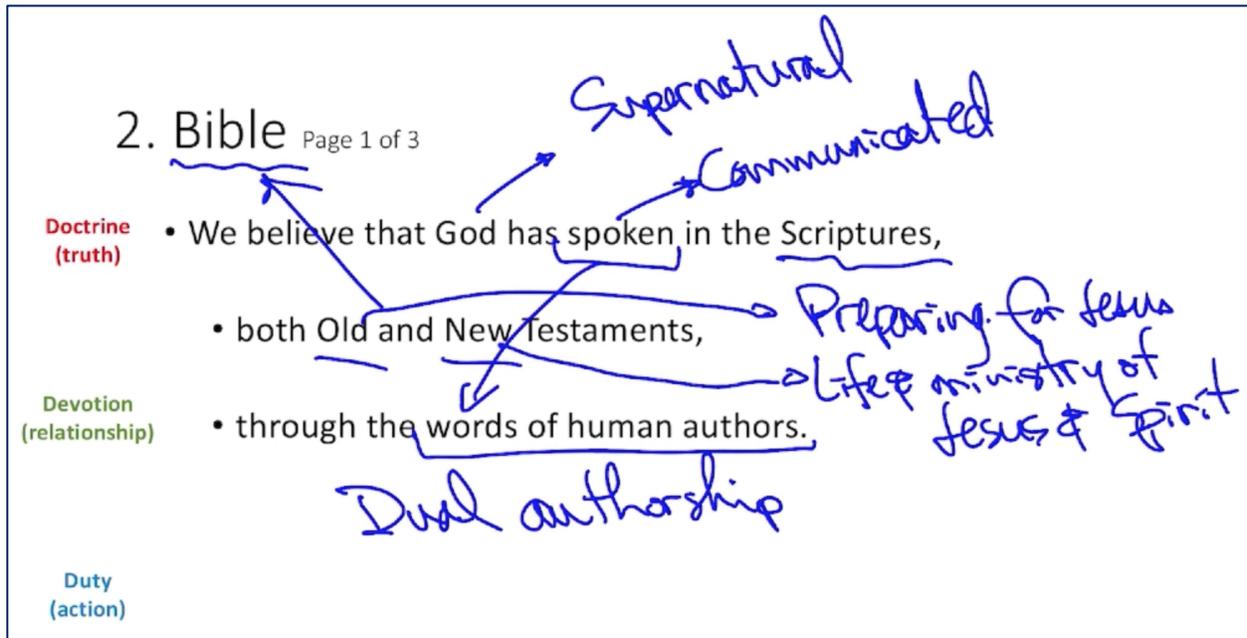


Doctrine 2: Bible



So the second area of our doctrinal statement is about the Bible. And again we'll do this in three pages.

So in terms of the Bible, we believe that **God has spoken**. This is very significant. And it's not necessary: God didn't have to do this. But God, in the supernatural -- outside of the natural realm -- has communicated, He has communicated Himself. He has spoken to people.

And where we find that is **in the Scriptures**. And "scripture" means a sacred writing, but we mean something more specific than the sacred writing in general. We mean the Old and the New Testaments, so what we know as the Bible. And one way to think about the **Old Testament** is, this was preparing for Jesus; so it is prophecy and preparation, a description of who God is, helping us get to know him, and anticipating the coming of Jesus Christ. And so then the **New Testament** is the life and ministry of Jesus and the Spirit, as the Spirit was given in a special way after Jesus returned to the Father. And so the Old and New Testaments are the things that that make up the Scriptures.

And God has spoken, but we also believe that humans have spoken. This was done **through the words of human authors**. And so there is a mysterious sense of dual authorship. So God did not merely dictate what people were to say, but also it wasn't just people doing their best to describe God and the things that happened.

2. Bible Page 2 of 3

Doctrine
(truth)

• As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is

Devotion
(relationship)

• without error in the original writings,

Duty
(action)

• the complete revelation of His will for salvation,

• and the ultimate authority by which

• every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged.

God has spoken and He has spoken through the words of human authors. So what does that mean? Well we believe that this is **verbally inspired**. So these are the words that God spoke, maybe not audibly, but He spoke through these authors.

