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Sola Scriptura JCI #91 Aug 1, 2010

Just Checking In #91 Sola Scriptura Psalm 19 August 1, 2010

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord...for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Sola Scriptura Psalm 19

My current teaching series in the Psalms is on the Five Solas of the Reformation. (You can find it at www.bbcpa.org under the sermon series link.) Each of the Five Solas is a defining foundation of evangelical belief. **Sola Scriptura**: "from scripture alone" do we draw our standards for both belief and behavior. **Sola Gratia**: "by grace alone" are we saved. **Sola Fide**: "through faith alone" are we saved. **Solus Christus**: "in Christ alone" do we find salvation. **Sola Deo Gloria**: "for the glory of God alone" are all things.

Put it together and you have: ***"From the scriptures alone do we find and define the message and obligations of the gospel; that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone."***

Psalm 19 is a wonderful instructive Psalm focusing on the twofold revelation of God in nature and in scripture.

The first six verses remind us that through creation every man in every nation and in every language is hearing a constant, consistent and clear message from God. The sky itself declares God's glorious reality as an all powerful and wise Creator. The Psalmist says "the heavens declare the glory of **Elohim**", the Creator. **Elohim** is the generic title of God as Creator.

But it is not until we hear from the book of God that we receive the knowledge of His name, Yahweh (repeated seven times!), His nature and character, His demands and justice, and His mercy and forgiveness. The glory of God as Creator is revealed in creation, as **Romans 1:18-20** concurs that **God is God and we are not!** And that God is powerful and wise. This is sufficient information to leave us all *condemned* for rejecting it and contenting ourselves with vain imaginations and the worship of false, self-made gods. But it is only

from His words in His law that we discover Yahweh as Redeemer. The greater glory and treasure of scripture is trumpeted loud and clear from verses 7-14.

God's word is inerrant. "The law of the LORD (Yahweh) is perfect, reviving the soul."

Because the holy scriptures are God breathed (2 Tim 3:16), they are preserved from error (2 Peter 1:20-21) and therefore completely trustworthy as God's revelation to mankind.

God's word is authoritative. "The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple"

God's word is the final authority on all matters of belief and behavior. It is a completely reliable and necessary guide to lead us into a life of obedience both individually and collectively as the church of Jesus Christ. (John 17:17; Psalm 119:9,11)

God's word is obligatory. "The precepts of the lord are right, giving joy to the heart."

God's message is to all mankind, and therefore makes all mankind accountable to obey it. The scriptures are not just divine information, but also the framework by which we will be judged both as to belief and behavior. (John 12:48; Matt 5:17-18; Heb 4:12-13)

God's word is sufficient. "The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes."

God's word contains all the information necessary to enable us to receive eternal life and to live a life that is fully pleasing to God. (John 17:17; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:23-25)

After delineating the various facets of God's word with six titles, and the effects of that word, he then extols the value of it.

#1 *Scripture is more valuable than "much pure gold."* Gold can provide security from material disaster, but only God's word can provide spiritual security from eternal disaster, by its clear warnings.

#2 *Scripture is sweeter than honey from the comb.* Fresh honey from the comb is the sweetest substance known to the Psalmist. But scripture brings a pleasure that is more delightful and lasting than the sweet taste of honey, as obeying it provides a reward that brings everlasting sweetness in the very presence of God forever.

Now, the Psalmist responds to all he has seen in God's law, commands, precepts, ordinances, judgments, and statutes. These aspects of God's word describe God's holy demands, leaving us under deep conviction as to our own disobedience. *The closer we come to the light of God's truth, the clearer our own corruption appears.* God's word comes to sinners! God's word comes to set sinners free from their deserved condemnation. Our humble response should be that of verses 12-13. "Who can discern his own errors? Forgive my hidden faults." *"I am so utterly sinful and corrupt, were I to name every sin I have ever committed, yet there would be millions of transgressions left*

unnamed and hidden from me. I do not see the extent of the sinfulness of sin in my own life. No sin is hidden from God's eyes. But most of my sin is hidden from my eyes. If I name one sin, shall not ten, or ten thousand be left unmentioned. O for the complete cleansing that comes in the gospel promise: "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ALL sin!" Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

Our first response is a humble pleading for forgiveness of sin. "Forgive my hidden faults!"

The second response is hot on its heels.... "Prevent me from willful sins!"

We desire cleansing and transformation. We want to be cleansed from sins committed and prevented from sins tempted. O how glorious is forgiveness. How much greater is the glory of sanctification that scripture's warnings bring. Psalm 119:9,11 John 17:17 May God so work in our hearts through His word that we experience complete cleansing from past sins and growing holiness of life to resist future sins.

At last the Psalmist concludes with the fullness of his desire and declaration... "May the words of my mouth (speaking truth) and the meditation of my heart (believing truth) be acceptable in Your sight, O Yahweh, my Rock (security) and my Redeemer (forgiveness).

Let's renew our treasuring of God's word by recommitting ourselves to its study and memorization. We study it ...to learn it... to live it. We seek not mere information, but transformation.

I am presently memorizing Revelation 21-22. Why not join me? Let me know if you take it on. ron@bbcpa.org

Do you have a useful method of studying God's word? Here's the method I've used for decades. I read the entire Bible through each year, plus a chapter of Proverbs every morning. As I read the scriptures I search for five things. What does it tell me about **1) God, 2) man, 3) sin, 4) a promise or principle, and 5) a command-choice-or consequence**. There's more to the Bible than that, but it's a good place to start. Write down what you find and finish with writing down two prayers: "Lord, thank you..... (for what you've learned) and "Lord please, help me to... (to apply what you've discovered.)

Self Check:

1. Select five passages of scripture that are very precious to you today. List the references and explain why they are so precious to you.
2. What scriptures have warned you and prevented you from committing willful sins? Share a personal experience of this happening in your life recently.
3. What is your method of personal, devotional Bible study? Do you journal or take notes? If not, let me encourage you to start. If you want the simple guide using the method explained above, go to **www.ronberrus.abwe.org** and look under **Bible Study Resources**, scroll down to the pdf called "**Journal 1**".

For further study:

compare the different words for scripture used in Psalm 19 and in Psalm 119. (words, laws, judgments, statutes, precepts, commands, ordinances, etc...) What is the difference in emphasis for each? Select one of them and do an extensive study of it. Consider doing a word study of the phrases... "the voice of the Lord" and "hear/heed/listen".

"Lord, Your word is a lamp to light the path of my feet. Give me a careful, intent focus on Your word, just as I would when walking on a wooded path on a dark night with a flashlight. How much more dangerous are the thought-paths of the mind. Sanctify me through Your truth, Your word is truth. Give me the knowledge of Your will so that I may please You in everything I do today. What a treasure is Thy Word... more valuable than gold... sweeter than fresh honey! Bread of heaven, feed me now and evermore. I pray in the name of the Word Incarnate, Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

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