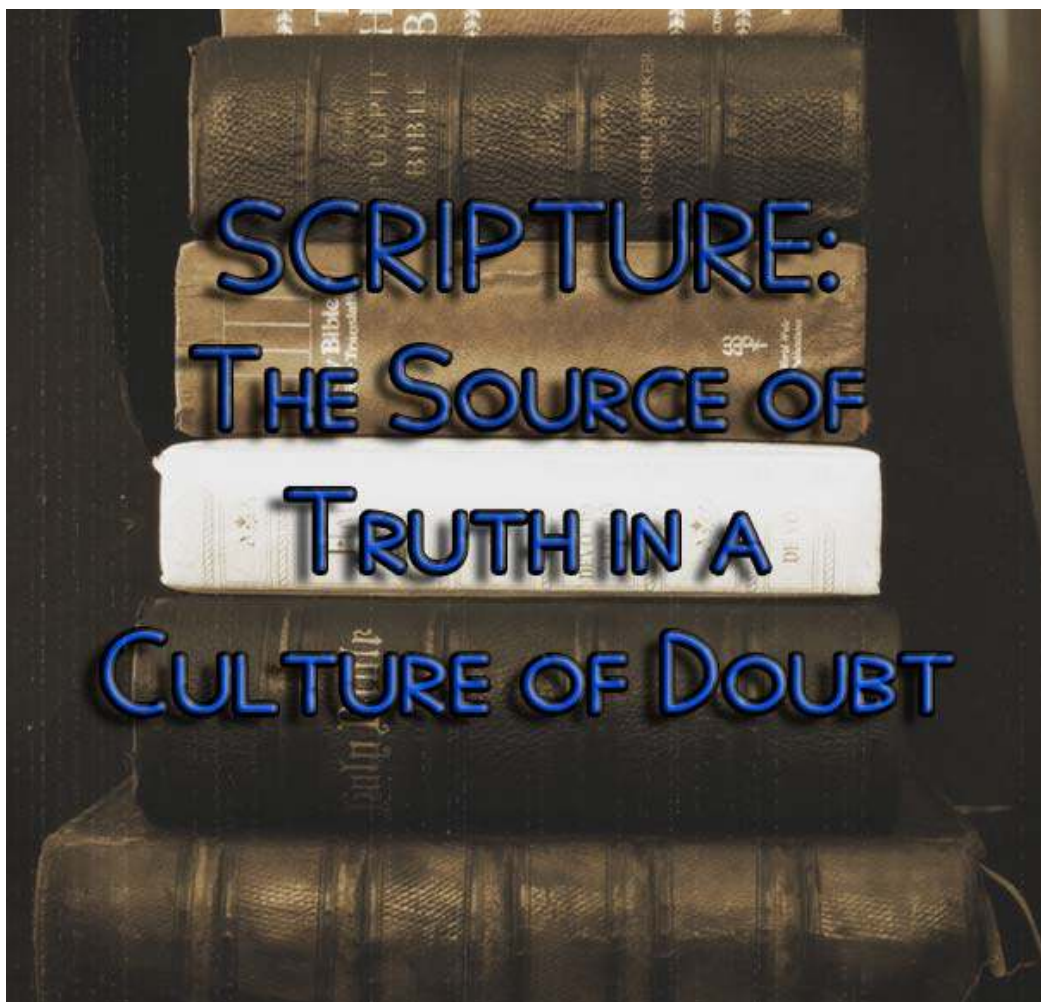


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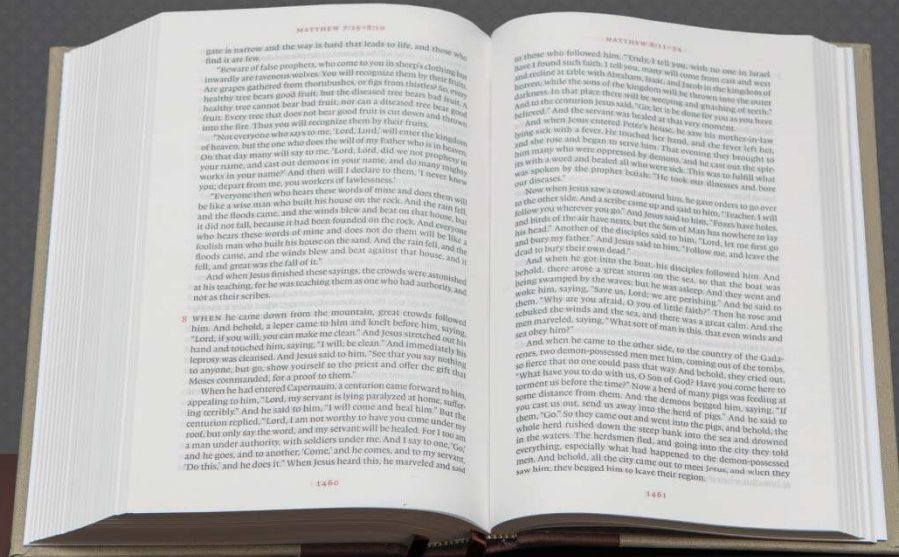
Volume 1 | Issue 3 | Winter 2014



Inside this Issue...

- *Truth in a Culture of Doubt — An Author Interview*
- *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*
- *Can I Trust the Bible? — A Book Review*

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CROSSWAY

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Editor's Corner

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dave Jenkins

STAFF EDITORS

Sarah Jenkins

Craig Hurst

Brian Cosby

Mike Boling

DESIGN DIRECTOR & COPY EDITOR

Sarah Jenkins

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Over the past decade, I've spent considerable time studying the Bible in both an academic and personal setting. During this time, I not only learned a great deal about the Bible, but also about how the Bible is under attack through a multifaceted method from the scientific communities, theological liberalism, and secularism. Many people come to the Bible to merely investigate what it teaches, rather than to humbly submit to what it teaches. As I continued to study secular history and church history, I quickly realized that these attacks are not new, but rather a common reoccurrence throughout time—albeit with a new spin and a fresh face attached to them.

When I progressed past the scrawny middle-schooler stage, I became very interested in studying doctrine and theology. As I continued to study the Bible into adulthood, I came to the conclusion that when a person views the Bible in the wrong light it affects the conclusions that he or she comes to regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ.

During the Protestant Reformation, the Reformers returned to the Scriptures. Theologians call this return *Sola Scriptura* which means “Scripture Alone”. By their understanding of *Sola Scriptura*, the Reformers believed the Bible was inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient for training and equipping in the Word of God as Christians practicing their faith.

In this issue of *Theology for Life* on the Bible, you'll learn from me and our other contributors about the doctrine of Scripture—precisely how the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, sufficient and authoritative Word of God. Not only this, but you'll also read reviews of current books on Scripture and an interview from Dr. Chatraw, co-author with Drs. Bock and Kostenberger of *Truth Matters* and *Truth in a Culture of Doubt*. As you read this Issue, our prayer is that the Lord would help you to grow in knowledge of handling His Word and applying it so that you won't be merely a hearer of the Word, but a doer of His Word by His grace. My hope is that the Bible would become more precious to you, so much so that you would

delight to digest the Word of the Lord, in the Bible. This is our prayer for you:

“Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf, and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lord—not crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts. It is idle merely to let the eye glance over the words, or to recollect the poetical expressions, or the historic facts; but it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models, and, what is better still, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord. I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like the reading the Bible itself. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture; and, though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his Pilgrim’s Progress—that sweetest of all prose poems – without continually making us feel and say, “Why, this man is a living Bible!” Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend his example to you, beloved.”

