

Biblical Theology - God Reveals Himself

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 November 2005

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor

- [0 : 0 0] It's a great delight to be here, and I realize, say, Learners' Exchange has moved forward in that I'm not being chained to something by a wire any longer.
- We've gone wireless. And so it's wonderful to see technology marching on, even in Learners' Exchange. Just as a caveat to say, we had a wonderful day yesterday at home.
- My daughter celebrated her fifth birthday yesterday, so I'm exhausted now. We still do traditional home parties in our household.
- We don't go to McDonald's. So we had 11 five-year-old boys and girls in our house yesterday. So if I wander off onto another subject, please just kind of pull me back.
- I had very disturbed dreams last night. And I am recovering. But I think my daughter feels complete now as a five-year-old.
- [1 : 0 0] So she went to bed the night before, saying she expected to wake up and find the house completely decorated. And an inspection was made at 7.30 yesterday morning. Well, so biblical theology.
- It's a great pleasure to have been asked, to offer and be asked to speak on this in four topics, four different talks. The four that I'm going to be giving the titles are going to be God Reveals Himself.
- That's today. God Redeems. And I'm going to be looking at a new community, the people of God on earth. And then a new age.
- I seem to be echoing here. Is that right? And I want to start this morning by just defining biblical theology very briefly and giving you a personal take on it.
- And then looking at this topic of God Reveals. God reveals Himself to us. He takes the initiative. He does the speaking. And we do the receiving.
- [2 : 0 0] And my hope is that as we look at these topics, that you will not just be inspired intellectually, because biblical theology is obviously an academic exercise, but more devotionally and spiritually be inspired to have your devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ deepened, your grasp of the incredible sweep of Scripture and of God's activity revealing Himself and redeeming the world through Jesus Christ expanded.
- Because when you begin to see the big, awesome picture of what God has done in the Scriptures, from promising a salvation to being faithful to His Word and to bringing it into being in Jesus, it's awe-inspiring.
- It really is an awe-inspiring thing. Very briefly, biblical theology approaches the Bible as an organic drama of God's unfolding revelation through history.
- Is that good? Everyone nodding their heads? Biblical theology approaches the Bible as an organic drama of God's unfolding revelation through history.
- I'll give you a handout probably next week. In distinction from doctrinal or systematic theology, biblical theology follows the progressively unfolding revelation of God's words and deeds in the Scriptures and through history.

[3 : 26] And so it is this linear aspect of revelation that unites each revelatory event and proclamation, both retrospectively and prospectively.

And at the center of this organic unity is the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Even as our risen Lord related all of Scripture retrospectively and prospectively to Himself, consider Luke 24, consider John chapter 5, I'll look at those in a moment.

So, biblical theology has at its center the work and person of Jesus Christ. And so our look, now, we want to call in balance all the time the unity and diversity of Scripture.

And biblical theology really has, in its view, the unity of Scripture, centered upon Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of the promises and activity of God.

And so this fleshes out what we often say at St. John's. You know, when you preach here, David Short will always say to you, every sermon's got to have Jesus Christ as its focal point. Every sermon.

[4 : 35] Now, try preaching on the food laws of Leviticus. I heard someone do that. And I'm telling you, you laugh, but Jesus Christ is the center of the food laws of Leviticus. And it is biblical theology which helps you see that and grasp that.

And so I think one of the, you know, struggles we have in our church is that, for the main, you know, liberal Christianity does not have a biblical theological view, either of the work and person of Jesus Christ, or of the Scriptures, of God revealing himself in Scriptures.

And so they make fun of us because of the Levitical food laws, and say, well, you have this attitude towards sexual ethics, but, you know, you're still eating shellfish.

Well, I think aside from being a mocking view of the Scriptures there, they don't actually understand the organic unity of the Scriptures, and how it is that when we read the Scriptures, we might see Jesus Christ.

God spoke into history. God acted in history. God was incarnate in history. And this is accomplished through Jesus Christ.

[5 : 45] Every revelation of God in history is an invitation for us to possess God's work amongst us.

And this is accomplished through Jesus Christ. through the history of redemption, the promised seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of Jesse. Even as God and man met in Jesus Christ.

And so the heavenly and the historical meet at every point of God's special revelation. God spoke into history. God acted in history.

And God was incarnate in history. The very term biblical theology sounds like it is properly the focus of academic study.

