

"Milk & Meat" - Answering Questions on Christianity
Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Adult Sunday School

KNOWING GOD - part 7

38. Holy Scriptures - Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 1)

- I. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare his will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.
- II. The 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament are all given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.
- III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.
- VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

39. How Can We Be Saved? [Ref: James Beeke, *Bible Doctrine*]

- a. The book of nature opens our eyes to the reality of our Creator God.
- b. The book of Scripture reveals our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation.
- c. God's special revelation is His Word, the Bible. His Word reveals
 - Who God is - Trinity;
 - How God is to be worshipped - in spirit and in truth; and
 - His plan of salvation - Jesus Christ.
- d. In ancient times, before the Bible was completed, God revealed Himself through dreams, visions, appearances of angels (Heb 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;") or God Himself, casting of lots, use of Urim & Thummim (Ex 28:30; Num 27:21). Later, He revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ - the Living Word (Jn 1:1, 14).
- e. Reflection: Do you treasure your Bible above all other possessions? Are you actively and prayerfully studying your Bible?

40. What are the Names of the Bible? [Ref: William Evans, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*]

- a. The Bible.
 - i. Our English word *Bible* comes from the Greek words *biblos* (Matt. 1:1; Mk 12:26; Luke 3:4; Acts 1:20; 7:42) and *biblion* (smaller scroll/book) (Luke 4:17), which means "*book*." Ancient books were written upon the biblus or papyrus reed, and from this custom came the Greek name *biblos*, which finally came to be applied to the sacred books.
 - ii. The Bible is not merely *a* book, however. It is THE BOOK - the Book that from the importance of its subjects, the wideness of its range, the majesty of its Author, stands as high above all other books as the heaven is high above the earth. In fact, the Bible comprises 66 books written over a time span of 1,600 years (1500 B.C. to 100 A.D.) by about forty writers who were inspired by God.

- iii. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps 119:105). Why would God's word be a light/lamp to sinners saved by grace?
- b. The Old and New Testaments.
- i. The word *Testament* means *Covenant (or will or agreement)*, and is the term by which God was pleased to designate the relation that existed between Himself and His people. The term *Covenant* was first of all applied to the relation itself, and afterward to the books which contained the record of that relation (Luke 22:20; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14; Heb. 9:15; 12:24).
 - Heb. 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.
 - Heb. 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.
 - Origen, in the beginning of the third century, mentioned "the divine *Scriptures*, the so-called Old and New *Covenants*."
 - ii. *The Old Testament* (39 books), also called the Old Covenant, deals with the record of the origin of man, his need for a Saviour, and prophecies about the Saviour's first coming, calling and history of the Jewish nation. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language with some portions of Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezra in Aramaic (a dialect which developed during the Jewish captivity that gradually replaced Hebrew as the common language of the Jews).
 - iii. *The New Testament* (27 books), also called the New Covenant, was written about 400 years after the last Old Testament book was completed. It describes the life, teaching, and purpose of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, at His first Coming, His relevance to our life, and prophecies about His Second Coming. The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language.
- c. Scriptures. The Scriptures are "Holy Writings." Mark 12:10 "And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:" Rom. 1:2 "(Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)"
- d. The Word of God. We are to regard the Bible as the utterance of divine wisdom and love as God speaks to man.
 - Rom. 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - 1Th. 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it not as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.
 - Heb. 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

41. Is the Bible Sufficient? (Sola Scriptura).

- a. The Bible provides all things necessary for the moral and spiritual needs of all people. It contains the complete revelation needed for man's salvation and sanctification.
 - Rom 10:17 "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - 2 Tim 3:15-17 "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
 - Rom 15:4 "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
 - Deut. 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
- b. After the Reformation, a Roman Catholic priest was condemning an Irish farmer (Mike) for trying to read and understand the Bible on his own: "The Bible is for the church - for the priests to read and understand - not for the individual people." The farmer answered, "*I was just reading in Psalm 78 that God commanded the fathers to explain His Word to their children, and this cannot mean only priests because priests have no children.*" The priest

replied, "Mike, the church will teach you. It has received God's Word and it will give you the milk of the word." The farmer replied, "Yes, but I would rather keep the cow and milk her myself!" What did Mike mean with his final answer?

42. What does it mean that the "Bible is infallible and inerrant"?

- a. As God's Word, as the only divinely-inspired Book, the Bible is infallible and inerrant. The Bible states more than 3,000 times that its words are not the words of men, but of God. The Bible testifies its author is God.
- b. *Infallible* means incapable of making mistakes or being wrong, absolutely trustworthy and sure.
- c. *Inerrant* means without any mistake, every detail being correct.

