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EFCA Statement of Faith 2, The Bible

In this paper I will examine the biblical support of the statements made in Article 2 about the Bible from the 2008 ECFA Statement of Faith. I will look closely at this three sentence statement phrase by phrase, looking at Biblical support for each one as reflected in the Statement of Faith with Scripture references document from June 26, 2008. After examining the Scriptures to see if these things are so, I will reflect on how these verses and concepts impact me.

First of all, this article states that faith holds to God speaking in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. In Matt. 1:22 we are told how God spoke through OT prophets, in this case to reveal Jesus Christ's birth. His word is meant to frame how we live because it comes from God's own mouth (Matt. 4:4). Attestation to the OT being applicable is seen in Matt. 19:4-5, where the Genesis account of the creation of man and woman is reiterated as truth. We also are told that God's word is in both the OT and NT (Jesus' words) in the first two verses of Hebrews. The fact that NT books are Scriptures as much as the OT ones is seen in 2 Pet. 3:15-16, where Paul's letters are equated with "the other Scriptures," which was the OT at that time.

Secondly, the Article speaks of faith in the Scriptures coming through human authors, as Luke 1:1-4 tells us, speaking of the gospels coming from "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us." Those who were with Jesus and heard His words, and those who ministered His words to others were used to write them down, becoming authoritative Scripture.

The third part of this Article on the Bible articulates that the Bible is the verbally inspired word of God – God Himself moved men to write the words that He gave them to put to page. We read that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (2 Tim. 3:16, ESV)." God-breathed (θεόπνευστος, G2314) is a compound word from 'God' and 'breathe out' that implies divine inspiration lies behind each word of the Bible. 2 Peter 1:20-21 goes on to tell us that Scripture comes as God speaks by His will His Spirit in those who spoke or wrote it down. This gives us assurance that the Bible is not man's invention, and that God ensured that His message was completely and accurately given.

Along with the inspired source of the Bible, the fourth point is that the original writings in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are completely without error. God tells us that He does not lie, and that He will do all He said; all of His words which He chose to tell us are in the Bible, as Num. 23:19 shows, and they are all true and promised (2 Sam. 7:28). Since all the Bible is forever true and pure, we can trust it (Prov. 30:5), knowing it covers all areas of life (Ps. 119:96, 160). Nothing God has in His word will pass away as Matt. 5:18 shows, and John 10:35 emphasizes that Scripture cannot be broken (λύω, G3088 – annulled, broken, undone, dissolved). His word IS truth (John 17:17). Because the original autographs were completely accurate, textual criticism to determine the right copies of those to use is vital. My own stance is that the current basis for the UBS text based on a limited number of old extant NT autographs is not as justifiable as the Majority Text process which takes into account the Byzantine Text types as being both

older and with a majority consensus. English translations from those must then capture the original text in an accurate and literal method where good linguistic methods apply.

As to the fifth point which states the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for salvation, we find that Luke 16:29-31 addresses the fact that Jesus revealed – that Moses and the Prophets told us the way to God to be delivered from our sin. The revelation for salvation was hidden in the OT and the mystery revealed in the NT (Rom. 16:25-26). The Bible goes on to say in Gal. 1:8-9 that any message other than delivered through God’s word is a false hope of salvation. We need to follow Paul’s advice to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:15) to rely on salvation through faith from the Bible’s gospel message alone.

Coming to the sixth phrase in this Article, faith holds that the Bible is the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. We must look again at John 17:17 to understand that the Bible sanctifies us by its truth, and so we must look through its lens to judge all we know and do. We see in 2 Tim. 3:15-17 that the Bible makes us complete and fully equipped as it teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains us in righteousness. This incorruptible and eternal living Word is what gives us new life (1 Pet. 1:23) because it has the authority to give us understanding and direct all we do. We then find freedom in seeking and keeping His word (Ps. 119:44-45), as well as peace with God when we follow His word (Ps. 119:165).

The seventh part of this Article concludes that we must believe all the Bible teaches us based on what the previous six points about the Scriptures have covered. If we do not know what the Bible says, we miss understanding and living by the power of God (Mt. 22:29), and miss the hope from patience and comfort given to us by the Scriptures as Rom. 15:4 shows. We examined 2 Tim. 3:16 before, and need to remember that the Bible keeps us on track by its instruction; if we do not believe what it tells us, we cannot rely on it to profit us through teaching and correcting us to keep us on the path of sanctification.

Furthermore, the eighth part reminds us we must obey to the end all that the Bible demands of us as Matt. 28:20 says, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” If we do not obey God’s word, other believers should keep their distance to let us feel ashamed and do what God tells us (2 Thess. 3:14). But, “whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected (1 Jn. 2:5, ESV).”

The final point is that we must trust in all the Bible promises – this is faith by attitude and action. God promised all through His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:2), and so we must be fully convinced of His promises. He can and will do everything He says in the Bible (Heb. 10:23), and the great and precious promises allow us to be like Jesus (2 Pet. 1:4)! Let us look forward to the new creation where the righteousness God tells of will come to pass around us (2 Pet. 3:13).

What this means to me is that by faith in God’s word I can understand how to live to please Him. This reliability of the Bible should move me to dig into His Word, devour it, and find the joy in pleasing God by following Him through it (Jer. 15:16).