And it is. It is an important tool for any Bible study teacher or preacher. My acquaintance with biblical theology began in theology college appropriately enough.

[6 : 46] And I hope has continued to deepen ever since that time. The first desire for me to continue studying this and go deeper with biblical theology was really the monumental task of preaching to a congregation every week.

It's been a great joy since my ordination seven years ago this year. I don't think there's an anniversary there we can celebrate. So I don't get a cake for seven years. Since my ordination, I've had the pleasure and duty of composing sermons almost every week to deliver to congregations large and small in cities, villages, and hamlets in Wales and in Canada.

In order to do that task properly, the ongoing study of biblical theology is essential. For without an appropriate grasp of the large sweep of biblical revelation, the preacher will be quite unable to adequately help his or her congregation.

Passages in the Old Testament will not be interpreted properly without placing them in their context in the progressive sweep of God's revelation to humankind.

Passages in the New Testament likewise may be inexplicable if they are not related to the larger picture of which they are a part. One of the problems that we fall into in Christianity, and again, this is something that can happen to any kind of school of Christianity, we certainly see it in the liberal side, is the taking of certain parts of the Bible and exalting them above others.

[8 : 18] So, for example, the picture of Jesus that is presented in some schools of the church is one of a social liberator, someone bringing God's justice. I'll look perhaps at some of the prophets there, but not all of them.

Aspects of Jesus' teaching, but not all of it. Ignoring the cross and the implications of that. We elevate certain aspects of the diversity of the Bible over others.

Biblical theologian does not do that or desire to do that. We want to look at Christ within the whole sweep of the biblical revelation. The preacher and the teacher needs to be able to express to their Bible study group or congregation something of their grandeur, the majesty, but also the completeness, the progression, and the relentlessness of God's revelation and salvific activity extended into human history.

That is the conviction that God has acted in human history, he has revealed himself, and he has redeemed us. And we are the recipients of his activity.

We are asked to, we are invited into that activity, we are asked to make that the center of our lives. For either Jesus Christ, and I think this is important, marks the high watermark of God's revelation, salvation, either Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's salvation plan, of the promises God made, or he is just a flash in the pan, and we have to decide that.

[9 : 53] That is the decision we all have to make. Either Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, are rooted, embedded, in God's plan to save the human race, or he is not.

So is the cross something that God foreknew and promised? Is the salvation that Jesus Christ brought about by his death and resurrection, something that God said he was going to do and then did?

Or was it something that was thought up at the time? Was Jesus crucified just because, as someone has said, the religious leaders of the time, the conservatives of the time, actually, they say, wanted to bump him off because he was inconvenient?

Or was this something Jesus was consciously walking towards? because this is what God had planned. If not Jesus is just a religious leader, a guru, a human figure, who ultimately tells us something about God, but is not God and does not mediate our salvation.

See, the cross of Jesus is nonsensical without understanding its place in the sweep of salvation history. So, biblical theology, yes, it is an academic discipline.

[11 : 11] It seems to me it is one of the most important things that we can grasp. And as I said when I began, there is more, and this is my final point of introduction this morning, the study of biblical theology is more than an academic exercise or a preacher's aid.

It is also a powerful and important and wonderful part of any devotional life. for when you begin to grasp something of the relentless activity of God amongst human beings, always keeping his word, pushing ever forward to Jesus Christ, completely consistent across centuries and eras, then you begin to grasp something of how God operates, and it is awesome when he has kept his word from the time of Abraham to the time of Jesus, that there is nothing, nothing, inconsistent about him.

And I put that before you because sometimes we read things in the New Testament and we don't relate them to the Old, or we read things in the Old and we don't relate them to the New. We don't understand that actually there is nothing about the Old Testament that is cancelled out or superseded by Jesus Christ.

It is completed by him. It points to him. Everything. And it is those points where we say, I don't understand that. How do the Levitical food laws fit into this?

That is the work of biblical theology. And it is awesome. And I heard someone preach on the food laws and they did a jolly good job too. But I'm not going to try it out here. I might, but not right now.

[12 : 43] And so my desire is that as we go through these lectures, as all of us might find our devotion to Almighty God, our grasp of the cosmicness, the hugeness of his salvation plan, his complete consistency, his utter wonderful nature, which is totally consistent.

