

I. General Revelation vs Special Revelation

General revelation where God has revealed himself to all people and all places through creation and conscience.

Special revelation is called "special" in contrast with general revelation because it is not given to all people in all places. At certain times throughout biblical history, God has chosen to reveal Himself by miraculous means.

The truths revealed by special revelation could not be known through looking at unwritten tradition, nature, providence, our conscience, or any by reasoning process. God must reveal them directly to us.

II. Special Revelation consists of both Actions and the Word

God works in history and revealed himself through speaking so that we learn of his plan of redemption through Jesus the Messiah.

In regards to special revelation, there is a God who is really doing things and the prophetic speaking of God. He has to have both of these together to have accurate communication, actions and the Word.

For example, during Passover there were three crosses. The person on the center cross was Jesus who was a revelatory work of God who came to save us from our sins. If you were a Jew at that time and simply walked by those crosses, you would wonder what they had done to be given such punishment. You would know nothing of the significance of what was happening, especially with the center person. So we know that God's actions are critically important because if Jesus had not have died for the sins of the world and if he had not have rose from the dead we would be lost and our lives would be hopeless. But the work by and of itself isn't adequate enough communication.

Special revelation is a combination of the life of God revealed in his works and the words of God that tells us the significance and meaning of those acts.

III. kinds and types of special revelation

Special revelation includes physical appearances of God, dreams, visions, angels, the prophets, the written Word of God, and most importantly—Jesus Christ.

God appeared in some type of physical form on multiple occasions.

Genesis 3:8, 18:1; Exodus 3:1-4, 34:5-7 In Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob wrestled with God.

Dreams: Bible records God speaking to people through dreams. Genesis 28:12, 37:5; 1 Kings 3:5; Daniel 2. In Acts 10, God reveals himself to Cornelius in a dream.

Visions: (Genesis 15:1; Ezekiel 8:3-4; Daniel 7; 2 Corinthians 12:1-7).

God used angels to reveal special messages (Daniel 9:20-21; Luke 2:10-11).

God reveals Himself through Jesus. Jesus is God who came to dwell among us (John 1:14). and we have seen his glory, glory as the only son from the Father, full of grace and truth. The Word was with God in the beginning, in the creation itself.

In verse 18, it says that no one has even seen God but Jesus who is himself God. He is at the Father's side and has made him known.

Later on in John 14, Philip wanted to see the Father with Jesus replying that he had seen the Father by seeing Jesus. So Jesus is the definitive Word of God. God came in human form and spoke to us, telling us and showing us by his actions and words the nature of the Father.

God also spoke through divine inspiration by the Holy Spirit directing the human authors to write what God intends to reveal in **Scripture**.

More particularly is that the Bible is a central aspect of Christianity.

We learn about Jesus and God and the Holy Spirit through the Bible. Look at 2 Timothy 3:15 where it says from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Also, the Old Testament believers had faith in the coming Messiah so it wasn't a new thing when Jesus came. Faith in the coming Messiah has always been there, clear back to Genesis 3:15.

All Scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching. It is also used for reproof, correction and training in righteousness. So this is the unique work of Scripture. Technically, inspiration is about the text of Scripture and not about the writer. The writer is guided and is providentially prepared to do that work, but what is actually inspired is the text itself.

2 Peter 1:20-21²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy of Scripture never had its origin in human will, but through the prophets, through humans spoke from God through the Holy Spirit. This is the imagery of inspiration. The verb "carried along" was used of a ship "carried along" by the wind (e.g., Acts 27:15-17). This means that the Holy Spirit carried along the human authors in such a way that what they wrote was His, not theirs. The Bible,

therefore, isn't the product of human invention; rather, it's the Word of God. That Scripture is reliable and trust worthy because the Holy Spirit has guided them in the writing of the text. In short, the Holy Spirit so directed the human writers that the finished product was precisely what He intended.

For the Christian, the Bible is held up as the enduring words of God with the final Word of God being Jesus Christ.

IV. Incorrect Concepts

- 'the Holy Scripture contains the Word of God.'

This is partially wrong in that it suggests that some of the Scripture is inspired while some isn't. All of Scripture is inspired. Some movements such as that of the 'red letter' Christians look at the words of Jesus as to be trusted while other text is questionable. So what these groups say is that Scripture contains the Word of God but also contain error. This of course is not true and becomes a serious problem for them.

- 'the Holy Spirit becomes the Word of God.'

This says that Scripture itself isn't the Word of God; it is only when the Holy Spirit uses the text that it becomes the Word of God. This is somewhat true when the Holy Spirit uses certain parts of the Scripture to speak to us. God uses situations from the Bible to speak to us concerning our own situations. But Scripture is always God speaking whether we hear it or not.

- "Scripture was the Word of God."

It is a record of God speaking two thousand years ago, good in its day but it is past now. It is not that relevant now. Therefore, you will hear this sometimes; I need a fresh Word of God. Their thinking is that they need a direct Word from the Holy Spirit speaking today. If you want to get a fresh Word of God, just open your Bible and read and mediate on it. This is really a good way to get a fresh Word of God because the Holy Scripture is God speaking. It is the very Word of God always.

VI. Conclusion

So the Holy Scripture is to be believed as God's instruction, obeyed as God's command, embraced as God's promise in all its promises. He providentially prepared and guided certain writers to write in their own circumstances in their own styles of the issues of the day so that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted to say to his worldwide church at all time and that message of Scripture is the universal Word of God completely trustworthy, completely true and adequate so that we can be prepared for every good work.