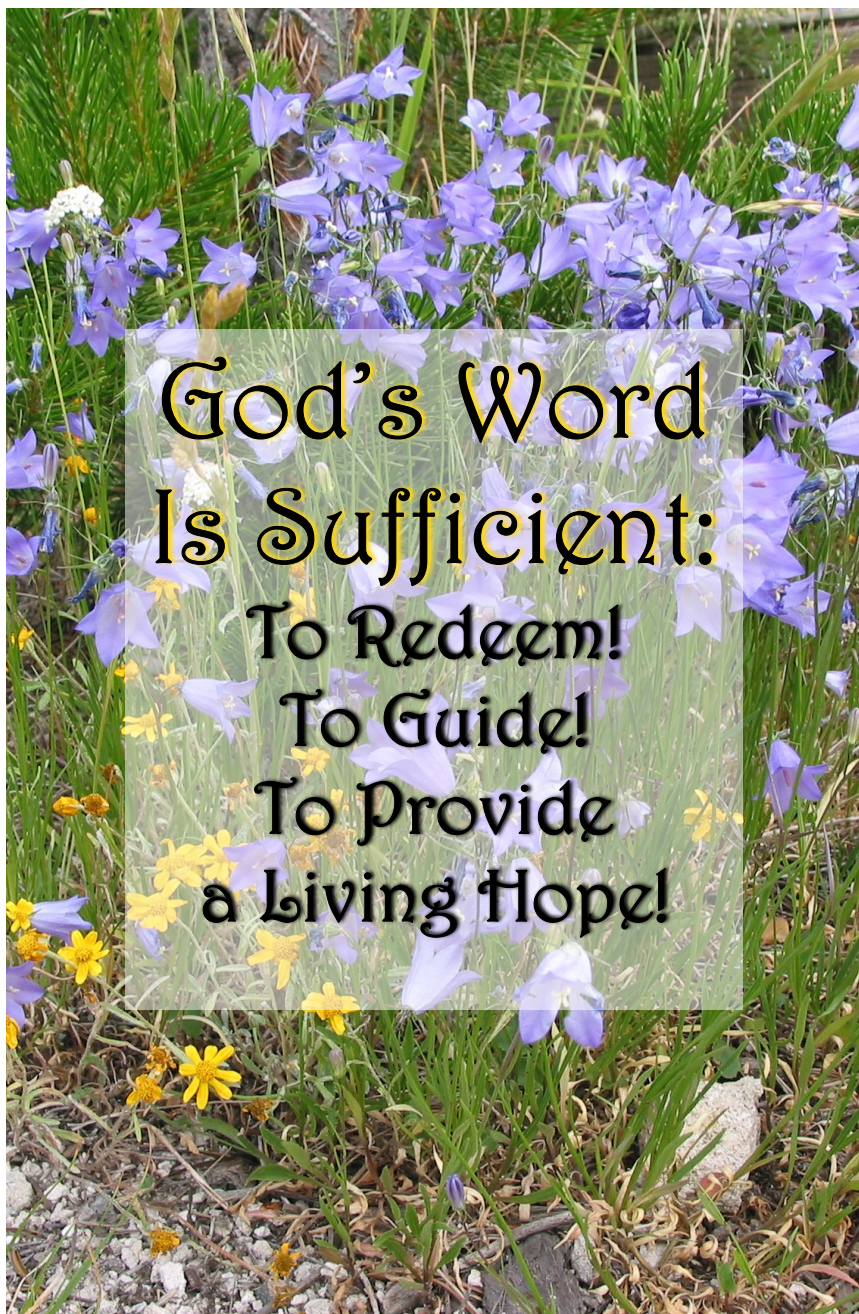




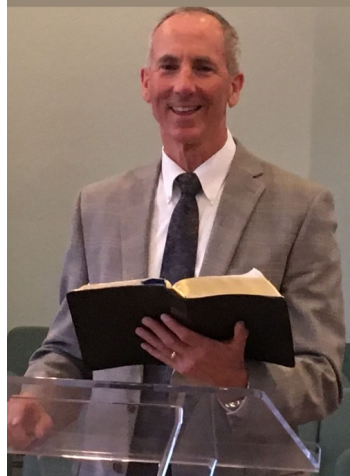
God's Word
Is Sufficient:
To Redeem!
To Guide!
To Provide
a Living Hope!

Alaska Christian Ministry to Seafarers

Foreword

Vistoso Community Church has had a theme of the year since 2013. These themes are designed to be cumulative, each year adding a new focus for our understanding of how to live the Christian life.

The *Sufficiency of God's Word* happened to be our theme, as a church fellowship, for the year 2025. This booklet is based on the several weeks of Theme sermons preached in January of 2025. Thankfully, it is a wonderfully perfect reminder each and every year.



I trust whenever you might happen to read the results of our study, and perhaps even re-read them, it will be a blessing to you!

In His grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Kevin Redig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "R".

Kevin Redig

All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NIV (1984 edition) or the NKJV (1982 edition).

Vistoso Community Church
Publication: July 2025

Introduction

There are some topics that are of such spiritual significance that it is in our best interest to be reminded of them regularly. It is even better if we can come at those topics from a new vantage point, a vantage point that stimulates a response of faith on our part. I trust this reminder of the importance and sufficiency of God's Word will do just that. So let us dig in with abandon!

As a teacher of God's Word and a follower of Jesus, I am always keen to compare and contrast what the world promises against the truths of God's Word. Of course, the contrast is not just what the world promises, but what it actually delivers in contrast to what God has, and will provide. I often do this by reading what people famous in their particular field have to say. For example, I recently came across a commencement speech given by author David Foster Wallace to a small and exclusive college in the Midwest.

Wallace is considered a great novelist, although his works are probably not the kind of thing anyone reading this book will have read. I have not. Nonetheless, his speech is noteworthy! Again, the context is a famous person speaking to a privileged group of college individuals about to embark on their professional lives. So what was the substance of his remarks; what was it that caused me to take note? He spoke candidly and powerfully about humility, compassion, and pathos. As a 43-year-old celebrity, he spoke to an audience half his age about the nitty-gritty of life—seeking to convince them that true success comes from finding compassion for others:

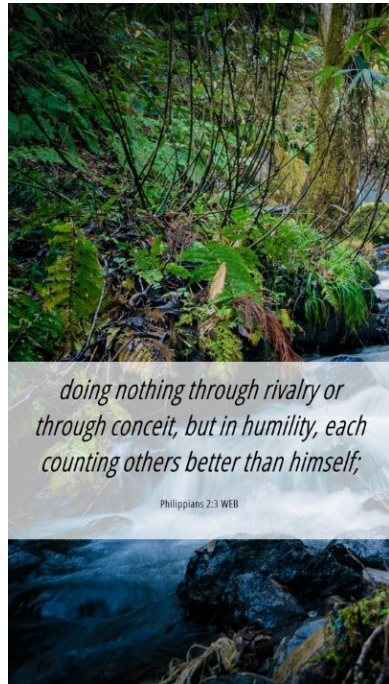
"We need to be more humble, more curious and more aware..." of the struggles of others. "Education isn't about success. It's about humility."

He likely had no idea that his comments could have come straight from the pages of Philippians, but I certainly do, and I must admit I was taken by surprise! For I did not expect him to speak so passionately and powerfully about finding pathos for others within the context of the deep trials of this life.

What I Found Amazing!

Now, what I found amazing about this famous but reclusive man is that I could find no evidence that he was a Christian. In fact, I found just the opposite. So, here is what so strongly grabbed my attention: We are accustomed to pointing out enslavement to the appetites of the flesh as typifying the lost—for example, the failed lives of Hollywood celebs caught up in drug abuse and sex scandals. We are also accustomed to pointing out the lust for power as typical of the lost, such as politicians who would sell their souls and ruin a nation in order to maintain their grip on power. But, in David Foster Wallace, I found something very rare—a lost person advocating the pursuit of that which was noble and virtuous by Christian standards!

He was advocating humility and compassion for the plight of others to the point of reaching out and providing service. Remarkable! Let me suggest to you that in David Foster Wallace we have an example of the very best that can come from *fallen mankind*, and the very



best that you could hope to find in our *fallen world*. To top it off, he was trying to persuade others to follow his noteworthy conclusions.

