

## **“THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD”**

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Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

*“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” (2 Timothy 3:16-17); “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” (2 Peter 1:21).*

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible is God’s Word to us, not a collection of books written by men expressing their thoughts and ideas about God. That’s what the Bible claims about itself, as we learn in the two passages above. For this reason, the verbal inspiration (that God gave His chosen writers the thoughts and words they wrote) and inerrancy (that the Bible is God’s Word and truth, without error) of Scripture are fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Belief that the Bible is the Word of God, not men’s words about God, goes hand in hand with being a Christian. In fact, the historic Christian Church has always maintained that if you do not believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, you cannot be a Christian.

Of course, such a claim does not bode well in our “have it your way,” postmodern society today. Since the so-called Age of Enlightenment (roughly dated from 1650 to 1789), we have witnessed a major shift in Western thought in which human reason has been exalted to a place of authority over Scripture. Enlightenment thinkers not only questioned the authority of Scripture, but actually rejected it. They claimed that human beings had the ability in and of themselves to determine what is true and what is false. Human beings no longer needed the Bible to tell them anything, for they could now determine all things for themselves. Those Christians who refused to embrace the new thinking of the Enlightenment and continued to stubbornly cling to the Word of God as the sole source of authority were labeled irrational and superstitious. After all, no rational, “enlightened” human being would believe that God created the universe in six literal days, Jonah was swallowed by a big fish and survived, and Jesus is God incarnate, was born of a virgin, and resurrected from the dead. These, and all other miraculous claims made in the Bible, were said to be nothing more than fairy tales made up by the men who wrote the Bible in the attempt to substantiate their absurd beliefs. Thomas Paine, in his *Age of Reason* (1794), sums up Enlightenment thinking, *“I do not believe in the creeds professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, not by any Church I know of. My mind is my own Church.”*

My mind is my own Church. No one is going to tell me what to believe. I will believe what I choose to believe. I do not need the Bible or a Church to tell me what to believe about God. I can determine for myself whether or not there is a God and what he, she, or it is like. Such is the content of the Enlightenment mindset and it still thrives today in our postmodern world in which we are told that the only thing that is absolutely true is that there is no absolute truth (an oxymoron if there ever was one!).

In complete and utter contrast to Enlightenment and postmodern thought, we Christians know and believe that there is absolute truth. And, that absolute truth is revealed to us in the inspired and inerrant Word of God. That absolute truth is this, in a nutshell: We are sinners who completely lack the ability to know God or save ourselves. But, He has revealed Himself to us in the Bible, His Holy Word, in which He tells us that He has saved us by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to live the perfect life we cannot live and to die on the cross for our sins. It is only through faith in Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6), that we are saved, and it is only through God’s Word that we are brought to that saving faith. This is what the Christian Church has always confessed and it is most certainly true!

In Christ,

Rev. Thomas C. Messer, Pastor

Peace Lutheran Church ~ Alma, MI

[www.peacealma.org](http://www.peacealma.org) ~ (989) 463-5754

You may contact Pastor Messer by calling the church or by email: [pastor@peacealma.org](mailto:pastor@peacealma.org)