually is the Word of God which is at work in those who believe. It carries its own authority and the Spirit of God bears witness in the heart of every child of God that it is the Word of God.

[32 : 58] That's why you never find the apostle Paul trying to prove that it's the Word of God before he preaches it. He even goes to the philosophers on Mars Hill and if ever you think he ought to maybe feel like he ought to give an apology for why he thinks they ought to listen to his preaching that would be it.

But he doesn't try to prove that the Word of God that the Bible is the Word of God with all these things that I just mentioned. He just posits it as true.

It is the Word of God. This is the God that you worship ignorantly and I'm going to declare Him to you. He's the God that made you. He's the God of providence and everything that happens.

The rain comes down because of Him. He's blessed you. He's going to judge the world one day. He's raised His Son from the dead as a testament that one day that Savior is going to judge all men in righteousness and that's why He requires that all men repent and trust in Him.

Well, it has its own authority. That's the important point being made in paragraphs 4 and 5. And then we come to paragraph 6, the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.

[34 : 22] As I said, we've already seen two statements of it. The first paragraph and we saw it again later that those old ways of God revealing Himself are past and unrepeating.

Now we come to the statement on the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture. And when we talk about the sufficiency of Holy Scripture, we have to ask the question, sufficient for what? What is this book sufficient for?

Is it sufficient to make you a brain surgeon? I'm not coming to you for it if you think that's all it takes. that's not its purpose, is it?

It wasn't given to make you a brain surgeon. So what are we saying when we're saying I have everything I need here? Well, we're not saying it's for that.

We're not saying that it's a textbook on science and I can learn all about science from this book. No, that's not its purpose.

[35 : 26] But when it speaks about scientific things, it is the authoritative truth of God. And when it does speak about man's mind and brain, it is true in its statements about it.

But that's not its purpose. You'll notice the first sentence of paragraph six. The sum total of God's revelation concerning all things essential to his own glory and to the salvation and faith and life of man is either explicitly set down or implicitly contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Nothing, whether a supposed revelation of the Spirit or of man's traditions is ever to be added to Scripture. Peter says it.

Everything we need for life and godliness, everything Timothy needed as a young man to be made wise for salvation is here in the Holy Scriptures.

And it's also thoroughly everything that Timothy needed when he grew up and became a preacher. Everything here he needed to be thoroughly equipped as a man of God to minister to the congregations.

[36 : 45] It's an amazing book, isn't it? That it's sufficient to teach little children how to be saved, to make them wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

And yet the same book, when Timothy grows up, he finds that this same book is the book that will make him thoroughly equipped for every good work in his ministry. He doesn't need all the latest theories being spun out of seminaries that are departing from the world.

He has it and it is sufficient. And if it's sufficient for the minister in ministering to all the congregation's needs, then it's sufficient for every single member in the congregation for their own life and godliness.

The sufficiency of Scripture. And nothing is ever to be added to it. Neither supposed new revelations, there were certain Anabaptists that were claiming God said this, he's made new revelations, we're prophets, we're apostles, we're getting new revelation.

And the confession says, oh no you're not. Whatever those supposed revelations are, they are not the Scriptures that we need. Nothing is to be added to it.

[38 : 02] Nor man's tradition, that's a response to the Roman Catholics who not only said that the Scripture is authoritative, but all of our traditions that we have agreed upon that these are authoritative in the church of Rome.

Those two stand on equal authority with the word of God. So we see the response of the writers to both errors in their day, and sadly, we still have the same two errors in our day.

Rome is still propagating their traditions, and many different denominations denominations have our traditions, and we can elevate our traditions to a level of Scripture.

And this statement is saying, no, nothing's to be added to the Scripture. And we have plenty of prophets, so-called prophets today, with their direct revelations from God, so-called.

Well, at the same time, sentence three says, we acknowledge that inward enlightenment from the Spirit of God is necessary for the right understanding of what Scripture reveals.

[39 : 10] So the Bible is sufficient, but don't think that it works without our minds studying and reading and meditating on the Scriptures. That's what it's saying.

