

96 THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

Introduction: Across the Old and New Testaments, we see the progressive unveiling of God's redemptive plan, reaching its pinnacle in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Christ inspires a lifetime of devotion, study and practice to understand the depth and outworking of the love and purposes of God. However, a cultic doctrine gaining worldwide influence is the notion that new revelations are needed today and so-called modern day apostles and prophets are preparing us for the assumed "last days". Books and social media presentations by modern day "apostles" and "prophets", replete with dreams, visions of heaven, miracles and new disclosures, tend to replace Bible study and devotion to Christ. These claims are often considered equal to or even surpass the scriptures, serving as assumed "fresh takes" on the Bible which, it is believed, is lacking in relevance. However, when the Bible seems to lack relevance, it is a sure sign it is contacting hard hearts, because "The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit... and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12). We will seek to show that the Bible is essential for wisdom, giving meaning, direction and blessing to our lives. We are all in critical need of constant guidance from above.

1. THE WORD OF GOD MAKES US WISE AND FULLY EQUIPPED FOR LIFE.

- A. Necessary for life:** "Jesus answered, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth.'" Mt 4:4
- B. It lasts forever:** "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Mk 13:31
- C. It is spirit and eternal life:** "It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and are life." Jn 6:63
- D. It steeps us in truth:** Jesus said, "Sanctify them [disciples] in your truth. Your Word is Truth." Jn 17:17
- E. It is the truth:** "Give diligence to present yourself approved by God, a workman who doesn't need to be ashamed, properly handling the Word of Truth." 2 Tim 2:15
- F. Makes us wise:** "You have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim 3:15
- G. Completes and equips:** "Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that each person who belongs to God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Tim 3:16-17
- H. Probes mind and heart:** "The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Heb 4:12
- I. Joy and insight:** "Yahweh's precepts [teachings] are right, rejoicing the heart. Yahweh's commandment [teaching] is pure, enlightening the eyes." Ps 19:8
- J. It lights our way:** "Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path." Ps 119:105

2. WATCH OUT FOR FALSEHOODS THAT CONTRADICT GOD'S WORD:

- A. Watch out for flattery:** "Woe, when men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets." Luke 6:26
- B. Expose error:** "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." Eph 5:11
- C. Don't be defrauded of Truth:** "Be careful that you don't let anyone rob you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men... and not after Christ." Col 2:8
- D. Check teachings with God's Word:** "Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1 Jn 4:1
- E. Don't add to or subtract from scripture:** "If anyone adds to them [Words of God], God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book. If anyone takes away from the words of the book... God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." Rev 22:18-19

3. FALSE PROPHETS ARE ENEMIES OF GOD AND HIS WORD.

- A. They teach another gospel:** "Even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any 'good news' other than that which we preached to you [scripture], let him be cursed." Gal 1:8
- B. They destroy, deceive, are covetous:** "False prophets... will secretly bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. Many will follow their immoral ways, and as a result, the way of the truth will be maligned. In covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words." 2 Pt 2:1-3
- C. They prophesy what people want to hear:** "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority; and my people love to have it so. What will you do in the end of it?" Jer 5:31
- D. They prophesy deceit:** "The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I didn't send them. I didn't command them. I didn't speak to them. They prophesy to you... the deceit of their own heart." Jer 14:14
- E. Teach their own delusions:** "Don't listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They teach you vanity. They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Yahweh." Jer 23:16

F. They are foolish and do not address the real problem—sin: “Your prophets have seen false and foolish visions for you. They have not uncovered your iniquity, to reverse your captivity, but have seen for you false revelations and causes of banishment.” Lam 2:14

4. LIVE BY GOD’S WORD

A. The Word of God sets us free: “Jesus therefore said to those Jews who had believed him, ‘If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’” John 8:31-32

B. The honest-minded study critically: “Now these [people of Berea] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” Acts 17:11

C. God’s Word changes the inner man: “For this cause we also thank God without ceasing that when you received from us the word of the message of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, God’s word, which also works in you who believe.” I Thess 2:13

D. The Bible is unique, teaching God’s mind: “For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Pt 1:21

E. Test teachings to see if they conflict with the Bible: “Beloved, don’t believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” I Jn 4:1

F. Strive to live by God’s Word: “I was constrained to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Jude 1:3

5. JESUS—THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF PROPHECY AND REVELATION.

A. Jesus, the Word of God incarnate: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made.” Jn 1:1-3

B. Jesus, the Word incarnate: “The Word became flesh and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the only born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jn 1:14

C. Jesus, the chief cornerstone of revelation: “So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom the whole building, fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.” Eph 2:19-22

D. Jesus is the peak and perfection of Revelation and no other revelation is needed: “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son and through him to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood of his cross – through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” Col 1:19-20

E. Jesus’ incarnation was the ultimate Word of God: “God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, who, when he had by himself purified us of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Heb 1:1-3

F. All prophecy testifies to Jesus: “Worship God, for the testimony to Jesus is the spirit which underlies prophecy.” Rev 19:10

Closing thoughts: The misinterpretation of the Day of the Lord as future to us, gives rise to all kinds of wild assertions including continuation-ism—that the word of God is not sufficient and we need modern “apostles” and “prophets” to add to the Bible. We do not deny the continual operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer—quite the opposite, but there is no need for more revelation. Jesus Christ was the goal and the end of prophecy (Rev 19:10). With the destruction of the temple in the first century, vision and prophecy was complete and sealed (Dan 9:24). The New Jerusalem is built on the twelve apostles (Rev 21:14) which excludes any modern day so-called apostles.

Note: The “coming of the Son of Man” was a first century event (Preterist Papers #1, #2, etc.)