

Toward Understanding Ourselves as a Christian

Lesson # 4 -- Understanding Ourselves from the Perspective of Divine Revelation.

Introduction

- A. When, in Adam, we turned our back on God and chose to disobey Him, one of the most serious effects, is that we lost the knowledge of the truth, and becoming ignorant, made ourselves vulnerable to all types of error.
- B. God, however, did not leave us in our self-chosen ignorance. He came to us and has made Himself know to us through Jesus Christ. John 1:14,18
- C. While a part of this activity is called general revelation (Ps 19; Rom 1:18-20; 2:14,15), our only source of final authority is found in special revelation. II Tim 3:16; II Peter 1:16-21.
- D. Reflect on this amazing truth: God has revealed Himself to us and has caused this revelation to be written in a book!

I. The Biblical Concept of Special Revelation Stated.

- A. The declaration of inspiration: II Tim 3:16; II Peter 1:21.
- B. The definition of inspiration.

Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it), exerted by the Holy Spirit on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore perfectly infallible. (B. B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, p. 420)

C. Important words related to inspiration.

- 1. Verbal -- the inspiration extended to the choice of words.
- 2. Plenary -- the inspiration extended equally to all the Bible.
- 3. Inerrant -- exempt from error.
- 4. Infallible -- absolutely trustworthy.
- 5. Revelation -- the communication of truth now known before.
- 6. Illumination -- the understanding of truth that has been given.

II. The Authority of Special Revelation Demonstrated by the Lord Jesus.

- A. He identified the OT Bible with Scripture. Luke 24:44,45
- B. He exhorted His disciples to believe the Old Testament. Luke 24:25-27
- C. He called the OT "The Word of God," "Scripture," and "Commandments of God." Luke 24:44,45; Mark 7:6-13
- D. He utilized the OT as His final authority. Matt 4:5,7,10; 12:3,5; John 10:35.
- E. He affirmed the historicity of Adam and Eve (Matt 19:4), of Noah (Matt 24:37-39). of Moses (Matt 15:3,4), and of the miracle of Jonah (Matt 12:39-41), and much more.

III. The Characteristics of Special Revelation.

A. Special revelation is inscripturated (a written revelation).

Revelation and inspiration stand in the closest possible relation to each other. As far as special revelation is concerned, it may be said that the one is inconceivable without the other. (Louis Berkhof, Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology, P. 144)

B. Special revelation is personal.

1. God has made Himself known to us. Heb 1:1-3; 12:12-29
2. God has made Himself know to us as individuals. John 12:48

C. Special revelation is historical.

1. Christianity is not based on myths, legends, or religious ideas. It is based upon events in history. Rom 1:1-3; I Cor 15:1-8
2. "Christain experience depends absolutely upon an event." (J. Greshem Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, P. 71)

D. Special revelation is propositional.

1. God has spoken in clearly defined statements, capable of being believed or rejected, in verbal expressions which are either true or false.
2. It is the Word of God that gives us authority, and thus certainty, and thus assurance. Matt 12:3,5; 19:4; II Peter 1:16-21; I John 5:9-13

E. Special revelation is authoritative.

1. God has not left us to guess. He has spoken clearly to us of His will.
2. All individuals are responsible to obey the Scripture and it will be the basis of our judgment. John 12:44-50; Heb 2:1-4

IV. Special Revelation is a Provision of Divine Grace and Power.

A. The provision described.

1. "The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63
2. "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb 4:12

B. The provision demonstrated. Matt 12:10-13; Rom 1:16; I Thess 2:13

C. The provision as exhortation. Joshua 1:7,8; Matt 7:24-29; I Thess 2:13

Conclusion

- A. Because of the damage of the Fall each of us has a built in resistance to God and His Word. Mark 7:1-13; Rom 1:18
- B. We must daily choose to reject this resistance and become involved in the Word.

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Recommended Assignment (Preparation for the Next Lesson)

Monday: Read Genesis 3:15. In this first promise of redemption what are we told the Savior will do, and what will happen to Him? _____

Tuesday: Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. From 53:5-7 how is the death of Jesus Christ as our substitute described? _____

Wednesday: Read Romans 5:6-11. What words indicate the need for Jesus Christ to die for us? _____

Thursday: Read Romans 5:6-11. What words indicate what the Savior did for us and what benefits are given to us? _____

Friday: Read Romans 6:1-11. What is the spiritual condition of the believer due to the Savior's death and what are his responsibilities? _____

Saturday: Read II Cor 5:17-21. List the words that indicate the benefits that come to the believer through our Savior's death. _____
