

BC Art 5 –The Bible: A Most Precious Gift

Brothers and Sisters: In the West, the works of Shakespeare, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, or the works of Charles Dickens are regarded as classic pieces of literature. They are of excellent literary quality and they will remain for a long time. But all these great works can be **surpassed in the future**. Furthermore, some of these classic works were **not always accurate**, some **were racist**, and some **treated women in a very lowly manner**. Dickens' **socialism has proven to be faulty**. And some **so-called science turned out to be fraudulent**. (Read some of the old medical treatments of the past!)

The Bible, on the other hand, will never be surpassed. The Bible is perfectly accurate and authoritative and never has to be changed! So what makes the Bible so amazing, so beautiful, so astounding, so accurate, and so authoritative when compared with the greatest writers and their messages? This is what you will hear about today!

Our headings are:

The Bible is Holy and from God

The Bible is the Source of your Faith

The Bible is Confirmed by the Holy Spirit

The Bible proves its Dignity and Authority.

Our goals are: That you will **fully grasp the greatness of God's love to you by giving you his infallible Word**, and that you then begin to **serve him more faithfully as you study it**.

Let read together *Belgic Confession Article 5*

We receive all these books, and these only, **as holy and canonical**, for the **regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith**; believing without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the **Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts** that they are from God, and also because **they carry the evidence thereof in themselves**. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

The Bible is Holy and from God

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical,

1. To consider the value of a gift you will normally consider who the giver is.

If your husband gives you a gift, you would gladly accept and cherish it because **he loves you**. **If a thief were to give you a gift** you would reject it, and for good reason. You would not like what he did and you surely don't want **stolen property**.

2. God, holy and perfect God, in his grace, gave the Holy Bible as his gift to his children.

And they received it.

Hebrews 1:1-2b - **God**, who at **various times and in various ways spoke in time** past to the fathers by the prophets, **has in these last days spoken to us by His Son**,

And because you know he is a perfect and holy God – your Creator – who gave you the Bible, and because you know he loves you, you know it is a good gift. The Word of God is about the coming of Jesus to save us. Jesus and the Word of God are closely tied, so much so that **Jesus is called the "Word of God."**

John 1:1,14 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. And the **Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

3. Many try to attack the perfection of the Bible.

a. Some try to slip in a few words in the Bible to change it, like Jehovah's Witnesses. (...and the Word was **a** God...)

b. Some try to change the Bible by redefining what it says....or by twisting some of the words with new and inventive interpretation. For example, they might say: "The Bible does say that women shouldn't be elders, but they were restricted from being elders because they were uneducated. So it is okay now!" "There is neither male nor female, so homosexuality is okay."

c. Some bring other books alongside the Bible. This is very common among cults. This is insidious 阴险的. But God expects you to have a noble respect for his truth and he threatens condemnation to hell – anathema (咒诅) – on the one who adds or subtracts from his Word.

Isaiah 66:2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, **And who trembles at My word**.

Why is it such a big deal to attack the perfection of the Bible? Those who add or subtract from the Bible, or make anything else equal to it, or bring in something alongside it, are really saying the Bible is not perfect. If it is not perfect, they then can't take it is authoritative. But holiness and perfection make the Bible an authority!

The Bible is the Source of Faith

for the **regulation, foundation, and confirmation** of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them,

1. Why would God give you this precious book?

A person might give you a cookbook because he thinks you can't cook and he wants to help you! Another might give you a book about raising children because he doesn't think you are doing a good job. Another may give you a book of love poems because he wants you to love him or do something else for him... **So why did God give you the Bible?** He did this because he loves you and he knows that it was critical for you. How so?

2. God gave the Bible to regulate how you live.

This "ruler" is most needed at a time of changing values in our relativistic society. Man now wants to save himself by science...or by saving the planet...or by cleaning up the air we breathe. Remember what happened in Judges: Everyone did what was right in his own eyes: homosexuality, abuse of the poor, rape, corruption, injustice, idol worship, adultery, and murder. **Add abortions, euthanasia, and drug abuse to that list and you have Canada.** Man, apart from God, lives in anarchy.

3. God gave the Bible as the foundation of your faith...what you believe.

Cliff notes might help you pass your exam, but it is not sufficient as a foundation for faith. Confucius might help you sound wiser, but he couldn't lead you to Christ. The Bible is the sure foundation. A house built on a poor foundation quickly falls apart with a great crash.

John 20:31 - but **these are written** that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **believing you may have life** in His name.

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.

The Christian willingly believes by faith, without necessarily having scientific proofs, all the things that are contained in the Bible. To him, miracles are true because God says so. And his experience with God shows that he is a truth teller!

