

Do We Need More?

The Bible does not record all that Jesus and his apostles said and did. The apostle John frankly admits that ‘Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book’ (John 20:30). Does this imply, as some argue, that the Bible is not sufficient, and that we need an additional source of revelation, namely Sacred Tradition?

I think it is crucial to make a very important distinction. We must not confuse ‘sufficient, enough, adequate, ample’ with ‘all, exhaustive, comprehensive’. Do we really need to know all that Jesus said and did, and all that the apostles taught and did? Even if God did provide us with that vast amount of data, could we handle the tsunami of information? If I’m thirsty, do I need to drink all the fresh water of the world? No, of course, not! A glass or two will be enough to satisfy my thirst.

Or, to give another illustration, when I diagnose a young boy with asthma, I spend time with the child and his parents to teach them about the condition, how to take the medicines, and what to do in case of an acute attack. I also give them an information booklet and a couple of good websites about childhood asthma. But I do not tell them all that I know about the subject. It is not necessary to burden them with loads of technical information. Nor do they need to know all that is known about it. It would literally take a lifetime to master all the knowledge and scientific studies on asthma. They do not need ‘all’ knowledge, but they need ‘sufficient’ knowledge to manage the condition well and even play football.

The apostle John makes precisely this point about the principle of sufficiency. Immediately after saying that not all the signs that Jesus did are included in his writing, he says further, ‘but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name’ (John 20:31). John had a purpose when he wrote his gospel account. He wanted to convince us that Jesus is the Son of God so that we may believe in him and have eternal life. He does not say, ‘I have given you some information but now you need to make further research and discover other crucial truths which I did not mention, and unless you find those other truths you don’t have enough evidence to believe that Jesus is God’s Son.’ On the contrary, he assures us that he wrote on selected episodes of Jesus’ life, and that it was enough for us to be convinced and believe in Jesus.

Thus, God did not need to give us one billion gigabits of information to communicate his message to us. It is perfectly possible for God to give us one book, the Bible, which has sufficient information to lead us to salvation and guide us during our pilgrimage.

Friend, if you are still uncertain about your salvation, learn and believe the good news written in the Holy Scriptures. It is enough, because the Bible reveals a perfect Saviour who is able to save to the uttermost those who come to him by way of repentance and a simple child-like faith.

If you’re already a disciple of Christ, rest assured that the doctrines, promises, laws and warnings of the Scriptures will give you the strength and wisdom you need for godliness and joyful communion with your Saviour. The problem with most of us is that we know so little of the Bible, and even the little we know, we often do not apply it to our daily lives.

I would not say that the Bible is sufficient ... *it is more than sufficient!* There is an overabundance of good spiritual food to nourish our souls. What we really need is not a source of additional revelation, but a more serious and dedicated study of the Bible and a more obedient heart.