In Christ Alone,

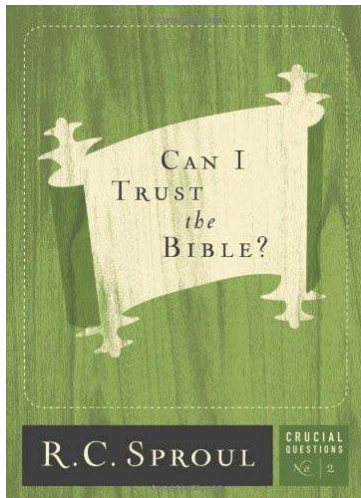
Dave Jenkins

Executive Editor of Theology for Life Magazine

A Book Review:

Can I Trust the Bible?

By Michael Boling



The authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture have long been a source of contention. Some attempt to treat Scripture as an important document without recognizing it as the Word of God, the revelation

of the Creator to His people. Still others affirm the authority of Scripture on all matters of life, the *Sola Scripture* or “Scripture Alone” approach. In book two of the *Crucial Questions* series titled, *Can I Trust the Bible?*, Dr. R. C. Sproul provides a historical and theological look at why we can place our full faith and trust in God’s Word.

This book begins by providing the reader with an in-depth look at the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, a document arguably most layman have not had much interaction with, which is rather unfortunate. This document was developed as a means to address the issue of inerrancy, providing a number of biblically rooted statements affirming the veracity of Scripture, and most importantly, to

“counter the drift from this important doctrinal foundation by significant segments of evangelism and the outright denial of it by other church movements.” I was pleased to see the inclusion of this document in this book, as it does meet head-on the charges made by the likes of Bart Ehrman and other recent critics of the perspicuity and inerrancy of Scripture. The *Chicago Statement* is admittedly heavy on theological language, but nevertheless it is an important statement of faith all believers should read and be aware of, given the magnitude of this issue.

The remainder of *Can I Trust the Bible*, Dr. Sproul addresses six key areas for which the inerrancy of Scripture impacts: namely, the authority of Scripture; God’s revelation to His people through Scripture; the inspiration of Scripture; biblical inerrancy; the truth of Scripture; and concluding the book with how all this applies to the life of the believer.

“Since Jesus *is* in fact God (as He claims), His words carry supreme authority in the lives of His creation.”

Dr. Sproul aptly notes, “The authority of the Bible is based on the fact that it is the written word of God.” When a passage such as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting

and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”, we can have confidence in that fact. The words found in Scripture are indeed God-breathed, which is what the word *inspired* literally means. Since Jesus *is* in fact God (as He claims), His words carry supreme authority in the lives of His creation. However, as Sproul rightly notes, some have gone the route of affirming other documents or church tradition as carrying equal weight to or as supplemental guidance for the believer over and above the divine oracles of God. This means that for some, guidance on how to love God and love others can come from a source other than the law of God found in Scripture. Such an approach is dangerous as it places the authority for one’s life somewhere else, other than in the pages of God’s divine Word. Sproul does an excellent job of interacting with the section of the Chicago Statement that addresses the authority of the Bible, clearly highlighting the various reasons why Scripture is the authority and source of truth, with a focus on discussing the term *sola scriptura*—what the term means, and how it is applied in the Chicago Statement.

In response to neo-orthodox theology, the issue of Scripture being the revelation of God is also addressed in the Chicago Statement. Biblical scholars, such as Emil Brunner, have stated that Scripture is not revelation unless there is some type of inward connection made with the Bible by the reader. Essentially, he views it as simply a witness to Christ rather than the God-breathed, revelation of truth from God to His creation. Sproul addresses this false approach by stating, “... [the Bible] embodies truth that comes to us from beyond the scope of

our own abilities. It comes from God Himself.” This statement aptly reiterates the previous section on authority. Since Scripture comes from God Himself, it is beyond the production of human thought or some mystical inward connection. Any connection comes from the work of the Holy Spirit writing God’s word on the heart of the believer. Sproul goes on to clearly explain how God used human authors, and thus the context of language by which His word was revealed. Many have attacked the inerrancy of the Bible due to the use of human conduits, given that man is quite

“God’s word [is]...nothing short of being *God-breathed*...”

clearly imperfect and therefore must have caused some imper-

fections as a result. Sproul saliently blasts such an approach remarking, “Because of divine inspiration and the superintendence of the Holy Spirit in the giving of sacred Scripture, the writings of the Bible are free from the normal tendencies and propensities of fallen man to distort the truth.” In essence, God was fully in control of the transmission of His word, which again relates back to it being *God-breathed*.

Since God’s word has been assessed as being nothing short of being the *God-breathed*, inspired Word of Almighty God, it can be asserted that within the pages of Scripture exists the source of truth. This is a rather huge element to understand and Sproul does a marvelous job of reiterating the necessity to look to Scripture for truth and as God’s instructions for righteous living. He appropriately states, “[We can affirm] the Bible is completely true, that all its affirmations and denials correspond with reality.” This means the entirety of the Word of God is

the very thing 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says. So beyond this being just a discussion of the nerdy theological term *inerrancy*, in truth (no pun intended), such a book means little if the truth of inerrancy is not brought home to the reader. I fully appreciated Sproul's dedication to ensuring the reader is left with the means for application of the principles and statements he has provided throughout this book. He ends his book with a sobering statement, one that is absolutely true:

"When the Church loses its confidence in the authority of sacred Scripture, it inevitably looks to human opinion as its guiding light. When that happens, the purity of the church is direly threatened."

Can I Trust the Bible is an excellent little book, chock-full of information, including plenty of useful tidbits of application. Those wanting a handy guide to what inerrancy is, and why it matters, will find Sproul's effort to be well worth their time. It systematically destroys the arguments of those who have attempted to treat Scripture as nothing more than a set of moral writings, while at the same times lifts God's Word to its proper place, that of the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and Holy Word of God.



Mike Boling lives in Belleville, IL, with his wife and daughter. He is the Associate Editor for Servants of Grace Ministries and also serves as the Director for Christian Apologetics and Intelligence Ministry.

***Truth in a Culture of Doubt* - Author Interview with Josh Chatraw**

By Dave Jenkins



Joshua Chatraw serves at Liberty University as the director for the Center for Apologetics & Cultural Engagement as well as the director for the Theology and Apologetics programs in the School of Religion. He is a fellow with the Center for Pastor Theologians and a member of the Evangelical Theological Society, Institute for Biblical Research, and Society of Biblical Literature. Chatraw has served in pastoral ministry and continues to speak at churches, non-profit ministries, and colleges both in the United States and around the world.

T4L: Thank you for allowing us to interview you! Your co-authored book, *Truth Matters: Confident Faith in a Confusing World* has been the source of great interest in the Evangelical Church. Can you tell us what inspired you and your fellow co-authors (**Dr. Darrell Bock** and **Dr. Andreas J. Kostenberger**) to write this book and the accompanying book, *Truth in a Culture of Doubt*?

