

Revelation

Since the Creator is necessarily distinct from creatures, only the Creator who transcends creatureliness possesses knowledge of objective truth. Therefore, creatures can know objective truth only insofar as it has been revealed by the Creator (Deut. 29:29; Ps. 145:3; Eccles. 3:11; John 16:13; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 2:7-16; Eph. 1:17-18). This Creator speaks this truth-revelation in five ways (John 17:17): the Creative Word (Nature), the Incarnate Word (Jesus), the Written Word (Bible), the Interventionist Word (Holy Spirit), and the Proclamatory Word (Event).

The **Creative Word** reveals the glory and nature of God as Creator (Ps. 19:1-2; Ps. 145:9; Rom. 1:19-20). The Creative Word is not salvific because its purpose is to drive creatures to the Creator to praise the Creator and seek further revelation from the Creator (Ps. 33:5-9; Acts 14:17; 17:25-32). Since creatures are given enough information by the Creative Word in creation to know the Creator, to reject the Creator is to be subject to the Creator's just wrath, for their rejection directs their worship to created things (idolatry) (Rom. 1:18; Gal. 4:8). The Creative Word is also an agent of the Creator's judgment (Gen. 19:23; Josh. 24:27)—judgments that are intended to lead to a knowledge of God (Ex. 14:18).

The **Incarnate Word** reveals physically the personal-relational character of the invisible Creator (Ex. 34:6-8; John 1:18; 8:19; 14:9-11; Col. 2:9). As the means by which redemption was accomplished (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:42), the Incarnate Word is the salvific basis for all revelation (Heb. 1:2-3; 1 Pet. 1:25). The Incarnate Word is the entirety of the person of Jesus, namely his birth, innocent life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension/current enthronement (John 1:14). Those who reject the Incarnate Word are subject to judgment (John 3:36; 12:48; Acts 7:51). Those who believe in the Incarnate Word receive salvation (John 3:16; 17:3).

The **Written Word** reveals the history of the Creator's redemption of creatures for the purpose of preserving an authoritative and trustworthy memory of those redemptive-events for those creatures (Ex. 17:14; Ps. 19:7-8; 33:4; 102:18; 119:142; John 21:24). As such, the Creator's revelation through Written Word is fixed (Num. 23:19; Rev. 22:18-19). Without violating the immutable nature of the Written Word, the purpose of translation can only be that creatures may read, meditate on, understand, and keep the Written Word in their own language (Deut. 30:11-14; Josh 1:8; 1 Ki. 2:3; Ezra 7:10; Neh. 8:8; Ps. 1:2; Matt. 5:17-19). As a fixed revelation, any and all future predictions described therein must occur (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam.

3:19). The Written Word is salvific on its own insofar as it pertains to the Incarnate Word (John 5:39; Jas. 1:21), and is believed (John 20:31).

The **Interventionist Word** reveals the truth of the Creator to creatures in immediate circumstances rather than through the rehearsal of memory (Ex. 34:6-8). Necessarily, the Interventionist Word revelation can claim its origin in the Creator only insofar as it is consistent with the Creator's fixed Written Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1). The Interventionist Word is revealed audibly (Gen. 2:16; 3:9-19; Ex. 19:9, 19; 1 Sm. 3:4-14; Dan. 8:16; Matt. 3:17), prophetically via the Holy Spirit (Num. 12:5-8; Ezek. 12:1; 38:17; Jer. 1:9; 18:1; Hos. 1:1; Mark 12:36; 2 Pet. 1:21), by dreams (Gen. 28:13-15; Matt. 1:20-21), or other means (Ex. 3:4; Num. 22:28). In addition to the Written Word, believers receive the Word Written on their hearts (Jer. 31:33; Rom. 2:15; Heb. 10:16). The Interventionist Word is not salvific on its own but can be salvific only insofar as it accurately explains the Incarnate Word as revealed in the Written Word.

The **Proclamatory Word** reveals the continued relevance of the Written Word for creatures (Matt. 24:35; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 4:12). While the Incarnate Word revealed in the Written Word is the content of the Proclamatory Word, there remains a necessary distinction between them; the word of the Cross as a preaching-event is distinct from the word of the Cross as an historical-event and the word of the cross as a written-event (1 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 1:5). The Proclamatory Word is salvific only insofar as it accurately explains the Incarnate Word as revealed in the Written Word and is believed (John 5:24; Rom. 10:14-18; 1 Thess. 2:13). Thus, it is God who speaks to unbelievers through believing proclaimers who reveal his mysteries to them (2 Cor. 5:20; Gal. 1:15-16; Eph. 3:4, 9; Col. 1:26; 2 Pet. 3:15-16).