How did such clarity of thought impact his life? David Foster Wallace, who at times struggled with alcoholism and depression, committed suicide three years after giving the speech mentioned above. As an example of the very best that the world has to offer, let me suggest that the best the world has is not enough! I must admit that as I read a very short biographical essay of his life, tears ran down my face as I read of his suicide. For after being caught up in the power of the message that he was trying to communicate, I expected to learn about a life lived on a higher plain—something that sounded a little bit like the *abundant life*. Instead, there was only an inglorious end! Remarkably, he had grasped some aspect of Biblical truth all on his own, reasoning his way towards what matters most in life. But it couldn't sustain him because he had nothing bigger than himself as an anchor for his soul. Personal brilliance, perception, and humor couldn't do it. And, unlike so many who suffer, his end wasn't something that happened to him. It was something that he did to himself!

The Point I Am Making

I am sure you are wondering about my lengthy introduction. To begin with, the good news of the Gospel starts out with the bad news of our lost condition—and it is equally bad news even for the rich and famous. But here is the most significant reason I have begun as I have: I want us to come to grips with something very important. Specifically, we need to understand that there really is a difference between the very best the world has to offer and what God offers through faith in His Son. They are not two roughly equivalent options!

It is not choose either A or B and they both pretty much work out the same. The choices we make are the difference between heaven and hell, between hope and despair. I want us to value deeply what God has so richly and abundantly provided for those who put their faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. You see, what the world offers, or even accidentally finds, is not sufficient to get us through this life. We need more! We need a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and that begins with what God has provided in His Word. It alone is sufficient, and that brings me to my title for this book:

God's Word is Sufficient:

To redeem!

To guide!

To provide a living hope!

Of course, God's word is *sufficient* for much, much more, but this title will be my focus for it addresses the realities we so desperately need. We need to know that, whether rich and famous or poor and obscure, there is no need for any to leave this life where they began—in Satan's dominion. God's Word is sufficient to show the way out, for it details the provision and means by which each and every one of us can be redeemed! Not only that, but God's Word will guide us into a deep and meaningful life irrespective of our circumstances.

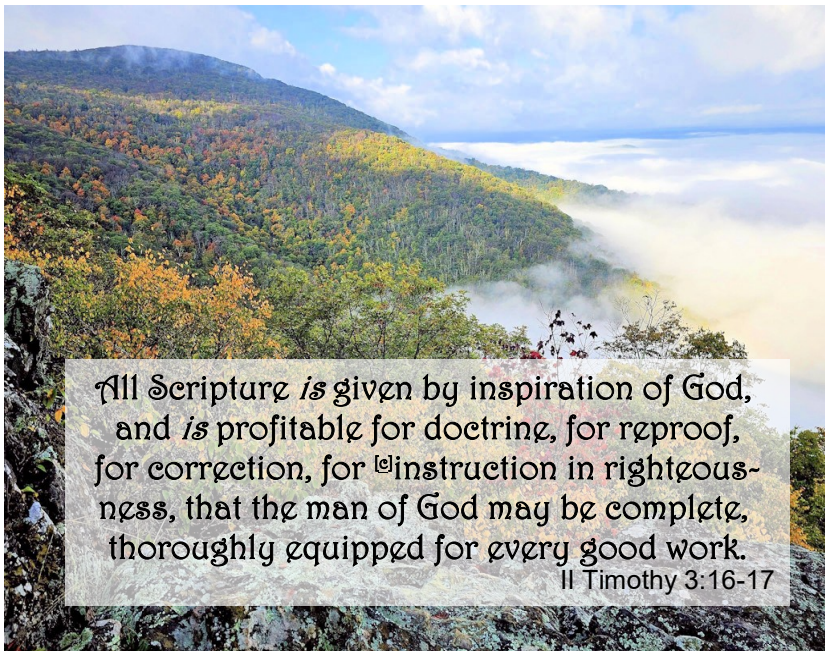
Given the tragic end of David Foster Wallace, it is very important you read carefully the next few sentences. I am not saying that Christians will not struggle with depression or any of the other evils of this world. What I am saying is that God's Word is sufficient to always guide us to a meaningful alternative and reveal the means of achieving that alternative. For He has:

**... given us everything we need for life and godliness ...
that we might escape the corruption of the world ...
and partake in the divine nature.**

II Peter 1:3-4

Lastly, God's Word provides hope where there otherwise is no hope. God's Word is sufficient, at the point our physical lives come to an end, to give us absolute confidence regarding our future.

Now, given the fact that I emphasize the importance of God's Word so often during the course of my regular teaching, you may be surprised that I am going to focus exclusively upon it for the remainder of this booklet. My rationale is simple! Given the day in which we live, we need our attention drawn to, and riveted upon, that which is *sufficient* for matters of faith and practice—and that would be the Word of God! Things are not getting less complicated and less challenging, but more so. That is all the more reason to pause, and firm up our resolve to finish holding firmly to a corporate confession as God's people: *God said it, I believe it, and that settles it!* For we are to be a people who find what they need in God's *all-sufficient* Word!



All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God,
and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof,
for correction, for ^{to}instruction in righteousness,
that the man of God may be complete,
thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16-17

God's Word is Sufficient— Qualifying Terms

Before we begin, we need to understand some basics:

1. Truth is defined as that which is descriptive of reality—the way things really are! When Jesus said to the Father, "*Your Word is truth*" (John 17:17), He was pointing us to a singular source for spiritual truth—the Word of God! The Word is full of truths that we would have no other way of knowing if God had not revealed them to us and then preserved them in written form. This said to be *revelation* because God has taken from what He knows and revealed a portion of it to us!

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 29:29

It is no wonder that the Bible has been referred to as *the mind of Christ*. (I Corinthians 2:16)

2. What do I mean by use of the term *God's Word*?

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.

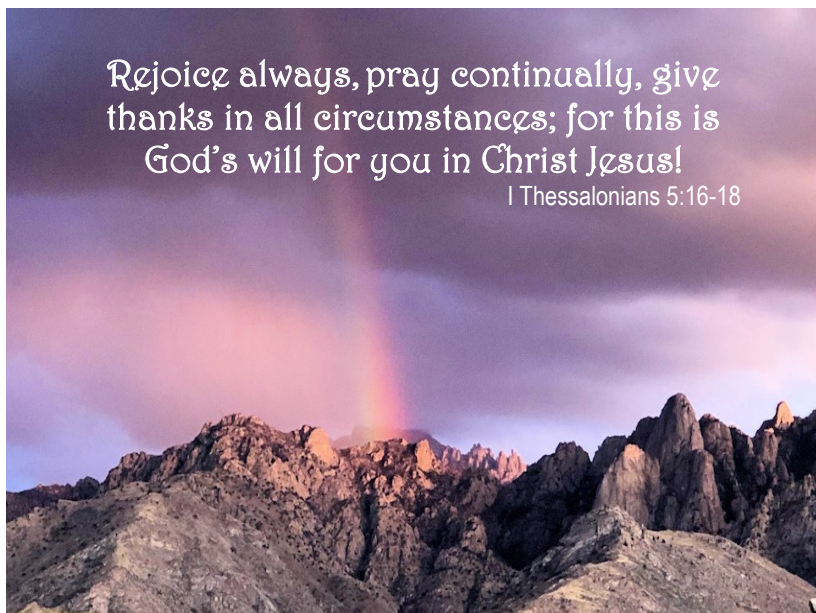
II Peter 1:21

I am speaking of the original documents that comprise the 66 books of our Bibles. As the above Scriptures make clear, these documents did not originate from the mind of man but from God Himself. Men were simply human instruments, inspired to write by the Holy Spirit what God intended for our benefit. That's why the Scriptures are said to be *God-breathed*. (II Timothy 3:16)

It might help you to know that the above refers to the original Hebrew and Greek texts. There is no such

thing as an inspired text in the English language. So do not allow the differences in English translations create doubt about the concept of inspiration. When all the language scholars have had their say, we have a number of very good English translations that are doing their best to communicate the meaning of the original texts in our language. There is no point of Christian doctrine that hinges on any of the textual variants within these translations. And, don't confuse theological differences with the validity of God's Word. Theologies come from the mind of man. Ours is to be a student of the Word!

3. What do I mean by the use of the word *Sufficient*? I do not mean that the Bible is sufficient to teach you how to use the latest software upgrade or to create some new dish in the kitchen. It is not a *How-To* video on YouTube. However, it will tell you how to respond when you are so frustrated with your computer that you want to stomp on it!