Josh Chatraw: *Many people are being told one half of the story concerning the Bible; we felt it was important to write books with a couple of different audiences in mind to tell the other half of the story. Unfortunately, this “other half of the story”, concerning why the Bible can be trusted, is often not even told in our churches! The church has too often left the tough historical (and theological) questions about the Bible out of their discipleship programs. I can remember going off to a state college and being taught by my skeptical college professor all the problems in the Bible and issues in its formation.*

I can remember becoming disillusioned, thinking, “I’ve grown up in the church all my life, and it’s the first time I’ve even heard these questions posed. Why am I not equipped to answer these? Are there even reasonable answers?” This doesn’t have to happen. We have written these books so that it will happen far less often.

T4L: Who is Bart Ehrman, and why are his books so popular?

Josh Chatraw: *I began reading Bart Ehrman’s books shortly after his first New*

York Times Best Seller, Misquoting Jesus. Since then, I have read his works quite extensively. Ehrman is a rare find, an established biblical scholar with the ability to winsomely communicate academic work to a popular audience.

T4L: The three of you (Bock, Chatraw, and Kostenberger) co-authored *Truth Matters: Confident Faith in a Confusing World* and then followed it up with *Truth in a Culture of Doubt*. Can you help us understand who your target audiences were for each of these books (laymen or scholars?), and if you have a different purpose for each?

Josh Chatraw: *Truth Matters* is an introduction to the issues raised by Bart Ehrman and other critical scholars aimed at teenagers, college students, and their parents. In *Truth Matters* we have restrained ourselves from including too many footnotes and have tried to speak to our target audience in a way they can understand and relate.

In *Truth in a Culture of Doubt* we go deeper and take a closer look at Bart Ehrman and his arguments. We include more of a "paper trail" through our footnotes for pastors, students, and ministry leaders who want to track down more of the specialized research. Also, we have arranged this book around specific claims that Ehrman makes. We then provide a response to each one of his claims. This arrangement makes *Truth in a Culture of Doubt* useful in the months and years after initial reading in that readers can use the guide in the back to track down the specific skeptical claim they are hearing and read our response.

T4L: How do you think Christians can best help those struggling with doubt due to being influenced by writers like

Bart Ehrman? What advice do you have for Pastors (and other church elders) ministering to those struggling with doubt and/or heavily influenced by Ehrman's false teachings (and others like him)?

Josh Chatraw: *Christian leaders have to be students themselves. Even if they don't have struggles over particular challenges to Christianity, they have to be in position to help those who do. This is hard work, but it's vital. It's part of the sacrifice of pastoral ministry – we not only have to deal with any of our questions and doubts, we also have to deal with the doubts and questions of others. However, we can't love others effectively if we can't help them work through their doubts.*

Moreover, often the people we are ministering to aren't aware of the questions they will need answered. Part of faithful ministry is about figuring out how to get people to take the medicine – or perhaps better, the probiotic – that they will need to keep them from catching something later on. For example, when I was a student pastor, most of my kids were not dying for me to explain textual criticism – check that, none of them were dying to hear about it. However, they will likely hear about it from a skeptic in college, the internet, or on the history channel. So, I better figure out a creative way to introduce it to them if I want to prepare them for the world out there – things can be dangerous when you leave "the Shire" and my job as a pastor is to make sure they are ready for what might be waiting for them on their journey.

T4L: How can pastors/churches equip their people apologetically, and help them understand the importance of Biblical apologetics?

Josh Chatraw: *Rather than viewing apologetics as some ivory tower exercise or*

a staged debate where two intellectuals viciously argue, I encourage people to view apologetics as a way to love their neighbors. We love our neighbors by actually engaging them in conversation and listening. As Christians we must learn to be better listeners, asking, "What problems does this person have with Christianity?" Then perhaps we can help the person work through his/her issues. Pastors can model this approach and even incorporate it in to sections of their sermons.

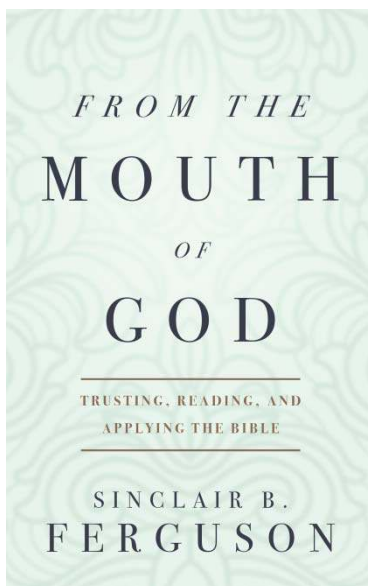


Dave Jenkins is the Executive Editor of Theology for Life Magazine and serves faithfully at Ustick Baptist Church, in Boise, ID.

A Book Review:

From The Mouth of God: Trusting, Reading, and Applying the Bible

By Dave Jenkins



Recent times have been witness to the rise of attacks on the authority,

truthfulness, and sufficiency of Scripture. During the 1970s, men and women gath-

ered and wrote up what is now known as the *Chicago Statement on Inerrancy*. This is now the standard statement on the doctrine of Scripture, and is considered the authoritative statement among conservative evangelicals. While attacks on the Bible are nothing new, an old problem that has recently resurrected is that of biblical illiteracy. Given the rise of attacks on the Bible, including skepticism about its truthfulness, joined with biblical illiteracy, what

is needed is a solid primer that will help Christians understand the nature of the Bible. Thankfully such a book now exists: *From the Mouth of God: Trusting, Reading, and Applying the Bible* by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson.

The book has three parts: in the first part, spanning the first three chapters, the author looks at trusting the Bible. In the second part, the author helps his readers understand how the Bible has *one story* pointing to Jesus Christ. And in the third part, Dr. Ferguson helps readers apply the Biblical principles to their everyday lives. The book has four appendixes by a variety of authors, such as John Murray on the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, John Newton on divine guidance, a bibliography for further reading, and lastly a Bible reading plan.

“...he explains when the Bible came into existence...”

From the Mouth of God is a very readable and helpful book. Many books in

this genre are overly academic, and thus lose most readers with their technical jargon; this is not the case with this book. Dr. Ferguson is a gifted writer and teacher; he will help each reader understand not only what the Bible is, but also its importance for the daily Christian life. In addition, he guides his audience through understanding the central storyline of the Bible and applying the Bible to one's own life. Along the way he explains when the Bible came into existence, the inerrancy of Scripture, what Christians need to learn in order to understand it better, and why the Bible's teaching changes people's lives. For this and many others reasons, I highly recommend *From the Mouth of God: Trusting, Reading, and Applying the Bible*.