I hope that we might all find our devotion to God deepened. I defined biblical theology at the beginning. Let me do that one more time. Biblical theology approaches the Bible as an organic drama of God's unfolding revelation through history.

At the center of the unity of the scriptures, of that revelation, is the person and work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ himself related all of scripture retrospectively, I can't say that, retrospectively and prospectively to himself.

And that's just a critical understanding there. Look at Luke, I'm sorry, you don't have Bibles, Luke 24. Jesus said to them, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[13 : 58] did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

He said to them, this is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms.

And he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. He told them, this is what is written, that Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all the nations.

You see what Jesus is saying here. It's very important, isn't it? First of all, he's pointing them back to the Old Testament scriptures, the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. And he's saying, I am in all of them.

And so it's interesting that wonderful tension, for example, in John's Gospel, where the Pharisees and the religious leaders, the people who know their Bible, were not able to see Jesus, in fact, rejected him.

[15 : 07] Were not willing, couldn't see that Jesus is the Messiah. That was promised there. But the point that Jesus is saying is, well, I am there.

And if their eyes had been opened and their hearts had been opened, they would have seen him there. And so that is our task, to see Jesus there. But not just to see Jesus in abstract, but to see the crucified Lord.

The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all the nations.

See, that's the Christ who was foretold to us in the Old Testament, the Christ who offered his life on the cross, who rose again from the dead, and he preached a gospel of forgiveness of sins, which began in Jerusalem and went out to all the nations.

They should have seen that. And that is what Jesus taught his disciples, and so that is what he teaches us. And then you begin to see there is this rootedness of Christ in the scriptures, the message of the cross and the forgiveness of sins is there, and the mission to go out and preach his name to all the nations is contained therein.

[16 : 24] So it's not actually as if we are being given the options that modern scholarship would tell you we are being given, that for some of us who are conservative we preach Christ crucified, others preach a more social gospel of Christ.

The power of biblical theology and grasping it in our hearts is that we begin to see that the Bible really drives us to the conclusion that God planned this and executed this plan of salvation right from the beginning and it took its culmination in the cross of Jesus Christ and that there is no other option.

This is not to be a hard line about anything, it's simply to bring out the message of the Bible, the message of God's revelation of himself to us. Theology is based on revelation.

God must come to us before we can go to him. God takes the divine initiative in revealing himself. And so revelation is absolutely essential for human beings to have a true knowledge of God.

And it is because of the sin of humanity that God has taken the sovereign initiative to reveal himself to us. See, God reveals himself to us.

[17 : 48] Simple point which we all nod our heads and say we know, and yet it is a controversial point in the church. Does God reveal himself to us? Well, people say no, actually. Marcus Borg, who I don't recommend anyone reads, who is a very much loved theologian in the diocese of New Westminster today, and he makes Bronwyn Short and myself shudder when we hear his name, who speaks regularly to diocesan groups, and really embodies the opposite view of this.

He says, well, that is how they understood God then, this is how we understand God now. That was how they understood Jesus then, and the people around him then created this myth around him, but this is how we understand Jesus now.

It's not the same now. See, that is the opposite view. If that's true, then really there's no salvation, is there? How could there be? Because if our understanding of God is something that we have that is temporal, that changes according to the ages, well, then what salvation is there?

Because God has not revealed himself. And if the cross is not at the center of God's revelation of himself and his salvation plan, then what is?

And they don't seem to realize that they have taken out the mediator between humanity and God and have left themselves, I think, in a very precarious position. After all, our understanding of God is not conditioned by our age.

[19 : 20] It has been given to us by him. And see, there you grasp the biblical theological principle. For if God has revealed himself to us, then our address to God and our worship of God, our obedience to God is not conditioned by time, by human development.

Our consciousness of God does not change because it is not dependent upon us. We did not think God into being. He revealed himself.

And I think saying that, and again, I have some of our theological opponents in our minds, does that make a simplistic or hard line about anything? Indeed, if you read the Bible in its entirety, in any way, you are driven to the conclusion that God revealed himself to the human race.

You can't come to any other conclusion. To do so means you have to cut out huge swathes of the scripture. Anywhere God says, thus says the Lord. God's speaking is written large all over the scriptures.

You cannot come to the conclusion that we have imagined God. God has revealed himself. And so biblical theology is the branch of exegetical theology that deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.

