FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

BIBLIOLOGY

The Doctrine of the Word of God

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION, WHY BIBLIOLOGY MATTERS

Lesson 2

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

Divine Communication and the Nature of Revelation

Key Text: Hebrews 1:1–4

> *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*
>
> **2 Timothy 3:16–17, NASB 1995**

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Introduction

In our first lesson, we established that Bibliology (the doctrine of Scripture) is the foundational doctrine upon which all other theology must be built. We saw that without a Word from God, humanity is left in darkness, possessing enough knowledge through general revelation to be held accountable, but never enough to be saved. We concluded that the Bible is not a luxury for the theologically curious but an absolute necessity for any creature who would know the living God.

Now we press deeper into the foundation. If the Bible is indeed the Word of God, as we confess with full conviction that it is, then the most important question we can ask is this: What kind of God is it who has given us this Book? The answer to this question shapes everything. The Bible is not a book that fell from heaven unattached to the character and purposes of its Author. It is, rather, the natural and necessary expression of a God who is, in His very essence, a communicating God: a God who speaks.

This is the great and glorious truth that sets the Christian faith apart from every form of deism, agnosticism, and religious speculation: our God is not silent. He has not wound up the universe like a clock and walked away. He has not hidden Himself behind an impenetrable veil of mystery, leaving us to grope after Him in philosophical darkness. No, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a God who has opened His mouth and spoken. And what He has spoken, He has caused to be written down for our instruction, our comfort, and our salvation.

In this lesson, we will explore the nature of divine revelation itself: its roots in the very being of the triune God, its progressive unfolding across redemptive history, its manifold modes, its glorious culmination in Jesus Christ, and its permanent preservation in the written Scriptures. We begin not with the Book, but with the God who stands behind it, for the doctrine of Scripture is, at its deepest level, a doctrine about God Himself.

I. GOD AS A SPEAKING GOD: COMMUNICATION ROOTED IN THE NATURE OF THE TRINITY

The fact that God speaks is not incidental to who He is. It is not as though God, having existed in silence for eternity, one day decided that it might be useful to communicate with His creatures. On the contrary, speech and communication are rooted in the very nature of God as He is in Himself, that is, in His eternal, triune being.

This is a point of immense theological significance, and it is one that only Trinitarian theology can adequately account for. The God of the Bible is not a solitary monad, existing in lonely isolation before the creation of the world. He is one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who have existed from all eternity in a fellowship of perfect love, perfect knowledge, and perfect communication. Before a single creature drew breath, before the stars were flung into the heavens, before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father was speaking to the Son, and the Son was responding to the Father, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

We catch a glimpse of this intra-Trinitarian communication in several places in Scripture. In the creation account itself, God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26, NASB 1995). The church has long understood this plural deliberation within the Godhead as a reflection of the triune counsel. In the Psalms, the Father addresses the Son: "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Psalm 110:1, NASB 1995). In the Gospel of John, the Son speaks of the glory He shared with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5), and declares that the Father has loved Him "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

What this means for the doctrine of Scripture is profound: when God speaks to us, He is doing something that is consistent with and flows from His eternal nature. Communication is not foreign to God. It is not an accommodation that sits uneasily upon His being. The God who speaks to us in Scripture is the God who has been speaking, within Himself, among the persons of the Trinity, from all eternity. His Word to us is an overflow of the Word that He is in Himself.

This is why the opening of John's Gospel is so theologically loaded:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."*
>
> **John 1:1–3, NASB 1995**

The "Word" (Logos) is not merely a title for Jesus. It is a theological declaration that the second person of the Trinity is, in His very person, the self-expression of God. The Father's eternal act of self-knowledge and self-communication is the Son. And the Son's mission into the world, the incarnation, is the supreme act of divine speech: God expressing Himself in human flesh. The Bible exists because God is, by nature, a communicating God. A God who does not speak would never have produced a Scripture. The Bible is the written echo of the eternal conversation of the Trinity, now addressed to creatures made in God's image.

II. THE LOGOS THEOLOGY OF JOHN 1:1–3: THE WORD AS ETERNAL ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

The prologue of John's Gospel is one of the most theologically dense passages in all of Holy Scripture, and it provides the deepest foundation for the doctrine of revelation. When John writes, "In the beginning was the Word," he is making three astounding claims simultaneously.

