

A Primer on
the Doctrine of the Bible
“...the Scripture of Truth”, Daniel 10:21

By
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Part 1 – The Reasonableness and Necessity of Revelation
(i.e., why is the Bible the medium of knowing truth about God)

1 Corinthians 2:6-13

“(v6) However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. (v7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, (v8) which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they have known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. (v9) But as it is written:

*‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’*

(v10) But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (v11) **For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.** (v12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God. (v13) These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

There are three basic reasons why it is most reasonable and necessary for God to reveal Himself to man thru the Bible, and to believe that man is incapable of finding God by virtue of his unaided faculties; that is, the sheer force of his reason.

1. The Nature of Personhood

First, in the above quote from 1 Corinthians 2, Paul states the obvious; that for one person to know another requires self-disclosure. As Paul says in verse (11a, highlighted above), “what man knows the things of man but the spirit of man that is in (e.g. within) him.” Paul states the “spirit” of man, the inner “ego” of man, is unknown and unknowable except to the person himself. Therefore, we must reveal our self if any other person is ever going to know our inmost being – our “spirit,” our “ego,” that is, our person. It is just a matter of everyday knowledge that for one person to really know another, because of the elegant symphony of notes we call personality/personhood, we must reveal ourselves to the person who wants to know us. Because we are not just facts, but are surely more than the sum of chemicals and electrical signals, to understand us – to know us – requires self-revelation. It cannot be other.

Man has not only arms to throw and legs to run measurable distances, but he has love, mercy, and compassion – the sum total making up the person. He is not just brain but mind, not just conscious but self-conscious, and all of these qualities make-up the “ego” we call personhood. Thus Paul says quite sensibly, that the “ego” of one human is known/understood by another only when we make the effort to reveal ourselves.

It is then for us, and Paul, to take the most natural and logical step in verse 11b with the Greek word “outos”/ (“even so/in like fashion”), *that if this is true of the person “man,” this must be true of the person we call God.* If to know a man, he must make himself known; God, the preeminent person, must do the same. **He must reveal Himself.**

Conclusion

To know God, in the same way we come to know any man, requires self revelation from the source (God), so it is reasonable and necessary that God reveal Himself if He is ever to be known by man.

2. The Nature of God

As the ultimate expression of God, great men throughout history have turned to the doxology to express the truth(s) about the living God in brief and dramatic form. Such doxologies reflect the best and highest expression in words most all people would write if we attempted to tell others about the nature and concept of **GOD** – Great, Wondrous, and Glorious.

Note the apostle Paul... “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unreachable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36)

And...

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Timothy 1:17)

And...

“Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to Whom be honor and glory forever, Amen” (1 Timothy 6:15b-16)

King David... "Yours O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is yours: yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In your hand is to make great and to give strength to all." (1 Chronicles 29:11)

Jude... “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 25)

It is this infinite greatness, holiness, and purity that man is unable to grasp unless that Great Being reveals the truth(s) about His nature and character. Historically, the best man-made expression of the God we seek is displayed by the great Westminster Confession (1648 A.D.), question #3 – “What is God.” Here is the answer – most appropriate and telling when we want to know if man, on his own intellectual steam, can find God:

***Question:** “What is God.”

****Answer** (of the Westminster Confession): “There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty; most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the council of His own immutable and righteous

will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.”

Can you find this God...this true, living God so poorly and inadequately described above by mere men?

It must be of all truths most clear that the greater (God) must declare/reveal Himself to the lesser (man). What is truly amazing is that man might grasp anything at all about God. To this, one must say, as the Puritans did, that the reason man knows even the *smallest* truth regarding God, is that God has **condescended** to speak through His Word – the Bible. And noting the nature of God, *we know this must be so.*

Let us let Jesus have the final word when the subject is understanding truth(s) regarding God. In one of the most famous quotes of the Bible, Peter the apostle confesses that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” (Matthew 16:16). But most enlightening is Jesus’ response regarding this confession. He replies to Peter’s statement of insight with, “Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: *for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven,*” (v17). If Jesus were asked the religious question, ‘How does one know **any** truth about God?,’ Jesus’ answer – as He states in many New Testament passages – is “The Father has drawn you [so You might know God]”... “the Father has given it to you [so You might know God]”... “The Father has revealed it to you [so You might know God]” (see Jesus’ answer to the issue of unbelief in His day in the book of John, 6:36-40, 43-44, 64-65).

When we are faced with the epistemology regarding God (i.e. the ideas and inquiries regarding truth[s] about God), we will, if we are honest, stand in silent awe. If David would say of God, “Our God is in the heavens, and He does whatever He pleases,” and “Whatever the Lord pleases, He does,” we feel the distance between us and the Sovereign Creator! When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was confronted with the **King of Kings**, he confessed this truth: “For His (God’s) dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation...He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. *No one can restrain His hand, or say to Him, ‘What have you done (i.e. “justify your actions!”)?’*”

Ultimately, Job is correct when he acknowledged, “As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him...(Job 37:23a),” after which Job completes his thought, and gives us the needed insight as to why his comment is accurate – “...He is excellent in power, in judgment and abundant justice,” (Job 37:23b). Isaiah grants us the same insight by stating, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts your thoughts,” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

If I may end with David's poetic form of expressing God's infinity in His dealings with man, "Such thoughts are too wonderful for me, ***It is high, I cannot attain it,***" (Psalm 139:6)!

Conclusion

Thus, God being who He is (i.e. His nature so completely and uniquely different from man), man requires the condescension of God in revealing Himself to man. This is most reasonable and necessary.

3. The Nature of Man

When Moses was expounding the doctrine of man to the recipients of the Torah, he let his readers understand even when man (Adam/Eve) came pure from the hand of God, the Almighty must make known His mind/will to man; “Be fruitful and multiply...subdue the earth...have dominion over it,” (Genesis 1:28), and “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,” (Genesis 2:17). So man, even in his pristine state, must understand God through God’s revelation to him. Why must God reveal Himself if man is to know the mind, will, and person of God Almighty?

First, because man is *creature/created*, and God is the infinite **Creator**.

