

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The God Who Speaks

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 1340

Tonight we begin a new series of study and we're just barely going to get our appetite wetted as we have a little less time than we normally do tonight. The Lord really kind of laid on my heart about two years ago the importance of a study on is the Bible believable.

Here at Grace Church we make a great deal about the word of God. And we have some very strong convictions about it. And certainly, we ought to be able to support those convictions. We ought to know why we believe the Bible. We ought to know the evidence that the Bible is valid, that it is true. We ought to know it well enough to be able to communicate it to others.

Certainly we ought to know it well enough to have confidence in it. And since we spent all of our time here studying the Bible, preaching the Bible, teaching the Bible, learning the Bible, and living by the principles of the Bible, we should be able to face some very important facts about the Bible with a positive confidence.

You say well what do you believe about the Bible? Now we believe that the Bible is the only book ever written by God and it was written to reveal Himself. We believe the Bible is the only authoritative and absolutely reliable source of revelation from God with regard to the origin of man, as well as his dilemma, his salvation, and his destiny.

We believe that the Bible is the single measuring standard. The only moral and spiritual standard for man. We believe the Bible is true in every detail even to the very words in the original manuscripts. And we believe the Bible is believable. We believe God wrote it, every word. That's what we believe.

Now, you're all in your heart, you that are a part of Grace Church, you're saying that's right, that's what I believe. We believe that the Bible is the source of all knowledge about God. And that apart from the Bible there is no revelation. There is nothing a man can ever learn about God from human reason. There's nothing a man can ever learn from philosophy or even from experience about God ultimately, unless God reveals Himself.

God alone is the source of the knowledge about Himself. And He has chosen to reveal Himself in this book totally and in no other. That's why we believe the Bible. Now I hasten to add this, this is not the view of all Christians. Or at least of all who claim to be Christians. There are many people who claim to be Christians and some who no doubt are Christians because they do believe in the Lord Jesus

Christ, but they do not believe that this is totally and in every word the revelation of God.

And so because we believe this we stand apart even from some other people who call themselves Christians. There are some people who claim to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ and they do not believe what we believe about the Bible. They deny its authority. They laugh at the idea of inerrancy. That is that there are no errors. They have humanized its inspiration so that God didn't write, but men did.

You know what happens to churches like that? They become impotent, insecure, confused, without conviction, uncertain, and inevitably revert to social or political activism. Packer says this and I think it's worth reading. Listen, "Certainty about the great issues of the Christian faith and conduct is lacking all along the line. The outside observer sees us as staggering on from gimmick to gimmick and stunt to stunt like so many drunks in a fog. Not knowing at all where we are or which way we should be going. Preaching is hazy, heads are muddled, hearts fret, doubts drain strength, uncertainty paralyzes action.

Unlike the first Christians who in three centuries won the Roman world and those later Christians who pioneered the reformation and the puritan, the awakening, and the evangelical revival and the great missionary movement of the last century we lack certainty. Why is this? We blame the external pressures of modern secularism, but that's like Eve blaming the serpent. The real truth is that we have grieved the Holy Spirit. We stand under divine judgment. For two generations our churches have suffered from a famine of hearing the words of the Lord."

That's a tragic truth. Self-styled man has decided that his own intellectualism is the answer to everything and his intellectualism rises from higher criticism and rationalism and the result is it destroys the truth. We've talked about the higher critics who came along and said well my mind can't handle a miracle so I'll just take my big vacuum and suck the miracles out of the Bible. One such German rationalist came up with 26 verses left.

Then there's not only intellectual rationalism, but egoism plays a part in this. You know, the man who has such a big ego that he does not permit himself to submit to authority has a hard time acquiescing to the authority of Scripture. And our society has become a society of self-centered deciders who will determine for themselves what truth is.

And then I think tragically the church has substitute programs and activities for the study of the word of God. They've given in to the social problems and relinquished the real priority of the word. They've become content with entertainment, psychology, and a lot of other things. In America, we've got 330,000 churches. A third of a million churches. That's too many. We can't get along.

Consequently, we're so fractured and split up that there's a lack of spiritual leadership. Now in the midst of all of this mess, the word of God is lost. Let me take you to a prophet. A bombshell prophet by the name of Amos. My dad used to say you can find Amos in the Bible, but you can't find Andy. Amos Chapter 8. I just want to share with you verses 11 and 12 to give you an illustration of what happens when the word of God is lost.