This book is perfect, not only for the lay Christian, but even for the most well-read scholar on the doctrine of Scripture. This book does all the things one would expect a book written at the popular level to do—namely to be accessible, easy to understand, and helpfully demonstrate how to put into practice spiritual disciplines within the reader's own life. *From the Mouth of God* is one of the finest popular-level books I've read on the doctrine of Scripture. While the book's goals aren't centered around examining the apologetic attacks on the Bible, Dr. Ferguson's aim is simply to introduce the reader to the questions *and subsequent answers* concerning the Bible. In this way, the author overwhelmingly succeeds in his purpose in writing one of the best primers on

the doctrine of Scripture published to date. So if you're interested in the doctrine of Scripture and wondering which book you should pick up, **do yourself a favor right now and go pick up a copy of *From the Mouth of God: Trusting, Reading, and Applying the Bible*, by Dr. Sinclair Ferguson.**



Dave Jenkins is the Executive Editor of Theology for Life and faithfully serves at Ustick Baptist Church, in Boise, ID. He and his wife, Sarah, live near Caldwell, ID where they work for Servants of Grace Ministries. Dave loves reading and playing golf as often as he can.

Spurgeon, Inerrancy, and What We Still Need Today

By Dave Jenkins



Charles Haddon Spurgeon's influence today is felt more than ever, as he is the most published Christian author in

church history.¹ He is often quoted in sermons, articles, books, tweets, and other quote-worthy mediums among Christians. Helmut Thielicke helpfully points out the impact and influence of Spurgeon's ministry when he

notes that, "Spurgeon's influence is still felt today in evangelicalism..."

"The fire Spurgeon kindled turned into a beacon that shone across

the seas and down through generations, was no mere brush fire of sensationalism, but an inexhaustible blaze that glowed and burned on solid hearths and was fed by the wells of the eternal Word. Here was the miracle of a brush that burned with fire and yet was not consumed."²

Albert Mohler explains that "the defining characteristic of Spurgeon's ministry was an undiluted passion for the exposition and proclamation of God's Word."³ Spurgeon's influence is felt today because he was a man of the people, a man whose infectious love for the Lord Jesus Christ spilled over into all he wrote, said, and did. Spurgeon's influence won him many friends and many critics, but it is undeniable that his influence is felt on evangelicalism today because of his passionate pursuit of proclaiming the glory and majesty of Christ in everything he said and wrote.

Spurgeon's influence is still felt today in evangelicalism, because he was a man of conviction. He did not seek after controversy, but rather picked which battles he entered into with great care, only choosing to enter into those battles which compromised the Christian faith. Spurgeon's example is instructive to Christian ministry leaders, as many supposed evangelicals today claim to follow in the line of evangelicalism, but do not have a high view of the Bible. If the story of Church history has taught evangelicals anything it should be that when a high view of Scripture is upheld, then Jesus will be brought glory. The example of Spurgeon is especially important in this regard, since he had a high view of God's Word and of His Son Jesus Christ. He proclaimed the Word of God in a time when

truth was under attack, much like today, but did not compromise.

Albert Mohler explains,

“Spurgeon was a man, possessed by deep passion for the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁴ Spurgeon’s passion for the Word of God and the person of Jesus consumed all of his waking hours. Charles’ conviction to preach the Word of God without compromise is needed among evangelicals today more than ever. In recent times, some voices are calling for a “big-tent evangelicalism” that is more inclusive than exclusive. This is a big mistake; the early church fathers to the 16th century Protestant Reformers across Europe, and up to the present day conservative evangelicals, have all affirmed verbal plenary inspiration, and biblical inerrancy.

Clement of Rome (A.D. 80-100) taught, “You have looked closely into the Holy Scriptures, which are given through the Holy Spirit. You know that nothing unrighteous or falsified has been written in them.” (1 Clement, XLV. 2.3.) Augustine wrote to Jerome (A.D. 394), “It seems to me that most disastrous consequence to follow upon our believing anything false is found in the sacred books, that is to say, that the men by whom the Scriptures have been given to us, and committed in writing, did not put down in these books anything false.” (Cited by James Olive Buswell, *Outlines of Theology*, 24.) John Calvin thought of Scripture as “the sure and infallible record”, “the unerring standard”, “the pure Word of God”, “the infallible rule of His Holy Truth”, “free from every stain or defect”, “the unerring certainty”, “the certain and unerring rule”, “unerring light”, “infallible Word of God”, “has nothing belonging to man mixed with it”, “inviolable”, and “infallible oracles”.

Inerrancy was the view of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, as well as of the entire Church; inerrancy is the “central church tradition”. (John D. Hannah, ed., *Inerrancy and the Church* (Chicago: Moody, Press, 1984), ix.) The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) was founded in 1949 and had a singular doctrinal statement at its founding that affirmed inerrancy: “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs.” (“Evangelical Scholars Remove Robert Gundry for His Views on Matthew,” *Christianity Today*, February 3, 1984.)

At the end of the day, those who want to redefine evangelicalism and reshape it in their own mold do so at their own peril.

“Godly men of passion and conviction will be maligned and persecuted...”

Evangelicals today would be wise to follow the example of Spurgeon, who stood on

the Word of God and called his readers to “read not so much man’s comments, or man’s books, but read the Scriptures, and keep your faith on this, — “God said it.””¹³

The ministry of Spurgeon is instructive to Christians today because Spurgeon was a man aflame with the glory of the grace of God. Spurgeon made an impact because of his passion for and stance on evangelical truth, which he contended for, defended, and proclaimed with all of his might to the glory of God. Men of passion and conviction are needed in evangelicalism today; men who will contend for, defend, and proclaim the truth of substitutionary atonement, the authority and inspiration of Scripture, eternal punishment for unbelievers, original sin, and

the absoluteness of Christianity.

Godly men of passion and conviction will be maligned and persecuted— as was Spurgeon and the Church Fathers before him—but they must follow the example of Jesus and men like Spurgeon who modeled for pastors, ministry leaders, and believers how to stand firm in the faith, once-and-for-all delivered to the saints. While truth is under attack today on many fronts inside and outside the church, an even greater need and threat is arising from within its ranks, and that is found in the need of men to stand up and be counted.

Every generation of believers must determine if they are going to stand for biblical truth or lay down their swords and accept the lie of liberalism. While there is much to be commended in recent days in evangelicalism—especially in the growing movement of Christians, ministries and churches that are discussing what is the Gospel and its implications—there is still much to be alarmed about as many are questioning and casting aside the authority of the Word of God; either through how they use the Bible, what they think about Adam being a historical person, or their stance on gender roles. This generation of believers will have to decide—as did Spurgeon—if they will stand on the Truth of the Word of God and lift up the Son of God among the nations, or whether they will lay down their sword and succumb to false teaching (and the wiles of the devil).

At the end of the day, Spurgeon was right: “...believers must never adjust the Bible to the age, but the age to the Bible.”¹⁴ Believers have been given the Word of God, not to speculate on, but to study, to mediate upon,

contend for, defend, and proclaim to the nations. The Word of God always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it. This fact reveals the fundamental problem going on inside and outside the church by exposing, as Spurgeon knew in his time, that the issues of today are *old issues* rooted in *who is authoritative*: God or man. As with every generation before and every one after, the Truth of God’s Word will remain authoritative, unchanging, and unrelenting as it seeks to lift high the name and glory of Jesus among the nations.

As the Word of God did its work in Spurgeon’s time, so today evangelicals can be encouraged that the Word of God is sharper than any two edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is the means by which God uses His Spirit to pierce the heart of the convinced atheist, rejecters like Judas, and deniers like Peter. Evangelicals today need to stand firm in the grace of God and the Word by looking to the example of men like Spurgeon, and be encouraged that God by His grace is still working to bring people to Himself and build His church for His glory and praise.

