

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 1 – “Of the Holy Scriptures”, Message # 5 –
“For Preserving & Propagating of the Truth”, Presented in the Adult
Sunday School Class, by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 21st, 2019.**

Paragraph 1 – The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience⁽¹⁾, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation⁽²⁾. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that, His will, unto his church⁽³⁾; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God’s revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.⁽⁴⁾

1) 2nd Timothy 3: 15-17; Isaiah 8: 20; Luke 16: 29 and 31; Ephesians 2 :20; 2) Romans 1: 19-21; 2: 14-15;

Psalms 19: 1-3; 3) Hebrews 1: 1 4) Proverbs 22: 19-21; Romans 15: 4; 2nd Peter 1:1 9-20

1. The Scriptures were written down by apostles, or those appointed by them, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth.

Romans 1: 1-6 – “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” “Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.”

We have been looking at the fact that God has declared his will unto His Church through the Scriptures. The light of nature, the light of human reason and understanding, apart from the Scriptures and the working of the Spirit in men’s hearts, is not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary unto salvation. God has revealed Himself in times past in various ways; through direct face to face communication with Adam, Abraham, Moses, and others. He revealed Himself to men by giving them prophetic utterance which was His speaking to them through dreams and visions, sometimes putting them into trances, so that He could communicate His will unto them.

Hebrews 1: 1 tells us, God spoke to us by His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In His Incarnation, He spoke to us, in His perfect life He spoke to us. By means of His word which was delivered to His apostles and prophets, by the things which they and others, whom they appointed, wrote down, we now have the complete Scriptures in our hands. This writing down was both for the preserving of truth and for the propagating of truth our confession states. What is an apostle? An apostle was a man called by Christ and sent by Christ to be one who would bear witness by their word, and some would continue to bear witness by their writing. They would receive grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith; to that body of doctrine which they would write down which would become the New Testament Scriptures. They would bear witness to everything doctrinally and practically which was related to them by our Lord Jesus Christ. It was then by means of the Spirit’s direct and immediate inspiration that God would convey to them the ability to write down what He would have all men as sinners to know; that He would have them to repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

And also what He would have His saints to know, in terms of their obedience to His revealed will. This is why the New Testament Scriptures were written down by them or by those whom they appointed to that holy task.

John Gill says – “An apostle was one that was immediately sent by Christ, and had his authority and doctrine directly from Him, and had a power of working miracles from him, in confirmation of the truth of his mission, authority, and doctrine; all which were to be found in the author of this epistle, who did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour to himself, of which he always judged himself unworthy, but was “called” to it according to the will, and by the grace of God.”

So, the apostles received grace and apostleship, why? Verse 5 of Romans 1 says – “For obedience to the faith among all nations for His name”. What does this phrase mean? It means that many people might be brought to have saving faith among the nations because they, the apostles had been commissioned to write the gospel down; they wrote down many important things in the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ and His ministry, and their own ministries in the book of Acts, and also the expectations of Christ concerning sound doctrine and the behavior of Christians, both in the church and when out in society, so that in every successive generation until the end of the world, people might know the truth and propagate that truth. How do we know the truth about Christ? It is because the Scriptures were written down by the apostles, and those letters and books brought together to form the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. For the better Preserving of the Truth an apostle, chosen by our Lord wrote about the entrance of our Lord Jesus, into the world, the Eternal Word becoming flesh.

Because of this writing, we see that even Angels were sometimes instrumentally used by God to convey the revelation of God’s will and the truth to men so that they would know about the gift of His Son to a world of fallen sinners.

Matthew 1: 18-23 – “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” “Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.” “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.’ “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” “So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.’”

How did Joseph, the virgin Mary’s husband, know that it was the will of God that he take Mary to be his wife; that the child which was conceived in her apart from him was the Christ child, the One whom God was sending to give salvation to all of His elect people? Matthew 1: 19 says that he was a just man and that he did not want to make her a public example, and so was minded to put her away secretly. Verse 20 says – “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.’ “And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

And this, the Virgin Birth of Christ, could be further confirmed and established to Joseph's mind, and to our minds by reading Isaiah 7: 14 – “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

How then do we, today, each one of us as believers in Christ, how do we know God's will in the thousands of situations in our lives that require moral discernment and correct moral choices to be made, and actions of obedience to be taken? It is not by direct revelation being given to us from God, but it is by the truth of the Scriptures that we are instructed. And then, further, it is by the power of the Holy Spirit, that we are convinced of the “rightness” of our views and decisions, in relation to the truth of the word of God, and by this means of faith in the Holy Scriptures, that we find that we have the power to do the will of God. This begins by believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is preached to you. It continues by your abiding in the word day by day so that you might have good success in living your life to the glory of God.

Romans 1: 16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

John Gill says – “It is the power of God organically or instrumentally; as it is a means made use of by God in quickening dead sinners, enlightening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, softening hard hearts, and making of enemies friends; to which add, the manner in which all this is done, suddenly, secretly, effectually, and by love, and not force: the extent of this power is, unto salvation; the Gospel is a declaration and revelation of salvation by Christ, and is a means of directing and encouraging souls to lay hold upon it.”