

Knowing God: Inspiration

Dr. David Shaw

We live in a world driven by communication with cell phones, computers, twitter, and text messages. Sometimes we even carry on conversations “face to face.” This need comes from the fact that we are made in the image of God. God is a God who communicates. Questions for us to consider:

1. What is revelation? Revelation is the means by which God discloses Himself to His creatures. Without God’s revelation, we would be left with our own speculation. In Genesis 1, ten times we read “GOD SAID.” There are two primary means of revelation:
 - A. GENERAL REVELATION is available to all. It reveals a great deal about God. There are three primary means of general revelation:
 - i. Creation (Romans 1; Psalm 19)
 - ii. Providence Acts 14:17
 - iii. Conscience The internal witness of morality

However, general revelation is not enough to tell us of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is enough, however, to hold us all accountable. (People are not guilty before God for rejecting Jesus Christ- they are guilty and condemned for rejecting the revelation of God)

- B. Special Revelation is applicable to specific individuals or specific groups of people. We find it in three ways:
 - i. Supernatural Occurrences (Birth of Christ)
 - ii. The Word of God as found in Jesus (John 1:1)
 - iii. Scripture II Timothy 3:16
2. What are the Scriptures?
 - The Bible is a library of books (66) put together by genre of literature and not in chronological order
 - There are 39 books in the OT and 27 in the NT
 - They were compiled over a period of 1500 years
 - They were primarily written in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic
 - In the 12th century, chapters were inserted (1189)
 - Verses were added in the 1500s
 - Bible speaks of itself in Proverbs 30:5,6; Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:105; John 17:17; James 1:22; Hebrews 4:12; Acts 17:11
3. Who wrote the Bible? It was a partnership with God and human authors He chose. He inspired these men. This does not mean that they became perfect or that they were used for mechanical dictation or that they lost their personalities. Inspiration ensured faithfulness in the process. 3,800 times in the OT we read reference to the fact that it is God speaking. There are 4,000 allusions that make ties between the OT and the NT in over 300 verses. The OT and the NT are woven together into one story. It is important to bring out a definition here: VERBAL, PLENARY, INSPIRATION.

- VERBAL: The very words are inspired (Matthew 5:16). Not just the ideas or the concepts.
- PLENARY: All of Scripture, not just parts, are inspired. Thomas Jefferson took scissors and cut out the parts he did not like. (See II Peter 3:15, 16 – not easy to understand, but it is inspired).
- INSPIRATION: God-breathed- II Timothy 3:16. A phone book can have accurate information, but it is not designed to make you Christ like.

In the Reformation, SOLA SCRIPTURA came to the front. Scripture alone is the highest authority.

4. What about the Catholic Bible? Many people are aware that there is a difference in the books contained in the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible. The question obviously becomes, who decided to include the Apocrypha in the one and exclude it from the other? Obviously, this is a question that could consume much more investigation and technical information.

Basically, Protestant teachings concerning the Canon are in general based upon the same principle employed in other matters: the earlier teaching and practices are to be preferred. The earliest available evidence with little regard for tradition that cannot be traced back to the generation following the Apostles is dismissed. When the ancient canon lists are examined, we find that the earlier ones omit the Apocrypha. It is not until the end of the 4th century in the West that this list appears and is included.

It must be realized that tests for canonicity were developed and the question of which books should be included in the canon were discussed in depth at many of the church councils. (For a good brief discussion see E. Earl Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991)

5. Can we trust the Bible? It is important to remember that Jesus worked from a translation (Luke 4 – Isaiah), so He obviously trusted them. As we look at our classical literature which is studied in our schools today, it is very telling to note:
 - With Plato, there are 7 copies of his work. The earliest manuscript we have is 1300 years removed from the original
 - With Aristotle, there are 5 copies available. The earliest is 1400 years removed from the original
 - With Caesar, we have 10 copies. The earliest is 950 years removed from the original.
 - Homer has the most copies, with 643.

So what about the Bible? The NT has 14,000 copies. The earliest is 100 years removed from the original. Less than 1% of any of the material is even debated. NONE of it has anything to do with a minor, much less major doctrine. Let me close by quoting from Hebrews 1:2 – “In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son...” Literally translated, the verse reads, “God has spoken to us with CRASHING FINALITY.” Take joy in this, dear friend, GOD HAS SPOKEN TO YOU THROUGH HIS WORD< HIS WORLD< AND HIS SON. WILL YOU LISTEN?????????