

Scripture, Canon of Truth, Tradition & Succession

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The Way Of The Cross Ministries

“I glory in the Cross of Christ”

Introduction

- What is Scripture to you?
- What is Tradition to you?
- Write it down.

Past and Present Confusions

- 2 centuries after Christ there was no “New Testament” text as we have it now.
- So many people claimed to have followed Christ and secret traditions.
- Marcion
- Valentinus
- Montanus

Misunderstanding

Scripture

Tradition



- A claim to scripture alone is not enough, for what it is, and how it is read is the issue here.
- A claim to tradition alone is not enough, for everyone claims a tradition.

Misunderstanding

- The problem arises when we see scripture and tradition as equivalent sources but distinct sources of authority and information.
- According to St. Irenaeus, in the 2nd century, the Gnostics claimed that one could not understand scripture without the secret tradition that was handed down to them.

2 Positions

- If authority is solely in the scriptures, then why these “*list*”/“*canon*” of books, and why not others, like the *Gospel of Thomas*.
- If scripture is within tradition, then who distinguish what is true and valuable within tradition.

So Then What Is It?

Scripture

- In the gospels, it is only when Christ opens the scriptures, that disciples understand who He really is.
- When Phillip found the Eunuch reading the text of Isaiah, the question was not, 'what is the meaning of this passage', but rather, he asked, "About whom does the prophet say this, about himself or another person." (Act 8:34)
- Meaning resides in whom the text is speaking of.

So Then What Is It?

Scripture

- “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life, yet it is they that witness to me.” (John. 5:39)
- If you believed Moses, then you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me. (John 5:46)
- The meaning of Moses’ words lies in how it speaks of Christ.
- In this, we understand for the authors of the NT, the “Word of God” refers to Christ.

What is it? It's all about the Word of God, Jesus Christ

Canon of Truth

- The “pattern” of sound words which Timothy heard from the apostle Paul, and which the apostle urged him to follow. (2 Timothy. 1:13)
- By the end of the 2nd century the *canon of truth* was a creedal statement, which affirmed the One God, Christ crucified and resurrected, as according to Scripture.
- Apostolic Preaching/Teaching

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Canon of Truth

“...the law is read by the Jews, it is like a myth, for they do not possess the explanation of all things which pertain to the human advent of the Son of God; but when it is read by Christians, it is a treasure, hid in a field, but brought to light by the Cross of Christ..” (St. Irenaeus of Lyons)

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Canon of Truth

- It was under this *canon of truth* that the scriptures were compiled, to form, as we know now, the canon (list) of scripture.
- At end of the 1st century the Apostle Paul's letters were being gathered.
- In the 2nd century, St. Irenaeus defends the four gospels as something that is already a part of tradition, which was traditioned down.
- The primary focus: The Cross and Scripture

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Tradition

- Scripture, the Canon of Truth all are *traditioned* down to us today.
- “For though the languages of the world are dissimilar, nevertheless the meaning of tradition is one and the same. To explain, the churches which have been founded in Germany do not believe or hand down anything else; neither do those founded in Spain or Gaul or Libya or in the central regions of the world.” (St. Irenaeus of Lyons)

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Tradition

“As the faith is the same, those who can speak endlessly about it do not add to it, any more than those who are poor speakers detract from it, for the meaning or the content of tradition is one and the same. While Christians are called to live in this tradition, and to give it ever new expression, the tradition itself does not grow or develop into something else. The Church is to guard carefully this preaching and this faith, which she has received and which she is to preach, teach, and hand down harmoniously.” (*The Mystery of Christ*, Fr. John Behr)

What is it? It's all about the Word of God, Jesus Christ

Tradition

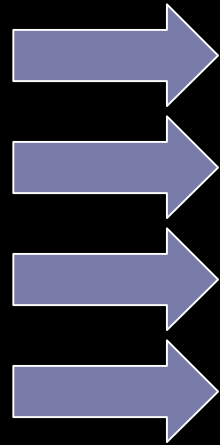
- Both true apostolic *tradition* maintained by the churches, and the apostolic writings themselves, derive from the same apostles and have one and the same content, the gospel, which is itself, “in accordance with the scriptures.”
- The heretics of the 1st and 2nd century appealed to a *tradition*, without which, scripture could not be understood, but the apostolic teaching is that what is preached and what is written down is identical.

What is it? It's all about the Word of God, Jesus Christ

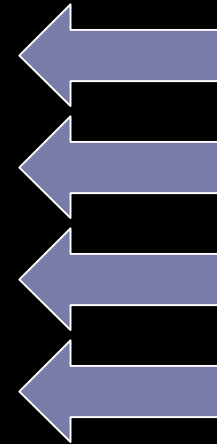
Succession

- Succession of the presbyter is the succession of faith, not the succession of a person or entity, e.g, throne
- The tradition that the bishop hands down--the apostolic teaching--is the same now as it was yesterday. The faith remains the same.
- The succession of the presbyter can never be separated from the canon of truth, as seen in scripture, "traditioned" down.

Correct and Holistic View



Scripture, Canon
of Truth, Tradition,
Succession



So What Now

- We need to search for truth
- In all things grow closer to Christ, in the truth of the gospel, who is Christ Crucified and exalted.
- We need to stop making groups:
 - Tradition
 - Scripture
- Don't belittle tradition or scripture