[20 : 44] And this teaches us that God has truly revealed himself through the scriptures and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we can come to know him as he has chosen to reveal himself to us.

Biblical theology affirms the historic progressiveness of the revelation process. God in scripture has not revealed himself all at once in time as it were, but has communicated his revelation to humanity progressively in history.

His revelation has unfolded itself in a long series of successive acts culminating in Jesus and then the initiation of the church.

But I would like to go back to the beginning and in these four talks, as I said, I'm addressing the themes of God revealing himself, God redeeming, a new community, and lastly, a new order, which should keep us busy through to 2010.

God reveals himself. I guess we might have the question in our minds, does God reveal himself? Has God revealed himself? If so, where and in what way?

[21 : 51] Are there boundaries and limits to that revelation that can be known by human beings? Has God revealed himself to humanity in a way that is clear, that is authoritative, that we might trust and rely on?

Or is it all just human imaginings conditioned by the human authors of the text that we cannot really trust or rely upon?

And the central question of religion is one of revelation. May God be known? Has he revealed himself to the human race? And in Christianity, this question pertains to salvation.

If God may be known, how might I come to him? So we have two topics which run together these two weeks, God revealing himself and God redeeming.

The claim of the Bible from beginning to end is that God has spoken. The speaking God is writ large through the text everywhere.

[22 : 57] Verse 3 of Genesis chapter 1 says to us, And God spoke. He spoke the universe into being and instructed his creatures to live.

In Genesis 1, he speaks his mandates to the first human being. God speaks to his creatures. In Genesis 2, he speaks of his specific instructions for life in Eden.

In Genesis 3, his discovery of and response to sin is spoken as well of his promise for our salvation coming from the seed of the woman.

In all of which we read of his characteristic divine activity in speech. That pattern is repeated with a dramatic range of variation right through to the book of Revelation.

In the law, the prophets, and history, we read the speech of God. The prevalence of divine speech which goes through the Bible suggests a presumption in favor of speech as the category within which to understand God's communication with his creatures.

[24 : 07] So we're talking about God's special revelation. Not his general revelation which the Bible also affirms, for example, in creation, in our consciousness, but in a special revelation of God to the human race.

And that is why the Bible's statements about the speaking God are in focus when we address the question of the authority of the Bible. The religion found in the Bible is the religion of the speaking God, of the God who reveals himself to the human race.

And so the concern, which is our concern in this church very much, to maintain the continuity of contemporary Christianity with the revelation of the biblical communities, suggests a like understanding of God as the speaking God and a like use of the texts that are held to record divine speech.

That's what we're trying to do, isn't it? Maintain and stand within that continuity. So when we're saying we want to be faithful to the scriptures, biblical theology helps us flesh out what we mean by that.

Because sometimes we can use that phrase, but not always, I'm not talking about us so much, but sometimes in the wider Christian world out there we say, well, we want to be under the authority of the Bible. Well, what do we mean by that?

[25 : 25] Well, it means that God has spoken and we want to stand within that continuity. Such reflection helps anchor our understanding and use of the scriptures and of the authority of the Bible books in their own original communities, which reaches its remarkable climax in the use made of the Old Testament by Jesus himself, which set the pattern for the Christian understanding of both the Old and the New Testament.

In the New Testament, we witness a double focus on Jesus as the incarnate Word of God and as himself God who speaks and whose speaking is recorded at length.

These factors together provide an anchor for the use of scripture and, of course, for a doctrine of revelation. Sorry, for a doctrine of revelation.

Just as the scripture is universally employed in the church as the source of every other doctrine. So this fills our pattern of understanding of the God of the biblical and Christian religion as a God who speaks.

For how else could we know him? For across the barrier of our creatureliness and our sin, he has chosen to reveal himself and his saving purposes.

[26 : 52] To recognize the scriptures as the chief locus of that revelation is not to deny that there is revelation elsewhere. We recognize general revelation.

God does reveal himself in nature and in the human conscious. But we also turn to God's special revelation, his revelation in word, in the scriptures, in history, in the mighty acts of God recorded for us in scriptures and in Jesus Christ, the incarnation.

And much of 20th century theological debate is taken up with the relative significance of these loci of revelation. Evangelicals recognize the role of scriptures as the control upon our theological formulation, as the definitive source of our knowledge of God, as the record and interpreter of the biblical history, and as the depository of the teaching of the living Jesus Christ.

