

Our Christian Faith



Holy

Yahweh

Hell

Law

Preservation

SCRIPTURE

In this devotional series we've been exploring some key words that communicate our Christian faith and hope with the world. It is important that we clearly define our terms. It is of even greater importance that we identify our source of spiritual truth. For us Christians God's revelation recorded in the Bible is our ultimate source and final authority on all spiritual matters. God is the one who made the universe and made each of us. He knows humanity through and through and his understanding encompasses all time and eternity. He alone can tell us what is vial and what is true.

But our family and friends may wonder, "Why should I listen to the Bible? What makes the Christian scriptures true and trustworthy, any more than *The Koran* or the Vedas, or the teachings of Confucius?" That's a valid question that we should be prepared to answer. Let's consider some of the characteristics of the Bible that make it totally unique from all other religious texts.

First and foremost, is the Scripture's unique message—both in the law and the gospel. No other religious text describes our sin-ruined condition so bluntly. God declares us sinful from birth,¹ ever-intent on evil,² with all the wicked and hurtful things we do and say to one another rising up from our own corrupt hearts.³ There is no one who is righteous.⁴ To any who would claim to be upright in the sight of God and people, I would wonder if they would want me to see their thoughts for even a half-hour of their day. If the answer is, "No way!" then the only person they're fooling about being so morally up-standing is themselves.⁵ Every other religion declares humans to be either basically good or morally neutral by nature. Only the Bible show us our sinful selves as we know we really are but don't want to admit.

Likewise, only the Bible tells us God is so full of mercy that he planned a solution to our sinfulness—a solution that simultaneously satisfies his demand for perfect justice and his desire to show overwhelming grace:⁶ he had his own Son become fully human to keep all of his commands that we cannot, to carry our guilt, and bear the punishment that our sins deserve on the cross. No other religion has a God who is capable of being both perfectly just and perfectly merciful because they have no Jesus Christ and no cross. Those false gods and false religions demand that you and I do the impossible: make ourselves right with God. Only the Scriptures proclaim the truth that God has already made himself right with us through the suffering death of his Son.⁷

There is so much else that sets the Bible above all other religious writings, but among its most impressive features is the uniformity of its message over the vast duration of its composition. The time from Moses until the death of the Apostle John was approximately 1600 years during which dozens of men from all different walks of life—priests and kings, shepherds and fishermen and physicians—wrote about God, sin and grace, repentance and the Savior, and yet none of them contradicted each other over all that time. In contrast most

¹ Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4.

² Genesis 8:21.

³ Matthew 15:19-20.

⁴ Romans 3:10.

⁵ 1 John 1:8.

⁶ Exodus 34:6-7.

⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:19.

religions have a single founder—a Buddha, a Confucius, a Mohammed, a Joseph Smith—whose teachings came from one mind during their brief lifetime. Christianity multiplies that authorship and duration a hundredfold, yet with perfect consistency.

Equally amazing is that the truths of Scriptures still apply meaningfully in our modern world. Yes, we believe that God spoke through the prophets and apostles and evangelists addressing real life issues in real time, but because they were speaking from the eternal God, the truth and wisdom of their words transcends time and place and applies to all people of every culture.

There's so much more that could be said about the Bible's uniqueness and its trustworthy track record, but let this suffice for now. For we who believe and know and have been transformed by its message, this Word is our source of truth about God and about ourselves and the truth of our salvation. To be sure we cannot nor should we ever want to force anyone to submit to the Bible's authority. That conviction can only be worked by the Holy Spirit, but we dare not stray from this word by even a hair's breadth, for it is our life now and forever.⁸



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1.) What do you find most fascinating about the Bible?
- 2.) We spend time listening to, learning, and memorizing the Scriptures. Why is it so important that we make God's Word the basis of our spiritual discussions with our family and friends and not anything else?



PRAYER:

Lord God, thank you for revealing yourself and your gracious plan of salvation to us through your Word. Help all Christians everywhere to cherish the Scriptures, to absorb its message, and take it to heart so that we are assured in faith, guided in holiness, and ready to share its saving truth with a world lost in sin and error. Amen.

⁸ John 6:63, 68. Psalm 119.