

INTERPRETATION: INERRANCY, LITERALISM, & THE WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL



Lectio—Mark 4:1-20

I. Review

II. History of Scripture - Role for Determining Doctrine

- A. **Early Church**—Doctrine is Determined in Ecumenical Community using Scripture as the Foundation—Creeds and Councils

Early Challenges
Circumcision (Acts and Epistles)
Trinity
Nature of Christ

- B. **Medieval Mistakes and Papal Authority/Infallibility**
- C. **Protestant Reformation**
- D. **English Reformation**

<i>Sola Scriptura</i>	<i>Prima Scriptura</i>
Scripture Alone	Scripture First
Church/tradition has no authority	Bible is first but Church/Creeds have authority
Revelation is contained to Scripture	Revelation may be in creation and in charism from the Holy Spirit
Most Protestants	Anglican, Methodist, and Charismatic/Pentecostal

- E. **Methodist Views**

1. **Article V** — “Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation—The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.
2. **BOD**—Theological Guidelines: “United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine.”

- F. **Enlightenment Epistemology and Scripture** (Descartes “I think therefore I am.”) The creation of “facts.”

- G. **The Fundamentalist-Modernist Split**

Modernist	Fundamentalist
Historical-Critical	Inerrancy
Scientific approach taken to history	Scientific approach taken to Bible

- H. **The Wesleyan Quadrilateral**—Build of Richard Hooker (1554-1600) “Three Leg Stool-Scripture, Tradition, and Reason”

Scripture (Primary)	Tradition	Reason	Experience
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III. Closing—The Purpose of Scripture Is Wisdom and Salvation.

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Theological Guidelines: Scripture

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2016

United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. Through Scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace. We are convinced that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God in our midst whom we trust in life and death. The biblical authors, illumined by the Holy Spirit, bear witness that in Christ the world is reconciled to God. The Bible bears authentic testimony to God's self-disclosure in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as in God's work of creation, in the pilgrimage of Israel, and in the Holy Spirit's ongoing activity in human history.

As we open our minds and hearts to the Word of God through the words of human beings inspired by the Holy Spirit, faith is born and nourished, our understanding is deepened, and the possibilities for transforming the world become apparent to us.

The Bible is sacred canon for Christian people, formally acknowledged as such by historic ecumenical councils of the church. Our doctrinal standards identify as canonical thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

Our standards affirm the Bible as the source of all that is "necessary" and "sufficient" unto salvation (Articles of Religion) and "is to be received through the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice" (Confession of Faith).

We properly read Scripture within the believing community, informed by the tradition of that community.

We interpret individual texts in light of their place in the Bible as a whole.

We are aided by scholarly inquiry and personal insight, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we work with each text, we take into account what we have been able to learn about the original context and intention of that text. In this understanding we draw upon the careful historical, literary, and textual studies of recent years, which have enriched our understanding of the Bible.

Through this faithful reading of Scripture, we may come to know the truth of the biblical message in its bearing on our own lives and the life of the world. Thus, the Bible serves both as a source of our faith and as the basic criterion by which the truth and fidelity of any interpretation of faith is measured.

While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve tradition, experience, and reason. Like Scripture, these may become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the Church. They quicken our faith, open our eyes to the wonder of God's love, and clarify our understanding.

The Wesleyan heritage, reflecting its origins in the catholic and reformed ethos of English Christianity, directs us to a self-conscious use of these three sources in interpreting Scripture and in formulating faith statements based on the biblical witness. These sources are, along with Scripture, indispensable to our theological task.

The close relationship of tradition, experience, and reason appears in the Bible itself. Scripture witnesses to a variety of diverse traditions, some of which reflect tensions in interpretation within the early Judeo-Christian heritage. However, these traditions are woven together in the Bible in a manner that expresses the fundamental unity of God's revelation as received and experienced by people in the diversity of their own lives.

The developing communities of faith judged them, therefore, to be an authoritative witness to that revelation. In recognizing the interrelationship and inseparability of the four basic resources for theological understanding, we are following a model that is present in the biblical text itself.

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