

How God speaks to us today:

Tonight's question: What 3 roles from the Old Testament does Jesus fulfil in the New Testament?

Do you know that there are only two ways of learning truth? These two ways are *reason* and *revelation*, and it is impossible to discover truth without the use of both *reason* and *revelation*.

In the world today we can see that it is possible to throw out reason and to attempt to rely on revelation alone. People who do this become guilty of *fanaticism* - if we decide that reason has no value at all, then we will find ourselves behaving irrationally.

Take for example the true account of one man in England who felt the Bible was the solution to every problem in his life. He had a problem - moles were eating the vegetables in his garden. He solved his problem, or thought he did, by taking the gospel of John and reading it in the four corners of the garden, hoping thereby to eliminate the gophers.

That is an example of throwing out reason. Setting moletraps or buying a fox terrier to hunt the moles would have been much more appropriate than using revelation in this way!

It is also possible to throw out revelation and to rely on reason alone, and the results are equally disastrous.

We have discovered or reasoned how atoms work and have managed to tap huge amounts of energy from them, but we have failed completely to discover how to change man, because we have ignored revelation. Therefore the more power we have over creation the more cruel and murderous we become with this power.

Instead of solving problems, it is only increasing them. This is because we have thrown out revelation and are relying totally upon reason.

What is the definition of revelation?

Revelation is truth that we cannot know by reason.

[Read 2 Corinthians 2:8]. When referring to “*the rulers of this age*”, Paul is not talking only about kings and princes, he is talking about leaders of human thought in every realm. (*in other words, clever men like academics and theologians*)

Paul says there exists a knowledge, a secret and hidden wisdom, which God gives to men, but which none of the rulers of this age knew, because when Truth in the flesh - Jesus - stood before them, they did not recognize Him.

These men thought Jesus was nothing but a worthless nuisance, and deserved nothing but a criminal's death. They crucified Jesus, *because they had thrown out revelation*

and were clinging only to the power of their own mental reasoning.

Simply put, *revelation is really Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit.* [Read 2 Timothy 3:16a]

Revelation did not originate with man, but man is only the channel it has come through. [Read 1 Peter 1:21] The writers of the New Testament sat down and wrote letters and expressing their feelings and their ideas in the most natural manner, but the Holy Spirit worked through them to guide and choose the very words that express God's thoughts to men. This is the marvelous, secret, and hidden wisdom

But the Bible is still totally worthless and useless to us if it is not illuminated by the Holy Spirit. We know it is possible to read the Bible and never get anything from it. So revelation is not found merely by reading the Bible. It is the Bible illuminated, interpreted, by the Holy Spirit. And it takes both - the Word and the Spirit.

So what is the purpose of all revelation? [Read Ephesians 4:13] It is in order that we may come to "*mature manhood*" in Christ. Later on in this passage Paul goes on to say that it is in order that we will stop being babies, playing around with the ABC's of life.

Revelation is there in order that we will begin to grasp life with such vigor of purpose that we begin to grow as God intended us to grow, until we come at last to the full expression of Jesus Christ, living in us. The purpose of all of revelation is to fulfill God's original intention in creating the world and the universe in the first place - that we might be a body wholly filled and flooded with God himself.

The Old Testament's part in this, as we saw in our last study, is essentially that of preparation. The purpose of the Old Testament is to awaken desire in our hearts, to create a sense of anticipation.

God, through the Holy Spirit, uses the Old Testament articulate (*verduidelik*) this hunger, so that we realize what it is we desire. We don't know what it is we want, but the Old Testament has the ability to focus and to help us see what it is we are looking for. As we open the Psalms and read them, they speak to us out of the deep experience of the human heart, and we say, "*That is what I want. That is the need of my life and heart.*" This is why the Old Testament is so essential to us!

This is why many Christians today who feel the Old Testament is irrelevant, and read only the New Testament, can only go so far in grasping the fullness that is in Jesus Christ - because their hearts are not adequately prepared. *Think for a moment if we all got married as soon as we came out of school without any preparation for life what a disaster it would be?* This is why we need so deeply and continuously the ministry of the Old Testament.

If the Old Testament *prepares*, then the New Testament *fulfills*. It is designed to meet the needs created and expressed by the Old Testament.

[Read John 7:37 & John 6:58]

What is Jesus promising here?

[Read Matthew 11:28 & John 8:12b]

All the needs the human heart are met in Jesus. The purpose of the New Testament is to be a channel by which the Holy Spirit, makes the living Jesus Christ real to our hearts.

Remember last week what we read in **Heb 1:1-2a**? The Old Testament is incomplete - it never gives us a final message - but the New Testament gives us the answer to all the yearning and hungering we find in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 2:8b sums up the whole New Testament in one brief phrase. Here it states that all the earth was to be subjected to man, and that God intended that man should be in dominion over it.

That is an accurate statement of the present situation. As we look around, we do not yet see much of anything in subjection to man. This is the problem, isn't it? Why don't things work out the way we think they should? Why is there always a fly in the ointment? The stamp of rebellion and futility is upon everything we touch. This is the present situation.

But the answer comes in **Hebrews 2:9a** - the answer is that: *“but we see Jesus.”* We do not yet see everything in subjection. But what we do see is the One who will make it possible. We see Jesus. And in the New Testament, He stands out on every page!

(Next time: What is the New Testament all about?)