A. The Eternality of the Word

The phrase "In the beginning was the Word" deliberately echoes Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But notice the difference. Genesis says, "In the beginning God created," pointing to the origin of the created order. John says, "In the beginning was the Word," pointing to what already existed before creation began. The Greek verb ēn (ἦν) is the imperfect tense of eimi ("to be"), indicating continuous existence in the past without a point of origin. In other words, when the beginning began, the Word already was. He did not come into being at creation; He was there before it, existing from all eternity. The Word is not a creature. He is uncreated, eternally generated by the Father, as the Nicene Creed confesses: "begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

B. The Distinction of the Word

"And the Word was with God." The Greek preposition pros (πρός), with the accusative, carries the sense of being "face to face with" or "in relationship toward." It indicates not merely proximity but personal communion. The Word was not merely alongside God in a spatial sense; He was in an eternal, face-to-face relationship with the Father. This is a clear indication of personal distinction within the Godhead. The Word is not the Father but is a distinct person who exists in intimate, eternal fellowship with the Father. Here is the seed of Trinitarian theology: one God, yet genuine personal distinction within that one divine being.

C. The Deity of the Word

"And the Word was God." The third clause is the most direct and stunning. The Word is not merely with God; the Word is God. The absence of the definite article before theos (θεός) in the Greek does not indicate that the Word is a god (as the Jehovah's Witnesses erroneously translate it) but rather that theos here is qualitative: the Word possesses the full nature, essence, and attributes of deity. He is fully God in every sense. John is affirming both that the Word is personally distinct from the Father and that the Word is fully and completely divine. This is orthodox Trinitarianism in seed form, centuries before the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople would give it creedal expression.

The theological implications for the doctrine of Scripture are immense. If the eternal Son of God is Himself the Logos, the self-expression of God, then every act of divine revelation participates in and flows from the Son's eternal identity. When God speaks, He speaks in the Son and through the Son. The written Word of Scripture and the incarnate Word of Christ are not two unrelated realities. They are two expressions of the same self-revealing God, the same Logos who was in the beginning with God and who was God. This is why to dishonor the Scriptures is, ultimately, to dishonor Christ Himself. And this is why to love the Word written is to love the Word incarnate.

III. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN REVELATION AND DISCOVERY

One of the most fundamental distinctions in all of theology, and one that is increasingly obscured in our cultural moment, is the distinction between revelation and discovery. These two concepts represent entirely different epistemological frameworks, and confusing them leads to devastating theological consequences.

Discovery is a human activity. It is the process by which finite creatures, using the faculties of reason, observation, and experimentation, come to understand things about the world around them. Discovery is the proper domain of science, philosophy, and human learning. In discovery, the initiative lies with the human knower. We go out and investigate. We hypothesize, test, and draw conclusions. The object of our study is passive; we are the active agents.

Revelation, by contrast, is a divine activity. It is the process by which the infinite God, in His sovereign freedom and grace, makes Himself known to creatures who could never have discovered Him on their own. In revelation, the initiative lies entirely with God. He is the active agent; we are the recipients. We do not find God; God finds us. We do not ascend to heaven to bring God down; God descends to us in the condescension of His self-disclosure.

This distinction is not merely academic. It has profound pastoral and practical implications. If knowledge of God is a matter of discovery, then the brightest minds, the best philosophers, and the most accomplished religious seekers will be the ones who know God best. Salvation becomes an intellectual achievement. But if knowledge of God is a matter of revelation, then even the simplest believer can know God truly. This is not because of their own intellectual capacity but because God has graciously stooped to make Himself known. As our Lord Himself declared:

> *"I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."*
>
> **Matthew 11:25–26, NASB 1995**

The knowledge of God is not the reward of human effort; it is the gift of divine grace. And the primary instrument through which that gift is given is the Holy Scripture. This is why the humblest grandmother with her well-worn Bible may know God more truly and more deeply than the most celebrated professor of philosophy: she possesses what no amount of human reasoning can produce, a Word from God.

IV. PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: GOD'S UNFOLDING SELF-DISCLOSURE ACROSS REDEMPTIVE HISTORY

Although God's revelation is unified and consistent, it was not given all at once. Rather, God chose to reveal Himself progressively, that is, in stages over the course of redemptive history, with each successive stage building upon, clarifying, and deepening what came before. This is what theologians call progressive revelation.

