

Chapter 2: The Triune God who Cares for His People

1689 Updated by Peter Masters - Of the Holy Scriptures - Chapter 1:1 - The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.¹ [How people are saved, the nature of saving faith, and how they must live after they are saved. The word ‘sufficient’ means that Scripture contains all that we need to know. It deals with every possible issue, and therefore God does not supplement it by inspiring any other agency.] Although the light of nature [natural intelligence] and the works of creation and providence manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so much that man is left without any excuse [for his unbelief], they are not sufficient to provide that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation.² Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners [different ways] to reveal Himself, and to declare His will to His church [His people];³ and afterward, for the better preserving and propagating of the Truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church, protecting it against the corruption of the flesh [man’s ideas will soon spoil the church] and the malice of Satan and the world, it pleased the Lord to commit His revealed Truth wholly to writing. Therefore the Holy Scriptures are most necessary [absolutely essential], those former ways by which God revealed His will unto His people having now ceased.⁴

1 2 Tim 3.15-17; Isa 8.20; Luke 16.29-31; Eph 2.20.

2 Rom 1.19-21 etc; Rom 2.14-15; Psa 19.1-3.

3 Heb 1.1. 4 Prov 22.19-21; Rom 15.4; 2 Pet 1.19-20.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB 95) 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Ideas throughout the Chapter:

- 1) Salvation leads to God’s care
- 2) The Bible is the good shepherd’s voice
- 3) God’s care is explained through the 66 books of the Bible

Please read additional references: Exodus 20, Psalms 58:3, Psalms 101:4, Psalms 119:115, Jeremiah 14:14, Jeremiah 27:14-15, Matthew 7:22-24, Matthew 25:12, John 3:36, John 10, Romans 3, Romans 8:6-12, 1 Corinthians 2:13-15, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 5, Ephesians 2:8 with Acts 16:14, 1 Peter 1:15.

The Covenant of Grace secures salvation for many humans. All humans from birth have a sinful and rebellious soul against God. There is nothing any human can do to cleanse sin away, repay the debt of sin owing to God, and appease God's justice. Please see Psalms 58:3, Isaiah 64:4-6, Titus 1:15 with Proverbs 30:11-14. Adam passes on sin to his descendants. All of Adam's descendants sin more through thought, action, and speech to add to Adam's first offence. This will lead to physical death and God's justice. Please see Romans 1:18-32 and 1 Corinthians 15:22. Christians give their sinful nature and additional sins to Jesus Christ. Why? To cleanse sin away, pay the debt of sin, and appease God's justice. Earthly sheep only listen to their shepherd for instruction, encouragement, discipline, and direction. Jesus Christ is required to be the perfect shepherd for God's sheep because He is the only one who has accomplished and will accomplish salvation. Humans become God's sheep and Jesus Christ becomes the shepherd of these humans during and after salvation. God's sheep now listen to the shepherd's voice. Please see John 10:1-35 and Hebrews 1:1-2. Christians will listen to the shepherd Jesus Christ to understand the most valuable item already obtained. Why? God explains what salvation is and what the expectations are for His sheep.

God wrote the Bible through many authors over a long time. The Bible has 66 books put together by God to explain why salvation is needed and who is the one to accomplish salvation. The Bible's central theme is Jesus Christ. Why? Humans need salvation from God. Non-believers receive the sign of Jonah. The sign of Jonah is to be called out of sin to God's merciful grace in salvation. Please see the Book of Jonah with Matthew 12:38-40, Matthew 16:1-4, and Luke 11:29-30. Non-believers interact with God through being called out of their sin onto the Lord Jesus Christ. Many humans will reject the call to be free of their sins. Humans in sin interact with God by the sign of Jonah and do not recognize God's interaction. Anyone who is in sin will meet God's justice. Eternal conscious hell is the consequence of God's justice because of God's holy and just judgment. Hell does not destroy humans, cause death in humans, or create decay in humans because it is an eternal action. God's judgment of guilty does not end. Please see Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:38-50, and Revelation 14:11. God will use Christians to call many humans out of sin to rest on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Will any human come to salvation? Yes. God is merciful to save many sinful humans and make them sheep. God grants faith and grace as a gift to some sinful humans to come to Christ when Christians explain the Bible's message of salvation. This is the work of the Holy Spirit being merciful because humans in sin cannot do it. Please see Ephesians 2:8-9 with Acts 16:14 and Acts 2:37-41.

To share the message of hope is not a formula or a certain presentation. There are different ways Christians can approach the message of sharing Christ's hope that is seasoned with wisdom and grace. Sharing Christ's message is through words. A godly

life reveals the power of salvation to change a life that conforms to God's teaching. Please do not confuse the two. Here are some general ideas that could be shared.

