

# The Sufficiency of Scripture

Introduction:

Taken from an article in USA Today Dec. 18, 2008 entitled *Many Beliefs, Many Paths to Heaven*.

“Most American religious believers, including most Christians, say eternal life is not exclusively for those who accept Christ as their savior, a new survey finds.”

“Of the 65% of people who held this open view of heaven's gates, 80% named at least one non-Christian group — Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists or people with no religion at all — who may also be saved, according to a new survey released today by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.”

FAITH & REASON: A 'crisis' for evangelicals?

This means 52% of Christians do not agree with the doctrines many religions teach, particularly conservative denominations.

Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, calls the findings "a theological crisis for American evangelicals. They represent at best a misunderstanding of the Gospel and at worst a repudiation of the Gospel."

Christian believers who named at least one non-Christian faith that could lead to salvation included 34% of white evangelicals, even though evangelical doctrine stresses that salvation is possible only through Jesus.

Taken from an article in USA Today Dec. 18, 2008 entitled *Where is Christ in Christmas?*

"Christmas is being marginalized every day of the year, when pastors fail to preach who Christ really was," says Michael Horton, who blasts these trends in his new book, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*.

Christmas without the specter of the cross, without awareness that this is a baby born to die for mankind's sins, is a fancied-up fraud, says Horton, professor of theology and apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, and associate pastor at Christ United Reformed Church in Santee, Calif.

"Santa becomes a substitute for Christ. He'll give you presents whether you were good or

bad. It's hard to imagine Santa returning to judge the human race and consign anyone to hell. But that (judgment) is what Jesus came to save us from," says Horton, who tells his children Santa works for Jesus.

But other Christians say love, peace, good will and generosity are well worth celebrating.

"A lot of the Christmas celebration is a nostalgic veneer that doesn't really connect very deeply theologically," says Mary Helene Rosenbaum, head of Dovetail Institute for Interfaith Family Resources, based in Boston, Ky.

When she advises religiously mixed families, she finds what works best is pragmatic: Elevate the holiday trappings over doctrine.

"We really are becoming a secular society," she says. "When you ask people their religious identity, they're really talking about their sense of community and belonging," not wrestling with ideas about God.

I. The need for the appreciation of the sufficiency of Scripture is great.

A. People will be religious but not righteous.

2 Tim 3:1 (NIV) But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

2 Tim 3:2 (NIV) People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

2 Tim 3:3 (NIV) without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,

2 Tim 3:4 (NIV) treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--

2 Tim 3:5 (NIV) having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

B. People will oppose the Scriptures.

2 Tim 3:8 (NIV) Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth--men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected.

II. The basis of the sufficiency of Scripture is great.

A. The Scriptures are sufficient because they come from God.

2 Tim 3:14 (NIV) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

2 Tim 3:15 (NIV) and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 3:16 (NIV) All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

- B. The Scriptures are sufficient for addressing the issues of our day.

2 Tim 3:17 (NIV) so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### III. The application of the sufficiency of Scripture.

- A. We are to rely upon the Scriptures in our preaching, teaching and study.

2 Tim 4:1 (NIV) In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

2 Tim 4:2 (NIV) Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction.

- B. We are to rely upon the Scriptures in a time when others do not.

2 Tim 4:3 (NIV) For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

- C. We are to rely upon the Scriptures in a time when others reject the Scriptures.

2 Tim 4:4 (NIV) They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

2 Tim 4:5 (NIV) But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

- D. We are to continually rely upon and read the Scriptures.

1 Tim 4:13 (NASB) Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.