

All Scriptures Point us to Christ

By Michael Clark

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJ2000)

As we read this passage, it seems to indicate that the scriptures are all we need to become complete men and women of God. Many Bible teachers today isolate these verses to justify the importance of Bible memorization and theological knowledge. Many have gone to an extreme and teach that the scriptures are all we need to become wise and perfect, which is what these verses seem to be saying. Yes, the scriptures are important to our walk in Jesus Christ, but they are not an end unto themselves, but rather they point to the One who is not only the Alpha, but the Omega, the Beginning and the End. When we look at the context of the above passage, we see that it is preceded by Paul saying these words to Timothy:

But you have fully known my doctrine [teaching], manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, (2 Timothy 3:10 KJ2000)

Paul had not only taught Christ, but lived Christ ("manner of life") before the young man this letter was written to. Timothy was not only grounded in the law and the prophets, but he was grounded in Paul's understanding of Christ and the life of Christ. Just before the passage in question, Paul reveals the most important aspect of why the scriptures were given.

And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures [Greek *gramma* - letter or written books], which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:15 KJ2000)

The scriptures exist to make us "wise unto [Greek *eis* - into] salvation through faith in Jesus." They lead us into Christ Jesus and He in turn reveals Himself in the scriptures. We are not made wise by our faith in the Bible or by faith in the letter of the law, but faith that places us into Jesus. Faith places us in Him and He is in us as our Light and our Life! It is from this place of rest that His Spirit teaches us. The scriptures were not written to be a law book or moral code unto themselves as are the writings of Mohamed or Gautama Buddha or Confucius. They are not separate from Christ, but they point us to Him.

Paul continues (past the chapter break):

I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word [*logos*]; be diligent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine [teaching]. (2 Timothy 4:1-2 KJ2000)

Preach the *logos*, Timothy! According to Thayer's Bible Dictionary:

Logos:

- 1) of speech

- 1a) a word, uttered by a living voice, embodies a conception or idea

Paul is contrasting the letter or written text, "scriptures" (*gramma*) with the living Word, Jesus Christ (see John 1:1-4, Word = *Logos*). He is saying, "With all that I have said about the importance of the scriptures, Timothy, preach the living word, the *Logos*, the very Word of God, Jesus Christ, not dead letter doctrines from the scriptures as some do. Be sure that your words are being inspired by Jesus, the Word of God, when you preach and teach."

As for the word *rhema*, we read: *Rhema* literally means an "utterance" or "thing said." It signifies the action of utterance. In philosophy, *rhema* was used by both Plato and Aristotle to refer to propositions or sentences. In Christianity, it is used in reference to the concept of *Rhematos Christou* - sayings of Christ.

In the beginning, the line between *rhema* and *logos* wasn't as hard drawn as modern theology has made it. According to Wikipedia, *logos* originally meant a ground, a plea, an opinion, an expectation, word, speech, account, or reason. As you can see, both words can mean a spoken word.

It is the Greek word *gramma* that is used to denote words that are written. Thayer's definition of *gramma*:

- 1) a letter
- 2) any writing, a document or record
- 2a) a note of hand, bill, bond, account, written acknowledgement of a debt
- 2b) a letter, an epistle
- 2c) the sacred writings (of the OT)
- 3) letters, i.e. learning
- 3a) of sacred learning

Graphē is a similar word to *gramma*. Thayer also defines it:

- 1) a writing, thing written
- 2) the Scripture, used to denote either the book itself, or its contents
- 3) a certain portion or section of the Holy Scripture

Paul uses both *gramma* and *graphē* to describe the written word. He uses one in 2 Timothy 3:15 and the other in 2 Timothy 3:16. Both were translated *scripture*. Paul uses these two words in opposition to *logos* in 2 Timothy 4:2 ("preach the word..."), which I find very interesting and informative.

Jacques Ellul observed,

We are not to make the Torah into God Himself, nor the Bible into a "paper pope." The Bible is only the result of the Word of God. We can experience the return of the Word of God in the here and now, the perpetual return of the actual, living, indisputable Word of God that makes possible the act of witnessing, but we should never think of the Bible as any sort of talisman or oracle constantly at our disposal that we need only open and read to be in relation to the Word of God and God Himself.

