

BIB 100 Lecture Two: Revelation

(Reading: Milne 29-59; Romans chap.1)

by

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1. Christian view of authority {Milne 1998: 26-29}

1) Definition of authority

Authority is the right or power to require obedience.

2) Source of Christian authority: God - Bible

A. Ultimate Source

The ultimate source of authority is the triune God himself [Trinitarian concept], as he is known to us through the words of the Bible [Special revelation].

B. Other sources

	<i>Content</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
The creeds	The summaries of Christian truth to state the essence of the faith in a time of theological confusion	Too general. “Secondary statements’ that depends on something earlier and more primitive.
The historic confessions	Products of the Reformation and post-Reformation. Much fuller than creeds.	‘Party’ statements reflecting views of one branch of the universal church ‘Secondary’
The mind of the church	God’s presence in the church → the main trend of Christian opinion	The ‘Christian consensus’ is extraordinarily difficult to nail. No authority beyond it in case of an impasse.
Christian experience	Experience-oriented.	Problem distinguishing between objective truth and subjective opinions, limited and biased. It limits Christian truth, ruling out anything beyond our immediate experience.
Christian reason	Logical reasoning.	Fallen nature of human reason → Severe limitation. Creator-creature distinction: man cannot know God apart from God’s revelation.
The ‘inner voice’	Direct prompting of the Holy Spirit	Subjectivity

3) Implication of divine authority: Man – God – Bible

A. Man-God

God has the supreme right and power to require obedience because he is the Creator and Lord of everyone.

B. Man-God-Bible

Since God has caused the Bible to be written and through it speaks to us today as he spoke to his people when those words were first given, it is to be received as God's words to us and revered and obeyed as such, and as we submit to its authority we place ourselves under the authority of the living God who is made known to us supremely in Jesus Christ.

2. Three Truths of Christian view of authority {Milne 1998: 29}

	Authority	Distinctive of Christianity
Initiator in Revelation	God	Revealed religion; Monotheism
Means of Revelation	Bible	Normative religion; Book religion
Content of revelation	Christ	Redemptive religion; Concrete; Personal

NRS John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

NRS Ephesians 1:11 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will,

3. Revelation

1) Definition

Revelation means unveiling something hidden, so that it may be seen and known for what it is {Milne 1998: 29}. As a theological term, it refers both to the process by which God discloses the divine nature and the mystery of the divine will and purpose to human beings, and to the corpus of truth disclosed. General revelation maintains that God's existence and particular attributes can be ascertained through an innate sense of God's reality and conscience as well as through observation of the universe and history. Special revelation refers to the more specific divine self-disclosure to and through certain persons that brings about {Grenz et al 1999: 102}.

2) Presuppositions: Necessity of revelation

A. Creator-Creature distinction (Gen 1:1, 27) → Absolute dependence to have adequate knowledge of God.

B. Man = Image of God (Gen 1:28) → A degree of correspondence

- Christ = the God-man = the Image of God (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15)
- Believer? Union with Christ; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9-17) → Union with God the Father (Rom 6)
- God became a man so that man may become a god (?!!!)

C. The Fall → Spiritual death (blindness and ignorance of God)

NRS Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

3) General Revelation

A. The Created World (Rom 1:18-32)

NRS Romans 1:20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse;

NRS Acts 14:17 yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good-- giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy."

NRS Acts 17:26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live,

B. Human Heart

NRS Romans 2:14 When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them

NRS Romans 3:23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; 24 they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; 26 it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

C. Implication

God has disclosed something of his nature and purposes to humankind
 → Despite the blinding effects of sin, we cannot plead entire ignorance of God (Rom 1:20).

3) Special Revelation

A. C&MA Manual A1. 3. Third. D

The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice (2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Timothy 3:15–16).

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Answers</i>	<i>Distinctive of Christianity</i>
Where to find it?	Canon of the OT and the NT.	Book Religion
Who gave it and how did it come to be?	Verbally inspired by God	Revealed Religion
Why was it revealed?	A complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men	Redemptive Religion
What does it mean to us?	The divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice	Normative Religion

B. Inerrant as originally given and “by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages”

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Answers</i>	<i>Doctrine of Inerrancy and preservation</i>
Variety of texts	1) Overwhelming agreement	Substantial conformity in its essential form
	2) Sufficient accuracy	Used by Jesus and Apostles. LXX
	3) Variety → Reliability of the text	
Textual divergence	Minor factor (Spelling & grammar) Meaning intact: Textual variants do not impinge upon the message:	1) No major tenet of theology or orthodoxy is negatively or adversely affected by an alternate reading. 2) Integrity of the original revelation is not in any way challenged or threatened. 3) Inerrancy in (and preservation of) the Scripture does not imply a constant miracle in transmission.
Inferior text	Inferior text is also the word of God.	Ancients’ view of Scripture: 2 versions of Jeremiah were both

		regarded as Scripture.
No autograph	No necessity to find one	Loss of original does not entail loss of its authority . We can recover it with substantial accuracy.

C. Inspiration, “verbally inspired”

This term is used by many theologians to designate the work of the Holy Spirit in enabling the human authors of the Bible to record what God desired to have written in the Scriptures. Theories explaining how God superintended the process of Scripture formation vary from dictation to ecstatic writing. Most evangelical theories of inspiration maintain that the Holy Spirit divinely guided the writing of Scripture, while at the same time allowing elements of the authors' culture and historical context to come through, at least in matters of style, grammar and choice of words.