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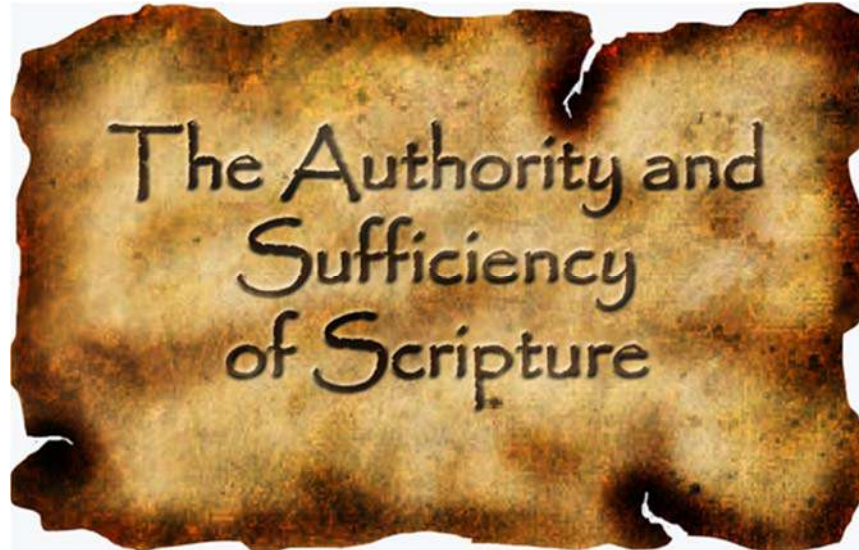
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Dave Jenkins is the Executive Editor of Theology for Life and faithfully serves at Ustick Baptist Church, in Boise, ID. He and his wife, Sarah, live near Caldwell, ID where they work for Servants of Grace Ministries. Dave loves reading and playing golf as often as he can.



By Michael Boling

Ever since the serpent in the Garden of Eden asked Eve, “Hath God said”, the authority and sufficiency of Word of God (Scripture) has been under attack. Unfortunately, this attack is not merely coming from outside the walls of Christianity. Increasingly, the questioning of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture has reared its ugly head within the Christian blogosphere, and also within many so-called “Christian books”—written by pastors who claim to preach the gospel. Perhaps more than ever, it is vital for believers to understand why Scripture is the Word of God, why it is the authority in all matters of life, and most importantly, why it is sufficient as the foundation for truth.

Let us examine the doctrine of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, look at the internal biblical evidence that sup-

ports both doctrines, inspect the ontological and epistemological proofs for the authority of Scripture, to include a discussion of what the approach known as *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) is all about. Furthermore, let’s dig in to the reasons why it is important to understand and affirm the authority and sufficiency of Scripture and why both doctrines are vital to all aspects of the Christian walk; again looking to the biblical evidence as support for our assertions.

Authority Defined

In order for something to be an authority or authoritative, whether a set of laws, a person, or organization, that which is established as being the authority, by definition, is imbued with the ability to decide what constitutes right and wrong. Additionally, that which has authority sets

the direction for those under its umbrella. Theologian Bernard Ramm aptly defined authority as, “that right or power to command action or compliance, or to determine belief or custom, expecting obedience from those under authority, and in turn giving responsible account for the claim to right or power.”

When it comes to Scripture, in order for it to be considered

as having authority over all matters of life, God—as its author—must, by extension, have ultimate authority over all things. Furthermore, this authoritative document should reveal something about the author that demonstrates that what was declared by its Author is able to be granted such authority. We find such proof in the pages of Scripture. Two fundamental proofs that establish the authority of Scripture as being truthful in all respects can be observed in matters of ontology (being) and epistemology (knowing).

God is eternal and the Creator of all things, thus nothing is more powerful or greater than Him. This is established in passages such as Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, which declares God as Creator of all things with that creation taking place by the spoken Word of God. This means God’s Word is all-powerful and has ultimate authority over God’s created order. Isaiah 40:8 declares, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” 1 Peter 1:25 states “the word of the Lord endures forever.” These

verses note God’s eternity, His position as Creator, and the reality that the words that He speaks endure forever. This ontological or state of being, namely the fact that God has been, will be, and forever will be the eternal King of the Universe, places

Scripture as the supreme authority and guide for how we relate to Him and our fellow man.

“Each and every time we look to the pages of God’s Word, what it tells us can be fully depended upon.”

It is also reveals the eternity of God’s revealed Word, placing it far above the passing fancies of any statement made by finite man.

Furthermore, for something to have authority, it must be based in truth, specifically unchanging, unalterable, and fully-dependable truth. This means that for Scripture to be the authority in matters of life, what it says must be completely without error. In order for it to be completely without error, the integrity of the Author must also be without question. When we turn to the pages of Scripture, we see the clear evidence that God’s Word is true. Psalm 119:142 tells us “Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true.” The law this passage refers to is all of Scripture. This idea of truth as stated in this Psalm connotes the idea of firmness, faithfulness, stability, and reliability. Each and every time we look to the pages of God’s Word, what it tells us

can be fully depended upon. As also noted by John Frame in relation to the authority of Scripture, “There is no higher authority, no greater ground of certainty.” God’s Word is truth because God is unchanging, truthful, and perfectly holy.

Sufficiency Defined

Of additional importance is affirming the sufficiency of Scripture. In fact, the authority and sufficiency of Scripture go hand-in-hand. If something is the authority, it is also the sole source one must look to for instruction. An authoritative source is also fully sufficient, completely truthful, and utterly dependable. The Protestant Reformation called such a concept *sola scriptura*, or “Scripture alone”. What the Reformers meant by this term is that “Scripture stood superior to all else.” Moreover, “other claimants had to be judged by Scripture as norm. However helpful they may be, they were far below

Scripture in the authority with which they spoke.”

“Scripture affirms *sola scriptura* in 2 Timothy 3:16-17...”

Thus, *sola scriptura* declares that while the writings of man indeed may be informative and can provide guidance for our lives, only Scripture provides the Words of God. Only the Word of God should be viewed as the sufficient source of what humanity needs in relation to

knowing God and understanding matters such as salvation. Theologian Wayne Grudem rightly notes, “It is in Scripture alone that we are to search for God’s Words to us.”

Scripture affirms *sola scriptura* in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, which declares, “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.” In Deuteronomy 12:32 we find God reminding His people, “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.” Scripture contains the Word of God, which fully reveals to us what God would have us do, how we are to love God, and love others; and we are commanded to neither add nor subtract from Scripture. As we have clearly observed, “[God’s] own Word assures us that Scripture is fully sufficient to bring us to salvation and to equip us spiritually for all that God demands of us.”

Application of the Doctrine

Simply affirming with our minds the authority and sufficiency of Scripture is not enough. We are commanded to obey the commands of God, which in turn requires us to affirm God as the authority and King with our lives. When trials come, will we look to the shifting sands of man’s finite and changing opinion, or will we look to the unchanging foundation of almighty God whose word never fails and is ever

trustworthy? In the spirit of the great Puritan authors of old, let us turn now from the doctrinal foundation we have established to the practical application of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

Authority of Scripture

Psalm 119:105 declares, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” This means that Scripture directs our every action; it is the basis upon which we determine how God would have us live. Charles Spurgeon once noted, “Each man should use the word of God personally, practically, and habitually, that he may see his way and see what lies in it. When darkness settles down upon all around me, the word of the Lord, like a flaming torch, reveals my way.” Only the Word of God can serve as the authority for the believer. No matter how wise our favorite theologian may be, or how helpful the latest Christian living book on the market seems, only Scripture is the final arbiter on all matters of life.