Amos 8:11, "Behold the days come saith the Lord God that I will send a famine in the land." Now listen, if you're not there yet, don't worry about it. "I'll send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east and they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not," what, "find it."

God says there's going to come a day when I'll send a famine and people are going to try to find the word of the Lord and they'll never find it. Eight centuries before Christ, the northern kingdom was very self-confident. It was true that moral standards had come crashing down, honesty was gone, poor people were being abused, the upper-class was vial and money was plenty and prosperity was going great, so they just kind of relegated the spiritual dimension to the background and figured if they were making it monetarily that was sufficient to live and everything was great and they were still cranking out their worship. They were still doing what they normally did in terms of ritual, and they thought everything was well. And then all of a sudden, God dropped a bomb by the name of Amos right in the middle of the northern kingdom.

He stormed into Samaria as a prophet of doom. And he said in Chapter 2 of Amos, "God's going to judge." And in Chapter 5, he said, "This whole nation is going to be enslaved and deported." And he says in Chapter 8, "Worst of all the streams of revelation are going to dry up. And there's going to be a famine of the word of God."

They who would not listen to the prophets whom God sent would find that there were no prophets to listen to anymore. God's word will be unavailable. And Amos goes on in his little book here to picture the scene of spiritual destitution that results when you can't find the word of the Lord, when you don't have any revelation. And he pictures restless, frantic souls wandering everywhere listening in hopes of hearing God's voice, but it is never heard.

And for them as for much of the so-called church today, there's a famine of the hearing of the word of the Lord. And I think it's judgmental on God's part. I think it's the legacy of liberalism, egoism, programism and denominationalism. The people who view the Bible as a human document, as a fallible book with mistakes, those who use the Bible as a pretext for false kind of preaching and simply rattling off their opinions have contributed to the sad demise.

And I don't know how many out of those churches really teach the word of God, but I know this, almost every city I go to people say to me do you know of a church in the city where we can learn the word of God? What's happen when people have forsaken the word of God, and I think God judgmentally has moved into the church and just left the famine there. What happens in a situation like that?

First, it undermines preaching. Where there's doubt as to whether the text is really the word of God, there's no preaching with conviction. It's weaken faith. People don't know what to believe anymore. It's discouraged Bible study. Why would you study the Bible if you're not too sure what it's all about. And so consequently the church today suffers from the terrible plight of having its authority undermined in the loss of confidence in the word of God.

Now to add to the problem that we face in the church the world hasn't got any confidence in the Bible either. The non-Christian world has obviously rejected the word of God. So we stand alone as a little island. There are others like us, praise God. But we stand in the middle of a world that doesn't believe in the word of God. We stand in the middle of a church called "the Christian church" that is not committed to authority of the word of God.

And you know whenever you go around and say I believe in the absolute inspiration of the Bible there are always some people and I faced this when I used to travel around and teach in seminaries and things, they'd say man if you believe in that old thing that all the Bible is true, the inspired word of God, you've committed intellectual suicide.

And somebody might say well if...you know, are you more intelligent than a non-Christian or are you more intelligent than the super professor with 49 little degrees after his name who study all the manuscripts and he doesn't believe in inspiration, are you more intelligent than he is? After all, he's examined the evidence.

Does Grace Community Church and does John MacArthur and a few other people in the world have some kind of inside information which the rest of the world doesn't have and that's why we've got the secret that the Bible's really inspired when the non-Christian world says bologna and the majority of the theological world agrees with them?

Have we got inside information? How in the world can we stand in the face of the philosophers and the intelligentsia of our world and claim the Bible to be authoritative and to be inerrant. When everybody keeps telling us it isn't. Let me say this, in the first place, and hang on to this, in the first place, it is not because we're more intelligent. Did you know that? There are a lot of people in this world more intelligent than me, a whole bunch of them, a lot of you.

There are a lot of much more brilliant people than me who have studied all kinds of things about theology. And they continue to reject the Bible's claim to divine authorship. Acceptance or rejection of the authority of the Bible is not a matter of intelligence. In the second place, we don't have special information. We don't have some kind of secret document hidden in the back of our church that tells us the real scoop.

I don't sneak back there in the middle of the week and find out what's going on. I don't have anything that an unbeliever doesn't have. That's all I've got right there. That's it. I've only got two eyes and one small brain and I just read. You know, some people think that we've got inside information and that the reason that the unbeliever doesn't believe in the Bible is because he doesn't have sufficient proof of its authority. And that if all we could...if we could just get to a bunch of unbelievers and if we could show them all the proofs for the authority of the Bible they'd all believe.

