

# **From Jesus to the Scriptures (and Back): Meeting the Crisis of Scripture as People of the Word**

Lay Bible Institute

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## **The Modern Battle for the Bible**

### **The Critics**

“For centuries, as the very word of God to man, the Bible has provided the context of meaning with which Christian man—indeed, Western man generally—has appropriated and understood his existence and set his course in life...But this is all over with and gone. Though we may recognize and be grateful for its contributions to our culture, the Bible no longer has unique authority for Western man. It has become a great but archaic monument in our midst. It is a reminder of where we once were—but no longer are. It contains glorious literature, important historical documents, exalted ethical teachings, but is no longer the word of God (if there is a God) to man.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The Doctrine of Inspiration**

“Yes, the powerful emphasis of a Luther upon the centrality of justification is wanting in some of the theological literature of the seventeenth century...It is true that their treatment of the sola scriptura is more detached from the article of justification than it might have been.”<sup>2</sup>

“Though the dogmaticians affirmed a Trinitarian inspiration, their exegetical exposition of the doctrine centered on the Spirit’s relation to the biblical authors. In terms of the cliché, inspiration was Third Article matter.”<sup>3</sup>

## **The Word of God**

### **Deputized Discourse**

### **The Word Made Flesh**

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Kaufman, “What Shall We Do With the Bible?” *Interpretation* 25 (1971): 95-96.

<sup>2</sup> R. Preus, *The Doctrine of Inspiration*, 209–210.

<sup>3</sup> David P. Scaer, “Biblical Inspiration in Trinitarian Perspective” *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (2005): 148.

## Luther and the Spoken Word

The Church is a mouth-house [*Mundhaus*], not a pen-house [*Federhaus*], for since Christ's advent that Gospel is preached orally which before was hidden in written books. It is the way of the Gospel and of the New Testament that it is to be preached and discussed orally with a living voice. Christ himself wrote nothing, nor did he give command to write, but to preach orally.<sup>4</sup>

Wherever there is God's Word, no matter whether it is in Baptism, in Absolution, in the Sacrament [Lord's Supper] there God Himself speaks to us. In Absolution he absolves us from [our] sins. In the Sacrament or the Lord's Supper Christ Himself feeds us with his body and blood. We thus have God's Word in the church, indeed, in the home. Whenever the pastor speaks to us in the church or the father in the house, then God himself speaks to us.<sup>5</sup>

## From Jesus to the Scriptures (and Back)

John 20:31

“These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

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<sup>4</sup> *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*. Vol. 1. ed. John Nicholas Lenker (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Company, 2000), 44. Sermon on Matthew 21:1-9, 1521.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in John Theodore Mueller, “Notes on Luther's Conception of the Word of God as the Means of Grace” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 20 (August, 1949): 588. Sermon on Luke 18:31-43, 1534.