

## **The Bible is Sufficient**

Do we need more than the Bible to know what God has revealed for our salvation? The answer is, no. The Bible contains all we need to know for our faith and life. It tells us of Jesus, who alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). There are many things the Bible could have recorded about Jesus. However, as John wrote, “If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written,” (John 21:25). John also said, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name,” (John 20:30-31). Paul spoke of the foundation for the church as the writings of the prophets and the apostles (Eph. 2:20). The Bible does not contain a record of everything Jesus said or did. It does not answer every question we have about why things happen the way they do in this life. It does tell us all we need to know for our faith and life (2 Tim. 3:15-17). It reveals all we need to give us assurance and encouragement (Ro 15:4).

The Bible tells us that we are sinners and under God’s just condemnation. It tells us that God demands that we should be perfect (Matt. 5:48). It reveals to us what God wants us to do and not to do (Rom. 13:9-10). It tells us that sins of the heart (Matt. 5:28; 1 John 3:15) or of the tongue (James 3:10) are as bad as sins of deed. The Law tells us that not only is it a sin to do what God doesn’t want us to do, it is also a sin not to do what God wants us to do (1 John 3:17; James 2:14). It tells us that we were under God’s condemnation from the moment our lives began (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:3). It tells us that we have not kept God’s laws the way He demands we keep them (Rom. 3:23). It also tells us that we deserve God’s just punishment because we are sinners (Gal. 3:10).

The Law also tells us all we need to know to live God-pleasing lives (Ps. 119:9; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). God does not want us to invent our own good works. Before and during Luther’s time, a husband would leave his wife and family and enter a monastery. There he dreamed that he could lead a holier life. Luther and the reformers responded by stating that God had clearly spelled out the duties of a husband and a father toward his family. God had given no command to abandon wife and family to enter a monastery. In this case it was clear; fulfilling responsibilities to a wife and children out of faith in Christ was God-pleasing but forsaking a family to enter a monastery was not.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals to us all we need for our salvation. It is not only the tool through which God tells us of salvation; it is also the tool through which God gives us salvation (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel tells us that God loves sinners (John 3:16). It tells us that God sent Jesus into this world to save us from our sins (John 3:16). It tells us that Jesus accomplished His mission (John 19:30; 2 Cor. 5:19-21). It tells us that Jesus rose from the dead, thereby assuring

our resurrection to eternal life (Rom. 4:25). The Gospel tells us that God has forgiven all our sins for Jesus' sake (Matt. 9:2). God through this Gospel brings us to faith (Rom. 1:5). Through that Gospel He assures us that He will preserve us in faith to eternal life (John 10:28; 1 Thess. 2:12; 5:23-24). Through Baptism and His Supper, He gives us forgiveness and assurance of eternal life. He assures us that His love for us is an everlasting love (Rom. 8:29-30). Through the Gospel, He encourages us to anticipate the joys of heaven (Phil. 1:23).

It is through this same Gospel that Christ gives us faith and empowers us to live new lives for Him. The Law cannot move us in the direction it points. Only the Gospel can empower us to lead new lives for Christ (Rom. 12:1). The Bible is sufficient because it not only tells us what God wants us to do; the Gospel also empowers us to do it. Those who are Christ's will abound in good works (John 15:5). No, we cannot carry out God's will perfectly, for we still have our sinful flesh (Rom. 7:22-23). However, through the Gospel we are empowered to do works that are acceptable to God for Jesus' sake (1 Peter 2:5).

The Bible is sufficient. It gives us all we need for faith and life. We do not need any further revelations or special insights. We have all we need in the Bible.