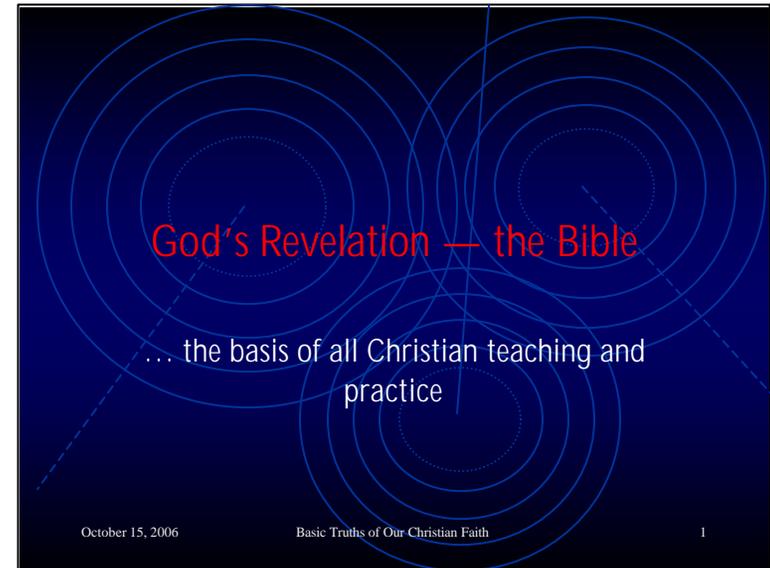


A. Scripture Reading, Isaiah 48:3–8 (NAS)

October 15, 2006

³ "I declared the former things long ago And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. ⁴ Because I know that you are obstinate, And your neck is an iron sinew, And your forehead bronze, ⁵ Therefore I declared them to you long ago, Before they took place I proclaimed them to you, Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my graven image and my molten image have commanded them.' ⁶ You have heard; look at all this. And you, will you not declare it? I proclaim to you new things from this time, Even hidden things which you have not known. ⁷ They are created now and not long ago; And before today you have not heard them, Lest you should say, 'Behold, I knew them.' ⁸ You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; And you have been called a rebel from birth.



- A. Today I want us to examine together the subject of the Bible
- B. And we read the passage from the prophecy of Isaiah to introduce this subject
- C. There are in the verses we read a number of fact about God and His revelation that I find wondrous
 - 1. The Creator, Yahweh (or Jehovah) God tells us what will happen before it happens
 - 2. God can do this because He can and does make it happen
 - 3. Yet God is willing to reveal this to us humans
 - 4. revealing it to us even though we may refuse to listen
- D. And considering this, we find Judaeo-Christianity to be unique among world religions; and the Bible among the world's books
 - 1. It is small wonder that we find it difficult to believe that an Almighty God would condescend to do this
 - 2. Yet, the very existence of these words in this book – against numerous opponents over 2,700 years – is an evidence of their truth.

Scripture reading: Isaiah 48:3–8

- A. God states some wondrous things to His people:
 - 1. God foretells the future
 - 2. God brings it to pass
 - 3. God informs humans of His intentions
 - 4. God does this even though we may refuse to take heed
- B. These make Christianity and the Bible unique
 - 1. That God desires to share His plan with us
 - 2. Israel gives evidence this is so because they carefully kept what was spoken by Isaiah as a treasured word from God

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 2

- A. Our statement of faith is a proclamation of what this church stands for and what its leaders warrant will be taught in its auspices.
- B. It includes as its very first point: 'We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six Books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union"

Our statement of faith

- A. ... the 66 books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments ...
- B. We have covered in our Sunday Bible classes last week and this morning the matters of ...
 1. The 'canon' ... selecting these 66 books from all others to be found in ancient Jewish and Christian writings
 2. Manuscripts ... the work of textual critics to determine the most accurate from tens of thousands of documents
 3. Translation ... the problems and care in rendering the Bible message into English from the original languages

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 3

- A. Let us comment upon of the phrases in this statement;
when we use the term 'Word of God'
1. We are not using it in some limited and special senses, such as
 - a. Speaking of the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, born among men as Jesus, the Christ
 - b. Specific instances of God speaking to prophets, conveying messages, instructions and commands, often with the words, 'The word of the Lord came to ... the prophet, saying'
 2. Rather, we are speaking of it as every form of verbal communication in words received from God
 3. And in its contents are many words which God did not speak but which the Holy Spirit has caused to be recorded for our benefit

the Bible to be the ... Word of God

- A. Here we do not mean
 1. The Living Word, that is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God
 2. The specific messages to individual prophets
- B. We mean 'word' as a verbal communication
 1. Received by oral means, as above
 2. Received in vision
 3. Received by the Holy Spirit moving men to write
- C. So, as well as God's true words, it is a true record of
 1. Lies spoken by Satan and by ungodly people
 2. Doubts and complaints by godly people in difficult times