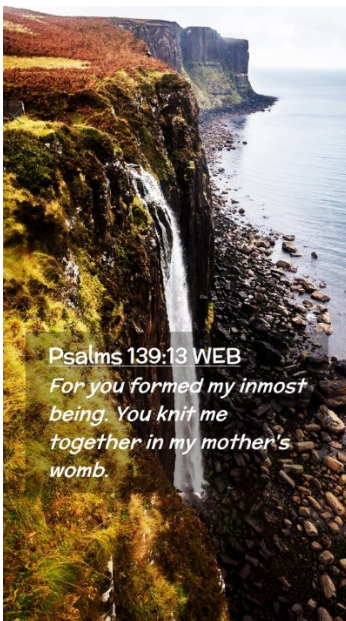
It is best to qualify the word *Sufficient* in this way:

The Word of God is sufficient for all matters of faith and practice ...

- *To inform us on spiritual matters and the overlap of the spiritual into the physical.*
- *To remind us that it is a complete revelation and not a work in progress.*
- *To assure us that other sources may help to explain it, but they have nothing to add to it.*
- *To reinforce, as you would expect given that God is the source, that:*

Nothing is completely perfect, except Your teachings.

Psalm 119:96 (CEV)



Psalm 139:13 WEB
For you formed my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb.

4. I would like to comment briefly on the Word of God's overlap from the spiritual into the physical. The idea of an *overlap* was the simplest way I could think of to describe a very important and broadly applicable principle. The Scriptures have much to say on topics that start out within the realm of the Spiritual: the creation and make-up of mankind, marriage, the family, and so on. It then goes on to provide a tremendous amount of information regarding the overlap of the physical with

the spiritual. For example, the Scriptures tell us that children are a *gift from the Lord* (Psalm 127:3), and that God is involved with knitting each one of us

together in our mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13) Then it has much to say about the very practical subject of raising up a child in the way in which he or she should go. (Proverbs 22:6) And, when it provides insight on these types of topics, it speaks with the same *sufficiency* as does every other portion of God's Word. For that reason, it is not open to *improvement* or *updating* by that which comes from the mind of man!

5. The word *sufficient* in this context is not a reference to that which is singular and isolated from God's overall plans. Rather, it is sufficient to fulfill its designed role as part of a larger plan! The Word of God has its role, as do the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of the saints! This may not immediately strike a chord with you, but it is essential for those who become knowledgeable in the Word—especially those who teach it. For those who become enamored with the Word have an unfortunate habit of thinking their individual knowledge of it is the only thing that matters! That is understandable, if we start here:

...You have exalted above all things Your name and Your Word.

Psalm 138:2

But let's not forget that our exaltation of the Word, which is admirable, must also fit within the following:

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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16-17

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16

I am pleading with you brothers ... to put yourselves under orders to God, as a living sacrifice ... which is how we rightly worship.

Romans 12:1, paraphrase

The goal of this point is to sound an appropriate caution. The Word is most certainly sufficient to thoroughly and completely inform the child of God. However, it is not an end in and of itself, lest we be puffed up by knowledge and take on the characteristics of a Pharisee. For, as you can see in the above passages, the Word of God is meant to lead to *good works*, coupled with a *walk in the Spirit* and a life that is both guided by the Word and *under orders to God as an act of worship!*

And so, once again, I come back to our title which outlines the content of the rest of this book:

God's Word is Sufficient:

To redeem!

To guide!

To provide a living hope!

Sufficient to Provide a Living Hope!

I am going to begin at the bottom of the list and show you the hope that is ours as laid out in God's Word. Again, I want to be very careful to make clear that Christians can, and do, suffer from depression, alcoholism, and suicidal thoughts. Christians can have tragic accidents and come down with terminal diseases. But there is an antidote to the worldly response that is likely to follow all such occurrences. That antidote is the *living hope* found in the Word of God—and nowhere else!

A Glimpse Into Our Living Hope

From the very first moment following our response to the Gospel of Christ, with nothing more than child-like

faith, we have the promise from our heavenly Father

... “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5

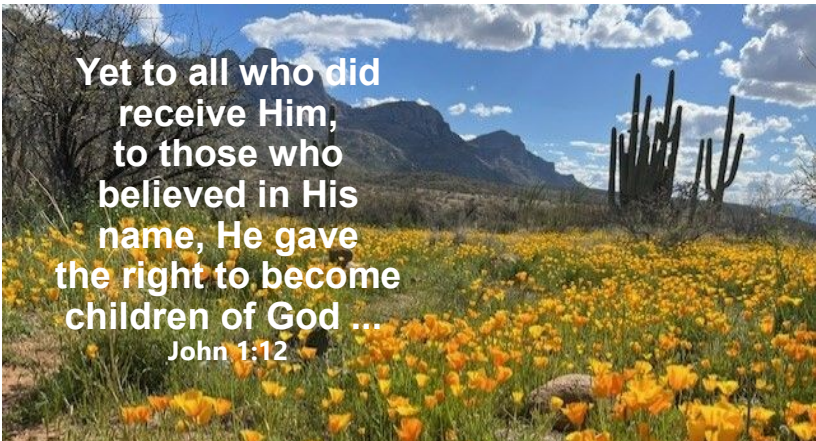
I refer to the one who has put his or her faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and is, therefore, the recipient of what He has promised—eternal life. This life is ours at the very moment in time when we trust Christ for eternal life.

At that point we have entered into relationship with God by virtue of having become a child of God. (John 1:12)
Now we know how we are to proceed:

... just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him ...

Colossians 2:6

Does that always happen? To our detriment, it does not!



Nonetheless, our God never leaves us, and apparently this includes ...

The Son:

... God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27

The Spirit:

Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14

And the Father:

... God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5 / Deuteronomy 31:6

If we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.

II Timothy 2:13

We Have a Support Network

God's Word is sufficient to show me that as a saved child of God, I have a much bigger *support network* than I may have realized.

When we are in the midst of trial, heartache, or crisis of any kind, it is very easy to feel overwhelmed by our circumstances. These circumstances tend to *loom large* in our thinking. It is at that point we need to allow ourselves to be informed by the living and abiding Word of God. For both the Holy Spirit and our Savior are interceding for us:

... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Romans 8:26

Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Romans 8:34

Of course, both the Son and the Spirit are interceding *for us* with the Father! Do you suppose the Father hears when the Spirit and Son intercede? How could it ever be otherwise?

But there is more! The Father and Son are also looking to graciously provide.

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

Romans 8:31-32

Then, as a final *refuge* in which we can always take shelter, we are loved by an infinite source from which nothing can separate us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

Think of it—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are *for us*! It doesn't really matter who or what is against us. And, none of this has an expiration date! Perhaps it will no longer be necessary when we are face-to-face and in His presence but, in the meantime, we can count on Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all working on our behalf!



We Have Guarantees

An Eternal Home. God's Word is sufficient to make clear to me that right now, not subject to change or revocation, I have a guarantee of an eternal home:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am."

John 14:1-3

Is there anything about the language in this scripture that is unclear? Even more pertinent to our subject, is there anything in the language that makes it conditional upon my not feeling depressed, anxious, or worried? Not even a hint! The only thing that would appear to be unknown is the answer to the question: "Am I going to Him before He comes for me?"



A Resurrection Body. We are also guaranteed a resurrection body as well as an eternal home:

... our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.

Philippians 3:20-21

We don't know the specifics of what this body will be like, but one thing we do know: It is going to be just like the glorious resurrection body of our Savior.

An Inheritance. It's on reserve in heaven and so can never be lost:

In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

I

Peter 1:3-5

Eternity with Jesus.

For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

Whether we die and our souls come into the presence of the Lord (II Corinthians 5:8), or we are still alive when He comes for us, either way we will be with the Lord forever! It is no wonder the very next words in the text are: *Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

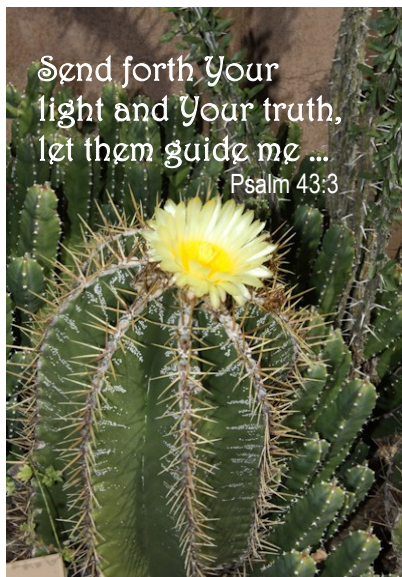
Can depression, disappointment, cancer, mayhem, evil ... touch any of these guarantees? Of course not! Do you see what we have? Our *living hope* will provide confidence in the midst of any or all of those things which come against us! And, only God's Word is sufficient to provide the details of what is ours in Christ.

