

***Finding
a
Foundation***

What is truth?

“The Truth” is unknowable

- There are many truths
 - Your truth
 - My truth
- All truth arises from me
- First generation in which there is no such thing as heresy
 - Try anything
 - Mix and match
- Don't ever say I am wrong

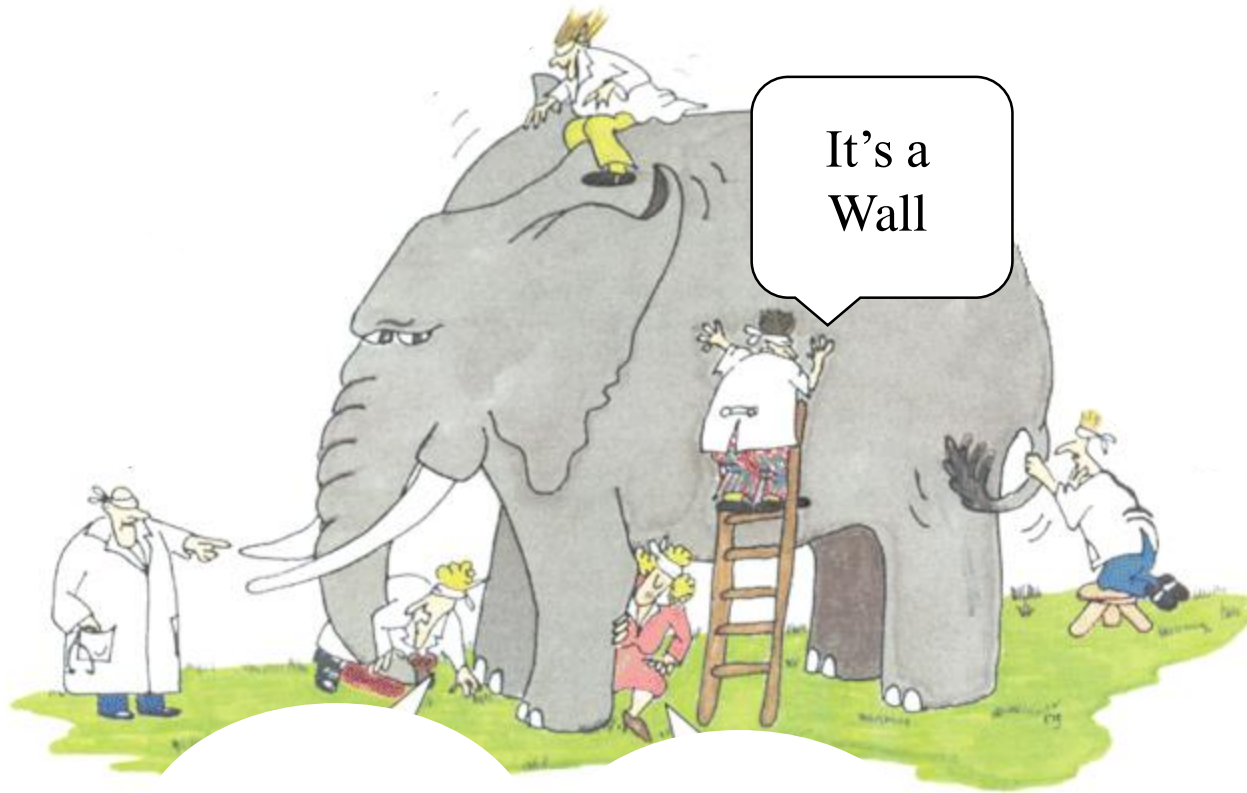
God is unknowable

- How can we ever know him?
- Projection of our ideas
- A god created in our image
- Television debate – “Did man create god?”

Quotation

“The way we perceive the world is through our own construct... we are humans... the way we perceive god and religion is limited by the fact we are human... I look at my text and there female voices missing... but here I am a woman minister part of a progressive movement... that practices her religion as it feel real to her... that doesn't mean god does not exist... it is just because I am limited by my own human powers.”