But there is much more of note. Man is neither pure nor pristine any longer in heart for proper affection to perceive God, nor a mind so free from bias and error so as to think proper thoughts to reason his way accurately to God. Thus, in his search for the “Infinite,” man not only has the wrong equipment, but it is damaged equipment! **That is simply man’s true nature**. It is not just that man is using a microscope mind to examine the sun-like glory of God, but his microscope has no lens, no dial to adjust – indeed, he has swapped it for a thermometer, in his wisdom thinking that the thermometer is the tool to examine ideas of God.

As for man’s capacities in heart and mind, Paul speaks to this issue. In Ephesians 4:17-19, he describes the state of Ephesians prior to God’s mercies: “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, **in the futility of their mind {2}**, having their **understanding darkened {2}**, being **alienated from the life of God {1}**, because of the **ignorance that is in them {2}**, because of the **hardening of their heart {3}**; who, being **past feeling {3}**, have **given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness {4}**.”

Note the highlighted ideas of Paul. He sees the order of man’s plight as being essential to the problem of knowing, loving, and following God. First, man has no vital relationship to the author of life, God, and thus because the plant is not tied to the root and soil for life, man is dead to God – even as he is still a living person. That is, since God is Spirit and a real person, our spirits must be vitally alive to know, relate, and in the truest sense – **be alive!**

The primary tragedy in Paul’s reflections on why truths about God cannot be understood by man is that we all are “**alienated from the life of God {1}**.” This is where all problems start. Because God is life and light, every stream of that life must have a vital connection to this ocean/source of life (God). Disconnected from this reservoir of all life, there is nothing but parched ground. This is why in the book of Acts we find such total-dependence-type statements regarding man as, “in Him we live, and move, and have our being,” (Acts 17:28).

No relationship – no life.

Further, this deadness toward God is not an isolated fact. Paul says because we are cut off from the source of this true life, its primary affect is upon the mind; our **ignorance {2}** reflects this, our **darkness {2}** and our **futility {2}** of thought reflects this. There is no way to discuss and understand the issues of God and man if we have no **spiritual** life corresponding to God – who is Spirit! Deadness of relationship means deadness in thought; not true thoughts of all disciplines, but certainly true and living thoughts of God. How will we reflect accurately about God when God is light, and our thoughts are dark, ignorant – in a word, futile!

Beyond this, the mind is not isolated. The heart, the seat of man's affections, flows in the direction dictated by the mind. In that the mind is dark, this darkness produces **hardening {3}** in the heart, and a state so hopeless it is **past feeling {3}**. What a circumstance! And this is man who thinks he, by searching, can find God. Now this **is** true ignorance! Does he (the seeker of God) really think with the description above delineating his state as a person, that the condition of his life/mind/heart/ can somehow be divorced? Does the condition of the searcher affect his searching? Can the fact that a man is blind affect his search for the North Star?

As we might guess, Paul includes in his analysis the fruit/results of an alienated man **{1}**, a darkened mind **{2}**, and a hardened heart **{3}**. What are the “fruits” of **{1}**, **{2}**, and **{3}**? Is it the ability to seek and find God successfully? Paul is clear that the opposite is the case. The state of our nature, for good or ill, biases the ways, methods, and perceptions in any search for God. And the results? It is, as Paul says, “**to work all uncleanness with greediness {4}**,” (Ephesians 4:19).

In other words, far from the ability to search and find the True and Living God, man final state of “seeking” is summed up by the words of Jesus in John 3:19-20; “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone [i.e. mankind, aliens to God] **{1}**, and thus having a darkened mind **{2}** and a hardened heart **{3}**] practicing evil hates the light, and does not come to the light **{4}**.”

God is light. Man’s mind, and thus his will/desires/activities, is darkness. If God is to be found by man, God must take the initiative.

Conclusion

If God is ever to be known – God must speak, God must disclose, God must reveal Himself. This is evident: 1) to us in experience when it comes to person-to-person knowledge; 2) because God is far beyond man in His nature and therefore His person; and 3) man is defective and limited in his abilities, such that words like “blind” are used of his spiritual-seeing abilities re:God.

We must hear, we must listen, we must perceive, and we must trust/believe; yet we are impotent to do so (cf. Jn 3:7-8); and this faith is

**based, not on blind hope, but on the foundation of truth – the truth/
fact(s) regarding God.**

This is both reasonable and necessary.

Part 2 – Revelation as Word – Spoken and Written

The saints have always inquired as to the revelation of the mind of God as it appears both in the truth as spoken by God and in its final form – written down.

When the Lord wanted to reveal His truth to the saints of old we read of its primacy both as recorded in Scripture and as quoted by the Savior, “man...shall live...by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord” (Matthew 4:4 quoting Deut 8:3). But we find that in God making His mind/will known, He also make clear the means: “...by the hand of the prophet Jehu...came the Word of the Lord...” (1 Kings 16:7); “He spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah” (2 Kings 14:25); “...the Words of the Lord, which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah” (Jeremiah 37:2).

This is why so often the books of revelation in the Old Testament speak in this manner: “Behold, I put my Words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9); “the Word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest...” (Ezekiel 1:3); “then came the Word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet...” (Haggai 1:3). Therefore we find expressions reflecting the knowledge of God’s truth with the instrumentality of man clearly in the mind of the Jewish nation such as; “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord?” (2 Kings 3:11), “Is there not still a prophet here, that we may inquire of Him,” and thus, “Please inquire for the Word of the Lord today,” (1 Kings 22:7, 5).

The result was the following types of statements in Scripture: “Surely the Lord does nothing, unless He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets...The Lord has spoken! Who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:7,8), “So the children of Israel inquired of the Lord...and Phinehas the son of Elieazar...stood...saying”, and this was followed by “...And the Lord said...,” making it clear that Israel knew the prophets words were the Lord’s Words (Judges 20:26-28).

Yet there was more – a connection also to the written Word through the speaking prophet. Thus we read: “Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent...” (Jeremiah 29:1); “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write these words...’”, and “So Moses wrote this Law and delivered it...” (Exodus 34:27; Deut 31:9). And this is precisely the way other saints in Old Testament times looked at prophetic writings: note Daniel; “I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet...” (Daniel 9:2). Thus we find in the New Testament concerning the Old Testament prophets/prophecies, “He (Christ) went into the synagogue...and stood to read. And He was handed *the book* of the prophet Isaiah...He found where it was written...” (Luke 4:16-18), and our Lord, when speaking of various Old Testament truth says, “It is **written**...it is **written**...,” and this was equal – in the same breath – to “It has been **said**...” (Luke 4:4,8,12)!