Allow me to add a verse of Scripture to our theme:

Send forth Your light and Your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to Your holy Mountain, to the place where You dwell.

Psalms 43:3

Is the psalmist asking for two things—*light and truth*?



Send forth Your
light and Your truth,
let them guide me ...

Psalm 43:3

Let me suggest that light and truth are one and the same. For he desires, as should we, the truth from our God and the illumination of that truth in our souls.

It is the truth of our *living hope* that allows us to come right into the very throne room of God in the midst of whatever challenges this world brings our way. For the child of God, this *living hope* is so clearly pro-

claimed in God's Word that it is a sufficiency we dare not try to live without.

For those who do not yet have this *hope*, it is available for every human being who will recognize their helpless and hopeless condition and put their faith in the Blessed Redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ. He offers this *hope* as a free gift, along with eternal life, to all those who will receive it by faith. What a Savior is Jesus our Lord!

Sufficient to Redeem!

I am particular in how I am using the word *sufficient* as it relates to redemption. To be precise, God's Word is *Sufficient to Redeem*:

In that it provides all that we need to know about how lost and desperately needy individuals can escape Satan's dominion and the consequences of their rebellious condition, and become a part of the family of God—including the possession of a Living Hope!

Now, before we turn to the *sufficient* Word of God to see what it has to say about redemption, let me show you something I find both interesting and noteworthy that is going on, not only in the USA, but on a nearly world-wide basis. It is something that is very much related to our investigation of redemption.

First, what do you make of Bible sales? Book sales and church attendance are down, but Bible sales are up.

Bible sales in the U.S. have increased by 22% in 2024 compared to the previous year, driven by factors such as a search for solace amid anxiety, new marketing strategies, and a rise in first-time buyers. This trend is notable despite a general decline in church attendance and overall book sales. The Wall Street Journal

Second, consider these headlines that are even more perplexing:

"I Took Religion Out of Christmas. I Regret it."

"I'm a New Kind of Christian ..."

"How Intellectuals Found God."

Before We Get Too Excited

Allow me to show you a few things about the trends in the largely secular world around us. First, let me ask a few questions:

- Is the human race going to find its way to a glorious spiritual enlightenment?

But mark this, there will be terrible times in the last days.

II Timothy 3:1

It would seem not.

- Do intellectuals and celebrities determine the validity of the Gospel? Of course not!

But the issue remains, what is going on in the world around us, and how excited should we be?

The short answer is: I think we should be very excited that the world is *looking*, but definitely not get lulled into thinking they have found the Redeemer! Let me suggest that the phenomena we are seeing can be understood as *Trying to Fill the Void*. The need to do so fairly shouts from the pages of the article by the author who regretted taking religion out of Christmas because she feels her children missed out.

These are experiences that my own children, who are now 21 and 25, never had. Their father and I are atheists who, without debate, raised them entirely without religion. At Christmas, we still did the tree and the lights and the presents—all the secular parts of the holiday—and my kids knew the Christmas story,



the way they knew about Greek myths. But there were no religious symbols in our home, and no going to church. In recent years, I've begun to regret this ... there were problems with secular Christmas, and they got worse every year ... My generation had the best of both worlds. We played in the crumbling remains of Christian traditions without realizing how much structure and beauty they gave us. I'm still an atheist, but I've come to believe that taking religion out of my children's Christmas was a mistake. They never really witnessed the celebration of a miracle that goes back two thousand years. They didn't have a nativity set, even though I loved mine, because when you scrub God from your holiday celebration, it's strange to give your kids a tiny baby Jesus to play with. Isn't it? To today's young atheist families building their annual rituals, I offer this advice: It's okay if you don't believe in God. Go to the Christmas Eve service anyway. Learn the carols, even the religious ones. Get the nativity set.

L. Phillips

Perhaps you can see why I am more likely to cry than be encouraged when I read *"I'm still an atheist ... its okay if you don't believe ... go to the service, learn the carols anyway ..."* Pascal said,

There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.

The disenfranchised unbeliever who wrote about her regret, thinks that carols and a nativity set she fondly remembers will solve her problem. Is that true? I say it kindly and with compassion for such families, this solution is nowhere near

Sufficient to Redeem!

Let's move from a mother looking to *fill the void* to the voices of two well-known intellectuals:

... you can't organize a society on the basis of atheism ... It's fine for a small group of people to say, "We're atheist, we're opting out," ... but, in effect, that depends on everyone else carrying on. If everyone else says, "We're out," you quickly descend into a maelstrom like Raskolnikov's nightmare ... a world consumed by nihilism and atomism tearing itself apart ... The fascinating thing about the nightmare is that it reads, to anyone who has been through the twentieth century, like a kind of prophecy.

N. Ferguson

I'm a cultural Christian ... I sort of feel at home in the Christian ethos, I feel that we are a Christian country in that sense ... I'm "happy" with the number of Christians declining in Britain. ... but nevertheless think that Christianity is a good thing, that Christianity would benefit the world if more people believed it, that Christianity might be the sort of basis for a lot of what's good about Western civilization.

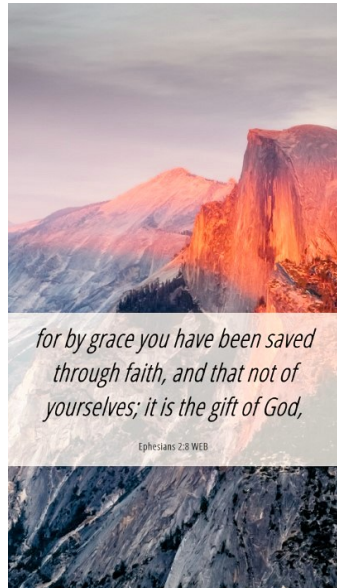
Dawkins

Ferguson is a gifted observer of history, but I must admit I was absolutely shocked by the comments of Richard Dawkins. As a preacher of the Gospel, Dawkins has been a personal nemesis for more than 30 years. In the realm of science, he has done more to damage the faith of college-aged Christians and more to turn young people into skeptics than any other individual I can think of. And, here he is saying:

I'm a cultural Christian ... I sort of feel at home in the Christian ethos ... Christianity is a good thing ...

Balderdash! I'll tell you what has happened in the past few years: Intellectuals have looked into the abyss of what they have created and they don't like what they see! They have reached the point in their lives where they prefer an ethical and moral world based upon the ethos of Christianity, rather than one based upon anarchy, gratification of self, and the pursuit of power. They have realized that Christianity holds their world together and gives them what they prefer—but is that sufficient to redeem? I think not!

There is actually a lot more of this type of thing in the media, and perhaps there are some cases of actual conversions. But thus far, we have in no way found that which is sufficient to redeem! So, why did I spend time on this? I want to reinforce my original point—the Word of God is *Sufficient to Redeem*. It is not one thing among many, it is the only thing sufficient to redeem a life!



I don't care how persuasive may be what the world has to say, or how much star power is used to say it. As soon as we deviate from the sufficiency of God's redemption centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ, we no longer have a redemption that will save for all eternity. Don't risk your eternity on anything but that which we know for sure is sufficient to save!

How to Respond

Let me give you a few suggestions on how you should respond to the *Conversion Buzz*.

First, it is a good thing that, at least for the moment, spiritual things are much less of a taboo subject. That makes opening a spiritual discussion easier.

Second, as the pastor of a fellowship of believers who believe God's Word to be *sufficient for all matters of faith and practice*, I want to be as clear as I can be that I see potential opportunity here and, of course, I can see the potential danger:

- It offers us an opportunity. Pray that this spiritual openness trickles down to your extended family and the street on which you live. Then, be ready to share a clear Gospel message!
- In terms of the danger, we dare not take conversions reported by the *media* at face value. For the salvation of the lost is not something that I determine, a church determines, or even the individual determines. Only God is the final arbiter of who is saved and who is not! When there is disagreement, the result is ruinous!

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 7:21

This is the key issue right here. For the will of the Father starts with one very particular thing, and that is to believe in the One whom the Father sent—the Lord Jesus Christ! (John 6:28-29) If this has not occurred, two verses later the passage tells us exactly what Jesus is going to say!