Progressive revelation does not mean that God's earlier revelations were false and were later corrected by truer ones. God does not contradict Himself. What it means is that God's earlier revelations were partial (genuine and true as far as they went) and were subsequently completed by later, fuller disclosures. The relationship between earlier and later revelation is not one of correction but of completion; not contradiction but crescendo.

Consider the analogy of the dawn. The first light of morning is not false light; it is genuine light, and it genuinely illumines the landscape. But it is not the full light of noonday. As the sun rises higher, more and more of the landscape becomes visible. Features that were obscured in the half-light of dawn are revealed in the full brightness of midday. So it is with God's revelation: the early stages of redemptive history progressively illumined more and more of God's redemptive purposes until, at last, the full light of day broke upon the world in the coming of Jesus Christ.

The author of Hebrews captures this progressive structure with magnificent precision:

> *"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world."*
>
> **Hebrews 1:1–2, NASB 1995**

Notice the deliberate contrasts the author draws. The earlier revelation came "long ago"; the final revelation comes "in these last days." The earlier revelation came "to the fathers" through "the prophets"; the final revelation comes "to us" through "His Son." The earlier revelation came "in many portions and in many ways," that is, fragmentarily and through diverse modes and instruments; the final revelation comes in one supreme, all-encompassing Person. The movement is from the many to the One, from shadows to substance, from promise to fulfillment, from partial to complete.

This progressive pattern is essential for understanding the unity and diversity of Scripture. The Bible is not a flat book in which every page carries equal redemptive-historical weight. It is an unfolding drama, a story that moves from creation to fall, from fall to promise, from promise to fulfillment, and from fulfillment to consummation. And at every stage, God is speaking, revealing more of Himself, more of His plan, more of His Christ, until at last the full glory of the gospel blazes forth in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus.

V. THE MODES OF DIVINE REVELATION

Throughout redemptive history, God employed a rich variety of means to communicate His will and purposes to His people. These modes of revelation are diverse in form but unified in source: they all proceed from the same God, serve the same redemptive purpose, and point to the same Redeemer.

A. Theophanies

A theophany is a visible, temporary manifestation of God's presence to human beings. The term comes from the Greek theos ("God") and phaino ("to appear"). In the Old Testament, God appeared to His people in various forms: as a smoking oven and flaming torch passing between the pieces of Abraham's covenant sacrifice (Genesis 15:17), as the burning bush before Moses (Exodus 3:2–6), as the pillar of cloud and fire leading Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21–22), and as the glory-cloud filling the tabernacle and the temple (Exodus 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–11). Many scholars also identify the "Angel of the LORD" as a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God (a Christophany), since this figure speaks as God, is identified as God, and receives worship that belongs to God alone (Genesis 16:7–13; 22:11–18; Exodus 3:2, 6; Judges 13:3–22).

B. Dreams and Visions

God also communicated through dreams and visions given to chosen recipients. Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven (Genesis 28:12–15). Joseph received prophetic dreams of future exaltation (Genesis 37:5–11). Daniel received apocalyptic visions of world empires and the coming kingdom of God (Daniel 7–12). In the New Testament, the apostle John received the Revelation of Jesus Christ on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:1–2). God Himself distinguished this mode from the more direct communication He shared with Moses: "If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth" (Numbers 12:6–8, NASB 1995).

C. Prophetic Utterance

The most characteristic mode of Old Testament revelation was prophetic utterance, in which God placed His very words in the mouth of a chosen human spokesperson. The prophet was not a religious freelancer offering his own opinions. He was a mouthpiece of the living God, authorized and compelled to speak precisely what God had given him to say. The classic formulation of this calling is found in God's commission of Jeremiah:

> *"Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.'"*
>
> **Jeremiah 1:9, NASB 1995**

This same pattern appears in God's commission of Moses, where Aaron is appointed as Moses' spokesman with the explanation: "He shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him" (Exodus 4:16, NASB 1995). The prophetic formula "Thus says the LORD," which occurs over 3,800 times in the Old Testament, is not a literary convention. It is a claim of divine origin for the message that follows.

D. The Incarnate Word

All of these modes of revelation (theophanies, dreams, visions, and prophetic speech) were genuine and authoritative in their time. But they were also preparatory. They pointed forward to a final, climactic, and unsurpassable mode of divine self-disclosure: the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. In Jesus Christ, God did not merely send a word; He became the Word in human flesh. This is the supreme act of divine communication: God speaking not through intermediaries but in His own person, not in fragments but in fullness, not in shadows but in substance.