We thus read of the Old Testament as “oracles of God,” and “the Holy Scriptures,” (Romans 3:2; 1:2). We read of Bible verses as “the Scripture says,” (Romans 4:3; 9:17; 10:11). The power of these documents are rhetorically established by phrases such as “do you not know?” (Romans 11:2), and “Have you not read” (Matthew 19:4). Indeed, for Jesus Christ and the answer to any issue, it was to the law and to the testimony – as our Lord makes clear to the rich young ruler when He says to him, “What is written in the law, What is your reading of it” (Luke 10:26). Thus the Words and books of the Old Testament prophets carried the final truth for any and all practices and doctrines – for it *was* the Word of God.

The New Testament history is identical. Christ ended His earthly ministry stating that all the disciples who would follow Him would be taught to “...observe all things I have commanded you”, and these commands came through His prophets – the apostles. So, like the Old Testament, we find that Peter could say he spoke “the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior” (2 Peter 3:2), John could say with inspired boldness like prophets of old, “He who knows God, hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 John 4:6).

Further, the words of the apostles were not just commands of the Lord *spoken*, but also commands of the Lord *written*. Paul could say, “the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord”, and “If anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person...” (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Thessalonians 3:14); and such was the command of Christ as we see with John the apostle, “What you see, write in a book, and send it...” (Revelation 1:11).

Matthew could combine the inspired use of his own words he knew would take written form, and the inspired words of an Old Testament prophet also in spoken, then written form. In Matthew 24:15 he writes, “...when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (*whoever reads*, let him understand).” Again, as we saw with Daniel and Jeremiah’s words, in New Testament times other saints recognized the words and authority of the Lord in the apostles by direct statement; “beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Jude 17), and by the activity of circulating and exchanging these apostolic letters to other churches (see Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27).

Probably the ultimate example of apostolic authority is the apostle Peter and his reflections on the writings of the apostle Paul. Peter considered Paul’s writings as being on a par with inspired Old testament revelation: “as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught...twist to their own destruction, as they do the rest of the Scriptures.” (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Conclusion

God must reveal Himself, or man cannot know God nor the truths regarding God. This revelation God has done – first spoken, then permanently written in His Word, the Bible. God’s truth about Himself, His glory, His will and His desires for the good for man, has been put down in His Holy Word. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV) states; “All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God man be perfect (e.g. mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Part 3 – Revelation by the Holy Spirit

Prior to our Lord's work on Calvary's hill, He made known to His disciples that, although He was going away, He would send another – a Comforter – to abide with them forever (John 14:16). The third person of the blessed Trinity would guide them into all truth (John 16:13) for He is the "Spirit of Truth" (John 15:26; 16:13). It is the Holy Spirit which always both inspired the Word and indwelt saints to understand inspired truth: "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things freely given to us of God, which things we speak, not in the words which men's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches," (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).

It has always been a Biblical axiom that "All Scripture is inspired by God [lit. God breathed, θεοπνευματος]. If Peter is speaking of the Old Testament, he writes; "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved along by *the Holy Spirit*," (2 Peter 1:20-21); and "the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ (cf. Isaiah 53);" and continuing with New Testament revelation, "who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit" (1 Peter 1:10-12). That is why Peter could proclaim he did not devise cunning fables (2 Peter 1:16).

The Old Testament abundantly speaks along this theme: "*the Spirit of the Lord* spoke by me [David]" (2 Samuel 23:2) and in the New Testament, speaking of Psalm 110, "For David said by *the Holy Spirit*" (Mark 12:36). Since this was true we find "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth" (Numbers 23:5). This also explains why the writer to the Hebrews could be so bold and exclude the instrument of man in the Word and just proclaim of Psalm 95, "*as the Holy Spirit said*" (Hebrews 3:7). Nehemiah makes these truth clear by preaching "thou...testified against them *by thy Spirit* in thy prophets" (Nehemiah 9:30). Again, Peter declares regarding Psalm 69, "this Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which *the Holy Spirit* spoke before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16); and Paul states "Well spoke *the Holy Spirit* by Isaiah the prophet," (Acts 28:25).

The revelation of God stand sure as it has been revealed to and through man by the Spirit of God, being inscripturated by God in written form, which has both been guided by the Holy Spirit and understood by the same Spirit. As Job says "there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding" (Job 32:8).

Conclusion

God must reveal Himself, or man cannot know God nor the truths regarding God. This permanent revelation for man is in His Word – the Bible. But the means by which truth becomes real to the individual (i.e. in his/her heart or spirit) is through the work of the Holy Spirit, who takes

the truth of the Word and makes it true in the heart of man. This is how the objective truth of God becomes objective truth personally understood and experienced.

Part 4 – Revelation as Infallibly True

“The Scripture cannot be broken” (lit: “loosed” λυθῆναι, John 10:35). Here is the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Old Testament (in this particular case, Psalm 82). In John 10:30-36, our Lord claimed to be one with the Father, and on the heels of this statement the assembled Jewish leaders took up stones to kill Him for blasphemy (v.31). Our Lord responds by quoting, then deducing, from Psalm 82 – the cornerstone of His argument and defense being that Psalm 82:5 must be sure because the Word of God is sure. Our Lord could summarize His thought on the Bible by simply stating in His High Priestly prayer, “Thy Word is Truth” (John 17:17).

How much of the Scriptures are given to this fact – the infallibility of God’s Word/Revelation. Just in one Psalm alone, Psalm 119, David declares “For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven;” “Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old you have founded them forever;” “thy Word is true from the beginning; and every one of your righteous judgments endures forever” (Psalm 119:89,152,160). Peter thought the truths of this Psalm so appropriate to his theme comparing God’s truth to man’s existence that he echoes Psalm 119. He writes of man that “all flesh is as grass...the grass...falls away...**But** the Word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:24-25).

There is much more both in the above testimony of Scripture and its application to us. Daniel is blunt enough to use the phrase “the Scripture of Truth” (Daniel 10:21), and the apostle John reflects upon both his witness of the events of the first century (in this context, the reality of the cross/death of Christ), and his penning these event by saying “he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knows that he is true, that you might believe” (John 19:35).

