



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 2.3 – The Doctrine of God

The Revealed Knowledge of God

Thanks be to God that He has chosen to reveal Himself to us more clearly than through creation and conscience. From the very beginning God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word. At first it was the spoken word and then also by means of written words that He gave to chosen prophets and apostles: **“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe”** (1 Corinthians 1:21). The natural knowledge of God is thus regarded as no knowledge of God at all by the Holy Spirit in this passage because it does not reveal the identity of the true God or His plan of salvation. No one can be saved by the natural knowledge of God. For this reason, God chose to use words, a message, preaching as a means to impart His salvation to human beings.

When Adam and Eve fell into sin (Genesis 3), God revealed Himself to them by giving them the promise of a Savior (Genesis 3:15). God continued to communicate this message of salvation to individuals and groups by means of oral communication (for example, to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Beginning with Moses and the first five books of the Bible, God began to put His message into written words through prophets. This revelation from God continued through the days of the Old Testament. God did not give this revelation all at once. He gave it little by little until His Old Testament revelation was complete.

But the best was yet to come: **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son”** (Hebrews 1:1-2). That Son of God is Jesus. **“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”** (John 1:18). The people who lived during the days when Jesus walked on the earth were privileged to hear the Word of God directly from God Himself in the person of His Son. There is no greater or more perfect revelation from God than Jesus.

But we today still have this revelation. Jesus assured His followers who knew Him face to face: **“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”** (John 14:25-26).

Thus, God reveals Himself to us not only through the Old Testament, which Jesus accepted as the revealed Word of God, but also through the New Testament, written by Jesus’ apostles and their assistants. The apostle Paul, for example, confirmed that the words he wrote in his New Testament letters came from the Holy Spirit. He said: **“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches”** (1 Corinthians 2:11-13).

The natural knowledge of God cannot save anyone, but the revealed knowledge of God, as given to us in writing in the Old Testament and the New Testament, gives salvation and eternal life. Jesus said to His Father: **“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”** (John 17:3). John wrote his Gospel for this very purpose: **“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His**

name” (John 20:31). The written Scriptures of the Holy Spirit in both Testaments **“are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”** (2 Timothy 3:15). This is true, because **“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,”** literally breathed out by God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Questions

1. Why is the natural knowledge of God unable to give us eternal life?
2. How did God reveal Himself in the days of the Old Testament?
3. What is the most complete revelation that God has given us of Himself?
4. In what way do we have this same revelation today?
5. How do we know that the writings of the apostles are a revelation from God?
6. For what purpose has God chosen to reveal Himself to us?
7. Where should we look if we want to learn something about the true God?