

## Sabbath School Lesson #5 – By Scripture Alone — *Sola Scriptura* – 25Apr-1May 2020

**C**hrist would have rely on Scripture alone as the authoritative source of truth. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). The Word discerning the thoughts is a natural consequence of the fact that “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14).

Sunday: Scripture as the Ruling Norm – The Bible *is* a more sure and sufficient guide in all things. “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). “Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5-6). Whatever varies in the slightest degree from Scripture, is wrong; he who add his words to Scripture will be found to be a liar.

Monday: The Unity of Scripture – The unity of Scripture is manifest when true Christians believe and speak the same thing (Romans 12:16; 15:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:2; 3:16; 1 Peter 3:8). Nothing could indicate more perfect unity than this. All must have one mind and one judgment. This existed in the early church, as we read: “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul” (Acts 4:32). What has been done can be done; this condition must necessarily exist among the true Christians.

Tuesday: The Clarity of Scripture – Scripture is so clear that it is said God “hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Matthew 11:25-27).

Wednesday: Scripture Interprets Scripture – “Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel’s message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled ‘*Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology,*’ Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation.” {RH Nov 25, 1884 Par 23}. “1. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible; 2. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study; 3. Nothing revealed in Scripture can or will be hid from those who ask in faith, not wavering; 4. To understand doctrine, bring all the scriptures together on the subject you wish to know, then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error; 5. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule, and not the Bible” {RH November 25, 1884 Par 24}. “The above is a portion of these rules; and in our study of the Bible we shall all do well to heed the principles set forth” {RH November 25, 1884 Par 25}.

Thursday: *Sola Scriptura* and Ellen G. White – The phrase “the Bible and the Bible only” as the basis of our faith and practice found expression with Ellen White many times. Each time she used this phrase she contrasted the teachings of the Bible with the traditions of men which are not in harmony with the Bible. But nowhere in her writings does she contrast this phrase with the testimonies and messages God gave to her. We are counselled, “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. .... Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support” {GC 595.1}.

There is one error that we need to correct, it is the notion of lesser light. Many of our fellow Seventh-day Adventists do not want to read the Spirit of Prophecy, and they claim that the Bible is the greater light. What an error and what a great deception they have fallen into! The Bible has never been the greater light; Jesus Christ our Saviour is the Greater Light.

In preparation leading up to Pentecost, the message of repentance and sharp rebuke of sin was borne by John, who was the lesser light, leading to Jesus, the greater light. John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). Ellen G White writings are understood as a lesser light leading to a greater light. Those Jews who rejected the testimony of John were not benefited by the teachings of Jesus. Those who will get lost in the Seventh-day Adventist Church will first reject the lesser light and eventually give up the

greater light, just as it was when the Jews rejected John and ended up crucifying Jesus (Acts 2:22, 23). Those Jews, who rejected the reproofs and warnings of John, were not prepared for the former rain on the day of Pentecost. Seventh-day Adventists who reject the Spirit of Prophecy will not be prepared for the latter rain. Let us heed the Spirit of Prophecy!

We are told this by Ellen White: "The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. As God's representative he stood forth to show the relation of the law and the prophets to the Christian dispensation. He was the lesser light, which was to be followed by a greater. The mind of John was illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that he might shed light upon his people; but no other light ever has shone or ever will shine so clearly upon fallen man as that which emanated from the teaching and example of Jesus. Christ and His mission had been but dimly understood as typified in the shadowy sacrifices. Even John had not fully comprehended the future, immortal life through the Saviour" {DA 220.2}.

If John, one greater than all men according to Jesus, "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28), is here considered as a lesser light, then all the Bible prophets would also be considered a lesser light that leads to Jesus the greater light. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The sole purpose of the Bible is to lead people to Jesus the greater light. The scriptures are not the end, but the means to the end. The prophets of old and of our times must lead us to Jesus or they are false. That the sole purpose of scriptures is to testify of and bring us to Jesus is clearly confirmed by Jesus when He said: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). If the sole purpose of the Bible is to lead people to the greater light, Jesus Christ, then the individual prophets and writers themselves are lesser lights, for no man can be greater than Jesus.

Now the Bible says: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The same wonderful light that shone on all the prophets of the Bible is the same light that was shone on Ellen G White, unless we do not believe Ellen White was a prophet. What did Ellen White say about her writings? Let us read just four quotations: The Articles: "I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision – the precious rays of light shining from the throne" (5T 67). The Letters (testimonies): "Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You may say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me" (5T 67). "When writing these precious books, if I hesitated, the very word I wanted to express the idea was given me" (3SM 51-52). "I am thankful that the instruction contained in my books established present truth for this time. These books were written under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit" (Letter 50, 1906).

The Bible says the remnant church will have the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy (Revelation 17:12; 19:10). This gift was manifest in Ellen White and so her writings are called the Spirit of Prophecy. Accepting this gift is in no way contrary to the claim that we have committed ourselves to follow "the Bible and the Bible only." James White affirmed the harmony between the Bible and the writings of Ellen G White: "We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time" (RH, 8 Oct 1861, par 148); "The position that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the rule of faith and duty, does not shut out the gifts which God set in the church. To reject them is shutting out that part of the Bible which presents them" (RH 3 Oct 1854, par 62). Seventh-day Adventists who hate the plain reproofs in the Spirit of Prophecy will be lost! Ultimately, they will defect to Satan: "Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit" (3SM 84). "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony" (1SM 48).