VI. THE CULMINATION OF REVELATION IN JESUS CHRIST

The epistle to the Hebrews opens with what is arguably the most theologically compressed sentence in the entire New Testament:

> *"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they."*
>
> **Hebrews 1:1–4, NASB 1995**

The author is making a staggering claim: Jesus Christ is God's final, definitive, and unsurpassable Word to humanity. Everything that came before was leading to Him: every theophany, every prophetic oracle, every vision, every divine act in history. He is not merely the greatest prophet; He is the One to whom all the prophets pointed. He is not merely the bearer of revelation; He is the content of revelation. In Christ, we see not merely something about God; we see God Himself.

Notice the exalted descriptions the author piles up:

- **He is the "heir of all things"**: the one for whom the entire universe exists.
- **He is the one "through whom also He made the world"**: the agent of creation, through whom all things came into being (cf. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).
- **He is "the radiance of His glory"**: the apaugasma, the outshining of the Father's own glory. The Son is the brightness that streams forth from the Father's being.
- **He is "the exact representation of His nature"**: the charactēr, the precise imprint of the Father's being. To see the Son is to see the Father (John 14:9).
- **He "upholds all things by the word of His power"**: the Son is not merely the Creator but the Sustainer, holding every atom of the universe in existence by His sovereign command.
- **He "made purification of sins"**: the supreme priestly act, the once-for-all sacrifice of Himself for the sins of His people.
- **He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"**: the session of the enthroned King, the declaration that His work is finished and His reign has begun.

Jesus Christ is the culmination of all revelation because in Him, God has said everything that needs to be said. There is no higher word, no deeper truth, no fuller disclosure to be expected. Christ is the omega point of divine speech. Every previous revelation was a road leading to Him; every subsequent proclamation of the gospel is a declaration of Him. This truth has a direct bearing on the doctrine of Scripture: if Christ is the culmination of revelation, and if the apostolic witness to Christ has been permanently preserved in the New Testament, then the canon of Scripture is closed. There is no new revelation to be expected and no further installment of divine speech that could add to what God has spoken in His Son.

VII. THE INSCRIPTURATION OF REVELATION: WHY GOD CHOSE TO COMMIT HIS WORD TO WRITING

One final question demands our attention: Why did God choose to commit His revelation to writing? God could have preserved His truth through oral tradition alone. He could have continued to speak through living prophets in every generation. But He did not. Instead, God sovereignly determined that His revelation would be inscripturated, permanently fixed in written form in the sixty-six books of the Bible. Why?

A. For Permanence and Precision

Oral tradition, however carefully guarded, is subject to alteration, embellishment, and loss over time. The written word, by contrast, provides a fixed and stable record that can be transmitted from generation to generation without corruption of content. When God commanded Moses, "Write down these words" (Exodus 34:27, NASB 1995), He was ensuring that His revelation would not be subject to the frailties of human memory but would be preserved with the precision that divine truth demands.

B. For Universality and Accessibility

A living prophet can only be in one place at one time. His voice can reach only those within earshot. But a written text can be copied, distributed, translated, and read by thousands (and eventually by millions) across every nation, language, and generation. Inscripturation is the means by which God's particular revelation to specific people at specific times became the universal possession of the church in all ages and all places. The Ethiopian eunuch, riding in his chariot far from Jerusalem, was able to read the prophet Isaiah because Isaiah's words had been committed to writing (Acts 8:28–30).

C. For Authority and Accountability

A written text serves as a public, authoritative standard against which all teaching, practice, and doctrine can be measured. Without an inscripturated revelation, there would be no fixed norm by which the church could distinguish truth from error, orthodoxy from heresy, genuine prophecy from false prophecy. The existence of a written Scripture makes it possible for the church to do what Paul commanded Timothy: "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13, NASB 1995). The written Word is the standard; all other authorities (creeds, confessions, councils, pastors, teachers) stand under it and are accountable to it.

D. For Preservation Across the Ages

God did not merely inspire His Word; He providentially preserved it. The inscripturation of revelation is the means by which God ensured that His truth would endure across millennia, surviving persecution, suppression, and the rise and fall of empires. The Scriptures have been burned by tyrants, banned by governments, ridiculed by philosophers, and attacked by critics. Yet they remain, indestructible and undiminished, because the God who inspired them is the God who preserves them. As the prophet Isaiah declared, and as the apostle Peter reaffirmed:

> *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."*
> **Isaiah 40:8, NASB 1995**

The Bible, then, is not merely a record of revelation; it is itself a revelatory act. In the inscripturation of His Word, God has given the church a permanent, authoritative, sufficient, and clear record of everything we need to know for salvation and godliness. It is the voice of the God who speaks, fixed in writing so that every generation might hear Him, know Him, love Him, and obey Him until Christ returns.