“I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Matthew 7:23

- We dare not present Christianity as something to be believed if it is endorsed by celebrities and rejected if it is not.

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ... But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

I Corinthians 1:20, 27-29

As you can see God doesn't think much of those considered to be the *movers and shakers* of our day. It is the *foolish* who have seen their need and trusted Christ for eternal life who are going to be used by God. We dare not let the world's messaging contaminate the Gospel that alone has the power to save.

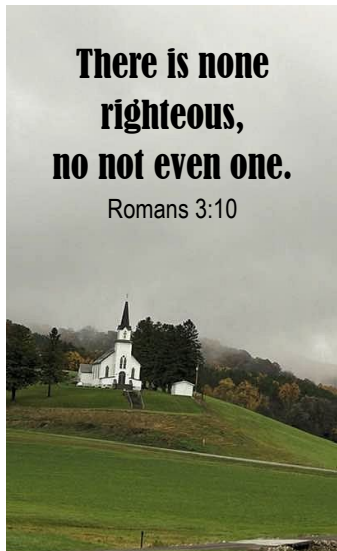
What About Redemption

By now you should very much want to know the answer to the following: *If God's Word is Sufficient to Redeem, then what does it have to say about redemption?* We are going to break it into parts.

Preparation to Believe the Gospel

I am using the word *preparation* to address the issue that each of us needs to come to grips with the bad news

about ourselves, before we are ready to embrace God's *Good News!* Of course, the Scriptures are more than *sufficient* to document the bad news which includes the following:



**There is none
righteous,
no not even one.**

Romans 3:10

**There is none righteous, no,
not even one.** Romans 3:10

... you were dead in your trespasses and sins ... Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:1,3

"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the One I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." John 8:24

Put these verses together and what do you have? Every single human being is born *dead in trespasses and sins*. Even before we start to commit sins, we have Adam's sin imputed to our account (Romans 5:12-19), and a nature bent on sin (Romans 7:18). It is for this reason that none of us will ever be able to claim a righteousness before God that is adequate to avoid judgment. If something doesn't change before we step out of this life into what is next, we will die in our sin—and that can only lead to an eternity in the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:15)

The Gospel of Christ - the One Message that has the Power to Save!

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ...

Romans 1:16

So, we have reached the crux of this section: I have made the claim that God's Word is *Sufficient to Redeem*.

We need to be redeemed because we are all in the *slave market of sin*; and the Gospel of Christ can do it—for it alone has the power to save! But what is the Gospel? Does the all-sufficient Word of God give us the details? It does! They are far more than we have room for in this little publication, so let me break it down to what I believe the Scriptures teach as the *irreducible minimum*.

That simply means: Here is the Gospel as simple as the Scriptures can make it! If you respond to it, you are of the redeemed! If you take any part of it away, you no longer have a Gospel sufficient to save! If you have follow-up questions, no problem, for the Scriptures are sufficient to answer those as well.

The Irreducible Minimum

The Gospel that has the power to save contains these three things:

1. **The Right Person!** That would be the Lord Jesus Christ. He is *the eternal Word who became flesh and dwelt among us*. (John 1:1, 14) He is:

... the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being ... Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity ...

Hebrew 1:3, 2:14

In short, Jesus is the eternally existent second person of the Trinity who, at the First Advent, added humanity to His eternal deity. He came to be the Savior who took away the sins of the world. (John 1:29)

2. **The Right Work!** Jesus tells us right up front the work He came to do!

"I did not come to judge the world, but to save it."

John 12:47

The Scriptures also tell us how He *saved it*—the *work* of salvation:

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree ...

I Peter 2:24

... He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him ...

Isaiah 53:5

For the wages of sin is death ...

Romans 6:23

“It is finished.” (Paid in full!)

John 19:30

These verses tell the story:

- The Father placed our sins upon Christ.

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us ...

II Corinthians 5:21

- While bearing our sin, the wrath of God was out-poured upon Him in judgment.

The wages of sin is death and Jesus paid them. He left no doubt about it with His final declaration that the work was finished—our sin debt was paid in full! Be very, very careful to note that the ones in desperate need of redemption have not lifted even a finger to help. We are completely unable to add anything to the *Right Work* accomplished by our Savior.



3. **The Right Response!** This is where we play our part—and we should really want to know—how does one obtain the salvation that Jesus came to provide? The question has already been asked and answered:

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved ...”

Acts 16:30-31

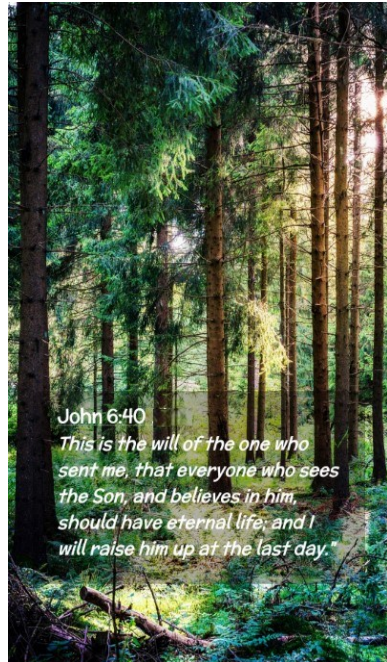
There is only one thing that a lost person is able to do in order to avail himself of God's gift of salvation—believe in the *Right Person* and *the Right Work*! We are not involved—just Jesus. There is no work for us to do—for Jesus has done it all. Ours is simply to receive by faith what God has so richly in grace provided:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

If the simplicity of this is hard for you to grasp, allow me to share another portion of Scripture with you.

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Romans 9:30-31



I wanted to draw your attention to this scripture because it points out something very instructive with respect to our redemption—something God's Word wants to make perfectly clear. There is a *stumbling stone*, which can keep us from receiving the blessing that God has provided. Specifically, if you pursue a righteousness that will be acceptable to God by works, you will never achieve it. If you can't do it under God's perfect Law, you can't do it

by keeping any other *system* either. On the other hand if you trust in the *Right Person* and the *Right Work*, then God will share His righteousness with you. (Romans 3:22) There is no other way to obtain a share in His righteousness and His life than faith alone in Christ alone!

Can We Know for Sure

I have made the claim that the Word of God is *sufficient to redeem*. Then I showed you God's plan of redemption centered in His Son as well as the means by which each and every one of us can be redeemed out of Satan's dominion and into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. At just this point, we have one more thing we should address: Can we know for sure, that we have actually been redeemed and that our eternal destiny is a settled matter? The Bible is *sufficient* to answer these most important of questions as well.

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

He who has the Son has life ...

I John 5:11-12

Eternal life is in the Son! So, if we have the Son, then we fundamentally have life! Of course that leads to a follow-up question, "*How can we know for sure whether or not we have the Son?*" As should become a habit—turn to the Scriptures for the answers to all of life's most important questions:

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I John 5:13

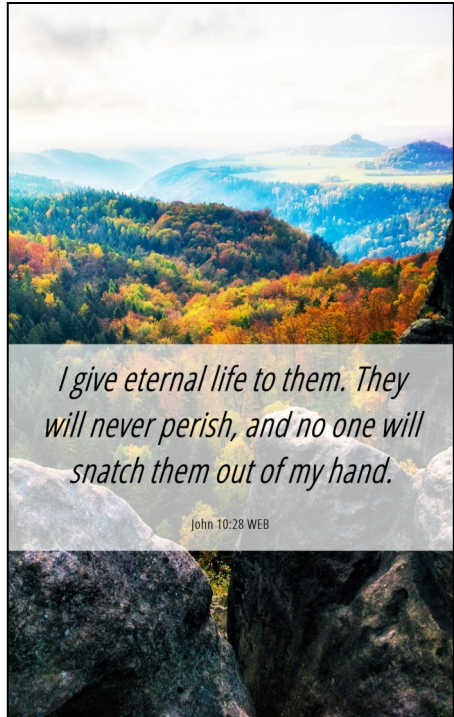
If we have the Son, we have life! But, how do we know if we have the Son? The answer is: Have we believed in His name? This is a very simple question for each and every one of us to answer. The *name* of someone in the ancient world was the essence of who they were or what they had accomplished. So the single most important

question for every member of the human race is this: *Have you believed in the Right Person and Right Work ... have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He accomplished at the cross?* Yes or no? If you have, then you have eternal life, and you are to know so! If you have not, what are you waiting for? You have all the information you need! I implore you, be reconciled to God through His Son—by faith alone in the Son alone! By the way, having a *know-so* salvation is most certainly a necessary part of having a *living hope*!

