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We Believe God Speaks

Any responsible investigation into any single Christian belief should start with what God says on the subject.

The Authority of the Bible

“Thus says the Lord...” the words of a king, to be understood and obeyed

2 Timothy 3:14-17 *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

The Apostle Peter affirms 1) the existence of the Word of God, and 2) that Paul’s letters were also considered the Word of God

2 Peter 3:15-16 *And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

Similarly, Paul quotes from both the OT and the NT

1 Timothy 5:18 *for the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”*

Paul quotes from both Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7, and calls them both Scripture

So how did God get His words into writing?

Hebrews 1:1 *says, Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

What are some of those ways?

God spoke directly to John, and John wrote down what we have as the Book of Revelations

Luke, who wrote his Gospel and Acts, utilized interviews and research

God certainly used the background, the personalities, the gifts, the experiences of the human writers...but the results were the very words God wanted them to write.

At other times, the Holy Spirit brought to mind (memories) of what Jesus had said
John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

The Holy Spirit does not add to or change the words of Scripture. He changes the reader

Do you think if Jesus showed up right now, that He'd drop word bombs on us that were totally without Biblical support?

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*

So while God used human writers, He was the Author

The Bible is not simply true, it is also truth

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth*

The truth of the Bible does not demand that it report events with exact, scientific detail

The truth of the Bible does not demand that it tell us everything we need to know on a subject

But if the Bible cannot be trusted, then God cannot be trusted

If the Bible is distrusted, and God is distrusted, then that causes the reader to believe he/she is a higher and more trustworthy authority than God Himself

The Clarity of Scripture

The Bible can be understood

Psalms 119:130 *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple*

But understanding Scripture is "spiritually discerned" - more a result of one's spiritual condition than intellectual capability

1 Corinthians 2:14 *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned*

This does not mean that everything in the Bible is easy to understand

Sometimes Jesus's disciples didn't get it because their hearts were hardened

Or maybe they need to wait for further events to happen
People in the first century Church did not always come to the same conclusions

But the problem is not with Scripture; it's with us

The Necessity of Scripture

Some things can be known about God aside from the Bible.

Nature reveals some things we call "General Revelation," stuff anyone can know

"Special Revelation" is God's Word to a special (or specific) people

If the Bible contains everything we need to know in order to become a Christian, to live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian, then without the Bible, we won't know

We have to read the Bible for ourselves, and we need to hear the Bible explained by someone else

Romans 10:14, 17 *How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

The Christian life doesn't just start with the Bible, it is the continuing/sustaining food source for a Christian

Matthew 4:4 *But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*

God's Word is also essential to knowing God's will

Deuteronomy 29:29 *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law*

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*

The Sufficiency of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Again) *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

If we do not find answers to every specific question or problem we have, it does not free us up to add anything to God's Word

In other words, we are not free to add to (or put on the same authoritative par) culturally assumed/accepted norms with God's Word

And, if the Bible says (either explicitly or by omission) that something is not a sin, we are not free centuries later to say that it is

Many differences between believers and between churches have been over issues that the Bible actually puts little or no emphasis on

If we believe in the sufficiency of Scripture, we are also saying that we are completely content with Scripture

So how is it that so many of us claim to be saved by God through Jesus, and yet have little or no interest in what God has to say?

How is it that we are so trusting of preachers and teachers, because we like them or admire them, without going to the source?

Acts 17:10-11 *The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so*

In earlier centuries the Islamic world referred to Jews and later Christians as the "People of the Book."

Over time, Christians came to refer to themselves as the same. Rightly so!

Apart from the Book, we are not a people

What should differentiate us, what should make us distinctive, is our devotion to the Word of God

John 6:66-69 *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."*