“Your Words are true” (2 Samuel 7:28). This dogmatism by both Old Testament saints and our Lord is given the strongest confidence by the words of Scripture *standing sure*, and *coming to pass*. Note how Daniel reflects on Old Testament truth written down and reflecting the ministry of another Old Testament prophet, “I Daniel, understood by [the] books the number of years, whereof the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:2).

Thus, you find clear statements of confidence in Bible promises/prophecies of old – such statements as Christ in Gethsemane, “But how then shall Scripture be fulfilled, that *it must be?*” (Matthew 26:54), and our Lord speaking of the imminent fall of the great Jerusalem temple, “For these be the days of vengeance, that *all things which are written may* be fulfilled*” (Luke 21:22).

*In Greek (the original language of the New Testament), the word “may” does not, like English, imply “may or may not,” but rather is equal to “shall.”

Therefore, we summarize the enduring truth of the Scriptures by our Lord Jesus what speaking New Testament truth while reflecting on Old Testament truth/fulfillment, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Conclusion

God must reveal Himself to man for man to know God. This revelation is in His Word, the Bible. This revelation is written by men inspired by God, and is without error in the original languages – Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament).

Part 5 – Revelation as Rational

A prominent charge of those who do not believe Christian revelation and the Bible is that the faith exercised in trusting and believing its verities is equal to “wishful thinking” by Christians. Faith in the Bible is not faith in facts/truths. Thus, the world believes and thinks of the Bible belief/faith as irrational. But this is far from the case. Indeed, as we shall see, much to the contrary.

Through Isaiah, the Lord calls and appeals to a rebellious Israel, “Come, let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). Note the context of verse 18 has as its subject the most religious of topics – SIN. Later in Isaiah, when the challenge of issues arise before Israel, God entreats His Old covenant people to rationality; “Produce your strong case, says the Lord; bring forth you strong reasons, says the King of Jacob” (Isaiah 41:21). Similarly, God speaks through Samuel “Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you” (1 Samuel 12:7). It should thus be no surprise that the mind is always engaged when God gives command regarding His Word and Truth. Note just in one verse of the Psalms, how many mental demands are laid at the feet of any who would know and understand God. Readers are called upon to “take... heed...seek...teach...meditate...” (Psalm 119:9,10,12,15). This is why just nine verses later the same writer proclaims that the Scriptures are his “counselors” (Psalm 119:24).

In the New Testament, we have some of the strongest statements equating the truth of gospel ideas centered in Christ as demanding that we bring our minds to religious truth. The apostle Paul’s companion and physician Luke witnesses to Theophilos, an apparent high-born citizen of Rome, regarding the Savior; “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us...which from the beginning were eyewitnesses...It seemed to me also, having a perfect understanding of all things from the very first...that you might know the certainty of those things” (Luke 1:1-4). Luke’s second treatise to Theophilos, the book of Acts, also deals in realities of those works of the church subsequent to the life/death of Christ; “To whom also He (Jesus) showed Himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). Luke was interested in communication historic, rational truth to Theophilos – appealing primarily to the mind.

This rationalism of the gospel is clearly why we find the following evangelical work and witness when examining Paul’s “methods” in evangelism and communication: Acts 17:2, “Then Paul, as was his custom...reasoned”, Acts 18:4; “he (Paul) reasoned in the synagogue”, Acts 24:25; “Now he (Paul) reasoned regarding righteousness.” Thus both Peter and Paul never exhorted to “cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16), but rather were eyewitnesses. So Paul, when speaking of the resurrection of Christ, speaks of the Savior having eyewitnesses to the historic validity. Paul avows Christ was “seen of Cephas,” “[seen] of the twelve,” “[seen] of five hundred,” “seen of James,” “[seen]...of all the apostles.”

Paul, Luke, and the other Biblical expositors established by their writings spiritual and historic truth – truth that was an appeal to the mind to persuade people of the reality and implications of the central verities of the Christian message.

Conclusion

God must reveal Himself, or man cannot know God nor the truths regarding God. Because man is a rational being, this revelation from God is directed to man's mind, and thus God uses illustration, argument, proof, and all the normal means of communicative language to persuade rational man of rational truth.

Part 6 – Revelation as True History (As displayed in Luke’s Gospel)

This part of understanding the Word/Bible will be a review of the gospel of Luke, examining all the past and present historic people and features both current and past. When the Bible expounded truth, it was also truth regarding real people and events spanning from the inception of historical people/event (re: Abel), to current events of people, places etc. This is to make clear the Bible is not myth or fantasy, but historic reality.

Unfolding with the religious interests of Luke are many real past and present people/events. In the midst of the coming birth of the Savior, we read of current events such as Roman tax collecting under Caesar Augustus, and Luke pointing out to establish historic context by also mentioning the governor of Syria, Cyrenius (Luke 2). At our Lord’s baptism Luke records such men as Tiberius Caesar, Pilate as governor, Herod ruling Galilee, Philip and Lysanius – both tetrarchs (Luke 3).

Old Testament historic validity is part of our Lord’s first discourse in Nazareth (Luke 4) as He reflects on Israel’s history – which includes Elijah and Elisha the prophets, and their ministries to Zerephath the widow and Namaan the leper (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 5). In Luke 10, Jesus speaks to the destruction of Tyre and Sidon by Alexander the Great (Ezekiel 26). In Luke 11, we have multiple history and event: the historic reality of Nineveh, Jonah and the fish, as well as the Queen of Sheba and Solomon; Christ also compasses the whole of Scripture in Luke 11, bringing in the death of Abel in Genesis to the death of Zechariah (not the OT writer) who’s death is recorded in the last Jewish book of the Old Covenant (according to the way the Jews arranged their sacred texts (somewhat different an order – but the same books)).

There is mention by our Lord of Noah and the flood, Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and the burning bush – and current events of non-Jewish history/event. In Luke 13, Jesus speaks to a current tragedy of that day. A tower fell at Siloam killing eighteen; Pilate defiled Jewish sacrificing by mingling unclean sacrifices.