Truly, God's Word is *Sufficient to Redeem*! And, right at this moment, I feel it is especially important to bring this to your attention. If the

lost people in our periphery become disenfranchised with what the world has to offer and open themselves to spiritual things, the message we share must be sufficient to redeem! Half measures will not do!

Where are we going to get such a message? You will not get it from the world—not even its best and brightest! Understand that pulling back from the consequences of sin is not sufficient to save. Dissatisfaction with depravity is not sufficient to save. Even espousing Christian virtue, apart from the cross, is not sufficient to save. It is simply not enough to change from the *immoral lane*



to the *moral lane* if you are still on the *Broad Road* and headed to destruction! Only one thing will save—you need a Savior and a cross. The one requirement is the *Right Person* and the *Right Work*! Isn't that, once again, what the *all-sufficient* Word has to say?

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else but Jesus! Allow me to conclude this section with two thoughts:

1. Make sure that you personally are rightly related to God through faith in His Son. In other words, be sure that you are in the company of the *redeemed*!
2. Resolve in your own heart and mind that the Gospel of Christ is too perfect and too costly to compromise in any way! Witness to it every opportunity you have, resolve to know Jesus and Him crucified if you know anything at all. (I Corinthians 2:2)

And all God's people said, "Amen!"

Sufficient to Guide

I have tried to show you that the Word of God is *Sufficient* to provide a *Living Hope* like no other and to reveal the one way that lost mankind can be *redeemed*. I have one more thing on my mind to show you, and so once more we come back to our title:

God's Word is Sufficient:

To redeem!

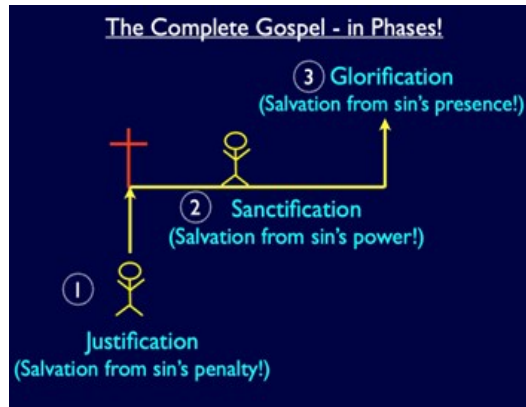
To guide!

To provide a living hope!

What remains to be covered is: God's Word is *sufficient to guide* in every aspect of our spiritual lives until we are safely home in His presence!

To begin, let me remind you of the three phases of our salvation as illustrated in the diagram.

1. We change our eternal destiny from one in the Lake of Fire to one in heaven as the result of believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ. At the moment we believe, we receive His life. We are also clothed with His righteousness and are now *Justified* before our holy God.

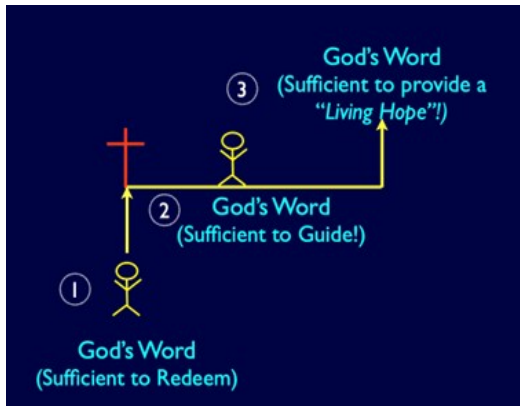


2. Then begins the process of *Sanctification: the setting apart of our lives unto God in terms of purity, priority, exclusivity, and service*. In the process of doing so, we become ever more conformed to the image and likeness of our Savior.
3. Lastly, we have our future *Glorification* as a confident expectation for the future. We will be clothed in a body like that of our Savior and completely free of sin's presence.

Now, in terms of God's Word, we can redo our diagram to align with what we have been learning.

1. At the point we are *Justified* we have also been *Redeemed*, and only God's Word is *sufficient* to reveal the way. Although we are meant to have a *Living Hope* in this life, its fulfillment will occur as part of our future glorification. And so, where does that leave us?

2. It leaves us with a need to be guided with respect to our *Sanctification*. For a newly-saved individual, sanctification is a huge undertaking! The child of God has



to learn how to separate from the old manner of life which was dominated by the flesh and walk in the new life. This new life is one that is meant to be guided and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

Of course, the goal of being conformed to the image and likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29) is, in and of itself, immensely challenging! How are we ever going to learn how to manage all of this? We need some kind of an instruction manual—a *how to* guide! Where do you suppose we could find such a thing? You should already know the answer! There is only one place suitable for the Christian who wishes to build his or her life upon a solid foundation—the solid rock of God's Word. Only God's Word is *Sufficient to Guide* to an outcome that is most certainly a supernatural undertaking.

Consider with me brand new believers in Jesus Christ. Such individuals are said to be *a new creation in Christ*. (II Corinthians 5:17) These new believers are blessed to be saved for all eternity. But in their very first day of engaging in the ongoing process of sanctification, what do they need? We have touched on the answer already, but let me break it down into its component parts.

What Every Christian Needs!

Let me suggest that all Christians need the following in order to live Christian lives. And, they need these things immediately following their faith in Christ.



1. They need something that is rock-solid and eternally unchanging.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever.

Isaiah 40:8

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

Psalms 119:89

2. They need something that is absolute rather than relative. They need fundamental and unchanging truth, as Jesus said:

"... Thy Word is truth."

John 17:17

3. They need something that is so practical it can meet the daily demands of the Christian Life—something that will guide, correct, bring them back when they go astray, and prepare them to act.

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16-17

4. And, they need something that is relational.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

John 14:23

When you look collectively at all of the above it becomes quite clear what our new believers need to do! They need to grab hold of the *all-sufficient* Word of God and

get into it every day. Of course, the world will try to guide new believers as well. They need to learn how to tune out the voice of the world and turn to that which alone is *sufficient* for all matters of faith and practice.

We dare not settle for that which is lesser than what God has so graciously provided.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

Our First Controversy

Let’s return to our brand new Christian, this precious child of God is going to face the same *controversy* over and over again for the remainder of the Christian Life: Will he or she come to the Word?

What controversy? I hope you are thinking: What is the controversy? I came across the use of this everyday term, used in a spiritual context, while reading the works of a theologian from the past century. I found it to be so helpful in my own spiritual life that I would like to share it with you. Here is how I define it for my own purposes, and I now intend to apply it for the rest of this publication.

The word “controversy” can be used very effectively to highlight the spiritual battle we will face on a daily basis. Specifically, will we trust God and His revelation to us, or will we trust something else? The word “controversy” highlights the fork-in-the road nature of the many, many choices that make up our spiritual lives. In short, what path will we choose—belief or unbelief? The goal is to settle this controversy every single time in favor of trusting God’s revelation to us—the all-sufficient Word of God. And, we must never forget this will be a life-long issue!

To illustrate the use of *controversy* with respect to our spiritual lives, let's leave our new Christian for a moment and go back to his or her salvation. Somewhere along the way all of us have to grasp the truth that we are sinners in need of a Savior—and Jesus is that Savior. And so we come face-to-face with the *controversy* laid out so clearly for us in John 3:36.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

John 3:36



Do you see the nature of the *controversy*? Will I trust Christ for eternal life, or will I turn to something else like trying to live a life good enough to earn God's approval, or perhaps even rejecting the idea of an after-life altogether? After I heard a clear presentation of the Gospel for the first time at age 20, I lived with this controversy for six months. I thought about it, asked questions, studied the Bible. All the while I was wrestling with an internal *controversy*.

I finally reached the point of *no controversy* by placing my faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ! Have you realized that every human being will settle this *controversy* one way or the other—and life or wrath will inevitably follow?

Will I Come to the Word? That brings us back to the first spiritual *controversy* for every new believer. Let me state it as follows:

In what or whom am I going to trust as I navigate my life as a Christian?

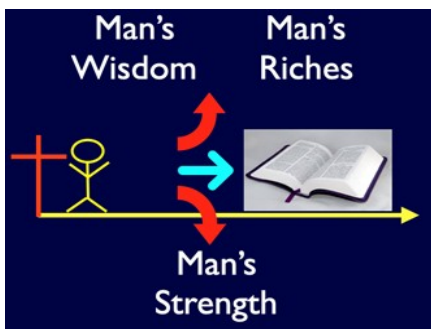
Now, as long as we don't realize the nature of this *controversy*, every *new creation* in Christ is going to naturally

default to those very same things we have trusted in all our lives—things like our own wisdom, the counsel of others, or financial resources. As new Christians, we must be taught right away to look to the all-sufficient Word of God. The Word cautions us on this very thing:

This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord ...”