Additionally, only Scripture reveals how we are to love God and love others, the two elements upon which all of God’s commands reside. As we observed earlier in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Scripture is our authority and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. It is the only place one should look as the authoritative guidebook. Only Scripture provides the foundation for what spiritual growth looks like. No self-help guide can suffice or replace

Scripture as the authority on what it means to be holy, as God is holy. It is Scripture that the Holy Spirit writes on the heart of the believer. As J. Norval Geldenhuys once also rightly declared, “The Bible comes to us with supreme authority as the Word of the Triune God to whom be the glory and the power for ever and ever.”

Sufficiency of Scripture

Since we have established that Scripture has been provided for our instruction and is the source of all truth, being the very Word of God, it can then be declared it is also sufficient for all matters of life. It is the sure foundation in the midst of the constantly shifting values and perspectives of society. Since we live in a world where the beliefs of today can change upon a whim, many crave and desire the element of certainty, especially when it comes to matters of eternal importance.

In Scripture, we are provided with the answers to even the most difficult of life’s questions. A. W. Pink commented,

“When I come to lay my head upon my dying pillow, I want something surer than a “perhaps” to rest it upon. And thank God I have it. Where? In the Holy Scriptures. I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know that I have passed from death unto life. I know that I shall

be made like Christ and well with Him in glory throughout the endless ages of eternity. How do I know? Because God's Word says so, and I want nothing more."

Why did Pink have such confidence? He understood that apart from Scripture, we cannot understand God, the plan of salvation, or matters of eternity. Apart from the God-breathed Word of the Lord, we are left with nothing to rest our confidence upon. The doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture brings the believer both great confidence and comfort. We can be confident that God's Word is the foundation of truth in our walk with God. Conse-

quently, we can take great comfort that when

"Where the Church no longer lives by the Word of God it is left to its own devices and is soon overtaken..."

we dive into the pages of God's Word, we have everything we need in those 66 Biblical books to grow closer to our Creator, to teach us how to love our neighbor, to instruct us in the message of the Gospel, and to inform us on how to declare that message to a world that desperately needs to hear it.

Psalm 19:7 reminds us, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." The Hebrew word for perfect is *tamiym*, meaning "complete and whole". This means Scrip-

ture is completely sufficient, fully able through the work of the Holy Spirit as the manner by which we understand what it means for us be the mature and faithful bride of Christ. In the words of John MacArthur, "Because it meets every need in life, Scripture is infinitely more precious than anything this world has to offer."

Final Thoughts

Noted theologian Carl F. H. Henry once opined, "Without an authoritative Scripture, the church is powerless to overcome not only human *unregeneracy* but also satanic deception. Where the church no longer lives by the Word of God it is left to its own devices and soon is overtaken by the temptations of Satan and the misery of sin and death." As we look at the world around us, that on the one hand rejects the authority and sufficiency of Scripture in favor of selfish pride, and on the other hand so longs for certainty, believers should forever be grateful for the Word of God. We can affirm the salient words of Carl Henry, especially in a time when even individuals within the body of Christ express a desire to treat Scripture as just one of many possible "sources of truth".

We are called to wield the sword of truth, which is the Word of God. This sword can be wielded with great confidence by the believer because it is the authoritative and all-sufficient, divinely inspired, Word of Almighty God. This Word is able to cut to the quick, to pierce joint

and marrow, and to pierce even the hardest of hearts.

I will conclude with a quote from that great hymn “*How Firm a Foundation*”:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said;
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

May the words of this hymn serve as a reminder of why we should constantly affirm the authority and sufficiency of God’s glorious Word.

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Mike Boling lives in Belleville, IL with his wife and daughter. He is the Associate Editor for Servants of

Grace Ministries and also serves as the Director for Christian Apologetics and Intelligence Ministry.

Our Redemptive History: *An Expose of Luke 24:13–27*

By Dave Jenkins



Luke 24:13, 27, “That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem... And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scrip-

tures the things concerning Himself.”

If you had the option of traveling back to any moment in biblical history to witness any event that occurred, which event would you choose? Some people might answer that they would have liked to see the creation of the world. Others would want to see the great flood. Some would want to see the Exodus. And still some might want

to see the fall of the walls at Jericho fall, or the battles of David. Finally there are those that might want to see the most famous events of the life of Jesus: the shepherds at the manger, the baptism in the Jordan, the healing of the lame and the blind, the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus walking on water, His glorious transfiguration on the mountain, or Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. All of those choices (and many others) would be excellent. If I had to choose one event from biblical history, I would choose Jesus' traveling the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus (as detailed in the Gospel of Luke), walking with the two disciples on that first Easter afternoon, and listening to Him explain how everything in the whole Bible was and is about Him. In this article we will journey back to the Emmaus Road, and listen in as Jesus teaches these two disciples (and His people today) how *the whole Bible is all about Him*.

A SCRIPTURAL SERMON

Only the Gospel of Luke records the encounter on the Emmaus Road. This event adds to what we know about the Resurrection Day by giving us an eyewitness account of people who actually saw the Risen Christ. They walked with Him, talked with Him, and even had supper with Him. This series of events took place at the end of Resurrection Sunday. In this article we will look at Luke 24:13 & 27 and how Jesus preached a scriptural, Christ-centered, evangelistic and missionary sermon.

At the start of this encounter, we read that Jesus preached a scriptural (biblical) sermon, in which He proclaimed the gospel promise from the Old Testament. Jesus wanted to give His disciples a com-

plete course in scriptural interpretation. He said to them, "These are **my words** that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

What Jesus taught was directly from the Scriptures, which is where His sermon begins: with the Old Testament. In briefing His disciples on their mission to the world, Jesus does not begin with their personal spiritual experience. He does not even begin with the physical reality of His own resurrection. Rather, He begins the same

place that we should always begin everything in life: with the Word of

God. As Kent Hughes comments, "[Jesus] did not want them to rest their belief in His resurrection on their personal experience alone. He was not interested in their becoming an esoteric coterie, an elite group with a special knowledge of Christ. Resting their faith on a miracle was not sufficient. He wanted them to ground their experience of His resurrection on the massive testimony and perspective of Scripture."

The way Jesus refers to Scripture here is by calling it "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms". This is the way many Jews referred to the three traditional parts of the *Torah* (or Old Testament Scriptures). For them, "the Law" was the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Prophets included the Major and Minor Prophets (such as Jeremiah and Isaiah), and also the historical books, like 1st and 2nd Samuel and the

Chronicles. The Psalms referred not only to Israel's "hymnbook", but also to other writings in the wisdom literature, like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Thus talking about "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" was really a shorthand way of referring to the whole Old Testament.

