

The Necessity and Sufficiency of Scripture

Indelible Grace Church Sunday School, May 9, 2021

The Necessity

The Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will (Grudem)

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which makes the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased. (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.1)

General revelation

We have knowledge of our creator

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20)

We have a conscience // Guilt is intrinsic

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them (Romans 2:14–15)

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. (Acts 17:22–23)

The problem - we are condemned

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (John 3:18)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Special revelation/ particular revelation

Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God. (John Calvin)

Only the Bible gives us knowledge of the Gospel

¹³ *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

¹⁴ *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:13–17)*

The bible is necessary for maintaining spiritual life

For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." (Deuteronomy 32:47)

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— (1 Peter 2:2)

But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

The Bible is necessary for knowledge of God's will

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:3–4)

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” (Exodus 17:14)

The Sufficiency

Scripture contains all the words of God that he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly. (Grudem)

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1.6)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14–17)

Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! (Psalm 119:1)

Scripture given is sufficient for each stage of redemptive history

But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'" (Luke 16:29–31)

"Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32)

*Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
Do not add to his words,
lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. (Proverbs 30:5–6)*

Implications

1. We can be confident that the answers to our deepest questions and problems are in the scriptures.
2. We are to add nothing to scripture, and we are to consider no other writings or teachings equal to Scripture.
3. We can be assured that God does not require us to believe in anything about himself or his redemptive work that is not found in Scripture.
4. There are no modern revelations from God that are to be placed on a level equal to Scripture in authority.