

## GREAT BIBLE DOCTRINES - LESSON 5 THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

Introduction: Because God is infinite and we are small and finite, we cannot know God and His will except as God chooses to reveal Himself. Since God so carefully made us in his own image, it is inconceivable that God would not communicate with us. There are things of God which we are not able to comprehend, or which we do not now need to know, but there are other things He wants us to know - Deuteronomy 29:29. A study of how God reveals himself and his will is important because our faith and practice need to be based on authoritative truth.

### 1. How has God revealed Himself and His will to us?

- A. Through the Creation, God's wisdom, power and glory are seen - Romans 1:18-23; Psalm 19:1-6; Job 38-41.
- B. God speaks more explicitly through His inspired word.
  - 1) The writers of the Bible (the scriptures) were guided by the Holy Spirit, so that the Bible is God's word, not just men - 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 3:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 2:13.
  - 2) During the Old Testament period, though a few messages were addressed to Gentiles (Genesis 14:18-20; Jonah, etc.), God's specific revelation was primarily addressed to Israel, as the chosen nation through whom Messiah would come - Romans 3:2; Deuteronomy 4:7, 8. (Of course other nations may learn from what God revealed to Israel, but the original recipients were Israel.) The New Testament Scriptures, containing the gospel, are for all nations - Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 17:30.
  - 3) Evidences of the Bible's inspiration
    - a. Its unity. Though written by 40 different writers of different backgrounds in different places at different times over 1500 years, its 66 books make a harmonious whole and do not contradict one another when correctly understood.
    - b. Its accuracy. Research, exploration and archaeology are constantly vindicating thousands of detailed references to the nature, history, and geography of the Bible lands.
    - c. Its prophecies. Although spoken hundreds and thousands of years in advance of their fulfillments, Bible prophecies have been fulfilled in detail. (For example, note over 400 prophecies concerning Christ, and the prophecies about the Jews). Only inspiration from God can explain this.
    - d. Its perfection. All human books can and must be improved upon, but the Bible has never been improved upon morally or otherwise. (Skeptics and enemies would if they could!)
    - e. Its impartiality. It gives the only completely objective and perfect portrait of man. It shows him as he is without over-emphasizing weakness or virtues. Human books are never as balanced and impartial.
    - f. Its adaptability. The Bible has been opposed from more sources than any other

book, yet has stood the test of the ages and is still the most wanted book in the world in spite of culture differences.

- g. The character of Jesus. The character and teachings of Jesus contained in the Bible are beyond the power of man's invention. Unaided human beings do not by nature invent such a character or such ideals.
  - C. God is most perfectly revealed through His Son, Jesus Christ, the "Living Word" - John 1:1,2,14; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; John 14:9.
  - D. We learn of God through His dealings with us in daily Christian experience (answered prayer, promises kept, discipline, blessings, enablements, etc.). Note that this kind of revelation is personal and subjective, valuable to each of us personally but not as useful to others as are the external, objective forms of revelation.
2. God's revelation through prophecy and scripture was progressive up to the end of the apostolic period.
- A. God at first only hinted at His plans for saving man, and slowly added limited revelation through the Old Testament period - Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; Ephesians 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:10-12. (For example, compare progressive teaching on divorce - Deuteronomy 24:1; Hosea 1-3; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9), and on life after death.
  - B. God's revelation in the O.T. concerns, above all, His covenant with the Jews, through whom the Messiah would come, while His revelation in the N.T. concerns the new Covenant made with all nations through the Messiah, the Christ - Hebrews 1:1,2; John 1:17; Matthew 17:1-5; 2 Corinthians 3:6-18.
  - C. The writings of Christ's apostles and prophets in the N.T. are as authoritative as the statements of Christ Himself.
    - 1) Christ Himself ordained the apostles and commissioned them to go out and teach. Luke 6:13-16; John 15:16; 13:20; 20:21-23; Matthew 10:40; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.
    - 2) The teaching work of the apostles and prophets was foundational in the church - Ephesians 2:19, 20; 1 Corinthians 12:28.
    - 3) Their teaching was inspired by the Holy Spirit - John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; 2 Peter 3:15, 16.
    - 4) Their teaching was confirmed by miraculous signs - Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 1:5-7; Romans 15:18, 19; 1 Thessalonians 1:5.
  - D. The revelation of God's salvation through Christ is complete and final through the apostles and prophets - Ephesians 3:4-6; Jude 3; John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Galatians 1:8, 9.
3. God's word will stand forever - Matthew 24:35; Romans 3:4; 1 Peter 1:24, 25.
4. God's word equips us for all our needs - 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3; Luke 16:27-31.

5. God and His truth will be found by those who seek Him - Hebrews 11:6; John 7:17; Matthew 5:6; Acts 17:27.
  
6. We will be judged by God's word - John 12:48; James 2:12; Revelation 20:11-13.

**Conclusion:** Truly we are "without excuse" if we fail to know God and His will, for God has revealed all we need to know. His word should be precious to us, for in it is the way to life and fellowship with God our Creator and Father.

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