The blind men and the elephant



BUT...

- While it does remind us of human inability in realm of divine

- We will never know God left to ourselves

1. The storyteller knows it is an elephant – so the truth can be known

2. What if the elephant talked...?

- The men could hear and understand and know it is an elephant
- Not perfectly or exhaustively but they could know

God who speaks...

- The first one to speak
 - And God said... -- Genesis 1:3
 - One who is before all things
 - One who makes all things
 - One who knows all things
- God is continually speaking
 - He creates, he curses and blesses, calls, converts, gathers, equips, threatens and promises by his word
- God speaks and makes himself and his will known

Gift of language

- To the crown of creation – humankind
- He gives the gift of language – Gen 1:28-30
 - Unique gift to us
- He speaks to humans and expects them to understand, reply and obey
 - Gen 1:28
 - Gen 2:16

Challenge to humankind

- The challenge to disobey God comes in the form of a challenge to his word
- “Did God say...” – Gen 3:1
- Doubt of and disobedience to the word of God is the root of all our problems

God who speaks -- Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

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Time Period

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People addressed

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People he used

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Means he used

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God's final word

- The God who has spoken
- Speaks his final word
- In the one who is the “the Word”
- Then in language reminiscent of Psalm 2 and 110

God's final word

- He is the:
 1. Heir of all things
 2. Creator of all things
 3. Sustainer of all things
 4. Revealer of God
 - the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of his being
 5. Dealt with sin
 6. Sat down

The Scriptures

- Old Testament
 - God's word spoken in times past to our fathers
- New Testament
 - God's word spoken in his Son

Hold on a minute...

All these are written by men

Yes they were but in a way which protects the word
God wished to communicate

God directs -- 2 Peter

- Peter writes at the end of the apostolic era to encourage and strengthen the first believers
- Challenge to the coming day of the Lord
- Need to live in the light of it

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. – 1:10

God directs -- 2 Peter

- Brings evidence why they can trust what they have been taught
- Two witnesses
- The first is the eye witnesses

God directs -- 2 Peter 1:16-17

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

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God directs -- 2 Peter 1:20-21

The second is the written and authoritative witness:

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

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Written and authoritative witness:

*And we have **the word of the prophets made more certain**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*

- We have the prophetic message as something completely reliable*

God directs -- 2 Peter 1:20-21

Written and authoritative witness:

*Above all, you must understand that **no prophecy of Scripture** came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

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God directs -- 2 Peter 1:20-21

- Not an aimless force blowing something where ever it will
- Rather a carrying to a determined destination
- An assured outcome
 - Verse 17 – “the voice came to him”
- Brought by the power of God to the place of his choosing

God directs --2 Timothy 3:15-17

...from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

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God-breathed

- The phrase in older versions is “given by inspiration”
- Olympics and the BBC “Get Inspired” campaign
 - The idea we will be moved to take up sport
 - Music or a beautiful scene can be described as inspiring
- That is not the word here
 - The emphasis is that it is what God breathed out
 - They wrote what he wanted written

**ALL scripture – not just the parts where he is speaking
-- but all of it**

The Scriptures

- So here we are facing the claim that God has spoken fully and finally in his Son and that the testimony to that is found in the written word of God, the Scriptures

- Jesus concurs fully: -- John 10:35

...to whom the word of God came — **and the Scripture cannot be broken** — what about the one...