- 1) To reveal and explain what sin is
- 2) God's holy response proclaiming every human guilty of being a rebellious criminal
- 3) God's justice awaits all who reject the call out of sin in the next life
- 4) Jesus Christ steps in to cleanse sin, appease justice, and give rebirth to the sinful soul
- 5) Christ Jesus will save through the Covenant of Grace
- 6) Humans rest and trust in the saviour Jesus Christ for salvation
- 7) True rebirth from sin leads to a life that conforms to the teaching of God in the Bible
- 8) Warn that difficulties and concerns will come
- 9) God is there for difficulties and concerns
- 10) Encourage Christians that Christ will keep them safe because of His merit alone

Christians should not read this as a list or a formula. Why? God does not provide a list or formula for Christians to share Christ's hope. These are general ideas that Christians could share to best explain Christ's hope of salvation. Look for opportunities to explain Christ's hope seasoned with grace and wisdom. Pray for wisdom because God will give wisdom. Go to God with boldness by asking for many opportunities to share Christ's message of hope. This means receiving and learning God's teaching deeply to have a rich soul full of God's word. Large ideas all over the Bible and what the Bible means verse by verse will need to be learned. Chapters coming up will discuss this.

1689 Updated by Peter Masters - Of the Holy Scriptures - Chapter 1:6 - The whole counsel [plan and purpose] of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture, to which nothing is to be added at any time, either by new revelation of the Spirit, or by the traditions of men.⁹ ['Necessarily contained' refers to those of God's requirements which are not made in the form of direct commands. Many of these arise as the obvious and logical conclusions which are to be drawn from passages of Scripture.] Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.¹⁰ There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and church government which are common to [all] human actions [activities] and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature [common sense] and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word which are always to be observed.¹¹ [The Scripture does not always give directions for minute and obvious points of conduct or good order.]

⁹ 2 Tim 3.15-17; Gal 1.8-9. ¹⁰ John 6.45; 1 Cor 2.9-12.

¹¹ 1 Cor 11.13-14; 1 Cor 14.26 & 40.

Is the Bible complete and perfect to guide Christians in all spiritual matters and in every situation in life? It is either yes or no. This needs to be asked because many Christians at the time of writing want more than the Bible provides. More messages reveal more knowledge from God. Many desire prophets to provide more messages from God for many reasons. Others want mystical experiences where God comforts and speaks. This list could continue. Many Christians want the Bible plus more by using the Bible to argue for more messages. Does God say the Bible is enough for all spiritual matters and in every situation in life? Look no further than 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NASB 95) 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned [them,] 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Bible exists to train and equip all Christians through teaching, showing error, and training for every good work. God commands how Christians should think, act, and speak in every situation. There should be no division between spiritual activities and daily living. Christians need to always remember that to love God means to learn and then keep what God commands. God is the king who commands His sheep. Please see Matthew 28:16-20 and John 14:21. A human cannot be a Christian and yet ignore the shepherd's commands written in the Bible. Why? Love for God is following what He commands. Remember Christ through the Covenant of Grace saves from sin alone. There should be no confusion between how God saves and having a living faith directed by the Bible.

God wrote the Bible in a way to have a singular meaning for all passages. Some passages of the Bible are vague. Other passages of the Bible are clear. The clear passages define and clarify the vague passages. Christians have no excuse to be left wondering about the meaning of passages over time because God is not the author of confusion. Christians are at fault when they turn clear ideas into vague ideas. The following chapters will explain how Christians do this by ignoring God's divine guide to understand His word.

God goes even further than 1 Timothy 3:14-17. How? The Bible is the place where Christ will speak to Christians. Christ commanding Christians is a good example. Other ways God speaks throughout history have ended. Please see Hebrews 1:1-2. Hebrews

1:1-2 includes New Testament prophets. There are no divisions in the Bible. No division means there are not different chosen groups at different times with different parts of the Bible only for them. Jews are not a different group from Christians. Salvation through Jesus Christ brings together all cleansed humans into one group. The Bible is one. The Prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles of the New Testament both wrote about Jesus Christ. All the Bible is about Jesus Christ revealing salvation and what it means to have salvation. The Old Testament is not about the Jews or the nation of Israel. Look at Christ explaining this in John 5:39-40 and Luke 24:24-27. God, through the Son Jesus Christ, explains that the 39 books of the Old Testament are about Himself. The rest of the 27 books of the New Testament consistently explain Christ's life, death, resurrection, and what it means to follow Jesus Christ through salvation. Prophets and Apostles reveal more Scripture or more messages from God. Please see Ephesians 2:19-22. No prophets and apostles means no Bible. Prophets and apostles would add more to the Bible if they existed today. Why? This is the method that God uses to reveal His intent to humans. To add to the Bible means either writing or speaking more than the Bible reveals. Groups who have or had living prophets and apostles have written more books or speak about new messages from God. Look at modern-day Pentecostals. Pentecostals give much attention to the Holy Spirit. There is a claim that the Holy Spirit says this or that in a prophetic message that Christians need to listen to and follow. Mormons wrote the Book of Mormon from their prophets. These groups quote the Bible alongside their sources of God speaking. It does not matter whether a new message agrees with the Bible. Groups like this have added more to the Bible. This subject is larger than the time allows. Please see chapter 1 of the 1689 Confession of Faith. Quakers and Anabaptists existed at the time of the 1689 Confession of Faith. These groups sought additional sources of God speaking. Either the Bible is complete and enough or God is still speaking and adding more to the Bible.