Which, of course, is very opposite from what is going on in much of the church today, isn't it? See, the church recognizes something of the authority of scripture. But the authority of scripture has been subordinated to human experience.

And so we live in a situation in which what I experience has to be weighed against what the scripture says, but what I experience actually takes the greater emphasis.

[28 : 29] So if what I'm experiencing of God, or what I think I'm experiencing of God, and the scriptures do not agree, then the scriptures subordinate to that. And that's why we're in the situation we're in.

Whereas, actually, we do experience, we do experience God in our hearts, in our lives, and we need to check that experience against the word of God, the revealed word of God.

So if I think God is affirming something in my life, but I check that against scripture, and see that when God has revealed himself and his will in a very different way, then I need to submit to that authority.

So you see, again, it's not about being hard line or anything like that. But it's just saying, if God is speaking, and has spoken in a definitive manner, then we need to submit to that as Christians and as a church.

The need for such a control, the scriptures are a control for us, is evident from a consideration of the logic of divine revelation. Since God is not a part of the world we directly experience, we are unable to study him in the manner which we study other objects in human research.

[29 : 42] We can't put him under a microscope. Unless he reveals himself, he remains hidden. Insofar as he does reveal himself, he becomes accessible to us.

Whether in the shadowy and outlight form of general revelation, his eternal power and deity, like Psalm 19 is an interesting text for you to look at. Or in the particularity and detail of the special revelation in history, scripture, and Jesus Christ.

For we can only study God under the impress of revelation. Of all the sources of revelation, it is the scripture that offers us the opportunity for sustained study of its subject, who is its author.

It is fashionable in theological circles to emphasize the mighty acts of God in history over and against his speech. But we must not sever the acts of God in history from their interpretation in the scriptures.

You take the cross as an example. No one denies the historicity of that event. No, liberals do. That Jesus of Nazareth lived and died on a cross, seems to me, is beyond dispute.

[30 : 58] But what is the significance of that cross? How do we interpret the cross? Is that a matter of personal opinion or theological persuasion? No, the interpretation is given to us in revelation.

So we have to look at the cross and interpret it as the Bible interprets it and gives us. The Bible is the record and interpretation of the mighty acts of God in history.

But not least of those mighty acts is its faithful recording of that most frequent of all acts of God, his speech. And as the book which supremely testifies to Jesus and records his teachings, which was written under the impress of the Spirit who spoke by the prophets, we say in the creed, and which is today illumined by that same Holy Spirit as it is read, studied, preached, made the subject of theological formulation, it serves most appropriately as the supreme rule in faith and practice of the Church.

And moreover, those who seek to claim the authority of Scripture in some lesser fashion undermine their own position. For every appeal to Holy Scripture as a source of theological authority entails the general authority of the whole.

That is, this massive collection of texts is in fact one single highly complex work. The work of the one Holy Spirit of God.

[32 : 28] And you see, this is what happens to us again in this church. We get snippets of the Bible thrown at us, particularly over the last couple of years regarding schism. Suddenly, when it comes to what we're trying to do as a church, we become called schismatics.

And that becomes the deepest sin of all, for some. And again, that is taking a part of the Scripture out of the whole, and kind of labeling us with that, and saying that's worse than anything else.

But actually, once you've appealed to a part of the Scripture, that entails the whole. And biblical theology recognizes that this wonderful, diverse group of texts, and these texts are diverse, is also one single, highly complex text.

The work of the one Holy Spirit of God. And I think, don't oversimplify anything, but in a way, for all the diversity, there is a huge diversity in the Bible. It's wonderful. It is so exciting to study.

I love to study the texts. Yet, in a way, and this is perhaps simplifying things, there is one message. There really is one overarching message.

[33 : 37] That message is Jesus Christ. So, divine speech, revelation, plays a central role in Scripture. And we want to just note the sheer abundance of the speech of God in the canonical texts.

God speaks in the Scriptures in a variety of ways. Consider the hand writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, or Balaam's ass. One of the most common formula in the prophetic word is, thus says the Lord.

And so, this offers a highly specific context to the general biblical claim to offer an account of revealed religion. Scripture itself testifies that there are other forms employed to accomplish revelation.

But the direct divine speech is both chief among them and the model for them all. Consider Psalms 19 and 29. In both cases, God's revelation in nature is presented as His speech.