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 4

- A. The matter of completeness was one we examined as part of looking at the Canon or selection of what books met the standard to be included in the Bible
- B. There are instances of revelation which are not recorded in God's word, the Bible
 - 1. Daniel was told 'But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book until the time of the end...'
 - 2. John was told in the visions in Revelation, 'Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them'

... the complete Word of God ...

- A. in the sense that
 - 1. there are no missing or lost books to be discovered
 - 2. it contains all that God intends to be in our Scriptures
 - 3. there are no books yet to be written
- B. As well, there are instances of revelation to people that are not recorded in the Bible
 - 1. Daniel 12:4
 - 2. Revelation 10:4
 - 3. such items as Noah knowing clean & unclean animals
 - 4. what Jesus said in detail to the disciples on Emmaus road

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 5

- A. If you want to see concrete examples: compare Peter's and John's epistles to the churches; or Isaiah to Chronicles
- B. So, as written, God's Holy Spirit ensured that it was correct

... verbally inspired ... free from error ...

- A. I advocate including a literal version when studying because the actual words used by the human authors
 1. Which reflect their particular vocabularies
 2. Which have differing styles
 3. Yet met the intent of the Holy Spirit
- B. So the Bible
 1. Was written by fallible men
 2. Was protected from error by God's Holy Spirit

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 6

- A. This expression says that in the realm of our Christian faith and practice
- B. There is no further addition of truth
 - 1. Beyond its pages
 - 2. That is authoritative and binding
- C. Yet, as we have mentioned in passing in examining translations and versions, we need to study and take into account the fruit of other's study if we are to understand it better

... final authority ... faith and practice ...

- A. In these it cannot be displaced or superseded
 - 1. by subsequent decision of church or council
 - 2. by so-called vision or historical or other 'fact'
 - 3. by observation or rational conclusion
- B. Yet taking into account that in using the Bible
 - 1. It needs careful, prayerful study to yield the truth to us
 - 2. Due respect must be paid to the truth that the Holy Spirit has revealed from it to Christians for two millennia

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 7

- A. Let's discover some things about God's from the Bible; what do you find about it in Psalm 19:1-3?

October 15, 2006

The matter of God's revelation

- A. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard." (Ps 19:1-3 NAS)
- B. The world in which we live
1. Reveals the glory and handiwork of God
 2. It reveal this on an continuing basis
 3. It does this in a non-verbal basis (to all who will see)

October 15, 2006

Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith

8

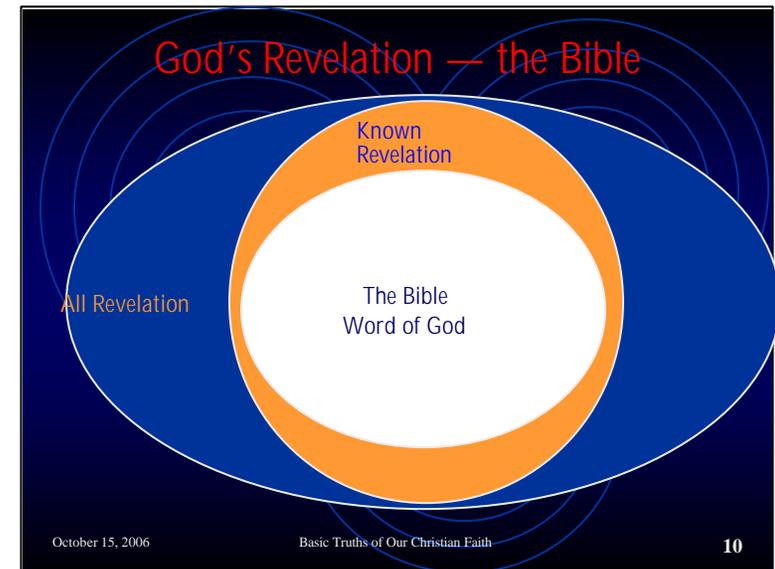
- A. What does Paul tell us here in Romans is the general response to this non-verbal revelation?
 - 1. Paul also talks about the revelation through conscience, in general like-wise ignored