All this is to testify and get a correct perception of the many facets of the Word of God. It is a book that speaks to gospel issues while not passing over the details of events that have effected the history of God’s covenant people as well as the world’s history of events people and nations (for example, Old Testament spends time on declaring historically and prophetically the parts of the history of Babylon, Assyria, the Persian empire with Darius and Cyrus, the Greek empire with Alexander and much more). Indeed, in the form of a statue in Daniel 2, and the form of multiple beasts in Daniel 7, the Bible speaks to the above nations in the order of there arise and fall in history; Babylon-MedoPersian-Greek-Roman...a true history of events from the 6th century to the times of Christ.

Conclusion

God's revelation is not just rational truth, but in every way is an account of true historic facts, events and figures which actually occurred in the history surrounding the events of the Moses, David, Jesus, Paul – in short, the events surrounding the gospel.

Part 7 – Revelation as Personal

When the Word of God reveals the grand truth of personal salvation – that revelation to an individual person that results in knowledge of the Living and True God – Scripture tends to use the greatest of historical illustrations and the most magnificent of metaphors. To communicate properly the glorious nature of redemptive work (which the Scriptures refer to as “calling”), it is as if the Bible spares no imagery to communicate the power, glory, and splendor of God’s sovereign act in delivering a sinner from death to life. It is both glory and sweetness that meet when a sinner is freed from the bondage of sin. As Colossians 1:13-14 declares; “Who (God) has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (lit. “Son of His love”): In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

The subject of gracious forgiveness and pardon is sweet in ways without number. For Peter, it is the sovereign act; “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jonah: for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:17). For the apostle Paul, it is eternal sovereignty; “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me...” (Galatians 1:15-16). With the seller of purple, Lydia, it is a simple yet profound; “whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of by the apostle Paul” (Acts 16:14).

With the saints as a whole, the Bible witness comes to each as Thessalonians speaks; “For our gospel came not in words only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance” (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5). For the Corinthians, Paul draws on the power of creation as he speaks of the grace that came to them: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness [lit. “who said ‘let there be light’”], has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

And all of this mighty work is the work of the Son: “All things are delivered unto me of My Father: and no man knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomever the Son will reveal him.” (Matthew 11:27). It is the Son alone who declares the Father (John 1:18). He who has seen the Son has seen the Father (John 14:9), and it is Christ and Christ alone who makes the Father known (John 17:6). All this is because He is the Son, He is in the bosom of the Father and can thus declare Him (John 1:18). Jesus alone can make the astounding statement “*I have known thee*” (John 17:25). The doctrine of knowing God is a work of Jesus through the Spirit: John 17:3 – “That they might (should) know Thee.”

Conclusion

God must reveal Himself, or man cannot know God nor the truths regarding God. This permanent revelation for man is in His Word – the

Bible. But it is not just truth understood, but a relationship with the Living Savior that is experienced. The Gospel is the good new of reconciliation between God and His creatures – individual creatures. Each Christian, being born again, walks and journeys in this world with God as his own Father. He is God’s child, and, and Christ said in John 10:3, “He calls His own sheep *by name*.”

Part 8 – Jesus Christ, the Center of All Divine Revelation

The Bible is a book about Jesus Christ. Of all errors in the act of reading and/or teaching the Scriptures, there is none greater than to read/teach in a way that makes ethics, morality, history, or any other theme rival the preeminence of Jesus Christ in the Book of books. As Jesus Himself said to the detractors of his day, “[You] Search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: *and they are they which testify of me*” (John 5:39).

Throughout the length and breadth of the New Testament, whereas the Jews saw history and revelation and culminating in Judaism, the law, etc., the Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ is the center of history, the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament, the prophetic, priest, and kingship of Israel’s history; in short, all of Revelation and truth as revealed by God from Adam to Malachi.

In the gospels, Luke quotes our Lord on the road to Emmaus; “And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He expounded in all the Scriptures the things *concerning Himself*.” Later, “These are the words I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, *concerning Me*.” (Luke 24:27,44). Nathaniel, in John 1:45, states; “We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write...” Jesus spoke condemnation to the leaders of His day for not recognizing this; “For had you believed Moses, you would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.” (John 5:46).

One could go straight through the authors and books of the New Testament and find the identical witness. Peter proclaims in Acts; “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that followed after, *as many as have spoken*, have likewise foretold of these days (i.e. days of the Messiah),” (Acts 3:24). Stephen, in the first great message after Pentecost, preached on the whole history of Israel and the Old Testament revelation, concluding with, “which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted... which showed before the coming of the Just One,” (Acts 7:52). Romans follows suit in Paul’s introduction; “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ... which He (God) promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,” (Romans 1:1-2). Note in Romans chapter nine how all Israel’s blessings culminate in Christ: “Who are Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption... glory... covenants... law... service, and promises... of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen,” (Romans 9:4-5). Paul finishes this culminating idea of Christ by stating in Romans 15:8 that Christ came “to confirm the promises made to the fathers.”

Note the centrality and pervasiveness of Jesus Christ and His work in flipping through the New Testament, in particular when it comes to *time and types*: Corinthians, “But of Him (God) are you in Christ...who is made...wisdom...righteousness...sanctification...redemption,” (1 Corinthians 1:30); Galatians, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His

Son,” (Galatians 4:4); Ephesians, “...mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit,” (Ephesians 3:4-5).

Part 8a – Jesus Christ, the Center of All Divine Revelation – Time, Promise and Fulfillment

In the Bible, there is a clear pattern of promise – fulfillment as Scripture moves from Genesis to Revelation. Genesis speaks of a promised descendant, both to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:16) and to Abraham (Genesis 12:3). He would be a King from one of Jacob’s son’s, Judah.

Note as we move historically through history, and through the Word, more writers affirm with more detail this coming redeemer “Seed” – whether in statement of in type/illustration. In Exodus, there is the introduction of the High Priest and his garments, as well as the tabernacle he was to minister at. The New Testament sees this clearly in Christ as He “tabernacled” among men (John 1:14), and was the Great High Priest, (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Exodus and Deuteronomy see Christ as the one fulfilling the law of God (Romans 10:4), and being the antitype of the sacrificial animals of Leviticus as well as the heifer of Numbers 19, the bronze serpent of Numbers 21, and the cities of Refuge delineated in Numbers 35. Most noteworthy, Jesus is the fulfillment of the magnificent prophetic quote by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18: “The Lord your God will raise up unto thee **a prophet** from the midst of thee...unto Him ye shall hearken” – a quote we find given by Peter relating to Christ in the book of Acts 3:22-23.