Jeremiah 9:23-24

So, now you see the first *controversy* for the new believer:



Will I turn to that which I find in myself or in the world? Or, instead, will I:

Set [my mind] on things above, not on earthly things?

Colossians 3:2

Will I choose to have the *Word of Christ dwell richly within?* (Colossians

3:16) Will I walk by faith in God's all-sufficient Word, or will I place my trust elsewhere?

The first controversy then is: Will I turn to the Word of God for all matters of faith and practice, or will I turn away in unbelief?

Our New Spiritual Nature

Now, we have several other controversies to settle, but before we do, we need to understand something that occurred as part of our regeneration and right along with our becoming a child of God with a new heavenly home. This is something we would have no way of knowing about if it wasn't spelled out in God's Word, and far too many Christians are unaware.

Allow me to walk you through it.

1. Jesus is quite clear:

"I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." John 3:6

To be qualified for heaven we must be born again, and the kind of birth of which Jesus is speaking is a spiritual one!

2. As lost individuals, you and I consisted of a physical body and an immaterial soul. Thus, the highest plane on which we could operate was the passions of the soul.

"And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'"
But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" Luke 12:19-20

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28

3. But once we are redeemed, we become *tripartite*. That just means *three-parts*. The three parts are body, soul, and spirit. This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but a human spirit which is the result of our spiritual regeneration. Consider Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian believers:

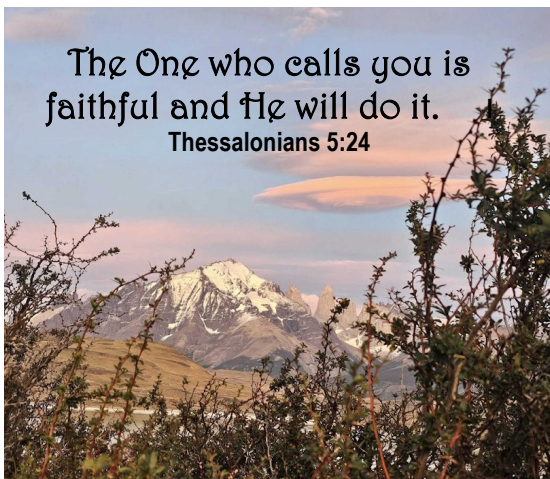
May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it. I Thessalonians 5:23-24

Although the *rich fool* had nothing but body and soul, the child of God is now body, soul, and spirit. You can see how Jesus addresses this same need for those who will truly worship during His conversation with the Samaritan woman:

“... true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.”

John 4:23

4. Our human spirit is what allows us to understand the truths of God’s Word, reason from a spiritual perspective, and make spiritual application. In other words, the Word of God is only *sufficient* to guide the born-again child of God, because only such a one has a human spirit ready to receive, understand, and apply the all-sufficient Word. Perhaps you can remember struggling to understand the Bible as an unbeliever. Now, you know why! As an unbeliever you did not have *the equipment*—a human spirit—to understand the spiritual content of God’s spiritual revelations.



5. Now the *born-again* individual is intended by God to be guided by the Word of God and influenced by the Holy Spirit—such a one is said to be a *spiritual man*. However, should we fall back into our old habits, we

become *fleshly*, or carnal. Paul was facing exactly this problem with the believers in the church in Corinth, as you can see in the following description:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

I Corinthians 3:1

As *babes in Christ*, Paul is most certainly speaking to a group of believers—but carnal ones! They have failed in the first *controversy* they have faced as new Christians—because as babes they have not grown. They need to confess their sin, get back into fellowship with God, and turn to His Word which alone is *Sufficient to Guide!* The quality of our Christian lives depend upon it, and there is only one place we can find the guidance we need. See if that isn't exactly what the following says:

But as it is written:

**“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
nor have entered into the heart of man
the things which God has prepared
for those who love Him.” ...**

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

I Corinthians 2:9-16

The *natural man*—the unbeliever—is at a hopeless disadvantage when it comes to spiritual things. He simply

doesn't have the spiritual equipment to understand them. The children of God, on the other hand, have a human spirit to which the Holy Spirit can reveal the things of God:

"... The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
I Corinthians 2:9

This should cause us to once again stand back in awe of the Plan of God, and how He, in grace, has provided absolutely everything we need!

Our Second Controversy

The second controversy is: Will I believe the Word? I seek to settle this *controversy* in my study every single day! Let me diagram it for you, and then explain:

First, when we open the Word of God, our goal should be to know the *Living Word* (Jesus) that stands behind the *written*

Word. The Word of God is meant to be a medium of fellowship with our Savior. We see the relationship between the Lord Jesus and the Word in these two Bible instructions:



1. The Word of God is said to be *the mind of Christ*.
(I Corinthians 2:16)
2. We are to let the *Word of Christ dwell richly within!*
(Colossians 3:16)

Our daily devotionals are not a box to check off, but the means by which we can know the mind of Christ our Savior and grow into a deeper relationship with Him! Don't forsake your time with Him, instead give it your utmost attention!

Here is where our second *controversy* arises: The Word of God, and the Holy Spirit, will continually confront us with the truth. What we are going to do with that truth is the crux of the *controversy*! Will we believe it, or will we come up with all kinds of reasons to turn from it, which is to turn to unbelief? This very same *controversy* will have to be settled every time we open the Word of God or hear it taught!

As I mentioned, I seek to settle it in my study every single day. That is the primary place I interact with God's Word as I study, write, and prepare to teach. It is my battle-field, for wouldn't you agree that I need to first settle the truth I interact with by believing it before I ever seek to teach it?

Truth that is believed then resides in the human soul and spirit and is ready for application. It is ready to apply to the circumstances faced throughout the day. This is to settle our second controversy in favor of God's *all-sufficient Word*. All this seems good, but there is one more *controversy* to be settled!

Our Third Controversy

Our third controversy is whether we will apply the word. Allow me to show you my completed diagram and then



walk you through it. Our new believer has successfully navigated the Christian Life thus far: He or she has turned to the Word as *sufficient* for matters of faith and practice and has responded in faith to the truths learned on a daily basis.

But now we have arrived at applying the truths and promises of God's Word at the point they intersect with our daily lives. This is our daily challenge to *walk by faith*. When we come to each and every fork in the road, will the drama of circumstances, and our internal fears and desires, cause us to turn away in unbelief? Or, will we settle this *controversy* in the same way we always should—in favor of trusting God's *all-sufficient* revelation to us? God's word of caution is ever so clear:

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Hebrews 3:12

We turn away from the *living God* when we refuse to believe what His Word has to say. This is really to see the Word as insufficient to guide us through the challenges of this life.

What Does All of This Teach Us?

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we face three daily controversies!

1. Will we come to the Word of God to see what it has to say?
2. Will we choose to believe that truth that the Holy Spirit reveals to us?
3. Will we choose to walk by faith—applying what we know to be true from the Word at the point it intersects with our daily circumstances?

Then we do it all again the next day and the next!

My personal goal is to live without *controversy*! For me, that means seeking to address every situation in life in the light of God's *all-sufficient* Word. It also means guarding my heart so that it never turns away from my Savior in unbelief.

An Example. Let me show you a dramatic example of a man who settled the *controversy of faith* in favor of believing God's Word. In Mark Chapter 9, we have a desperate man bringing his demon-possessed son to the disciples, but they could not heal him. With hope nearly gone, the man says to Jesus:

"But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

Mark 9:22

Here is Jesus' reply:

**"If you can?" said Jesus.
"Everything is possible for him who believes."**

Mark 9:23

Jesus has already presented Himself as Israel's Messiah, and before He is willing to deal with the issue of the demon, there is another issue to settle first! "**If ...**", Jesus responds! Who do you think I am? As the Son of God and Savior, everything is possible for the one who comes to Me in faith! In essence, Jesus is asking the man to settle the controversy of who He is and what He is capable of doing.



Do you think I am stretching this? Look at how the man responds—he understood completely!

Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Mark 9:24

As soon as the man settles his internal in favor of faith in Jesus, the Lord is pleased to cast out the demon! I so much appreciate the man's response to Jesus as something I can bring into my own life as a personal prayer.