Key Text: Hebrews 1:1–4 (NASB 1995)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets

in many portions and in many ways,

in these last days has spoken to us in His Son,

whom He appointed heir of all things,

through whom also He made the world.

And He is the radiance of His glory

and the exact representation of His nature,

and upholds all things by the word of His power.

When He had made purification of sins,

He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

having become as much better than the angels,

as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Theological Terms and Definitions

Revelation	From the Latin revelatio ("unveiling"). The act of God whereby He makes Himself, His will, and His ways known to His creatures. Revelation is always a divine initiative, not a human discovery. It is distinguished into general revelation (through creation and conscience) and special revelation (through Scripture and Christ).
Logos (λόγος)	Greek for "Word." In John 1:1, it refers to the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, who is the self-expression and self-communication of God the Father. The Son is the Logos not merely in title but in essence; He is the eternal Word through whom all things were made and in whom all revelation finds its center.
Trinity	The Christian doctrine that the one true God exists eternally as three co-equal, co-eternal persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who share one undivided divine essence. The Trinity is the foundation of divine communication, as the persons of the Godhead have existed in perfect fellowship and mutual self-disclosure from all eternity.
Progressive Revelation	The theological principle that God's self-disclosure unfolded gradually across redemptive history, with each successive stage building upon, clarifying, and completing what came before. Progressive revelation does not imply that earlier revelations were false, but that they were partial, awaiting fuller disclosure, culminating in Christ.
Theophany	From the Greek theos ("God") and phaino ("to appear"). A visible, temporary manifestation of God's presence to human beings in the Old Testament (e.g., the burning bush, the pillar of cloud and fire, the glory filling the temple).
Christophany	A pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God in the Old Testament, often identified with the "Angel of the LORD" who speaks as God, is identified as God, and receives divine worship (e.g., Genesis 16:7–13; 22:11–18; Judges 13:3–22).
Inscripturation	The act of God whereby He caused His special revelation to be permanently committed to writing in the Scriptures. Inscripturation ensures the permanence, precision, universality, and authoritative transmission of God's Word across all generations.
Apaugasma (ἀπαύγασμα)	Greek for "radiance" or "effulgence." Used in Hebrews 1:3 to describe the Son's relationship to the Father's glory. The Son is not a mere reflection of God's glory but the brightness that streams forth from the Father's own being, of the same substance and the same nature.
Charactēr (χαρακτήρ)	Greek for "exact representation" or "impress." Used in Hebrews 1:3 to describe the Son as the precise imprint of the Father's nature, as a seal leaves its exact image in wax. To see the Son is to see the Father's very being perfectly expressed (cf. John 14:9).
Autographs	The original manuscripts of the biblical books as written by the inspired human authors under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit. While the original autographs no longer exist, the doctrine of inspiration applies to them in their original form, and the manuscript tradition has preserved their content with remarkable faithfulness.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that the God of the Bible is not a silent, distant deity but a God who has spoken clearly, authoritatively, and sufficiently. His speech is rooted in His eternal, triune nature: the Father has eternally spoken in the Son, and this intra-Trinitarian communication has overflowed into history in the revelation preserved for us in Scripture. We must believe that Jesus Christ is the final and supreme Word of God, and that the written Scriptures are the permanent, authoritative record of that revelation. There is no further word to be expected; in Christ and His apostolic witness, God has said all that needs to be said.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

If the infinite, self-sufficient God, who needed nothing and no one, has nonetheless chosen to open His mouth and speak to creatures of dust, then our response must be one of profound wonder and gratitude. The fact that God speaks at all is an act of sheer condescension and grace. He did not owe us a word; He gave us one. He did not have to reveal Himself; He chose to. And He did so not in a single, cryptic utterance but "in many portions and in many ways," patiently, progressively, lavishly, until at last He spoke the final Word in His own beloved Son. Let this truth kindle in your heart a deeper love for the God who speaks, and a deeper gratitude for the privilege of hearing His voice in the Scriptures.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

1. Listen to God's Word with reverence. When the Scriptures are read and preached, we are not hearing mere human opinions. We are hearing the voice of the God who speaks. Let us come to the Word with the reverence and attentiveness that befits a Word from the living God, whether in personal devotion, in family worship, or in the gathered assembly.