Now let's look at what Jesus had to say about the purpose of the scriptures when He was walking with the two despondent brothers on the road to Emmaus after he was crucified.

Then he said unto them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses [the first five books in our Bibles] and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27 KJ2000 - emphasis added)

Jesus taught them in *all* the *gramma* about the things that pointed to and spoke of Him. Jesus didn't teach them the need to keep the law, but rather that the law and the prophets all pointed to Him. He was not like the scribes and Pharisees who only used the holy writ to teach legalism, so hung up on the details that they couldn't see the forest for the trees!

Jesus warned the Bible scholars of 2000 years ago:

And the Father himself, who has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. And you have not his word [logos] abiding in you: for whom he has sent, him you believe not. Search the scriptures [gramma]; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And you will not come to me, that you might have life. (John 5:37-40 KJ2000)

Robert Brinsmead wrote:

The Bible in itself is not the Word of God. The Word of God is a person (John 1:1). Neither does the Bible have life, power or light in itself any more than did the Jewish Torah. These attributes may be ascribed to the Bible only by virtue of its relationship to Him who is Word, Life, Power and Light. Life is not in the book, as the Pharisees supposed, but only in the Man of the book (John 5:39).

The scriptures exist to lead us to Christ, the Living Word of God, and from Him alone we receive our spiritual Life. Paul contrasted the *gramma* with the Spirit in his second letter to the Corinthian church.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also has made us able ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter [gramma], but of the spirit: for the letter [gramma - scripture] kills, but the spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:5-6 KJ2000)

Paul contrasted himself with the teachers of the law. Bible knowledge without the Spirit of God kills. We who believe in God (cling to, trust in and abide in Him) have our life in the Spirit of the *Logos*, the very Word of God, not the scriptures.

The scriptures are only a shadow (see Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1), but Jesus is the substance. Can the Spirit use them to shed light into our hearts? Absolutely! But Paul was trained in the scriptures by the best of the Jewish teachers, and yet he used them to justify his persecution of Christ (see Acts 9:4-5). After his encounter with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul counted his Bible knowledge as nothing compared to His intimate knowledge of the Lord (see Philippians 3:4-10).

Paul prayed for the saints in this way:

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he performed in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (Ephesians 1:15-20 KJ2000)

I pray that we may all have that same wonderful personal revelation Paul lived in through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and that we will abide in His Spirit of Revelation. Remember, "In the beginning was the Logos of God," not "In the beginning was the *Gramma* of God." Jesus is the Word which the scriptures were written about and He still speaks to us today and wants us to hear and obey His voice.

"While he [Peter] yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear you him.'" (Matthew 17:5 KJ2000)

Addendum:

These are just a few of the passages in the Old Testament that point to Christ:

- Genesis 3:15 (see Galatians 3:16) and 22:18
- Numbers 21:9 (see John 3:14) and 24:17
- Deuteronomy 18:18
- Psalms 2:1-7; 16:9 - 10; Psalm 22; 40:7 - 8; 45:6 - 7; 49:10; 69:7 - 12; 78:2 - 3; 88:8 and 18; Psalm 110; Psalm 118:22 - 23; 132:10 - 11
- Isaiah 7:14; 9:1, 2, 6 - 7; 11:1; 40:10 - 11; 42:1-7; 49:5 - 6; 50:4 - 9; 52:13 - 15, chapter 53; 61:1; 63:1-6
- Jeremiah 23:5 - 6; 33:14 - 16
- Ezekiel 34:23 - 24; 37:25
- Daniel 9:24 - 27
- Hosea 11:1
- Micah 5:2
- Zechariah 9:9; 11:12 - 13; 12:1;, 13:6 - 7
- Malachi 3:1; 4:2

Besides individual scriptures, there are also Bible characters who depicted Christ; Adam, Enoch, Joseph, Moses, Melchizedek, Boaz, David, Jonah, Esther, Samuel, Zadok, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea to name a few. Then there is the Holy of Holies, the Mercy Seat on the Ark, the golden serpent on the pole, the High Priest, the Passover Lamb, the scapegoat, Aaron's rod that budded (which was dead and lived again), the manna (bread which came down from heaven), and the bodies of sacrificed animals burn outside the camp and many more.

For a more complete list of Old Testament Messianic prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, go to: <http://www.bibleprobe.com/365messianicprophecies.htm>