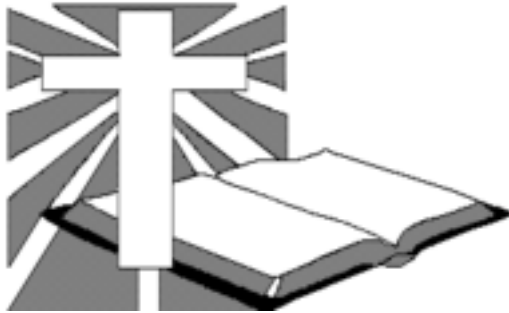


LESSON 1

THE BIBLE, GOD'S REVELATION



Scripture Texts: Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-3; Luke 24:27

In these lessons we will be reminded that man possesses a power of mentality that enables him to search out many truths. He has made many discoveries. These cover many fields of science. But in one direction man finds himself quite unable to make satisfactory progress without outside help. This is in the highest spiritual realm, including the knowledge of God. Our knowledge of Him depends on what He has revealed to us. The Bible is preeminently the channel through which such revelation of God has been given to us.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."* *John 5:39*

The Bible Gives a Complete Revelation

God spoke through various prophets in olden times. He talked with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and others. He gave a rather comprehensive revelation through Moses. These revelations contained only portions of the truth and were given at various times to various people, often for a limited purpose. Yet these revelations pointed toward and led to the perfect revelation given through Christ. This revelation is complete, and because it is complete it is final. Christ is the perfect image of the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Christ—in His teachings, His works, and His character—perfectly reveals God. No other revelation could make God more fully known to man.

The need of a revelation of God is felt by the whole human race. This is shown by the fact that men everywhere are trying to make contact with the Unseen whom they regard as having control over their lives and to whom they feel responsible. This search for the Higher Being is often carried on in darkness and ignorance, even as Paul found those at Athens seeking worship of the Unknown God. This search for God continues, because there is something in human nature that calls for God and cannot be satisfied with anything but God. As nature has made provision for the satisfying of all our needs—food for the hungry, fuel and clothing to keep us warm, and provision for every other need—should not provision be made for the satisfying of the greatest need of all, that of our souls? Such satisfaction requires a revelation of God.

Does God Reveal Himself to Man?

Unless there is some method and channel through which God can reveal Himself to man, our search for Him will be unrewarded. If we think of God as a personal Being possessing the power of self-expression, and not as an abstract quality or an ethical principle, there is no reason to doubt His ability to make Himself known. The ability of God to reveal Himself cannot become fruitful except there is also on the part of man ability to receive such a revelation.

A highly favored, select group of people were permitted to see Jesus, associate with Him, hear His teachings, and see His works. They heard His Gospel and saw it lived. This was not alone for their benefit and enjoyment but

it carried with it the obligation of declaring what had been seen and heard. The message told by these faithful witnesses has been made secure to us through its recording in the New Testament. Thus, the Gospel has been preserved for us and in it we have God's special revelation to man. It is more than mere history. It is God's will toward man, proven by miracles.

Our obligation to heed this message is greater than was the obligation toward the Mosaic Law, which was enforced with dire penalties. We must not treat this revelation lightly.

The Old Testament Revealed Christ

Before the New Testament was written, the Old Testament was the only Scripture possessed by the church. Throughout the entire Book, Christ found many references to Himself. To those whose eyes are enlightened by the Gospel, a great revelation of truth also appears in the Old Testament Scriptures.

God uses many means of revelation to man. The first is the implanting of the idea of God within human nature. This idea of God finds expression in our moral thinking—the distinction between right and wrong. God reveals Himself in nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God." God reveals Himself through His providence and loving care. Man is "fearfully and wonderfully made." Part of God's personality has been copied in man.

God speaks through the Bible. A knowledge of God is not obtained through natural religion. Nature is silent on man's needs of the way to get out of sin and into God's favor. Such a revelation is the Bible. The Bible explains why man is sinful. It tells the story of the fall of man and its results. The way of atonement and mercy is shown to us in the Bible. It teaches holiness, justice, love, and moral qualities needed by men. God's revelation begins first individually, then to a family, then to a nation, and then to the world.

The Bible is an authoritative revelation. It is the rule of faith and conduct for this life and the standard by which we will be judged in the final Day of Judgment. The greatest evidence of the authority of the Bible is in the character of its message. Such a revelation of God as it contains could not have come from purely human sources. God gave Moses certain miracles to perform, which he did, convincing both the elders of Israel and Pharaoh of his divine calling when the people doubted his call. The miraculous birth of Christ, His life, death, and resurrection are proof of the Bible as God's revelation to man. Not all people can test all the evidences in support of the Bible, but this test is open to all. "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

Just A Thought

"The pleasures of sin are for a season, but its wages are for eternity."

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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Publication, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047