No, that's not true, because it isn't a question of proof anymore than it's a question of intelligence. People say well, if they only understood the unity of the Bible. If they only understood the miracles, the scientific accuracy, the archeological evidence, the transforming energy and power of the Bible, if they only understood fulfilled prophecy, they'd believe.

But you know something, it doesn't work that way. It doesn't work. Now all those proofs are important. You know why they're important? Because they strengthen the faith of a Christian. You know, I'm a Christian. I believe the Bible, then when I study it and I see its unity and its miracles and its scientific accuracy and its archeological data, its transforming power in my life, its fulfillment of prophecy, I get excited about that and my faith gets stronger.

Same unbeliever hears the same thing and he just walks away from it. Now let me tell you something, those proofs are important to strengthen the faith of a believer. But listen, there's a basic fallacy, and I want to say this it's the very beginning of our series, there's a basic fallacy in thinking that all of those things will prove something to unbelievers. That's a fallacy and I'm not going to do this series in order to convince unbelievers. If I want to do that, I wouldn't do it here. I'd go do it at Cal State North Ridge or somewhere.

You say, well, don't you think it'll convince unbelievers? Well, I don't even want to approach it that way, because I see a basic fallacy in that. What's the fallacy? Listen, if I am going to try to use proofs to convince an unbeliever that he ought to believe the Bible, I am in effect violating a very direct fact that's in the Bible itself. And that is this, no man has the right to sit in judgment on the credibility and truthfulness of the Bible.

God is the creator, man is the creature and that's how it is. And God never gives to the creature the right to evaluate the creator. And when you place a man who's a non-Christian in the position of being judge over the character and the credibility of the Bible, you're giving him a right that God

doesn't even give him.

So I'm not going to use this as just a way to prove to unbelievers. I want to use it as a way to strengthen the faith of believers. Man is never, unbelieving man, non-Christian man, is never granted the right to sit in judgment on God. That's why God doesn't even defend Himself. When we appeal to an unbeliever, you know we say well, here's all the evidence, what do you think? Pass judgment on the divine authorship of the Bible. You're giving him a right to do something that God doesn't give him the right to do.

It allows no man to sit in judgment on it. No, we don't believe the Bible because we're smarter, because we're not smarter. We don't believe the Bible because we have more proof either. You know, you can give the same proof and I've seen it done and I've done it myself. I've gone to college campuses and I have given so much proof...I did a series...I remember at Woodyer College on why the Bible is believable for three solid weeks for one solid hour every week and for an hour after that I answered questions. I mean the weight of evidence was astounding. Do you know how many people responded to Jesus Christ in three weeks? Zero. Zero.

And my assumption was wrong. Those people didn't have the right to be offered the choice of making an evaluation of the truth of the Bible. Let me tell you something folks, you know why we believe the Bible? I'll give it to you simple. Because God made us new creatures, illumined our minds with His blessed Holy Spirit and told us it was true. Did you get that?

It's a question of revelation. Take your Bible and turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 2. First time Paul arrived in Corinth he could have taken the apologetic approach. Could have said and I want to give you the reasons to believe what I say. I want to give you the reasons to believe in God. I want to give you all the proofs of God, all the proofs of Christ's deity, all the proofs of this, the proofs of that, the proofs of the other, but he didn't do any of that.

1 Corinthians 2:1, "I brethren when I came to you came not with excellency of speech or wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God. I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and," what? He didn't deal with...he didn't deal with proofs of anything. He just preached the cross. Because when a man is redeemed the Holy Spirit takes care of the convincing.

"I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." You know, I'm not interested in convincing somebody to be saved. I'm just interested in presenting the gospel so the Holy Spirit has the tools to recreate Him.

I don't want intellectual converts. "However, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect. Yet not the wisdom of this age nor of the princes of this age that come to nothing, but we speak the wisdom of God and the mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory which none of the princes of this age knew, for if they had known it they would never have crucified the Lord of glory."

Watch, here's the reason they don't know it and here's the reason the unbelieving man cannot absorb legitimate proof. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither entered into the heart of man the things which God's prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." The reason I know that the Bible is true is because the Spirit of God has convinced me of that.