4. God gave the Bible to confirm you in the faith, removing any doubt from your mind of your salvation (sanctification).

2Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 **that the man of God may be complete,** thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1Peter 2:1 Therefore...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, **that you may grow thereby,**

The only cure for having doubts about your salvation is the opening of the unchanging Bible. This is so unlike ever-changing manuals...or disappearing manuals...or using one manual for different models of the same appliance.

The Bible is Confirmed by the Holy Spirit

not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such but more especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God,

1. You have already heard how the Bible came to be: God spoke through holy men and his Son.

God then preserved what he inspired men by his Holy Spirit to write, gave it men, and they received it. The apostles and Jesus confirmed that God's Word was true. (Peter called Paul's words "scripture." That should be enough to make everyone believe the Bible. But God added one more confirmation that his word is true: **The Spirit confirms the Holy Bible is the accurate and authoritative Word of God in your hearts.**

1 Corinthians 2:14 - But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because **they are spiritually discerned.**

2. This confirmation of God's Words by his Holy Spirit says something about how you are able to reach the unbeliever; you do it with the Holy Spirit's help.

Sadly, today, people push contemporary (现代的) worship services, or seeker friendly worship services, or social work, as the best way to reach non-Christians. But the way to reach the unbelieving is simply by proclaiming the Word of God and **then stand back and pray for the Spirit to use the Word to bring about repentance (悔改), faith, and obedience.** Friendliness and social work only bring people to the door. So be patient when a non-Christian doesn't understand the Gospel the first 20 times. **You can't do the internal work.** (Do social work, but that doesn't save!)

The Bible Proves its Dignity and Authority

and also because they carry the evidence thereof in themselves. For the very blind are able to that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

1. Bible is the accurate, beautiful, effective, excellent, and authoritative Word of God.

The Bible does what no other book could ever do – it perfectly prepares you...not for an exam...but for eternity! Already there are ancient Chinese books that no one knows what they say! The script is too old and forgotten! But look at the Bible!

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the **patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**

Proverbs 22:20-21 Have I not written to you **excellent things Of counsels and knowledge, That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,** That you may answer words of truth To those who send to you?

Then when you consider the consistency (一致性) of all the parts, it leaves you amazed. These 66 books were written over a period of more than 1500 years by many different authors in different countries and yet they never contradict (相互矛盾), but support, each other. And no one has ever proven the Bible wrong...though many have tried.

2. The Bible proves its authority and truthfulness by its prophecies coming true hundreds of years later.

When men said: Man would never fly or go undersea in submarine (潜水艇), it did not take long for these men to be proved wrong. The Wright's brothers own grandfather (a pastor) said that flying was only reserved for angels. **But the Bible has always predicted correctly:** The Fall of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, etc. They Bible predicted hundreds of details of Christ's birth and life. These prophecies were so specific that there was no chance they could be referring to anyone else. The Bible predicted the rise of God's kingdom after Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem.

3. This evidence is so clear that even blind men can see it.

This means God can confidently execute justice on those who know his Word and reject it!

Romans 1:32-2:1 - who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. Therefore you are inexcusable...

We know this in theology as the "autopistia" of Scripture. That's a Greek phrase which means that Scripture is self-authenticating (自证) or self-authoritative.

Conclusion:

The Bible is from God and it is therefore holy and perfect. You can trust it with all your heart. This holy Bible, which is for the whole world, tells man how to be saved and sanctified. This Bible is confirmed in your hearts as true by God's Holy Spirit. This holy Bible confirms itself by its dignity and authority. No other book can make such claims. The Bible is neither a hoax (欺骗) nor a forgery (伪造).

Brothers and Sisters Jesus Christ: The Bible is from a God who truly loves you.

1. When you know and believe the holy, perfect, reliable and beautiful Bible, your confidence in God will be strengthened, and you will be able to personally and bravely serve God better. Only the brave will confront the enemy. Faith makes you brave.

2. Then **make every effort to study the Bible well, teach it to your children in family worship, and give it to your co-workers and friends.** This is one part of the inheritance you want to give to your children now – something they can't squander. This is what the world needs now! Have you ever given a Bible to someone? What is the use if you have bread and keep it in your cupboard...while people are starving? So give it.

3. If you share this bread, others can learn of the Savior and be rescued from their sin and hopelessness.

If you are not a Christian, God is graciously giving you this opportunity to hear his Word today so you can know what is in it. I pray that you will search out the Scriptures more and learn how to be saved from your sins and how to be separated from yours sins. You don't have to look anywhere else. This is the end of your searching! God's Word is for you! Read. Believe. Live. Rejoice.