The fact that Christ is central in the Bible is as basic as genealogies. That Christ would be the seed of Adam-Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-Judah arises in the book of Ruth, where the truth of Christ being the seed of David (Matthew 1:1 “Christ, the Son of David”), is begun innocuously in Ruth as the book ends – where we find Ruth’s husband Boaz: “ Boaz begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David,” whose Lord according to Psalm 110 is Jesus Christ (Psalm 110:1).

Samuel’s words point to Christ as Peter states in Acts 3:24, “Yea, all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after...foretold of these day (e.g. days of Christ).” In I and II Kings, we have Elijah’s life, a man who with Moses bore witness to their King, the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 17:1ff; and in 2 Chronicles, the summery last martyr, Zacharias, our Lord refers to when reflecting on the depravity of the generation He ministered to (Luke 11:51).

Job knew that “his redeemer lived” (Job 19:25); from Psalms, David knew that God would raise Christ as well (“neither will you let your Holy one see corruption” – Psalm 16:10). Solomon wrote Proverbs (over 3000 of them) as well as Ecclesiastes, yet a greater than Solomon appeared in the first century (Matthew 12:42).

It didn’t matter what book of the Old Testament or at what time the prophets spoke, Jesus Christ was the apex of their prophecy. It could be Isaiah and the virgin birth, the “Child born, the Son given,” or the suffering servant – the object was Christ (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 53:1-12). It could be the One called “The Lord our Righteousness” from Jeremiah 23:6; it could be the “appearance of a

Man” with the Glory of the Lord from Ezekiel 1:26-28; it could be Daniel’s “one like the Son of God” in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:23-25). It is Christ from the beginning of Genesis to the End of the Old Testament.

Even as the Old Testament closes with the 12 Minor Prophets, Christ is everywhere. Whether Hosea, “Out of Egypt I have called my Son (Hosea 11:1, cf. Matthew 2:15); Jonah, “Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights; (Jonah 1:17, cf. Matthew 12:40); or Micah, “But thou Bethlehem...out of thee shall He come forth...a ruler” (Micah 5:2, cf. Matthew 2:1).

Thus, when the history moves from Old Testament to New Testament, a trumpet of fulfillment is sounded loud and clear, to let all Israel and the nations know that the 39 books of the /old Testament have reached the goal for which they were all along written: Mark 1:15; “The time **is fulfilled**, the kingdom of God is at hand”; In Luke 4, Our Lord reads in the synagogue from Isaiah 61:1-3: “This day, this Scripture **is fulfilled** in your ears.” Again, when the Holy Law that God gave to Israel was the subject, our Lord states in Matthew 5:18, “I [have come] **to fulfill** [the law].”

This is why the Bible talks of the “**fullness** of time” (Galatians 4:4), because the great era of consummation had dawned with the advent of Christ. The writers and speakers of the New Testament are so clear and bold as to speak of the era of Christ as “the time of reformation” and “restoration” (Hebrews 9:10; Acts 3:21)

In Christ, Old Testament shadows are fulfilled (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 10:1), types (Romans 5:14), figures (Hebrews 9:9), patterns (Hebrews 8:5). Christ is the promised Priest-King of Zechariah 6:12-13, the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15-18, in other words, He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the End, the All in All of Revelation. All of the Bible points forward to Him whether type, shadow, or promise; and all New Testament exposition expounds and centers in Christ.

Part 8b – Jesus Christ, the Center of All Divine Revelation –
Witness to the Centrality of Christ
– From the Book of Acts –

The content of witness in the book of Acts, and the content of the messages of the early church was **Christ**, and Him alone. Here is a selection from the book, and the preaching of the saints and apostles (Acts chapters 1-28). Truly when the Word went forth, first to last, the content was “Christ, and Him crucified,” (1 Corinthians 2:2).*

*Just as a point of interest, when the gospel message was proclaimed, the idea of “God loves you,” or similar words being a part of that message, is foreign to Acts. Indeed, the word(s) “love/loves/loved” etc. are not found **once** in the entire book as part of the apostolic message/gospel!!

Acts 2:36 – “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

3:26 – “Unto you first (Israel) God, having raised up His Servant Christ, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquity.

4:12 – “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”

5:31 – “Him (Christ) did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.”

5:42 – “and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

7:52 – “Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them that showed before the coming of the Righteous one.”

8:5 – “And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them Christ.”

9:20 – “And straightway in the synagogues he (Paul) proclaimed Jesus, that He was the Christ.”

10:36 – “The word which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all).”

11:20 – “But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spoke unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.”

13:38 – “Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this Man (Christ) is proclaimed unto you the remission.”

15:11 – “But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.”

16:31 – “And they said ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your house.’”

17:2-3 – “And Paul...went in unto them...opening and alleging that it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead.”

18:5 – “But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.”

19:4 – “And Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus.’”

20:21 – “...testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

22:14-15 – “And he said, ‘the God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous one...for you shall be a witness for Him’”

23:11 – “And the night following the Lord stood by him (Paul), and said, ‘Be of good cheer: for as you have testified of Me at Jerusalem, so you must bear witness of Me at Rome.’”

24:24 – “But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jew, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus.”

26:16-18 – “to make you a minister and a witness,...to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may received forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified in me.”

28:23 – “...persuading them concerning Jesus both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets.”

28:30-31 – “Then... Paul received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and things which concern Jesus Christ.”