The Bible

The Bible is the Creator's Written Word. As the Creator's premier way of speaking to creatures, the Bible is the Word of God (1 Sam. 3:21). The Creator accommodates his revelation to his creatures' ability to understand, and speaks to his creatures in their own languages (Dan. 8:16; Acts 22:2; 26:14; Heb. 1:1). The contents of the Bible should be interpreted naturally, meaning a combination of literal and figurative meanings, even within the same expression, clarified by the textual context and the *Sitz im Leben* (historical/cultural setting), just as all speech and communication is interpreted.

The Bible has been preserved so accurately that we can confidently assert the 51 books of the Bible are entirely God's Word. The books of the OT are incorrectly arranged in English Bibles and ought to revert to the tradition of the HB as at the time of Jesus, namely the three-fold sections of Torah (law), Nevi'im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings) (Mark 12:26; Luke 24:44; John 10:34-35). This involves combining Kings, Samuel, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, each from two books into one, and combining the Minor Prophets into the Book of the Twelve. The teachings of Jesus in the Written Word (John 15:7; 1 Tim. 5:18; cf. Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7), and the teachings of the Apostles in the Written Word are equated with God's Word (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:37; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). This is the justification for including the "New Testament" alongside all "The Scriptures" of the Old Testament as equal. Thus, without setting aside any content from English Bibles, this is why there are 51 books rather than 66. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are not God's Word; however, they warrant study for the purpose of expanding our knowledge of the *Sitz im Leben* of God's Word (Jude 14).

These 51 books were authored by human writers throughout history (Ex. 34:27; Josh. 24:26; 1 Sam. 10:25; Jer. 36:32; Rom. 1:1; 16:22). Their reception as God's Word made clear their human authorship did not spoil the divine origin of the writings (2 ki. 14:6; Matt. 15:3). The Holy Spirit guided the writers in such a way that even the grammatical markings were planned and prepared (Matt. 5:18; Gal. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Yet, the guiding was also in such a way that the human writers' individual personalities were honored and preserved in the Creator's revelatory accommodation to his creatures (Gal. 1:6; Phil. 1:8), with dictation an uncommon exception outside of this *modus operandi* (Ex. 20:1; 31:18; Isa. 38:4-6; Jer. 26:2; Rev. 2:1).

The accuracy of the Bible is seen by considering quotations of Scripture in theological writings from early church history that consistently and closely matches our present translations. Moreover, the high number of English translations of the Bible—which are not inerrant—assures us that we have a reliable translation of the Word of God, for each translation seeks to be more accurate than the next, removing the likelihood of textual corruption from occurring from maleficent or conspiratorial actors. Reading multiple translations can benefit personal study.

All of the Written Word is about the Creator's story of covenant-redemption, which climaxes in the Incarnate Word. There are multiple purposes to the Written Word (Gal. 3:24; 2 Tim. 3:15-17), including the provisions of examples for how we should or should not live (Rom.

15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 4:11; 2 Pet. 2:6). Although Jesus is not the content of every passage, every passage is about God's story—creation, fall, redemption, consummation—that climaxes in Jesus. This is why the Incarnate Word must be the climactic subject of the Proclamatory Word regardless of what part of the Written Word is being proclaimed.

The following three reasons lead to a significant conclusion about the Bible should be viewed. (1) The Creator is the only “being” who knows Truth (see paragraph 1 of “Revelation”); (2) It is impossible for the Creator to lie (Num. 23:19a; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18; 1 John 2:27); and (3) The revelation of the Written Word is fixed (Num. 23:19b). Thus, the Creator's Written Word cannot be in error and all apparent errors or contradictions are flaws in the understanding of creatures. This total lack of errors is restricted to the original autographs. Since the Written Word is without error, reliable in its preservation and translation, and about God's story of covenant-redemption for the purpose of revealing truth, the Bible is therefore the only/sole authority on matters of faith for salvation (Prov. 8:25; Jas. 1:21) and the final/supreme authority for the practice of righteousness in life (Ps. 18:30; Matt. 4:4; Eph. 5:26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17).