

Romans 15:4 (KJV)

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Paul wrote Timothy in **2 Tim. 3:15 (KJV)** *And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Then, he goes on to say **2 Tim. 3:16-17 (KJV)** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

One of the first acts of the English Reformation was to place a Bible, to place a copy of Holy Scripture in each parish in the realm. From that time our practice, as Anglican Christians, is to balance the word and the sacraments.

Again, let me remind you of Article VI of the Articles of Faith. *Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation. Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*

We, as Anglican Christians, are Bible based Christians. We hold to the centrality of Holy Scripture in our belief system, in our core belief. We do not accept anything that cannot be proved by Holy Scripture and we do not reject anything that is contained in

Holy Scripture.

Someone the other day, one of our priests, was telling me about a young priest in another kind of church parish who refuted the Gospel story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead as merely a story, not the truth.

We are here today as members of the Anglican Province of America because the persons that formed our original congregations left the Episcopal Church over a Bishop that rejected the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, and who was not censured for this heresy by the church.

Today, we are faced with a society that is at best nonreligious and is oftentimes anti-religious, a society who has no concept of the moral yardstick provided by the Bible.

Today, also, we are faced with an even more dangerous situation speaking in a spiritual sense. We are faced with many of those of the mainline denominations that reject Holy Scripture as merely a myth to justify Christianity or even worse than that claim to follow Biblical teachings but picking and choosing which passages to use.

Jean Mabillion wrote in the 17th Century, *The spirit in which Scriptures should be read: search first to know God and the mysteries of our religion, and to know oneself; and to understand the ways to travel to God...*

Jeremy Taylor, the English theologian also wrote in the 17th Century, *Set apart some portion of thy time, according to the opportunities of thy calling and necessary employment, for the reading of Holy Scripture; and if it be possible, every day read or hear some of it read.*

We are given this gift from God, the story of our salvation from the beginning of time through the atoning acts of Jesus Christ to the anticipation of the return of our Lord.

It is all there and it is all there for a purpose: to get us ready for eternal life with God.

Paul relating what had happened to those who practiced immorality against the laws of God and were destroyed says, *1 Cor. 10:11 (ESV) Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

We have to read Holy Scripture. We have to read our Bibles. And we have to read our Bibles on a regular basis, systematically and thoroughly, not just reading and rereading those passages of scripture that make us feel warm and fuzzy.

A good way to do that is to read the outlined daily office readings in the Prayer Book. You get both the meat and the gravy that way.

Jesus is coming back. During this season of Advent we are particularly reminded of that fact but it is still a fact anytime in the year. Jesus is coming back as we heard from today's Gospel. *Luke 21:25-28 (KJV) And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ²⁷And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

Jesus is coming back. The way to be prepared is in Holy Scripture; in the Word and in the breaking of bread. Jesus is coming back. Will you be ready?

Amen.