

The Doctrines of Revelation and Inspiration #1

Because man is a fallen race we have a natural inability to formulate full and accurate ideas about God. Therefore, the only reliable way for us to know who God is, is for him to reveal himself to us. This is what we mean by “revelation” – we know God as he reveals himself to us, not by our own unaided reasonings.

There are two types of revelation:

1. **“General revelation”**, which is available to all men, in all ages.
 - a. Through the creation, God reveals his existence, intelligence, and power.
 - b. Through his acts of providence, he reveals himself to be a God who is active and concerned about providing for and guiding his creation. However, this is usually ignored or not recognized by the unbeliever, and is chalked up to “luck”.
 - c. Through the conscience, He reveals that he is a moral God (there is right and wrong).

Ps. 19:1-4 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork ...”

Rom. 1:18-23 – “... men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse ...”

Rom. 2:15 – “ which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness ...”

Every culture has some idea of 'god', however perverted. All men can look at nature and realize that there has to be something greater than man.

'General revelation' is sufficient to see that there **is** an intelligent and all-powerful creator God, and is also sufficient to make man liable to judgment, yet reveals nothing about whether this God is one or many, what he is like, or if he has any specific expectations or demands of man.

2. **“Specific revelation”**, which comes directly to individuals from God, and indirectly from God to men via the scriptures, or even by the preaching of the gospel.
 - a. **Direct revelation** – God spoke directly to men like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Solomon, and all the OT prophets. Of many of the prophets, it says something like “In the Xth year of king Y, the word of the Lord came to Z, saying...” This was often by dream, vision, or audible voice.
 - b. **Indirect revelation**
 - i. **The Scriptures.** Those to whom did speak directly, often recorded those things so that they are now available to us.
 - ii. **Preaching of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.** This is certainly not on the same level of authority as scriptures, but God does speak by His Spirit to people initially through the gospel if it is rightly and faithfully presented. Such preaching will inevitably appeal to the Scriptures as the confirming authority for what is being preached.

For now, we will concentrate on what is usually meant by “revelation”, the scriptures.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 – “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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Greek is *theopneustos* (“God-breathed”). So instead of “inspiration”, it would be more accurate to say “expiration” – God “breathed out” the scriptures to men. The Greek word *pneo* means to breathe or blow (like the wind), and *pneuma* is “wind, breath, or spirit” Similarly, the Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*, which can also mean breath or wind. So as in Gen. 1:2 “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”, and in Gen. 2:7 God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”, so in revelation God breathes or blows by His Spirit into the writers of scripture to produce a life-giving revelation of Himself to mankind.

2 P. 1:20-21 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were **moved by** the Holy Ghost.” The Greek means to be carried by, or borne along by, the Spirit.

The Scriptures are not just the words or opinions of wise men. In God's own way he prevailed upon the writers of scripture so that their writings were the words of his own choosing.

The NT is peculiarly a revelation, because it rests on the authority, not just of a prophet, but of the Son of God himself:

Heb. 1:1-2 – “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ...”

This is why we refer to the Bible as “the Word”, yet John often refers to Christ as “the Word”. He is the living Word, a living representation and revelation of the Father. We can know the Father by listening to and obeying the Son. Jn. 14:8-9

What is meant by the term **"plenary, verbal inspiration"**, common among fundamentalists? Plenary means full, complete, in entirety. i.e, that ALL the scriptures are inspired, not just part. The Bible doesn't "contain" the Word, it IS the Word. Verbal means that the very words of Scripture are inspired, not just the thoughts.

Here are some common Satan-inspired attacks on the integrity of the Word:

- "The Bible isn't the Word, but the Word is in the Bible." (somewhere)
- "The Bible was just written by men."
- "The Bible contradicts itself."
- "The Bible is just a lot of legends and myths."
- "It is not to be taken literally - only as allegory and parable"
- "Fundamentalists are worshipping a book."
- "The Bible is irrelevant in this modern world."
- "The Bible can't be true because miracles don't happen."
- "How do we know the right books are in there?"
- "The books of the Bible weren't written when and by whom they say they were."
- "Evolution and modern science shows us that the Creation and Flood stories didn't really happen."
- "We don't know if Jesus really rose from the dead, and it doesn't really matter."
- "Born of a 'virgin' really just means a young woman of marriageable age."
- "The Hebrews didn't cross the Red Sea, but the Sea of Reeds, a shallow marsh."
- "We don't have any of the original Scriptures, so how do we know they haven't been changed?"
- "It is too rigid, harsh, and judgmental." (i.e., it is too black and white, but we prefer a nice fuzzy grey)

The devil is desperate to keep people from reading, and believing the Bible.

The Preservation of the Word

“Preservation of the Word” refers to the fact that God not only gave a revelation by a divine out-breathing, but that He also preserved it from destruction and perversion, so that we can have it and rely on it.

- Jer. 36 - when Jehoiakim cut up the scroll from Jeremiah, God said, 'Write it again'
- The scribes used extreme care in copying the scriptures.
- The Dead Sea scrolls have confirmed the trustworthiness of what we have at this day
- The ancient Romans and modern Communists have tried to burn all scriptures
- Roman Catholicism tried to keep everything in Latin so only the priests could understand it, then tried to destroy all common-language Bibles, and murder the translators.
- Satan continues to attack the Word through evil translations - they are trying to purge out everything that doesn't fit their liberal theology, even as far as to remove all references to God as masculine, or references to Christ's sufferings as a blood atonement. This is not physical destruction, but a purposeful perversion of the Word to make it ineffective or even misleading.

We must give the Word the preeminence in our lives that it deserves – read it, study it, memorize it, live by it.

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