

Lesson Six

Review from Previous Lessons: We have seen that revelation is distinguished from information by several identifying traits; and that the Holy Spirit is a foundational linking Agent who indexes the unseen realm of God, connecting the unseen to the seen.

The Problem: Many Christians are unclear about the role of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives – especially since they do not want to “overstep” in talking about Him. In addition, many do not have a clear conception of His foundational role and relationship to revelation.

Why the problem persists in churches: Many people believe that others have “gone overboard” in talking about the Holy Spirit and think this has led to a very subjective form of Christianity. Others are concerned that we are ignoring His role in our lives but don’t know what to do about it.

Underlying Assumptions As Expressed in Everyday Language:

1. Although Pentecostal believers have many qualities I wish I could emulate, I’m just not comfortable with the way they speak about the Holy Spirit.
2. I’m not clear about the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life today.
3. Isn’t the Holy Spirit the epitome of the unseen? So how can He be linking the seen to the unseen?
4. I thought the Bible was the only form of revelation we have today.
5. I am not sure of what the role of the Holy Spirit is today in giving revelation.

Background Reading Before Teaching This Lesson: Take each of the first four manifestations of revelation listed in the lesson material. From your own Bible study (use a concordance if necessary), make a list of supporting scriptures for each point.

The Lesson:

- 1) This lesson deals with an element of the 3-D model, the second connecting layer which we could refer to as the second stacked index: revelation. Closely associated with and built upon the action of the person of the Holy Spirit is the process we refer to as revelation. Revelation can be defined as information which can only be known through the communication of God. Unlike information, and intuition which has its origin in the mind of man and his feelings, revelation is that which is known that could not be known unless God were to reveal it. Generally we understand revelation to have five main manifestations:
- 2) **General revelation.** Romans 1:20 demonstrates that all of creation can be seen as a broad field of communication about certain attributes of God. The psalmist spoke of how the heavens "declare" the glory of God, and

Paul elaborates on this, noting that "since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." (Again: reality reflects its Creator.)

- 3) **Mankind as revelation** of certain aspects of God. When God created man, He created Him in His own image (Gen 1:26). Those attributes of man which correspond to those of God (communication, virtues, etc.) can be said to represent Him in limited ways.
- 4) Historically, God has **communicated** in dreams, impressions on the mind, advice from godly friends, and other ways about personal circumstances. This must be regarded as revelation because it comes from God; but because we are fallen creatures we always measure it against the inspired written Word.
- 5) In a sense, **Jesus Christ** functions as an index of revelation. John declared, "No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (Jn 1:18.) One of the most overt functions that Jesus claimed for Himself was that of revealing the Father, speaking His words, and thus revealing His will. Thus we can properly speak of Jesus, the Word Incarnate, as Himself being revelation.
- 6) The fifth and most reliably accessible form of revelation is through the **written Word**, the Bible. It is this form of revelation on which we will concentrate in the stacked indices; and which we will examine in detail.
- 7) Second Peter 1:20-21 shows the way that the Holy Spirit worked in the process of revealing the mind of God to the ones who wrote it down for their contemporaries and succeeding generations: "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Again, this scripture shows the asymmetrical, noncommutative nature of revelation as well as the foundational role of the Holy Spirit in linking the two sides of reality.
- 8) That is why it is so essential to give the Bible our full attention, and to always look to it for information about every aspect of our lives. It is the mind of God in written form. If one wants to know what pleases Him, what angers Him, what works in a relationship with Him and what does not; if one wants to know what works in human relationships and what does not, then we have in this written representational form a manifestation of the psychology of the mind of God. Again, if one wants to know how that was literally played out in earth life, look to the life of Jesus, who declared that He had nothing to say and nothing to demonstrate that did not come from the mind and will of the Father, as the exact representation of Him (Col 1:15).
- 9) There is much, much more in the Bible about the way that revelation or the word of the Lord links the unseen purposes of God to the material world. Suffice it to say that its apex of point of contact with God, the Bible, is an essential, living, dynamic and complete connection to the unseen side of reality. (In fact, if your 3-D model were printed on stiff

enough paper, you could actually lay the Bible itself across the top of the model to show how it functions as a link between the seen and the unseen.)

Questions for Discussion with Class

1. In what way could it be said that intuition and information are the same?
2. What are the five ways that revelation is manifested? With which of the five are you most familiar? Which is least familiar to you?
3. If we think of the Bible as the representation of a “fact,” what would you say that “fact” would be? Support your answer with Scripture.
4. In what way could you use the 3-D model to explain the Bible to a new Christian?
5. Can the class list other scriptures which demonstrate that revelation must be based on the work of the Holy Spirit?
6. How would your interactions with Scripture have been different in the past if you had understood revelation as a link between the seen and the unseen? Specifically, how would you have viewed the Bible differently?

“Yeah, but...”

The existence of the Bible isn't enough, is it? What is our part in all of this?

Next week – some solid Biblical information about the most basic way we can participate in linking the unseen to our own lives.