If Acts may be summarized from Paul’s statement to the Greeks at Corinth, when it came to preaching the Gospel and its contents, Paul, as all other Christians, “Determined not to know [and preach] anything among you, save Christ and Him crucified,” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Part 8c – Jesus Christ, the Center of All Divine Revelation –
Superiority of Christ to All Previous to Him
– From the Book of Matthew/Hebrews –

Hebrews is written to contrast the Old Covenant and its laws/priesthood/tabernacles – the center of Jewish religion – with the final laws/priesthood etc. of the New Covenant. In a single verse, the writer of Hebrews sums up this contrast of Sinai to Calvary when he writes, “In that He says a new covenant (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34, Calvary), He has made the first old (e.g. Sinai). Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13). In a word, the writer is expounding the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old Covenant. Just one example of the superiority of the New Covenant contrasted with the Old, from Hebrews 10:11-12, “and every priest stands daily offering and ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man (e.g. Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”

Note then all the ways this superiority is expressed in Hebrews:

Christ – Superior – “So much **better than angels**,” Hebrews 1:4

Christ – Superior – “Jesus made a surety of a **better covenant**,” “Mediator of a better covenant,” Hebrews 7:22; 8:6

Christ – Superior – “Covenant, which was established on **better Promises**,” Hebrews 8:6

Christ – Superior – “the heavenly things with **better sacrifices**,” Hebrews 9:23

Christ – Superior – “a **better and more enduring substance**,” Hebrews 10:34

Christ – Superior – “they desire a **better country**,” Hebrews 11:16

Christ – Superior – “they might obtain a **better resurrection**,” Hebrews 10:35

Christ – Superior – “God having **provided some better thing** for us,” Hebrews 11:40

Christ – Superior – “Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the **blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things**,” Hebrews 12:24

Christ Greater than:

Christ – Greater – Sabbath, Matt 12:8

Christ – Greater – Temple, Matt 12:6

Christ – Greater – Solomon, Matt 12:42

Christ – Greater – Jonah, Matt 12:41

**Part 8d – Jesus Christ, the Center of All Divine Revelation –
Christ, the Substance to Old Testament Shadows/Types**

Incense – Ephesians 5:2, “Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.”

There is this symbol of sweet perfume as God gave direction for the tabernacle and its attending services and sacrifices. One of these was the incense. It was to be perpetual incense before the Lord (Exodus 30:9). It was to communicate to Israel that the sacrifices were sweet and pleasant in the eyes of the Lord who commanded them. Of course the sacrifices themselves meant nothing to God. It was only that in the sweetness of the picture God saw in the offering of Christ God’s only begotten for sinners. The aroma that arose was of God’s Son and His (Christ’s) free-will offering according to the Father’s command to lay down His life for the sheep. This is why the picture of incense filling the place of the mercy-seat. All these spoke to the effectual blood of atonement which would not just cover, but remove the sin and guilt of believers. This is what was so incense-sweet.

Bread/Manna – John 6:35, “Jesus said unto them, “I am the bread of life.”

In John chapter six, Jesus brings the Jews face to face with a clear, historical and irrefutable fact about their vaunted story of the supernatural bread, the manna – “Your Fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead,” (John 6:49).

Then, in multiple places, Christ put Himself above such bread... “the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”... “I am the bread of life; he that comes to me shall never hunger”... “I am the bread of life”... “This is the bread that comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die”... “This is the bread which came down from heaven...he that eats of this bread shall live forever”... (John 6:33, 35, 48, 50, 58). How often the Jews of Jesus’ day, expressing the thinking of current Judaism, gloried in the manna, or the Temple glory, or the Passover, only to have the Savior make statements that directly stated or indirectly implied... a greater than the Temple is here; a greater than the manna is here; a greater than Solomon is here; a greater than the Sabbath is here; a greater than Jonah is here.

The life granted to Israel in the wilderness was through manna (which they soon tired of). But the bread that God has given from heaven, the water that God has given from heaven (John 4:14), was to partake of everlasting light. This is why when Israel saw the manna, saw the water; they were to know there was an eternal bread and water, given from above.

Mercy-seat – Romans 3:25, “Whom [Christ] God has set forth to be a propitiation (Greek: mercy-seat) by faith in His blood.”

The picture of the mercy seat in Exodus 25:17-34 is full of gospel truth – as full as any type in the Old Testament. Some of the detail of the part of the ark of the covenant located in the “Holy of Holies” was:

- 1) it was made of pure gold;
- 2) it was made of beaten gold;
- 3) this gold slab was to cover the ark of the covenant, in which was the tablets of Sinai, Aaron’s rod that budded, and a jar of manna;
- 4) part of the gold cover were two angels which looked down upon this mercy-seat, one at each end of the gold slab;
- 5) The angels overlooking the mercy-seat had wings which covered (overshadowed) the mercy-seat;
- 6) On the great Day of Atonement, only the High Priest would enter to the tabernacle and sprinkle the shed animal blood for the forgiveness and reconciliation of God to Israel. ***This meant***

7) (and the most important), God said after the details, “I shall meet with you and commune with you above the mercy-seat.”

Note all the gospel truth in the design of this mercy-seat:

- 1) this mercy seat was pure gold – and thus precious like our Lord.
- 2) It was beaten gold – and thus plain, almost rough, like our Lord, who “had no form or comeliness,” Isaiah 53:2
- 3) The mercy-seat covered three things inside the tabernacle: *First*, the Ten Commandments, which spoke to Israel of a Holy God, but thru the covenant mercy-seat – a forgiving God; *second*, the budded Rod of Aaron, which spoke to Israel of the miracle working God who restored Israel through the blood/sacrifice; *third*, the manna, which highlighted God as provider for His covenant people thru reconciliation at the mercy-seat.
- 4) Here we have Peter to explain these gold angels looking down on this mercy-seat (remember that all these images were designed by God to picture His Son and the work of redemption)... “of salvation...the Spirit of Christ which was in them [the prophets] did testify...[and] preached to you...***which things the angels desired to look into,***” (1 Peter 1:10-12). The picture is that the mercy-seat is a symbol of the gospel the angels find gloriously mysterious (e.g., the salvation of rebels), and they desired to know the answer as to how God would do such.
- 5) The overshadowing wings of the elect, holy angels re-enforce the glory and veiled solution as to how God is Just and the Justifier of Sinners.
- 6) The act and use of the mercy-seat. This was the sinner's means of reconciliation to God.

Lamb – John 1:29, “Behold, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.”

Behold! The original words of John are simple – LOOK! LOOK! There is amazement here. Especially for John the Baptist! If we look at Matthew 13, we will see how John, albeit obeying the commands given to him by God, let the world’s and his own circumstances turn his heart from faithful, obedient proclamation to unbelief. Note John 1:31: “I knew Him not (Christ Jesus): but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am come baptizing with water (to witness to Him).”

Yet, in our English Bibles, after just a few chapters, we find John the Baptist sending a message via his disciples, “Are you that one that should come, **or are we to look for another**, (Matthew 11:3)?