2. Resist the temptation to seek new revelation. Because Christ is the culmination of revelation and the Scriptures are sufficient, we must not seek additional words from God beyond what He has given in the Bible. The Spirit illumines the Word already given; He does not supplement it with new revelations. This frees us from the anxiety of needing to "hear from God" through subjective impressions and grounds us in the objective, sufficient Word.

3. Worship the God who has spoken. Revelation is not merely informational; it is relational. God speaks because He desires to be known, loved, and worshipped by His people. Let the truth of this lesson drive you not merely to intellectual assent but to adoration. The God of the universe has spoken to you. Respond with worship.

4. Proclaim the Word to others. If God has spoken, and He has, then the most urgent task on earth is to ensure that others hear what He has said. Evangelism, discipleship, and missions are all grounded in this one reality: God has spoken a saving Word in Jesus Christ, and that Word must be proclaimed to every creature.

5. Be anchored in the incarnate Word. As you read the written Word, always remember that it points you to the living Word, Jesus Christ. The Bible is not an end in itself. It is the means by which the Spirit brings you face to face with the Savior. Read the Bible to know Christ. Study the Bible to love Christ. Obey the Bible to follow Christ.

D. *For Every Season of Life*

For the one overwhelmed by the complexity of Scripture: Take heart. The same God who spoke "in many portions and in many ways" has also given you the Holy Spirit to illumine His Word (1 Corinthians 2:12–14). You do not need to understand everything at once. Trust the progressive nature of God's self-disclosure, and let your understanding grow as you sit under the faithful teaching of His Word.

For the one tempted by false teaching: Remember that all true knowledge of God flows from His self-revelation, not from human speculation. If a teaching cannot be grounded in the written Word, it is not the voice of God, no matter how impressive, popular, or emotionally compelling it may be. Test all things by Scripture (Acts 17:11).

For the one in darkness or despair: The God who spoke the universe into existence with a word is the same God who speaks comfort, hope, and promise into your darkest moments through His written Word. He has not gone silent. Open the Scriptures and hear His voice: "Fear not, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God" (Isaiah 41:10, NASB 1995).

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. Think about a time when someone's words made a profound impact on your life, for good or for ill. What made those words so powerful? How does this illustrate the significance of God choosing to reveal Himself through words?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

2. Read Hebrews 1:1–4. List every description the author gives of the Son in these verses. What does each description tell us about who the Son is?
3. Read John 1:1–3. What three things does John say about the Word (Logos) in verse 1? How does verse 3 expand on the Word's identity?
4. Read Jeremiah 1:9 and Exodus 4:15–16. How do these passages describe the relationship between God and the prophet? What does this tell us about the nature of prophetic revelation?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

5. What does it mean to say that communication is rooted in the nature of the Trinity? Why is this an important theological foundation for the doctrine of revelation?
6. Explain the distinction between revelation and discovery. Why is this distinction so important for the Christian understanding of how we know God?
7. What does the phrase "progressive revelation" mean? Give an example of how God's revelation became clearer and fuller over the course of redemptive history.
8. Why does the author of Hebrews say that God has spoken "in these last days" through His Son? What makes Christ the final and supreme Word of God?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

9. If Jesus Christ is the culmination of all revelation, how should this shape the way we read the Old Testament? How should it affect our expectations for "hearing from God" today?
10. The lesson argued that God chose to inscripturate His revelation for permanence, universality, authority, and preservation. Which of these reasons do you find most personally significant, and why?
11. Read Matthew 11:25–26. What does this passage teach about who receives the knowledge of God? How does this encourage you in your own study of Scripture?
12. The lesson closed with the assertion that "to dishonor the Scriptures is, ultimately, to dishonor Christ Himself." Do you agree? How does the connection between the written Word and the incarnate Word affect the way you handle the Bible in daily life?

Prayer Focus

Spend time in prayer as a group, praising God that He is not a silent God but a God who has spoken. Thank Him for the gift of His Son, the living Word, and for the gift of the Scriptures, the written Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your understanding of God's self-revelation and to help you treasure both the Person and the Book through which He has made Himself known. Pray for those who have not yet heard God's saving Word, and ask the Lord to open doors for the proclamation of the gospel.

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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