"For the Spirit searches all things, ye the deep things of God for what man knoweth the things of a man except the spirit of man that is in him. Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is over God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

You'll only know the gift of revelation from God when the Spirit of God convinces you that it's true, because human reason doesn't perceive it. Verse 14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they're spiritually discerned. If I can throw Ephesians 2:1 in, "And he's spiritually dead."

I believe the Bible with all my heart people. You know why I believe it? I believe it first of all because the Holy Spirit came into my life when I received Jesus Christ as Savior and the Holy Spirit has given me confidence in the word of God. And I'll tell you something, as I've studied the Bible and I've seen these truths that we'll be sharing in this series and I've seen the archeological evidence, the miracle evidence, the prophecy evidence, the scientific evidence, all that's done is just strengthen and under gird the faith that the Holy Spirit planted there to begin with.

Here's the point of this whole series. This is for you that love the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to strengthen your faith. I want you to see what a marvelous book it is. And if you can get more confidence in the Bible and you can pour more of your life into the Bible, you're going to be a richer Christian for it, is that right?

I want you to believe it with your whole heart. Like Spurgensaid, I want your blood to bibbling. The Bible says that God by His grace has dealt in a very special way with Christians and He's removed the barriers. He's removed the blindness. You know, 2 Corinthians 4:4 says "the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel if Christ should shine unto them."

They're blind, they're ignorant, they're dead, there's no way they're going to understand it. When God gives spiritual light then the apprehension of the word of God comes to us. Remember what Jesus said? I think it's beautifully illustrated in John 10. He said, "My sheep hear my voice." His sheep hear His voice.

You know why you hear His voice in the word of God? You're His sheep. Remember the verse in Galatians 3, I think it's verse 26 where He says, "For you are all children of God by faith and Jesus Christ." Listen, I'm a child of God and I know when my Father's talking.

I pick up this Bible and I say yep that's Him. He's talking and I'm hearing. If I don't know Him, I don't know if it's Him talking. So only when the Holy Spirit does a regenerating work opens the mind, tears down the scales of blindness, gives life where there's death, plants the marvelous understanding of the revelation of God will we ever understand.

You say, well, John, are you telling me that all those traditional proofs have no purpose? Yes, they have a wonderful purpose, but I don't think their primary purpose is to convince unbelievers. The only way an unbeliever is ever going to get saved is when the Spirit of God does a miracle in his heart. And you say, well, can't say some of this be used? Yes, I think maybe we could say this, there might be some unbelievers who will come in as we share these thoughts and they'll be just escaping from the corruption of the world. They'll just be thinking about Christ. They'll just be emerging to understand Christianity and maybe God will use this to just pull them across. I praise Him for that.

But in and of itself, all the proof stacked up in the world apart from the convicting work of the Holy Spirit has no effect. And I'll tell you something else, all the proof in the world, if the Holy Spirit's already doing the work, really isn't that necessary. So this is to under gird the faith of Christians. Now the Spirit may use it in the life of an unbeliever to bring that final convincing. I pray that He does.

Let's do it this way. Instead of saying prophecy has been fulfilled, the Bible is scientifically accurate, miracles occurred, the Bible produces radical and revolutionary changes in lives, therefore it is the word of God. Let's reverse that whole thing and let's say this. The Bible is word of God. We believe that therefore, prophecy has been fulfilled, miracles have been done, scientific facts have been given that are accurate, lives have been transformed, prophecy has been fulfilled, etc.

Instead of saying these things are true, therefore the Bible is the word of God, let's say the Bible is the word of God, therefore these things are true. These aren't proofs friends, these are products. Thus we do not grant the non-Christian the right to sit in judgment on God's word as to whether or not it meets his approval. He is a creature and as a creature he is subject to the word of his creator. He is to believe it. He is to obey it. He is never to judge it.

So in a sense our study's for Christians. Now, the unbeliever he just...he can't evaluate. You know what I always think of when I think of this? I think of the life Jesus. Is there any way conceivable to explain away the fact that a population of Jewish people totally and absolutely rejected their own Messiah when He did for a period of three years miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle incessantly in the face of all them when it was all said and done, they screamed for His blood and executed Him.

