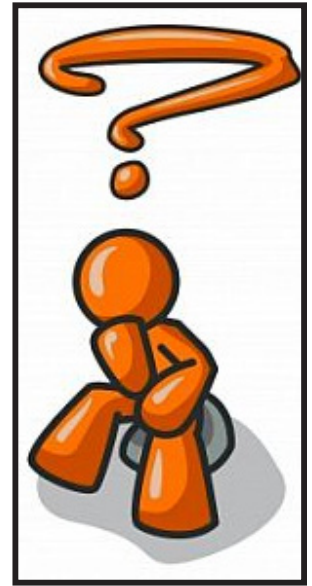


What About ... The Sufficiency of Scripture

By JERRY COLLINS

...the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17). ...Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints (Jude 3).

While traveling in India recently, I viewed a television program about pastors who reverted to the authority of sacred tradition. The program described their journeys from *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) to sacred tradition as an equal authoritative source of God's message to us. They had each believed in the authority and sufficiency of the Bible alone, but over time and for various reasons, including conflicting interpretations, studying church history, the influence of liberal scholars, and questions about the origin of the biblical canon, they came to reject *sola scriptura*. The relevant question for these pastors was whether there were any messages that God intended for us that He has not caused to be recorded in the Bible. Their conclusion was that we do have access to revelation, which is essential for



salvation and obedience, through sacred tradition as well as Scripture. Their journeys led them to abandon the written Word of God as the only sufficient inspired revelation of God's message (once for all delivered to the saints) and adding to it uninspired sacred tradition. The outcome of their reversion is a denial of the sufficiency of Scripture.

The sufficiency of Scripture is based upon verses like 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and Jude 3, which state that the Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only (*once for all*) inspired and inerrant words of God that we need in order to know the way of salvation (*give you wisdom that leads to salvation*) and the way of obedience (*equipped for every good work*). This means that all of God's special revelation is contained only in the Bible. We do not need any more inspired words, nor is there a deposit of sacred tradition that conveys God's message to us. So all claims to impart additional revelation that either supersedes or supplements the Bible are false claims.

From the very beginning, Satan has attacked the sufficiency of Scripture. The strategy then, *indeed has God said* (Genesis 3:1), continues to be the same strategy today. Yet, the Bible urges us not to tamper with the words of Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6). Revelation 22:18-19 contains the warning of severe divine judgment *if anyone adds to them...and if anyone takes away from the*

words of the book of this prophecy. In other words, do not deny the sufficiency of the Bible. Can we confidently assert that the canon of Scripture we have today is the final, sufficient, and authoritative Word of God? Or do we need to supplement the Bible with sacred tradition, rabbinic Judaism, ancient or current cultural contexts, scientific hypothesis, sociological theory, or psychological analysis in order to interpret Scripture?

The Bible clearly answers this question. Consider these additional verses and passages authenticating the sufficiency of Scripture: Psalm 19; 119; Matthew 4:4; 15:5-9; John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; Colossians 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:2; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:21; 2:20-21; 3:15-16.

As Genesis began Scripture by bridging the gap from eternity past into a time/space existence with the only detailed creation account (Genesis 1-2), so Revelation transitions out of time/space back into eternity future. Genesis and Revelation, by virtue of their contents, are the perfectly matched bookends to Scripture.