Every time the Word of God gets through to me, I seek to respond: *"I Believe!"* But then I am so quick to add, *"Lord, help me overcome my tendency to unbelief when I face the next challenge you bring my way."*

A Clear Understanding. By this point I trust that the following nuances have become clear: God's Word is *sufficient to guide* only to the extent that:

- We know the Word! For we cannot act upon what we do not know!
- We believe the Word! For we cannot apply what we have not believed!
- We develop skill in believing the Word in the face of trying circumstances! We are all going to fail. In fact, at this point in my Christian Life, I probably confess the sin of *unbelief* more than any other sin.

It is at this point that we begin to understand the *division of labor* that God has built into the Christian Life:

- It is the role of the Holy Spirit to bring truth to mind.
- It is our role to choose to trust that truth.
- Then it is the Holy Spirit's role to come alongside and enable ongoing trust—which is the fruit of the Spirit called faithfulness! (Galatians 5:22)

As Christians, we sometimes have the silly notion that we are called to *walk by faith*, but we just want to do so while avoiding any sort of trial or tribulation. That is neither life on this earth, nor the call for those who wish to be disciples (followers) of Jesus. Might I suggest the following as a better mindset:

Rather than an absence of trial or tribulation, the Christian's walk of faith is better understood to be an absence of controversy when it comes to believing and applying God's Word to our daily circumstances!

A Challenging Text

Let's turn our attention to this very challenging text:

... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

We are going to begin with the latter part of this verse:

... it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Understanding the Audience.

First, is this verse true regarding lost individuals?

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.

I Corinthians 2:14

The *natural man* is the unregenerate man and so, of course, God is not at work in such a one *to will and to do!*

Now consider whether this statement is true regarding the carnal Christian? How about the one out of fellowship as the result of sin? How about the untaught Christian?

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ ... there are envy, strife, and divisions among you ...

I Corinthians 3:1-3

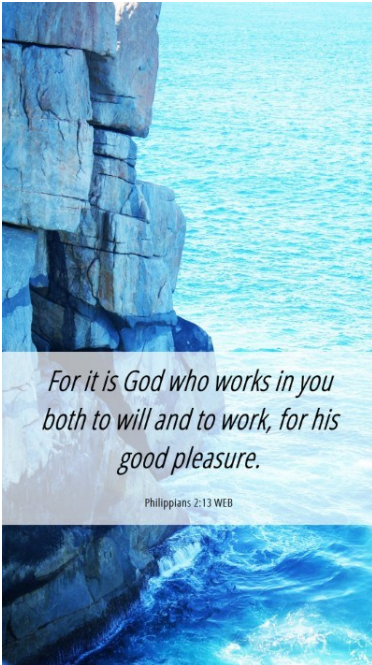
If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

I John 1:6

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:105

Those full of envy and strife, those walking in darkness, and those without the illuminating presence of God's Word are most certainly not displaying the works or having the thoughts of God! So once again, the answer to the question is a resounding, "No!"



*For it is God who works in you
both to will and to work, for his
good pleasure.*

Philippians 2:13 WEB

Then to whom does the verse apply? We have spent this entire booklet learning at least a part of the answer:

God is at work both to will and to do in the Christian who, without controversy, comes to the Word, believes what it says, and then applies it daily to the circumstances and demands of this life!

If we want God to be at work guiding both our thoughts and our actions, the *all-sufficient* Word of God is going to be our guide under

the administration of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way.

Understanding the Message

Does this seem to be an impossible burden? In other words, do you feel like you have been given the following orders?

- No controversy!
- No turning away in unbelief!
- Now get out there and perform!

This is neither the message of the Bible nor my intent.

Let me show you God's way:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness ... He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature ...

II Peter 1:3-4

You see, it is His power not ours. The resources we need to live the supernatural quality of life to which we are called do not come from us. They are all provided by our Lord!

Where do we find these great and precious promises? Why, of course, they are contained in the *all-sufficient Word of God*—over 7,000 of them.

Who *exhaled* the truth we can hold in our hands and then preserved it through the centuries? Why, our God did! (Matthew 24:35) Who teaches us the truth and brings to mind what we have learned in time of need? Why, the Holy Spirit does! (John 14:26) Finally, Who produces steadfast faith in our lives?

... the fruit of the Spirit is ... faithfulness ...

, Galatians 5:22



There is a very significant difference between faith and faithfulness, and the Holy Spirit plays a role in each.

The Spirit is our teacher of truth and is, therefore, the one who brings us to the point of faith. When we choose to believe, who has the power to perpetuate our faith, moment-by-moment, through difficult circumstances? It is the Spirit Who comes alongside and enables us to continue to trust—that is faithfulness. It is a fruit that only the Holy Spirit can produce in our lives!

Understanding the Challenge

Knowing and believing are ultimately the easier parts. Navigating daily circumstances by faith is the real challenge. Just ask the Israelites!

**Then they believed His promises and sang His praise.
But they soon forgot what He had done and did not
wait for His counsel.**

Psalm 106:12-13

This is the problem, so often repeated by God's people, that I am trying to help us avoid: starting well in belief and then turning to unbelief. The Israelites did it over and over again to their great detriment. I tried to challenge you on this by using the word *controversy* to highlight the importance for all of us to come to the Word, study it intently that we might believe what it has to say, and then, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, put it into practice. If we do, this can be the alternative picture:

But now we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

II Corinthians 3:18

As we steadfastly gaze upon the Lord in His Word, we will be transformed into that same image that is the object of our affections—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The more we become like this, the more we are transformed from glory to glory—one step at a time.

Who will do it? There we have the work of the Spirit once again. Our job is to steadfastly behold the Living Word as communicated in the written Word because that is what makes it *sufficient to guide!*

Then we must trust the Word of God and the Spirit of God to do their work in our lives!

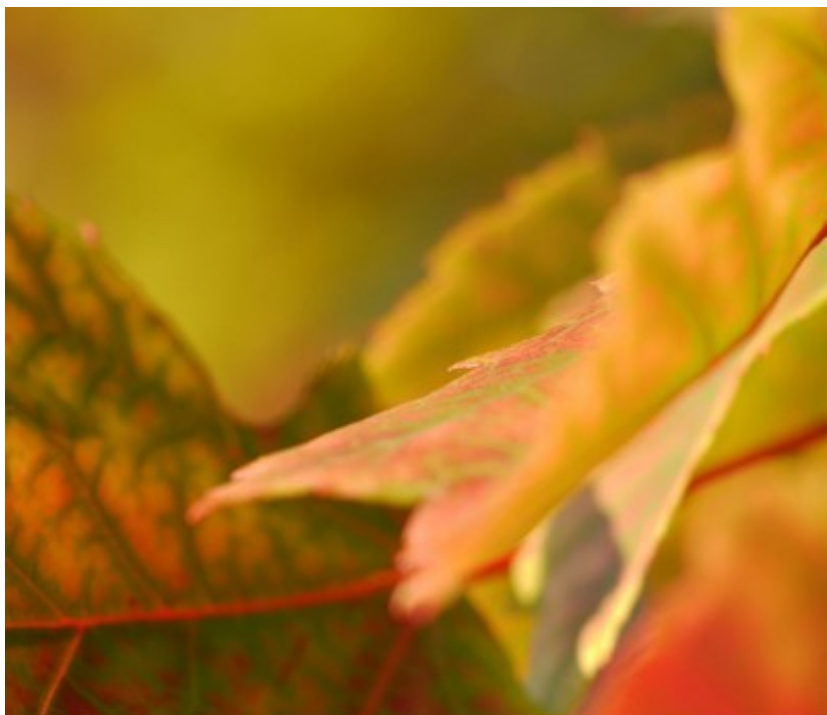
In Closing

So, in closing our brief study of the *Sufficiency of God's Word*, know that:

- It is *sufficient to redeem* by revealing to us the *Right Person, the Right Work*, and the only *Right Response* acceptable to God.
- It is *sufficient to guide* us in the process of sanctification that we would progressively be conformed to the image and likeness of our Savior.
- It is *sufficient to provide a Living Hope* such that we have a confident expectation of eternal life in a new resurrection body, dwelling with the Son in the Father's house, and in possession of a glorious inheritance.

What a wonderful thing it is to be the people of God, to be able to hold his *all-sufficient Word* in our hands!

And, all God's people said, "Amen!"



*But we all, with unveiled face beholding as
in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are
transformed into the same image from glory
to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 WEB





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