43. How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God? [Ref: James Beeke, *Bible Doctrine*]

- a. Completeness.
 - The Bible contains 66 books written over thousands of years by over 40 different writers from all walks of life (judges, tentmakers, kings, shepherds, priests, soldiers, prophets, doctors, presidents, tax collector, and fishermen).
 - Despite all these differences, it is one book by one author. It teaches one system of doctrine, one plan of salvation and one rule of faith.
- b. Indestructibility.
 - Generals, kings and rulers have burnt countless Bibles in their crackdown on Christians in past centuries. People have been burnt at the stake, thrown to wild animals, and tortured to death in many ways for having a Bible, or confessing to believe in its truths. Yet the Bible has survived and expanded its influence over the world. Historically, the Bible is the most widely-read book. Never has there been a book so loved and so hated in the entire history of mankind.
 - In Armenia, an entire village of sixty families became Muslims, under threats of torture and death by soldiers. One woman, more than one hundred years of age, refused. Holding her Bible to her heart, she confessed, "I am too old to deny my Lord." The soldier snatched the Bible from her, but she calmly replied, "You can tear the Bible out of my hands, but you can never tear it out of my heart."
- c. Speaks to all types of people.
 - The Bible has spoken to people from different cultures, countries, high and low, rich or poor, young and old, throughout all periods of history.
 - These people have found that the Bible spoke personally to their hearts. It revealed to them the true God, their own hearts, and the purpose of their lives.
- d. Power & influence.
 - Bible missionaries enter a new territory with neither money nor power, but only God's Word and the faith that God will lead them. The Bible has changed savage tribes to civilised people, cruelty to kindness, and lust to purity.
 - A recent youtube video depicted the results of a revival in a small village in India. Villagers testified they have been converted and freed from their alcohol addictions, lustful lifestyles, demon possession and idolatrous religion.
 - Singapore halfway houses, The Hiding Place and Breakthrough Missions, have witnessed lives of former juvenile delinquents, drug addicts, changed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christian missionaries and pastors have done much good in their establishment of Churches, orphanages, Christian schools, hospitals and rescue missions.
 - Are you a new creation in Christ? Have you put off the old man and put on the new man? (Eph 4:22, 24) Do you now love the things that God loves, and hate the things that God hates?
- e. Inexhaustibility. Despite millions of sermons that have been preached and thousands of commentaries written about the Bible, we have yet to plumb the depths of its riches or exhaust its infinite wisdom.

- f. Honesty of the writers. The Bible honestly depicts even Bible heroes such as Noah, David or Solomon in all their humanness - faith and sins, trust and doubts, wisdom and folly.
- g. Teachings concerning God and man.
- Only in the Bible is God exalted to the highest and man abased to the lowest.
 - All non-biblical early forms of religion had gods who look and live similar to human beings - their gods had bodies like men and were fallible. But the teachings of the Bible concerning God are different.
 - Books of other religions speak differently of man - man is good, and can help themselves to become gods by their own good work - this appeals to man's pride. But the Bible teaches differently: man is spiritually dead in sin, cannot save himself, and is in total need of God to save him from hell.
- h. Historical Exactness.
- Bible critics who have doubted the existence of places and people recorded in the Bible have been proven wrong by the work of archaeologists.
 - The captivity of Israel in Egypt has been verified in Egyptian archaeological records. Solomon's large stables and copper furnace at Ezion-geber have been uncovered. Hezekiah's pool and conduit have been discovered, still intact.
 - King Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh, Assyria, had been found, along with records of his siege of Jerusalem and imprisonment of Hezekiah. After that, there was no description of any victory over Jerusalem. 2 Kings 19:35-36 tells us that the angel of the Lord destroyed Sennacherib's army and he returned in shame to his country. Visit Israel, Jordan, Turkey & Greece to see places and archeological finds that corroborate Scripture. Some biblical artifacts are stored at London's British Museum. When you next visit London, walk through the British Museum guided by Dr Peter Masters' book that will explain the exhibits regarding people or events in the Old and New Testaments.
- i. Prophetical Accuracy.
- Prophecies concerning Samaria, Jericho, Jerusalem, Nineveh, Moab, and Babylon have been fulfilled. More than three hundred prophecies concerning the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus have been fulfilled.
 - In Ezekiel 26, we read a prophecy written in 590 B.C. concerning the city of Tyre: Nebuchadnezzar shall take the city, and other nations shall join in. The city will be made flat and become a place for spreading of fishing nets. Its stone and timber shall be laid in the sea. The old city of Tyre shall never be rebuilt. This prophecy was fulfilled in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre. He captured it thirteen years later in 573 B.C. In 322 B.C. Alexander the Great captured the city and leveled the old city into a flat rock. Today, visitors will find the flat rock area as a popular place for fishermen to dry their nets.
- j. Powerful and personal application to one's heart.
- The Holy Spirit applies the power of God's Word to the heart of a believer and transforms his life, giving him a new birth and a new spiritual life.
 - The Bible has power to convict man of sin and works faith in his heart to believe and hope in a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the power which turns the heart from a love of sin and self to God and His truth. It is the power of God the Holy Spirit blessing His Word unto salvation.
 - Have you known anything of the convicting power of the Bible in your life? If so, then its words and truths will produce fruits of faith, hope and love in your life.