The Holy Spirit teaching us as we read it and think about it. That, too, is understood for the sufficiency of this book. You just give this book to a lost person, it's not going to be sufficient for his salvation because he's blind and he can't see.

It's all here, but he can't see it. So he needs the Holy Spirit to open his eyes and to teach him to make this book sufficient for everything that he needs to know and do in this life.

That's why we should pray as we approach the Word of God. Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things in your law because we, too, get this cataracts built up on our eyes and we need the Spirit of God to come and teach us.

They will all be taught by God as the promise of the new covenant people and that's what we need. And then paragraph 7 is on the clarity of Holy Scripture.

[40 : 20] The perspicuity is the fancy word, but it's the clarity of it, the simplicity of it. It's the beauty of the thing, that it's clear.

Notice sentence 1 of paragraph 7. The contents of the Scripture vary in their degree of clarity and some men have a better understanding of them than others, yet those things which are essential to man's salvation and which must be known, believed, and obeyed are so clearly propounded and explained in one place or another that men educated or uneducated may attain to a sufficient understanding of them if they but use the ordinary means, sitting under the preaching of the word, reading the Bible for themselves, fellowshiping within the body of Christ over the word of God, the normal means of grace, an uneducated man can find all he needs, he'll understand all he needs for salvation and life of godliness.

Now again, that's answering Rome's charge. They didn't trust the lay people with the Bible. What do you know? We're the experts. And so, they didn't trust them to read the Bible.

It's for us to know and we'll teach you everything you need to know. Sadly, a lot of their sermons were given in Latin so that people couldn't profit even from what they told them.

But, the Bible, yes, it has some things hard to understand. Doesn't Peter say that about Paul? There are some things that he writes that are hard to understand.

[42 : 07] So, some scripture is easier than others and other scriptures are harder to understand. But what we need to know for salvation is clear to all if you just apply yourself to the normal means of grace.

it was, I think it was Wycliffe that said to the Roman Catholic Church, I'm going to make the plow boy following behind his horse to know more of God's truth than you prelates, you leaders of the church because I'm going to give them the scriptures in their own language, in the English language.

It's clear and they can understand it. Even little Timothy as he grew up on the knee of his mother and grandmother was able to be made wise for salvation.

Well, the availability of the Holy Scriptures, paragraph 8, it needs to be translated into the people's language so that they can read scripture in their own language, not in Latin or Greek or Hebrew.

They need to have it in their own language. And then paragraphs 9 and 10, the finality of the Holy Scriptures, paragraph 9 says, it's an infallible rule that scripture is to be interpreted by scripture.

[43 : 35] That's to say one part is to be interpreted by another part. Hence, any dispute as to the true, full, and evident meaning of any particular passage must be determined in the light of clear, comparable passages.

Or we might just say that the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible. So if you have a difficult passage, keep reading, keep reading, because there will be clearer passages that will shine light back on the difficult passages.

And so we have an inspired commentary, God's own word, and it sheds light on itself. And then that speaks to the finality of scripture.

We look to the scripture itself to make our final understanding of what it means. And then paragraph 10 ends.

All religious controversies are to be settled by scripture, and by scripture alone. All decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men collectively or individually, are similarly to be accepted or rejected according to the verdict of the scripture given to us by the Holy Spirit.

[44 : 49] In that verdict, faith finds its final rest. So yes, confessions of faith that men have written, they're helpful.

But they don't stand over the word of God. And that's the beauty of the 1689 confession of faith. That in the first chapter, it tells you that it knows where it belongs.

It doesn't belong standing in judgment upon the Bible. It's this way. And in any dispute about any religious matter, our appeal, our final appeal, must not be to the confession of faith, but to the word of God.

I like that in any confession. And it's not always held in such a way. Sometimes men can put their confessions above the word of God rather than bowing and putting God's word above.

Well, that's chapter one of the confession. I trust that just the summary of it will make us thankful that we have Bibles, that the word and revelation of God is clear, and what we need to know, and that yeah, he's merciful, and we're going to get to hear it again this day.

[46 : 09] We're dismissed. Thank you.