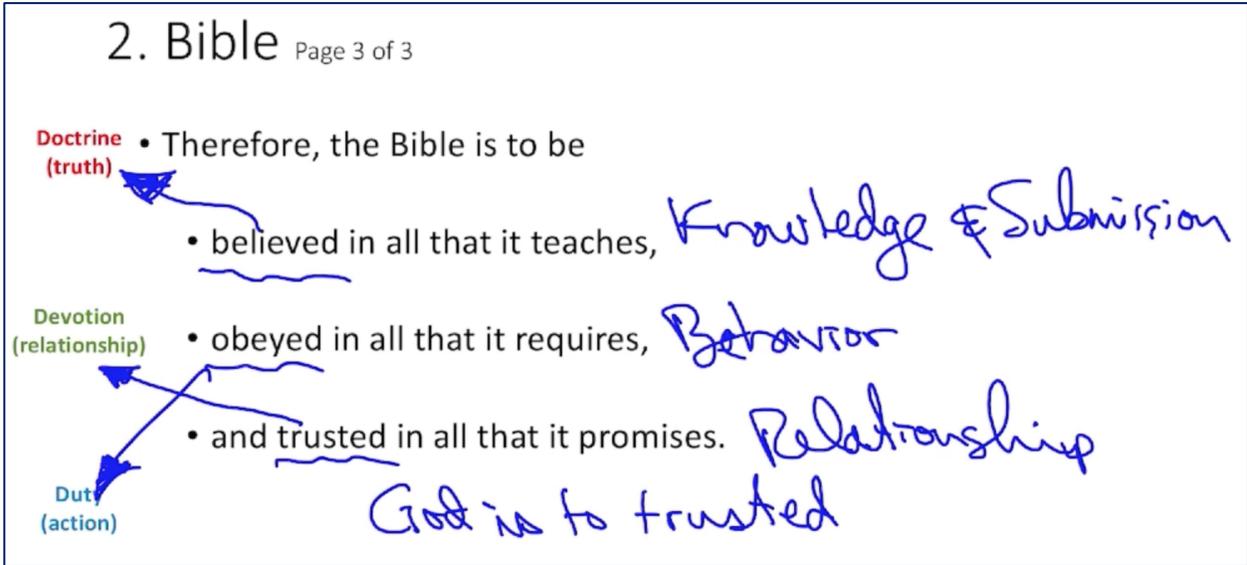
And because we believe that, we believe that the Bible is without error, and it's **without error in its original writings**. So that means that, in whatever it claims, it's claims are accurate. Now we say this in the original writings because there are translations that are better and worse translations, just like translations between languages today, some are better some are worse, some introduce errors, some are unclear, some claim things that that the original author didn't say. There are better and worse translations of the Bible today, so just because something claims to be the Bible doesn't mean that it is an accurate Word of God. Yet we believe that God continues to speak, so that God continues speaking, and we can trust His voice through this.

Now this raises the question: how in the world we find out what's original? Well, there's tremendous study in this, and we have extremely high degree of confidence about the original writings. There's a few places where there's uncertainty, but all of this uncertainty is secondary. It doesn't relate to critical parts of the Gospel or understanding of God or people. And when you read your Bible, you'll see footnotes that say, "Here there's differences in the manuscripts." And to me, that gives me great confidence that, where we have confidence, it's a solid confidence. So we do have a strong understanding of the original writings. And we believe that God continues to speak when those are translated as we have those. We do believe it's without error, but you know this is actually a challenging thing. Because sometimes it's hard to make sense ... this is a challenge of figuring out: how do we read what it's claims were? And so we want to try to get back to the original intent of the writing. And so this is an important part of reading Scripture well.

We believe that the Bible is the complete revelation, the **complete revelation of God's will for salvation**. And so we believe that it is sufficient. So nothing else is needed in order to know what we need for salvation. That doesn't mean that reading things that people have written

since the Bible was completed is not helpful it. In fact, it's a wonderful thing to do. But the Bible is unique in having the ultimate authority. This is the standard by which all other claims about God will be judged. So it is the one with the authority. When somebody else says, "Here's what I think it's like, here's what I think it means", our task is to go back and say, "Is that true? Does that fit the original intent of the Bible?"

And so, it's the **ultimate authority** for **every realm of human knowledge and endeavor**. This does not mean that we go to the Bible to figure out trigonometry, or to understand how to cure cancer. It does mean that whatever the Bible claims has authority over any human knowledge and endeavor. Anything else that people do, the Bible has greater authority. So we submit everything to an understanding based on the teachings, the theology of the Bible. So we believe that we have God's Word, and it is sufficient.



So then, the question is, "What are the implications?" And so now we get to our our areas of the doctrine, and the devotion, and the duty. The Bible is to be believed, it is to be obeyed, and it is to be trusted. It's easy to see how the **doctrine** that the Bible teaches is what is to be believed. So this does relate to knowledge and submission. The Bible claims that Jesus is the Son of God, it claims that He died and rose again after having lived a perfect life; this is something that we are called to believe, because the Bible teaches it.

The Bible is to be obeyed and so this is our **duty**. We are to do as the Bible says, and this is our behavior. So, for instance, the Bible says to love our neighbor, the Bible says to pursue holiness. As it says this, it's our duty to obey what it says because this is the expression of God's will.

And then it's be trusted in all that it promises. And so then this is a **devotion**. This is the relationship with God. This is how we express and live out a love for God, is that we submit to Him and what He says. The grammar here says that the Bible is to be trusted, and that is true, but more deeply, God is to be trusted. We're to have the relationship with God that is expressed in His Word, which we believe is the accurate expression of it.

So we're to believe what the Bible teaches, obey what it requires, and trusted in what it promises.