Now you talk about proof, Jesus Himself said, "If it isn't the words that I've said that should convince you, it's the deeds that I've done." But Jesus knew that wasn't convincing to them. Most of the miracles that Jesus did throughout His entire ministry for the convincing of the disciples, not the world. Sometimes they came and said hey Jesus do a trick. Do a trick. And Jesus said in John 6, Yeah, you want a trick so you can get some food, not so you can be convinced who I am. And sometimes when they came and said show us a sign, He said, I'm not giving any more signs to this evil, adulteress generation.

It's for you that I'm going to go through this series, because I want you to really fall in love with the book and I want you to have absolute confidence that every word here is true and when somebody nails you to the wall and says why do you believe the Bible, I want you to be able to say this is why I believe the Bible, not so much for His sake, but for your sake so you're secure in your faith. So this is for us.

Now, tonight I want to just begin with just a simple introduction. I just want to introduce a thought to you. We have to start somewhere and if we're going to defend the Bible, here's what we're going to start with. We're going to start with the concept of revelation. Because revelation is the heart of everything. Christianity claims to be a revealed truth. Here's the difference.

A philosophy is something a man sits down and cranks out. A revelation is something that's revealed from God. We claim to be a revealed religion. Now here we are in our little world, trapped on earth, bounded by time and space, sensing somewhere in the deepest part of our being that somewhere out there there's some kind of power called God, but we haven't got any way to attain the knowledge of Him. Satan's told us if we stir up certain kind of religions we'll reach God. So man has invented religion upon religion upon religion and attempted to crawl out of his little box and find God and it doesn't work.

Christianity says that God invaded the world and revealed Himself. This is a revealed religion. God Himself removed the obstacles to understanding and disclosed who He was. The word reveal, apocalypso means to unveil something previously hidden. That's what Christianity is. Do you know folks that until this book was put together none of this stuff was known?

The revelation of God in its fullness was unknown. And it was given progressively, little by little, more and more until it was finally completed at the end of the New Testament, totality of the revelation of God was given. Christianity is the unveiling of God.

Look with me for just a minute and you can stay there for a second because we're going to consider Hebrews 1. And the first two verses gives us probably as good a sum up on the biblical doctrine of revelation as there is anywhere in the Bible.

Hebrews 1:1-2, "God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time passed unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoke unto us by His son whom He hath appointed heir of all things by whom also He made the worlds." Now notice, "God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time passed unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoke unto us by His son."

Now that is a majestic statement. That defines for us the Bible. It is God speaking. It is God's disclosure of Himself. It is God's revelation. Though man senses are marvelous, they are incapable of reaching beyond the natural world. Men is censorially incapable of comprehending, identifying or understanding the supernatural. It has to be revealed to him. We don't expect the bug in the bottle to understand the boy that put it there. Nor can we expect man in his natural state to comprehend God. It can't be done.

So revelation is the act by which God makes Himself known and if He doesn't do that, then He is not known because man cannot know Him. Now as we look at the glorious truth of revelation, I want to consider five aspects. Five aspects of revelation, the revealer, the revelation, the reason, the result, and the response.

First of all, the revealer. Who is this God who is revealing Himself? Who is this God who in Hebrews 1 speaks? Now the term, notice it Hebrews 1:1, "God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke." God spoke. Who is this God? Notice that it says He spoke at sundry times and in diverse manners. Palumarosand palutrapos, what does it mean? It means that in many portions that is in different books and in many manners through visions, types, symbols, parables, prophecies, everything. God through many different books and through many different ways of communication spoke, but He always speaks.

Francis Schaeffer is right when he says "He is there and He is not silent." God speaks. Aren't you glad He speaks? Because if He doesn't speak, we don't know Him. If we don't know Him, we're lost. But He speaks. Do you realize that it is the character of God to speak? It is His nature to speak, just like you are made to speak. You're given a mouth to speak. God in the essence of His nature communicates. For example, Genesis Chapter 1 says "He spoke and out of nothing the universe was

born."

In fact, when Jesus came in the world it is said of Him "that the word was made flesh." You know the name for God was the word. The Jew understood God as a speaking God, "thus saith the Lord," he heard all of his life. God speaks and the best title that John could come up with for the revelation of God in the flesh was the living word. God speaks.

People, I'm so glad God speaks so we don't have to guess right here. God has spoken. This is the claim the Bible makes for itself. Do you realize that Deuteronomy Chapter 4 at the Mount Sinai God even let the children of Israel hear His voice? They didn't know what was going on, but they heard a loud thunderous voice.