Jesus based His life and ministry on everything those books said about His saving work. Jesus said that everything in the Scriptures was about Him. What an audacious claim to make! What right did Jesus have to say that everything in the Word of God is all about Him? Who does He think He is anyway? Jesus knows who He is—the Son of God and the Savior of the World, and therefore the fulfillment of every promise that God has ever made to His people. Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the Old Testament. To know the Old Testament truly is to know Jesus, and to know Jesus, one has to know (and understand) the Old Testament.

Our Savior used every part of the Old Testament in His own ministry. He taught His disciples many things that were written about Him through Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Jesus used the Law of Moses at the very beginning of the Gospel, when He was tempted in the wilderness and answered the devil by quoting directly from Deuteronomy (Luke 4:1–11; cf. Deut. 6:13, 16; 8:3). Jesus also used the Prophets, starting with His very first sermon (Luke 4:17–21; cf. Isa. 61:1–2) and including many specific fulfillments of their prophecies. For example, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He was fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy of a King coming "humble and mounted on a donkey" (Zech. 9:9). Jesus also often taught from the Psalms. He did it the very week that He was crucified, using Psalm

110 to prove that the Christ is both David's son and David's Lord (Luke 20:41–44).

The Lord taught this way because He knew that all these Scriptures had to come true. As He told His disciples, everything written about Him "*must* be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44)—the use of the word "*must*" expressed a divine necessity. The life of Jesus was governed by the prophecies and promises of the Word of God. In order for God to fulfill His plan—and in order for us to be saved—Jesus had to come into the world the way He came, live the way He lived, die the way He died, and rise again the way He rose again. It all had to happen the way the Old Testament Scriptures said it would; the way it was *promised* to happen. To show this, Jesus preached a scriptural sermon at the end of the first Easter.

A CHRIST-CENTERED SERMON

Jesus also preached a Messiah-centered (or Christ-centered) sermon, as any scripturally-based sermon ought to be. The main thing that Jesus taught His disciples—from the Torah—was the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Christ. In other words, He preached the gospel, because these are the two basic staples thereof: *the dying* and *the rising of the Savior*, whom God had promised. In His sermon to the disciples on the Emmaus Road, Jesus preached that same gospel again: "Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead'" (Luke 24:45–46).

These were all things that Jesus had told His disciples before. He said: "The Son of Man must suffer many things ... and be

killed, and on the third day be raised” (Luke 9:22). He said: “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.... After flogging Him, they will kill Him, and on the third day He will rise” (Luke 18:31, 33). But even though Jesus said these things, the disciples did not understand them. When He said the Son of Man would be delivered over to death, “they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it” (Luke 9:45). Similarly, when He prophesied His death and His resurrection on the third day, “they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said” (Luke 18:34). The minds of the disciples were closed to understanding the words of their Lord.

We should not be surprised, therefore, when people have trouble understanding the gospel or believing in Jesus today. It did not seem all that important to the disciples at first either. Finally, Jesus actually did what He always said He would do: He offered His body for suffering unto death, and then on the third day He rose again. At that point one might think that the disciples would understand and believe the gospel, yet they *still* did not understand! When Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection, they thought they were seeing a ghost (Luke 24:37), not a living Savior; somehow they were *still* missing something.

What made the difference for these disciples? How did they ever start trusting in the Cross and believing in the empty tomb? Luke tells us that Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45; cf. 24:32). What these men needed—what everyone needs—is the

mind-opening work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Christianity is rational, but understanding the gospel is not merely intellectual, it takes a work of God for anyone to know Jesus in a saving way. The Bible says that “the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). It does not matter how smart we are; we will never understand the message of God’s salvation unless (and until) God enables us to understand it. This is what Jesus did for His disciples, and what He will do for anyone who sincerely asks Him for understanding.

Knowing Jesus is the work of God, the Holy Spirit—a work He does when the Bible is preached in a Christ-centered way. Notice that when His disciples had trouble understanding what He was saying from the Scriptures, Jesus did not decide to try some other method. He did not say, “The Scriptures must be too hard for them to understand; I need to find some other way to communicate.” On the contrary, Jesus knew that the Holy Spirit does His saving work by the Word. So He went back to the same Scriptures that He had always preached, and preached them again. Here is an example for our own evangelism, in which we should always trust the Word to do the real work of our witness.

Jesus preached salvation through the Christ from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Maybe at one point He turned to Exodus, chapter 12, and talked about the Passover, and how an offering of blood (from a pure lamb) saved people from death. Or maybe He quoted Leviticus, chapter 16, and preached about the sacrifice that was sprinkled on the mercy seat to atone for all of Israel’s sins.

Then He might have turned to one of the Books of the Prophets, like Isaiah, who said that the Savior would be stricken, smitten, and afflicted; that He would be wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (see Isa. 53). Or perhaps Jesus preached from Psalm 22—the song He quoted from the cross when He was dying a God-forsaken death. But wherever He turned in the Scriptures, Je-

“The biblical gospel is more than just a set of facts.”

That is not all He preached, however—Jesus also preached the resurrection of the Christ. Maybe He preached it from the story of Moses and the burning bush, where God proved Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of the living, not one who is dead (Exod. 3:1–6; cf. Luke 20:37–38). Or maybe He preached the resurrection from the prophet Jonah, who came back on the third day (Jonah 1:17), or from Hosea, who said, “on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him” (Hos. 6:2). Jesus also preached the resurrection from passages like Psalm 16, where the Word said, “You will not abandon me to the grave” (Ps. 16:10 NIV; cf. Acts 2:25–32).

When Jesus preached His Easter sermon, He preached the Christ crucified and risen—suffering, dying, and rising again. He preached the Christ from all the Scriptures, opening minds to understand the basic facts of His saving gospel. Jesus did and fulfilled what was prophesied concerning Him, and then He explained it all—His saving work for all of humanity—to His disciples, who *finally* began to understand.

This is the basic message of the whole Bible: Jesus the Christ suffered and died and rose again, to forever defeat death for the salvation of His Chosen ones.

AN EVANGELISTIC SERMON

If we believe the gospel, as promised in the Scriptures and accomplished by the Christ, then we must repent of our sin. This too was part of the Easter teaching of Jesus Christ. His biblical, Christ-centered sermon was also an evangelistic sermon—one that called people to respond by repenting and receiving forgiveness for their sins. Jesus thus ended His ministry in the same way He began it—by preaching repentance (Matt. 4:17).

The biblical gospel is more than just a set of facts. We need to know that Jesus died and rose again (of course), but we also need to understand what those facts mean and respond to them in a saving and believing way. This was also promised in the Scriptures; the same Old Testament that promised the sufferings and the resurrection of the Christ, also promised repentance and forgiveness. “Thus it is written,” Jesus said, “...that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His [the Christ’s] name” (Luke 24:47).

This could be proved from almost any page in the Bible. It is not just this text or that text which proclaims repentance and the forgiveness of sins; it is the whole message of the Old Testament. Ever since Adam and Eve committed the first sin, God has been calling His people to repentance. The biblical prophets were forever telling the people of God to turn away from sin. “Let the wicked forsake his way,” they said, “and the unrighteous man his thoughts” (Isa. 55:7).

The very best men and women of God show us how to repent by their example. “Have mercy on me, O God,” said King David. “Against you, you only, have I sinned” (Ps. 51:1, 4).