Other sources of God speaking introduce vagueness into the Bible. How? Christians look at other sources of knowledge to form positive teachings in the Bible. There is a combining of the Bible with other sources to create an idea. Excellent tools to clarify the meaning of passages should be used because they are gifts from God. Male teachers are an excellent example to learn from because God sends Christian males who can teach. The concern is that the Bible plus some other sources combine to have God speak. Many Christian women explain from some source that God wants me to become a male elder. God wrote in 1 Timothy 3 that male elders are the husband of one wife. This means to be male only because husbands are males. This starts with Adam. There is a contradiction in God if this is true. God wrote one idea down. Then God says the opposite through Him speaking more. This leads to difficult questions about God. Is God trustworthy? God changes His mind. Well-known leaders will create new sins that God never wrote about because they speak for God or heard God say. Read or listen to popes. They often

create new sins or teaching for the time they live in. Many Christians look for fallible or unclear sources where God may or may not be speaking to be informed about God's will. The creation of new teachings adds to the Bible and subtracts from the Bible. God has given a definable and examinable book. Christians need to learn not to exceed what God has written from the Prophets and the Apostles. It is enough for every situation in life. Please see 2 Timothy 3:14-17 with 1 Corinthians 4:6. God would be lying if more were required. This would call into question God's nature with this question: Is God evil because He is dishonest in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and Hebrews 1:1-2 if more is required or there are other sources where God speaks?

God cannot lie because it is impossible for God to sin. Why did this chapter discuss humans coming to God through the Covenant of Grace, God writing the Bible, and the Bible being enough? Humans need to approach God in a pure state, know where to find God's words, and know the Bible is enough. To remove the Covenant of Grace means no salvation. No human could approach God in a favourable state. Would humans know God's thoughts and intent if the Bible did not exist? No. There would be nothing to read. What if the Bible is open to adding more messages from God? Christians would look for the Bible plus another source to combine together. These other sources lead to changing what God wrote because the message goes beyond the Bible to add more. What if the additional message agrees with what is in the Bible? The Bible is just being repeated. More is not required because the Bible already contains everything needed to learn from. God works through the Bible to direct His people through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals God's thoughts. Please see Hebrews 4:11-13 with 1 Corinthians 2:11-13. Christians should read the Bible alone to hear God speak. God speaks about many subjects that all Christians should seek to learn for the filling of the soul. The soul full of God's word is the human who is blessed and rich because of God's activity.

How does God care for His sheep?

How does God care for Christians	References:
God welcomes sinful humans into His kingdom through Christ	Luke 23:39-44
God listens to Christians through prayer	Matthew 6:1-15.
God is active through the Bible in the soul of Christians	Hebrews 4:11-13
Prayer and the Bible lead Christians out of temptation	1 Corinthians 10:13
God gives strength when temptations and troubles come	2 Corinthians 12:7-10
The Fruits of God to live a godly life	Galatians 5:22-23

Above is a selection of verses explaining God's care for His sheep. The Bible from cover to cover shows these ideas and more. There is a pattern of mercy and help from God towards His chosen people after Genesis 3. God's people are God's sheep. God protects His people. The Book of Psalms reveals this mercy from God. Israel's history is a pattern of mercy after discipline because Israel needed God's mercy for many reasons. God consistently forgave Israel after times of His corrective discipline. Corrective discipline removes sin and grants a more faithful way of life. Please see the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There are special ways that God protects His people in this sinful world. Please see Daniel 1 to 6. God provides corrective discipline to purify His people because He cares. All Christians conform to God's standard that leads to a holy life away from temptation and sin. It may seem harsh for a time. God provides strength during and after corrective discipline. Please see Hebrews 12:4-11 with 2 Corinthians 12:9. Proper reflection on the Bible shows how caring God is among His people. God will not stop caring for His people.

God is there for His people because of Jesus Christ securing salvation. Salvation comes to many humans in sin. The Bible is there to speak, guide, correct, and train Christians for every situation to live godly lives. God explains at great length how much He cares to help His people. The Triune God is active among this people through the completed Bible that is to be studied. How should Christians approach the Bible to understand God's care? The next two chapters will discuss how to read and understand the Bible to gain insight into God's thoughts. This will lead to other discussions on how God is active among Christians. Amen!

Questions:

- 1) Do you see mercy in the Covenant of Grace for you?
- 2) Is the Bible enough for God to communicate His thoughts?
- 3) Does Jesus Christ speak only through the Bible now? Why?
- 4) Do you confuse the Bible working in the soul with God speaking outside of the Bible?
- 5) Do you see God's mercy and help for His people from within the Bible?

6) Do you seek to understand how God is merciful through learning the Bible's teachings?