Way back in the early days when Israel began, God spoke. He spoke to the prophets. Prior to that even to Abraham He spoke. God speaks. The Psalmist said this, "Forever oh Jehovah thy word is settled in heaven." Jesus said "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my," what, "words shall never pass away." Peter said, "the word of the Lord abides forever," 1 Peter 1:25.

Listen friends our God is not silent, He speaks. He's not like the dumb idols of 1 Corinthians 12:2. Let me show you an interesting passage on this. Isaiah 46, and I know I've gone by a lot of things rapidly, and we'll cover them again as we go through this series. This is interesting. Here's the difference between God and all the systems of religion, the idols. He says in verse 5 of the heathen you know, to try to make their idols, "To whom will you liken me and make me equal and compare me that we may be alike?" Are you going to have gods like me?

"They lavish gold out of the bag and they weigh silver in the balance and they hire a goldsmith and he makes a god." Take all the little gold and silver and they make a god, nice little god made by the goldsmith. And you know what they do? They fall down, yes, they worship the god. "They bear it on their shoulders, they carry it, they set in its place, its stands from its place shall it not move." That's a god whose got a problem. It's not omni-present.

Now watch this. "Ye one shall cry unto it, yet can it not answer?" God is the only God who speaks. He's the only God. It is God's nature to express Himself. Remember on Mount Carmel, 1 Kings 18, Elijah went up and said all right, let's see who is God. We'll find who is God. Let's find who speaks. You call on Baal, I'll call on God. Whoever answers that's God. And man they called on Baal for a long time. And the prophet kept saying well maybe he's asleep. Oh I think he's away on vacation. Just wish.

And then Elijah said, God would you like to say something. And God said a lot. He sent fire from heaven consumed not only the sacrifice, but the rocks and the water. And the people said the Lord He is God. The Lord He is God. God speaks. It is God's nature to express Himself.

Let me add this, when God is silent, it is judgmental. When God is silent it is judgmental. When Saul rejected the Lord in repeated disobedience over and over and over, 1 Samuel 28, verse 6 says "He inquired of Jehovah and Jehovah answered him not." In regard to Israel God said to dear weeping prophet Jeremiah, he said "Pray not for this people. I will not hear their cry." Jeremiah 14:11-12.

Proverbs Chapter 1, verse 23, do you ever read this? "Turn you at my reproof," God says, "behold I'll pour out my Spirit unto you. I'll make known my words unto you." God says if you turn and listen you can hear me. I'll talk to you. "Because I've called and you refused. I've stretched out my hand and no man regards. You would have said it not all my counsel and would have none of my reproof." Then the table turns. "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes. When your fears comes as desolation and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you then shall they call upon me and I will not answer. They will seek me early and they will not find me."

God silence is judgmental. But God has spoken and He's spoken in His word. God is a God who speaks. It's abnormal for God to be silent. It only occurs in judgment. It's His nature to speak. You say well, what's this revealer who speaks like?

Let me just give you some thoughts and we'll just cover these and be done. He's personal, did you know that God's personal? He calls Himself I. And He calls us you. He's personal. You know what He said to Moses? He said hey Moses, do you know what my name is? "My name is I am that I am." That's personality. "My name is I am that I am." What a name. And that was a name that was like all other God given names like Abraham and Israel and Jesus. It had significance. The name I am stands for a free purposeful, self-sufficient personality.

I am that I am. Not just I am, but I am what I want to be. Free, purposeful, sovereign, self-sufficient personality. God's not a floating fog. God's not an it. He's not aimless blind force. Not a cosmic energy. God is an All Mighty, self-existence, self-determining person with mind and will. He's a person. All you have to do is read the Bible and you find out that God is a person. He has all of the attributes of personality.

You know, you'd never know that unless you had a Bible to know it. You say what about the creation? Can't you see God in the creation? Sure, but what you see in the creation you see is not personality. What you see in the creation is power and deity. The personality comes in the revelation of the word of God. And if you read through the Bible long enough, you're going to find out that not only is God personal, but He's tri-personal, right?

I mean, you know, it starts out when it says that God created everything He uses the word Elohim, and any time you see the i-m ending on the end of a Hebrew word it has to do with plurality. And

then you have a little conversation in heaven going like this. The Lord said unto my Lord. Even in the Old Testament, God is a plurality. He's tri-personal. He's a personality. You know what the New Testament name for God is? Have you ever known...you know what the New Testament name for God is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's the New Testament name for God. It's right there in Matthew 28:19. He's personal.

