

## BASIC DOCTRINE – THE FUNDAMENTALS

### PART 3: REVELATION – SPECIAL REVELATION

Profound and necessary as General Revelation is it cannot rescue anyone from spiritual darkness nor repair a broken relationship with our creator. In order to restore us we need something more than just knowing God exists. We need a revelation that can bring redemption as well as knowledge. God in His grace has provided what we need by means of a Special Revelation. Like General Revelations Special Revelation comes to us in three ways: the supreme way through Jesus Christ, the primary way through the Scriptures, and the personal way through the inward witness of the Holy Spirit

#### Jesus Christ

In the prologue to his Gospel John refers to Christ as the Word of God. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... (John 1:1)*. That is, through Christ, the Son of God who became a man, we discover God's nature and character and learn to relate to God in an intimate way. If you want to know what God is like, then get to know Jesus, for He is God.

*Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father;" (John 14:8-9)*

Jesus was a real, He lived at a specific time, in a specific place, and among a specific people. Those who knew Him witnessed to His miraculous life, ministry, death and resurrection. Afterwards, they declared to the world what they saw, heard and knew. Today we have the advantage of reading what they witnessed and proclaimed, because God inspired men to preserve the works and words of Christ in the writing of New Testament, just as He did for the prophets of the Old Testament, which brings us to our next topic.

### Holy Scripture

The Bible is not only the words of men but, by the process of divine inspiration, the words of God. Therefore the Bible is meant by God to be the authority our life and faith. Paul says that, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

The Greek word Paul uses for inspiration is *“theopneustos”* which literally translated means “God breathed out.” Thus the Bible is, in fact, God’s breathed word. The Bible does not explicitly define the exact way in which God inspired the authors of the Bible to write His “breathed word.” The Apostle Peter simply characterizes inspiration as: *“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is*

*of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet 1:20-2)*

We do get a helpful hint about the nature of inspiration from the author of Hebrews who writes: *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son”.* (Heb 1:1-2) That is, at times, God spoke directly to the writers who recorded or dictated what He disclosed, as He did with Moses at Mount Sinai. In other cases God spoke through the prophets who were spokesmen for God declaring forth God’s revelation and on some occasions writing it down. And at other times the prophets, for the most part, chronicled the history of Israel and its people.

There are many reasons for believing that the Bible is the word of God. Here are a few:

#### 1. Inspiration of the Old Testament

The Old Testament prophets always presented themselves as spokesmen of God and were confirmed by God supernaturally by miracles or other signs pointing to God’s authority being expressed through them.

Many of the prophetic oracles were written and saved. This process began with Moses: *“So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: “Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you” (Deut 31:24-27)*

The call of prophesying and writing sacred Scripture continued throughout the history of the Old Testament with prophets such as Joshua, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Isaiah, Daniel and many others.

The Hebrew people viewed these authoritative writings as the very words of God and authoritative for all they believed and acted upon. Christ, the Apostles and authors of the New Testament maintained that the Old Testament was the word of God. Many other reasons could be given for why the church believes in the authority of the Bible, but the final and lasting proof rests with Christ. He is Lord of all believers, and it is His view and His view alone that matters the most.

## 2. Inspiration of the New Testament

When Jesus commissioned his followers to teach and make disciples, He promised them the infilling of the Holy Spirit who would be their helper and would *“teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*

(John 14:26). Jesus also said that, *“I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes”* (Matt 22:34). Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines scribes as: “Members of a learned class in ancient Israel through New Testament times who studied the Scriptures and served as copyists, editors, and teachers.” Those chosen by God to write what would become the New Testament were scribes as well as Apostles and prophets.

The Apostle Paul considered his own writings to be from God and binding upon his readers as such, for he told the church at Corinth *“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord”*. (1 Cor 14:37)

Peter understood Paul's letters to be inspired and considered them as Scripture when he wrote *“also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”* (2 Peter 3:15-16)

As mentioned above, Jesus gave authority to His disciples, promised the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and saw the day that what He taught and said would be a part of the continual recording of inspired word (Matt 28:18 & Matt 23:34).

### 3. Inward witness of the Spirit

The Special Revelation granted by God to the believers includes not only the incarnation of Christ and the written Holy Scriptures, but also that all-important part of our new life in Christ, which is the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. Paul bore witness to this saying, "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*" (Rom 8:16). Similarly, in 1 Cor 2:12 Paul says, "*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*"

Part of what it means to have the Holy Spirit working in our lives is that it enables us to recognize and comprehend Special Revelation, first by making it possible to receive Christ as Lord and Savior of our life, and then by illuminating His written word so that we can be led by God in a practical way in every area of our lives.

Jesus Christ, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit work as a kind of trinity of Special Revelation from God that breathes fresh, God-life into the believer by enabling us to recognize that we are sinners in need of a savior, that Jesus Christ is our savior, that Jesus needs to be Lord over our lives, and that Scripture must be adhered to as the revealed will of God for all of us if we are going to progress in that which God has made us for: increased Christ-likeness to the glory and praise of God.