

## Entrusted With the Oracles of God

by Hendrik Joubert

In the opening chapter of the letter to the **Romans** God declares the guilt of the non-Jew, a fact which must have pleased the Jewish audience. However, in the next chapter God states the case against His people of the Old Testament, implying the conclusion stated in chapter **3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

From the Jewish standpoint this was somewhat puzzling; if they are no better than the non-Jews, **Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? (Romans 3:1)** The answer to this question now applies to all of mankind: **Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. (Romans 3:1-2)**

Seeking the approval of the Most Holy Creator of the universe must be the highest priority of every person. (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**) The wonderful fact is that we do not have to stumble around in relative darkness as we search for God, He revealed Himself to us and entrusted us with the instructions on how to please Him. **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2Timothy 3:16-17)**

The context in which this comprehensive statement concerning the Bible is found further confirms its all sufficiency. Paul has just described the sinful digression of society (**2Timothy 3:13**) when he supplies Timothy with this solution for those who would refrain from following suit: **You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2Timothy 3:14-15)**

The Scriptures are supplied so that believers may assist one another in the effort to please God. This requires what is considered the negative and unpleasant duties of correcting and reproving one another by pointing out God's requirements, judging righteous judgment (**John 7:24**), while refraining from frivolous interpersonal judgment where one rather focuses on the splinter in the eye of another than the log in his own eye. (**Matthew 7:1-5**)

Those who oppose the completeness stated here argue that when the statement was made only the Old Testament Scriptures were available. Jesus said to the Jews of His day: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;... (**John 5:39**) If they had followed the Old Testament, it would have brought them to the New to be revealed through the apostles and prophets. (Ephesians 3:1-7) Notice that the statement in **2Timothy 3:16-17** includes all Scripture *inspired by God*, and then look at what Peter writes concerning the writings of Paul: **...and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup> as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2Peter 3:15-16)**

Paul wrote with ***the wisdom given him – inspired by God***. These letters contains some things hard to understand, and those who are not taught in the scriptures and those who are of such character as Paul described in 2Timothy 3, would distort what Paul wrote, causing them to incur ultimate rejection. One only has to read **1Corinthians 1:17-31** to realize that ***hard to understand*** is not as much intellectual as it is a matter of faith. The people of His day found it hard to understand Jesus' teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage – **Matthew 19:3-12** – the Lord acknowledging that ***not everyone can accept this statement...*** Many stumble over the teaching concerning baptism as a necessary step toward salvation. (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-3**)

When Paul writes to the Ephesians he explains his role in God's revelation of His New Covenant by which we as non-Jews may be ***fellow heirs and fellow members of His body*** (3:6): ***...that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. <sup>4</sup> By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;...*** (Ephesians 3:3-5)

The interesting fact is the statement: ***...when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ...***" Making His revelation available in written form places before every reader an objective source for establishing the will of God. Those who find in it things hard to understand will subject it to interpretation resulting in a distortion, and their own destruction. Notice the insistent appeal to trust only the written source as Paul writes: ***Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.*** (1Corinthians 4:6)

***For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*** (Hebrews 4:12) The Bible will address even our most private thoughts and feelings. When these disagree with the word of God, it is obvious which source we are to trust. Being entrusted with the oracles of God brings with it the extreme responsibility to treat it with the respect it deserves, or suffer the consequences.