Secondly, we find that the revealer is moral. He reveals Himself as one supremely concerned about right and wrong. It's a high priority with God. Thinking of Exodus 34, interesting passage beginning in verse 6, "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God," watch, "merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant, in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Now watch this, "And who will by no means clear the guilty." He just said He was merciful and forgiving, what is that supposed to mean?

It means that God is a just God and He will not just throw aside guilty people and say well it's all right, I'll let you off the hook. He'll show mercy, but believe me somebody will pay the penalty for the sin. And if you know anything about the gospel, you know that somebody was Jesus Christ. God's a moral God. He must punish sin as well as forgive. Gracious and merciful and yet He's moral. He will by no means clear the guilty. He's personal, He's moral.

I'll tell you something else about this God, He is the source and the stay and the end of all creation. It says in Roman 11:36, "Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things." Turn with me for just a minute and we'll just look at this passage and be done, Acts 17. Acts 17:22, "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill and said ye men of Athens I perceive that in all things you're very religious." That's a good way to start. Kind of winning them over a little bit. "As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription to the unknown God whom therefore you ignorantly worship him declare I unto you." I notice you've got an unknown god around here. I like to have you meet him. I know him very well.

And then he describes the unknown god. First of all he says the source of everything, verse 24. "God who made the world and all things in it." Source of everything. "Who made the world and all things in it." Verse 26, "Hath made of one blood all nations of men who dwell on the face of the earth and determine the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." Not only geographically, but in terms of ages. God is the source of everything.

God is the stay of everything. He upholds it, verse 25. "Neither is He worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things." Here's His sustaining power. Verse 28 puts it this way, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Here's God not only as the source, but as the stay. He is the one in whom we live and move and have our being. God is the end of all things. Verse 27, "That they should seek the Lord if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him though He's not far from everyone of us. He is the end of all, man's

destiny is to know Him."

So God is personal, moral, He is the source, He is the stay, and He is the end of all. Let me add this forethought. He's available. Aren't you glad about that? Verse 27, "That they should seek the Lord if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him though He's not far from everyone of us."

I'm telling you folks it's a glad thought to know that God is available. He's infinitely great according to verse 24. He doesn't dwell in temples made with hands. And He doesn't need a thing. He doesn't need anything, verse 25. "Neither is worship with men's hands as though He needed anything." He's self-sufficient, but He's also available. Praise God for that.

So we meet the revealer. Who is this God who speaks? He's personal, He's moral, He's the source and the stay and the end of all things and He's available to you. And you see friend that's the reason that He wrote this, because He wanted you to know Him. The fact that He's personal indicates that He wants to have fellowship with you. The fact that He's moral indicates that He wants to deal with you righteously. The fact that He's the source and the stay and end of all creation means that your life and it's destiny is dependent upon your relation to Him.

The fact that He's available is the concluding, exciting concept that you can come into a full relationship with Him. That's why He revealed Himself. In order to be all to you that you needed a God to be. I hope you can meet the revealer and the only place you'll ever meet Him is in the pages of His revelation. And we'll talk about that next time.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you tonight that we've had a good time of fellowship. I feel Lord like we really didn't cover all things that we had in our heart to cover but just trust your Spirit. We want to have confidence in the word. We want the study of the doctrine of the word of God to build us up and strengthen us and encourage us in the faith. And we do even as Peter said, want to be able to give to every man an answer for the reason of the hope that is within us with meekness and fear. We want to know what we believe, but we also want to know why we believe it. We want to have confidence in Your word. So bless the time that we'll spend together in the weeks to come studying this.

Thank you God, for being a revealing God. Thank you for not hiding Yourself. Thank you for revealing that You're personal, that You care about us as individuals. That You're moral, that You're just at the same time You're gracious and forgiving and merciful. That You're the source and the stay and the end of all things. That is that our entire life and all of its destiny is wrapped up in the knowledge of You. Thank you that You're available.

Lord, we would only ask this that You would make Yourself very available tonight by Your Holy Spirit to anybody who doesn't yet know You. We pray that You'll go beyond the human capacity and that

the Holy Spirit would convince those hearts that You are true. And that the only way to know You is through Jesus Christ. That they would claim Your availability in Christ tonight.

Thank you for the joy and the privilege of sharing together giving us all that You've given us in Christ. Thank you for being the revealer You are. We pray in Jesus' blessed name. Amen.

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