God did have mercy—not only on David, but on every penitent sinner. This as well is the message of the Old Testament: God freely offers forgiveness to anyone who is truly repentant of sin. “As far as the east is from the west,” David testified, “so far does He remove our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). The prophet who told the wicked man to forsake his way also said, “Let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon...” (Isa. 55:7). “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper,” the Scripture says, “but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

Now repentance and forgiveness are to be preached in the name of Jesus—on the basis of what He has done on the cross and through the empty tomb. This is how we know that the ancient promise is true, that by the saving grace of gospel and through our repentance, all our sins will be forgiven. We are sure of this because Jesus went to the cross for us, and said, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34). We are forgiven “through the merit and the mediation of Christ.” We know that His sacrifice has been accepted because God raised Him from the dead. It is not only the crucifixion that guarantees our forgiveness, but also the resurrection. The way for us to respond is to repent and believe, and then we too will be forgiven.

A MISSIONARY SERMON

This message of repentance and for-

giveness is for the whole world, which is why Jesus ended His biblical, Christ-centered, evangelistic sermon by engendering a missionary response from His disciples. First we believe the gospel for ourselves, confessing our own sin and trusting Jesus with our own faith. Next, we proclaim that gospel message to others. So Jesus told His disciples that repentance and forgiveness should be preached in His name “to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Then He said, “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48). Like all the resurrection stories in Luke, this one ends with witnesses (see Luke 24:9–10, 33–35).

Thus the Easter sermon of Jesus Christ is a missionary sermon for the world. This had been God’s plan from the beginning. He was never the God of the Jews only; He had always had a heart for the whole world. This too was “written in the Scriptures”. The same Old Testament that said the Christ would suffer and rise again, and that promised repentance and forgiveness, also prophesied that this saving gospel would be preached throughout the world. It would start in Jerusalem, where Jesus died and rose again, because that is what the Scripture promised (Isa. 2:3; Joel 3:16). But, it wouldn’t stop there—the gospel would go from Jerusalem to all nations.

We see this missionary promise in every part of the Bible. We see it in the Law of Moses, which promised that God would bless all nations through the “son of Abraham” (see Gen. 12:2–3; 17:1–7; cf. Gal. 3:16, 29). We see it in the Prophets, who said, “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth” (Isa. 49:6). We see it perhaps most clearly in the Psalms. Psalm 22, the same psalm that prophesied that

Christ would suffer a God-forsaken death, also made this promise: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you” (Ps. 22:27). We find the same global promise in many of the Psalms: “The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations” (Ps. 98:2; cf. 96:3; 97:6; 100:1).

And so it was *written*! The Old Testament promises of God included the missionary age of the church. If anyone understood the global reach of the gospel it was Luke. Since the beginning of this book, he has been preparing us to see that salvation is for all nations. He announced that Jesus came to bring peace on earth (Luke 2:14), that His salvation would be for all peoples (Luke 2:31), that it would be a light for the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). Luke quoted Old Testament stories about Gentiles coming to faith, like Naaman the Syrian, or the widow of Zarephath (Luke 4:25–27). He also told us stories about Gentiles coming to Jesus, like the Roman centurion with the dying servant (Luke 7:1–9).

Now the time had come for all the ancient promises to be kept and prophecies to be fulfilled. Just as it was promised that the Christ would suffer and rise again, so it was promised that forgiveness would be preached to all nations. As far as the plan of God and the fulfillment of Scripture are concerned, the missionary work of the Church is as necessary and as important as the cross itself, and as the empty tomb. The Bible therefore teaches three great redemptive acts in history: the cross, the resurrection, and the missionary work of the church; the ancient promises to the nations fulfilled. As Spurgeon said, “there

was a divine necessity that Christ should die, and an equally imperative *must* that He should arise again from the dead; but there is an equally absolute necessity that Jesus should be preached to every creature under heaven.” Therefore Jesus sent His apostles out on their mission to the world, which was really *His* mission to the world. This is why Jesus had invested so much of Himself in these men, to the point of death. His plan all along was for these apostles to take the message of the gospel global. As eyewitnesses of the resurrection, they would preach repentance and forgiveness to all nations, through the crucified and risen Christ.

“The apostles witnessed the same way that Jesus preached.”

This is exactly what the apostles did—they shared Jesus Christ everywhere. Their story is told in the *Book of Acts*, which is volume 2 of Luke’s collective writings—the sequel to his Gospel account. In *Acts* we read that, starting from Jerusalem, the apostles went out into the world with the gospel. Again and again we are told that they were witnesses for Jesus (e.g., Acts 1:8; 2:32; 5:32), as Jesus said they would be.

The apostles witnessed the same way that Jesus preached. Their sermons were scriptural. They did not preach merely on the basis of their personal experience (which they sometimes did and could do better than anyone), instead, they also (primarily) preached from the Old Testament (e.g., Acts 2:17–28; 13:26–41). Their sermons were Christ-centered; the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ were their primary focus. “You crucified Him,” they said, “but God raised Him

up” (see Acts 2:23–24, 32; cf. 17:2–3). Their sermons were evangelistic, they said, “Repent...in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (see Acts 2:38). Although it is true that we do not have the full text of Jesus’ Easter sermon in the *Gospel of Luke*, there is a sense in which the notes from that sermon are scattered throughout the New Testament, for it is the same message that the apostles continually preached.

Today we continue to carry out that mission by increasing gospel ministry in the world. Through the work of the church, and through the faithful ministry of Christian missionaries, repentance and forgiveness are proclaimed everywhere in the name of Jesus. Every time someone preaches a biblical sermon that gives people the gospel and calls them to repent for the forgiveness of their sins, the Easter sermon of Jesus Christ is preached all over again—His universal missionary gospel.

A FINAL CALL

We too are called to be witnesses. We are not eyewitnesses, of course, because we have not seen the risen Christ the way the apostles saw Him, but we are witnesses nonetheless. We have heard the Easter sermon of Jesus Christ. We know the gospel message of the cross and the empty tomb. We believe God’s promise of the forgiveness of sins. So now we are the ones who carry the message of the apostles wherever we go. Paul Beasley-Murray said, “The task of every disciple—and not just of every preacher—is to interpret the significance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for others, and in doing so to spell out the gospel offer of forgiveness and the gospel demand for re-

pentance.”

When we think of the nations, we should not think only of people who live far away. The “nations” includes all the people who are outside the family of God, who do not yet believe that Jesus died for them on the cross, or that their sins can be forgiven. In fact, some of the people who are farthest away from God are the people who are closest to us—our neighbors, friends, and even family. Who will be their witness?

Anyone who repents and believes in Jesus’ name will be forgiven. This is the promise of God, as it was made in the Old Testament Scriptures, preached in the Easter sermon of Jesus Christ, and given to all people everywhere—every one of us. Let us now do our part as message bearers (witnesses) of the gospel, and proclaim it to “the ends of the earth”!



Dave Jenkins is the Executive Editor of *Theology for Life* and faithfully serves at *Ustick Baptist Church*, in Boise, ID. He and his wife, Sarah, live near Caldwell, ID where they work for *Servants of Grace Ministries*. Dave loves reading and playing golf as often as he can.

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Executive Editor: Dave Jenkins

E-mail: dave@servantsofgrace.org

Design Coordinator & Copy Editor: Sarah Jenkins

Email: sarah@servantsofgrace.org