These words of John the Baptist must have surprised all the Jews coming to the Jordan for the baptism of repentance, and then to have John turn and point the world to Jesus, the Son of Righteousness, the Lord of Infinite Glory – who is **God’s Lamb?! And to the slaughter**, or, as Isaiah prophecies, “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before His shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth,” (Isaiah 53:7).

But we must pause, ponder, and adore. This is the lamb **of God!** God has determined in His will to do the impossible – make the unjust... just; make the unrighteous...righteous! God is going to remove the guilt of guilty man. He is going to perform a Divine act – one of those unique act that fits the words of Matthew 19:26, “With God, all things are possible.”

This is the Lamb that John proclaimed – a work/offering that was God’s pure will. LOOK! Isaiah 53:10 – Behold! Worship! What is it that occurred on the cross? What was God doing?

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him (Christ). **HE has put Him (Christ) to grief**. When You (God) make His (Christ’s) soul an offering for sin...”

This is the Lamb proclaimed to Israel at Jordan by John.

Prophet/Priest/King – “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet...,” “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! ... So He shall be a priest upon His throne...” (Deuteronomy 18:15; cf. Acts 3:22-24; Zechariah 6:12-13).

Note all the following history and historical figures that meet in Christ or speak towards Christ. These three offices were the anointed offices of Israel under the covenant of Sinai (1 Kings 1:34; 19:16).

How many great men of Israel held two of the three anointed offices of prophet, priest, and king: David, king and prophet; Ezekiel, priest and prophet; Melchisedek, priest and king? But in Christ, these three offices meet in an ultimate separation and anointing of God with the Spirit at Christ’s baptism (Matthew 3:14ff). Christ the Final Priest – not after Aaron but an

untransferable priesthood after Melchisedek (Psalm 110:4; cf. Hebrews 5:1-5; 7:24). Christ the Final Prophet – not like the piecemeal prophets/prophecies of men of old (Hebrews 1:1-2). Christ the Final King – the everlasting King with an everlasting kingdom (Acts 2:26-36; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44-45).

Just in the book of Hebrews, we have Christ as Prophet/Priest/King. Note: “God, who...spoke in times past...has in these last days spoken to us by His Son;” We have such a high priest, who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens,” (Hebrews 1:1-2; 8:1)

Light – “Let there be light,” (Genesis 1:3).

From Genesis to Revelation, when light is the theme, the redemptive work of the Savior immediately comes to mind – “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Further, “the people that sat in darkness saw great light” (Matthew 4:16); “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus” (2 Corinthians 4:6); “His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Christ is the one that gives light to every man (John 1:9), and it is the light that brings life (John 1:4). All the images of light and sight meet in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. His light IS life for man.

Sabbath – Matthew 11:28, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

I would ask the reader – if they do not see the Sabbath related to Christ but rather to creation – to review the order of revelation given in Exodus chapters 25-31. Note the progression: *Exodus 25, the tabernacle*, “And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain (Exodus 25:40; cf. Hebrews 9:5); *Exodus 26, tabernacle details*; *Exodus 27, the altar of offerings*; *Exodus 28, the Priesthood of Aaron, his garments, and his offerings* (Exodus 28-29; cf. Hebrew 5:1-5); *Exodus 30, the altar of incense*; *Exodus 31, The Sabbath* (Exodus 31; cf. Hebrews 4:1-11).

One can see that Exodus 25-30 bespeaks of the typical redemption, from the types of tabernacle-sacrifice-priesthood, to chapter 31 – the redemptive type/doctrine of the Sabbath! In other words, this points to the fact that the Sabbath was part of the types that pointed to the antitype: Christ’s incarnation (the tabernacle), priesthood (Aaron), cross (offerings), and redemptive rest (*Sabbath!*).

This is no doubt why the recounting of the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy 5 (on the second table) links the Sabbath with Jewish redemption – the Exodus from Egypt. This is because the exodus points to the deliverance wrought by Christ at Calvary.

Exodus – Luke 9:31, “Who (Moses and Elijah) appeared in glory, and spoke of His (Christ’s) decease (Greek: exodus) which He should accomplish in Jerusalem.”

As spoken above, the redemption of Israel from the bondage in Egypt speaks directly to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, if only for the fact that the last Passover – (“and He (Christ) said to them, ‘With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’”, Luke 22:15) – is turned into the first Lord's Supper; (Take this and divide it among yourselves...This is my Body which is given for you,” Luke 22:17,19).

The remembrance of Egyptian bondage/deliverance is replaced by a greater bondage/deliverance – that of sin (John 8:42-44) and the freedom from its rule (Romans 6:16-15-17, 20-22).

Refuge – “cities of refuge,” (Numbers 35:6, 11, 13-15, 25-28, 32). In Israel, there was a law that allowed revenge/justice for the death of kin. But with this, there were also cities of refuge available as sanctuaries for accidental slayings so that the family “revenger” could not slay the party that had killed accidentally.

But the justice and wrath of God against sin has no refuge. The Word proclaims wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, (Romans 1:18). Note: “he who believes not the Son, the *wrath of God* abides upon him;” “we [are] all...by nature the *children of wrath*,” and lest we think this is God, but not Christ, Scripture is unafraid of the phrase “*the wrath of the Lamb*,” (Revelation 6:16).

But we have a refuge (Hebrews 6:18). It is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a city where mercy through justice reigns. It is not that God has turned from justice to mercy; but through Christ, God “is just (e.g. righteous) and the justifier (e.g. He who declares righteous) of him who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26).

Passover – “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night...and...execute judgment. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses...When I see the blood, I will pass over you,” (Exodus 12:12-13)

1 Corinthians 5:7, “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

God was to go through the land of Egypt and strike down the first-born. This meant all the first-born. It was only the blood on the doorpost that prevented the Israelites from partaking of the fate of the Egyptian first-born.

But there will come a day when God will pass through the entire human race. And what shelter will there be? The blood. We are brought “nigh by the blood of Christ;” bought with “the precious blood of Christ;” washed “from our sins in His (Christ's) own blood,” (Ephesians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 1:5). God shall pass by us on that great day because the blood of Christ has cleansed us from all sin, (1 John 1:7).