

## THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

*“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.”*

### Psalm 19:7

Just as God has attributes, so the Bible possesses certain defining qualities. Christians have often summarized these using the acronym **SCAN**: sufficiency, clarity, authority, and necessity. Together, these truths describe how God’s word functions in the life of his people.

**Sufficiency.** Scripture does not tell us everything about everything, but it tells us everything we need to know to be saved and to live faithfully before God. As Paul wrote, the sacred writings are able to make us “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). God has revealed his saving work fully and finally in Jesus Christ. The Gospels proclaim that work, and the apostles explain it in the rest of the New Testament. Because Christ’s redemption is complete, the revelation that bears witness to it is sufficient for our faith and life.

**Clarity.** The clarity, or perspicuity, of Scripture does not mean every passage is easy to understand. Some parts require careful study. But it does mean the Bible is understandable enough that ordinary people can grasp its message of salvation and live accordingly. God’s word is not hidden beyond our reach. It is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105).

**Authority.** Scripture carries the authority of God himself. When the Bible speaks, God speaks. Christians may learn from tradition, reason, and experience, but none of these stands above God’s word. The Bereans were praised because they examined the Scriptures carefully to see whether things were so (Acts 17:11). In matters of faith and practice, Scripture must have the final word.

**Necessity.** We cannot truly know God apart from what he has revealed. Human wisdom and observation cannot uncover the saving truth of the gospel. God must make himself known. The church is therefore built on the message delivered through the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20). Without God’s revealed word, we would not know the way of salvation.

*Which of these four aspects of Scripture—sufficiency, clarity, authority, or necessity—do you find most encouraging for your daily faith, and why?*