

Session 2: Revelation and Inspiration

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Is it possible for the human mind to conceive of an infinite personality? Can it imagine a beginningless being, infinitely powerful and intelligent? — Robert Ignersoll (The Great Agnostic)

Where there is a great gulf, as between God and man, friendship becomes impossible. — Aristotle

- If it were up to us, we would never be able to know God, but we can know God, and we know Him personally, because God has _____ Himself to us.
- As we define the knowledge of God, we note two things: God is both _____ and _____.

INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD

- First, to say that God is incomprehensible means that God _____ be understood apart from His revealing Himself to us.

Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power, who can understand? — Job 26:14

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. — Psalm 145:3

- God desires to be _____ by His creation and has taken action to make Himself known and known personally.

NOTES:

“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.”
— Isaiah 43:10

- While God can be known, He cannot be _____ known.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! — Romans 11:33

GENERAL REVELATION

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” — Ps 19:1

- **Definition:** General revelation refers to how God has revealed Himself through His creative work.
- **Means and Content:**
 1. *Creative Work*

God has revealed truth through creation and control over His creation.

 - His glory (Ps. 19:1).
 - His power in creating the universe (Ps. 19:1).
 - His supremacy (Rom. 1:20).
 - His divine nature (Rom. 1:20).
 - His providential control of nature (Acts 14:17).
 - His goodness (Matt. 5:45).
 - His intelligence (Acts 17:29).
 - His living existence (Acts 17:28).
 2. *Conscious of Man*

God has given man an _____ of the existence of _____.

NOTES:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them! — Romans 2:14-15

- **Function**

- It is general in its _____. It reaches all people throughout all time (Romans 1:19-20).
- It is limited in its _____. It does not teach us about God's redemptive plan.
- It is limited in its _____ in that it can only inform and condemn.

SPECIAL REVELATION

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. — Hebrews 1:1-2

- **Definition:** Special revelation refers to God communicating in special and particular ways.
- **Means and Content:**
 1. God Speaking Directly (Genesis 3:8-9; 13:14)
 2. Theophanies (Genesis 16:7-14)
 3. Events (Ezekiel 25:7)
 4. Dreams and visions (Isaiah 1:1)
 5. Angelic messengers (Revelation 1:1)
 6. Prophets (Jeremiah 18:18)
 7. Christ's incarnation (John 1:14)
 8. Bible (2 Timothy 3:16).

NOTES:

- **Function**

- It is _____ in its audience. It reaches only those it is shared with (Romans 10:14-16). It is _____ in that God's self-disclosure to humanity unfolded gradually over time, rather than being revealed all at once.
- It communicates _____ instructions from God and includes: the mind of God, the ways of God, the righteousness of God, and the means by which man might please God, and how to be redeemed to God.
- God has _____ told us _____, but He has revealed what we need to know for our present life and our anticipation of the future (cp. Deuteronomy 29:29; John 15:15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Definition

Inspiration points to the production of God's revealed truth in human words, whether spoken or written (Floyd Barackman, Practical Christian Theology)

Inspiration describes the process of divine causation behind the authorship of Scripture. It refers to the direct act of God on the human author that resulted in the creation of perfectly written revelation. It conveys the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit whereby he used the individual personality, language, style, and historical context of each writer to produce divinely authoritative writings...What is most important here is to recognize that the biblical claim of inspiration is one of divine superintendence. God produced the Scriptures by influencing the human author's own thoughts. This resulted in divinely authoritative and inerrant words written in the autographs. — MacArthur: A Survey of Bible Doctrine

NOTES:

1. _____: God's sovereign influence over the heart and mind, enabling Him to write precisely what He intended.
2. _____ Written: The word of God is a perfect reflection of what God wanted to reveal to mankind when it was written.
3. _____: Inspiration is limited to the original compositions of the authors.

Scriptural Basis

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. — 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- The Greek word “breathed out” is picturing the words of Scripture as though coming out of the very mouth of God as He speaks.

Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit — 2 Peter 1:20-21

- Carried along carries with it the connotation of a ship being blown in a direction by the wind.
- It was the _____ that moved these men to write and write in the manner that they did.
- While God used human authors to compose the different books of the Bible, He so controlled the writers of scripture's hearts and minds that what they wrote of their own free will was a perfect reflection of the truth God wanted to reveal to mankind.

NOTES:

VARYING VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

1. _____ Inspiration Theory:

This view holds that the Bible is just the ideas of really smart men. The Bible is a textbook of ancient and universal wisdom from which all people should learn.

2. _____ Theory:

God dictated the Bible to the human writers, and they wrote down what God told them.

3. _____, _____, and Conceptual Theology:

1. Partial Inspiration holds that only parts of the Bible are inspired.
2. Degree inspiration holds that some parts of the Bible are more inspired than others.

The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. - Psalm 119:43

3. Concept inspiration holds that only the concepts, not the actual words, are inspired.

These Words I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life — John 17:8

Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. — Proverbs 30:5-6

4. _____ Inspiration:

The organization of Scripture with an emphasis on the personal application of doctrinal truth in the lives of the church and the individual.

Verbal: The words, even down to the grammatical structures, are directed by God.

Plenary: All of scripture, every single part, every single word, is intended by God.

NOTES:

Inspiration: It is a true and accurate reflection of what God wanted to have communicated.

IMPORTANCE OF INSPIRATION

- _____ **from God**
If you want to hear what God wants you to know about Him, yourself, and everything else in this world, Scripture is where you've got to come.
- **Striving to** _____
If we want to understand what God seeks to communicate to us, we must be diligent in studying these words and their meaning.
- _____ **by God**
God's word is not merely intended to be informational; He seeks to use His word to do a powerful work in transforming our lives to reflect His glory.