The matter of God's revelation

- A. "because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honour Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Romans 1:19-21 NAS)
- B. Mankind's general response to the non-verbal revelation
 - 1. Not according honour or glory to God that He deserves
 - 2. Speculating in a fashion that leaves God out of consideration

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 9

- A. So there is an entire body of revelation that has been presented to mankind
- B. Of this, some is not generally known as we saw, and the remainder is known
- C. But within the body of known revelation there are the non-verbal such as our conscience and the creation around us
 1. But these are individually subjective
 2. So we restrict our teaching and practice to the written word of God, the Bible
 3. Now we could place another circle in this diagram, except it would not fit – that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Living Word of God, God’s ultimate revelation, but more. Of Him, John said the world probably could not contain the books detailing all of His works.
- D. The limitations of time make this study this morning only and overview, but let us look for the next few moments at what the Bible says concerning itself (by the way, the most common New Testament word for the Bible, is the ‘Scriptures’).
- E. These verses tell us what our attitude and use of the Bible should be; it is possible to be guilty of ‘Bibliolatry’ – having a beautifully bound Bible with gold-edged pages, sitting in an evident place in the house, kept dusted, no other book put on top of it – yet not read, yet not obeyed



- A. We stated the truth of inspiration, but gave no evidence: this passage is one internal statement on the subject
- B. What truths to you find in here about the Bible?
 - 1. Just as God initiated the matter of our salvation
 - 2. We see that God initiated the matter of revelation

Inspiration

- A. "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:20-21 NAS)
- B. Truths to be applied
 - 1. Men did not choose of their own to write the Bible
 - 2. The Holy Spirit was the active Agent producing the Bible
 - 3. The Bible is not an arcane book that a select few have a secret key to its understanding: just the normal meaning

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 11

- A. What attitude is required
 - 1. Diligence (includes not just reading and study but obeying)
 - 2. Accuracy (handling it honestly, truthfully, carefully)

Our required attitude to the Bible

- A. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15 NAS)
- B. Attitudes
 - 1. Diligence
 - 2. Carefulness
 - 3. With due regard to seeking the approval of God

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 12

- A. What 4 things does Paul give as uses for the Bible?
- B. Your translation may read, 'doctrine' – that just means teaching; as I stated at the beginning, this is the stand of our statement of faith
- C. You can see that these also include the matter of practice; how we live as the body of Jesus Christ, His church, both individually and corporately
- D. Now, let us look at the surrounding verses to this verse, for the ultimate goals of these uses

The uses of the Bible

- A. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;" (2 Timothy 3:16 NAS)
- B. Paul tells Pastor Timothy 4 things the Bible is for:
 1. Teaching – our statement 'authority on ... faith'
 2. Reproof – to dispute false teaching and false living
 3. Correction – to effect repentance and conversion
 4. Training – to bring about right living, sanctification

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 13

- A. Sacred writing is an alternate translation to 'Holy Scriptures
- B. The word 'adequate' is a little weak for the Greek, which could be translated complete, perfect or entire. Make a Caesar salad but fail to put in the anchovies and then it is not adequate!
- C. What goals do you see in the uses Paul has just presented for the Bible?
- D. The Christian life, Jesus said, requires a committed faith: 'If you do not take up your cross and follow me you cannot be my disciples.'
- E. And yet, we neither gain our salvation nor sustain it by our own efforts, our works; so what Paul says here is consistent with that great verse of salvation, ...

The goals of Biblical revelation

- A. "... you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ... that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:15a, 17 NAS)
- B. Goals
 1. Bringing people to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus
 2. Enabling God's children then to serve Him suitably

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 14

- A. Salvation is a gift, not something earned, but wholly the result of God's gracious love to mankind on account of which He sent His Son into this world, and provided a Way to fellowship with Him through the cross.
- B. And the God who gave us this revelation, the Bible; the God who prepared our salvation; is the same God who, when we have believed, will by the power of His Holy Spirit will enable us to accomplish those good works that He has prepared for us to do, for us to walk in.
- C. The greatest single proof of the truth of the Bible is to be found in the Person of Jesus Christ as revealed therein: first in His words, then in His works, He is shown to be the Son of God, and if that be true, then the Bible is shown to be the word of God.

The Bible and the Plan of Salvation

A. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10 NAS)

October 15, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 15