1. Final authority

- So here is the truth we live by
- Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice
- That is:
 - In what we believe
 - In what we do
- The basis for all that we hold as true

1. Final authority

- All of us have reference points to which we turn when we come to decide what we should do:
 - Parent, cultural norm, community expectations, peer pressure, feelings, government policy etc.
- For us Scripture is that reference point

1. Final authority

1.1. So we are not bound by tradition

- We may refer to them and consider them but not bound by them – only bound by scripture
- Jesus – Mark 7:6-13
 - You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men...
 - Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”
- Applies to the “teaching authority” of the church
- Applies to all that we do

1. Final authority

1.2. So we are not bound by philosophy or reason or science

- Colossians 2:8

See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ

- 1 Timothy 6:20-21

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

- Scripture tests reason not reason scripture

1. Final authority

1.3. So we are not bound by feelings, intuition, dreams, visions

- God has spoken finally in His Son and the testimony to him
- Nothing more to be revealed
- Holy Spirit today illuminates the pages of scripture that we may understand its truth but there is no further word to be added

2. Scripture is Clear

- The truth of scripture – who God is and what he requires of us -- can be known more fully and be understood by you and me sitting down and reading our Bible
 - That is not to say that all scripture is equally clear and simple
 - Nor that all passages are equally clear – some are clearer than others
 - The essential truth may not be equally clear in every passage but they are made clear somewhere in scripture
 - We may not be able to understand all things perfectly but they can be known sufficiently
 - 2 Peter 3:16

2. Scripture is Clear

This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— speaking of these things in all of his letters. **Some of his comments are hard to understand,** and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture.

2. Scripture is Clear

- What is necessary for salvation

- 2 Timothy 3:16

the holy Scriptures, which **are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus**

All Scripture is God-breathed and **is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

3. Scripture is complete

- ALL we need to know
- Many things we are not told
 - History in the OT – Omri King of Israel
 - Processes of creation – not a science text book
- Tells us of:
 - God – his creation, holiness, judgement
 - Sin – rejection of God and his word
 - Salvation – love grace and mercy of God in Christ
- Teaches, rebukes, corrects and trains us to be all we need to be

3. Scripture is complete

- Quite simply
- ALL we need to know to lift us from sin, take us through life and bring us to eternal rest with him in new heavens and new earth

4. Scripture is necessary

- Here we come back to where we started
- Can we know God?
- Never left to ourselves

- Job 11:7

Can you find out the deep things of God?

Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?

It is higher than heaven—what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?

Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.

4. Scripture is necessary

- Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? -- Ps 24:3
- Who has known the mind of the Lord? – Ro 11:34
- Who has instructed him as his counsellor? – Isaiah 40:13
- Who has given to him? – Ro 11:35

4. Scripture is necessary

BUT some argue the mighty acts of God are all we need

- But without scripture how do we know what they mean?
- Consider the life of Jesus

4. Scripture is necessary

Apart from the record of the New Testament:

...how would we ever guess that Jesus was God incarnate who created the world in which he was crucified; that by dying the criminals death he put away the sins of humanity and that now, gone from our sight, he ever lives to bring penitent sinners to His Father?

4. Scripture is necessary

BUT some argue the mighty acts of God are all we need

- But without scripture how do we know what they mean?
- Consider the life of Jesus
- Only with scripture do we come to the meaning

4. Scripture is necessary

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. -- 1 Corinthians 2:8

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.” -- 1 Corinthians 2:9

these things God has revealed to us -- 1 Corinthians 2:10

4. Scripture is necessary

“The truth we need to know most cannot be discovered on our own”

Conclusion

Scripture is:

1. the Final Authority in all matters of faith and practice
2. Clear
3. Complete
4. Necessary

Conclusion – Acts 17

Thessalonica

- Jealous Jews – started a riot
- Still true today
- Personal prejudice
 - We don't like – music, people, pastor
 - Type of god
 - Need of salvation
 - Too tight
 - Intolerant
- Silence the voice of God

Conclusion – Acts 17

Berea

- Searched the scriptures to see if these things are true – challenge is to do it!
 - Urge you search the scriptures
- That is where we stand
- Scripture God's final, clear, complete and necessary word
- The basis of all that is to follow over the next weeks

Questions?

- Perhaps questions arising – good want to address these
- This evening deal with some of the evidences that support this view
- If you have a question write it down and put in in the Offering boxes at the back and happy to try to answer it