This illustrates the Old Testament acceptance of general revelation and of the overarching significance of revelation by divine speech. But there is a wealth of God speaking in Scripture, which can be sorted broadly into five categories, which I would like to briefly outline now.

[34 : 55] First, creative speech. Genesis 1. And God said. So divine speech initiates every stage of the creative process.

It is by His speech that God orders His time-space universe. The fundamental category of divine revelation is taken to be speech.

As in creation, so in sustaining providence, God upholds all things by His mighty Word. Do we not say in John 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the Lord us.

So creative speech. Second, conversation with human beings, I called this. Genesis 1. 28. God's first words of revelation addressed to His human creatures, be fruitful and multiply.

God commands us. He converses with us. It's amazing that the cosmic immensity of God's creative speech now gives way to the narrower dimensions of Eden, to our human lives.

[36 : 07] He speaks into our human situation. He speaks into our lives. We read that God commanded Adam regarding the tree. The next divine words after that are among the most poignant in all the Bible.

Where are you? Those words are the opening salvo in the sustained interchange that exposes sin and announces its penalty for Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the world, but also contains the promise of a salvation.

This pattern continues in the exchanges between God and Cain. There are more detailed and sustained conversations with Noah, conversations in which promises are made and covenants sealed.

And that in turn gives way to God's conversations with Abraham and the patriarchs. Conversations initiated and controlled by God, marked by promise-making on a scale that both encompasses the lives of the characters involved and which looks to a much bigger picture which will unfold before us as the Bible unfolds.

Third, Moses. Wonderful story. I love the story of Moses. He starts out as a murderer who has to flee.

[37 : 25] I think it's important when we read the Old Testament to recognize that we're not supposed to be like any of the people in the Old Testament. This is not the point. None of them were any good for anything.

And yet God was faithful to his promises and did what he said he was going to do. And that is so strong in the case of Moses, is it not? And his people. Lengthy interviews with God followed by the giving of the law.

We have those wonderful texts. I love. I'm dying to do a series of sermons on Leviticus, actually. I think I'll do it in the new year. The most sustained and formal example of the divine speech in the scriptures.

I mean, it's a sustained divine speech in that legislation. which offers us a paradigm of divine speech issuing in divine writing of inscription.

Funny, isn't it? We say that. Well, we don't really believe that God spoke and they just wrote it down. Actually, we do. Which means that if anyone tells you that the scriptures did not issue from the mouth of God written down by human hands and turned them into the law.

[38 : 31] You see, God spoke and it was written down. And if anyone mocks the scriptures because of the Old Testament law, you know, remind them that they are the result of divine speech.

Now, if they seem strange to us, that does not diminish their authority. And if they do not apply to us in quite the way they applied to ancient Israel, we have to recognize that God's revelation is progressive and that they fit into a much larger picture of scripture and of the plan of salvation revealed therein.

So, Moses. Four, prophets. Very briefly, here the form changes but the extensive first person accounts given as from the mouth of God serve as the chief context of the prophetic books.

As I said, thus says the Lord. Fifth, and with this I'm going to bring myself to a close, the New Testament. Now, several different situations are found here.

But at the heart of the New Testament lie the four Gospels whose major context is the teaching of Jesus. And since we are introduced to him as God incarnate, his teaching brings to a climax the biblical witness to the speaking God.

[39 : 51] It's divine speech incarnated. God who spoke by the prophets now speaking by himself. And so, when we talk about Jesus as the high watermark of salvation, Jesus as the climax of God's revelation of himself, as Jesus of God revealing himself to the human race fully, it also means that God is speaking to us directly.

This is God incarnate speaking. Our understanding of the inspiration of Holy Scripture is signally illumined by the phenomenon of the speaking God taking flesh, actual vocal chords, so that we have word made flesh and word made Scripture.

So, the twin foci of law and gospel in the given law of the Mosaic legislative corpus and the human speech of the incarnate Jesus Christ, these offer dynamic illustrations and also controls of the method of inspiration and the character of revelation as the very words of God are issued as the words and also the writing and speaking of human beings.

Biblical theology stresses the centrality of the tradition of the speaking of God and that understanding of the Holy Scriptures as the deposit of his spoken revelation.

My aim this morning has been to introduce the broad scope of biblical theology under the title God Reveals Himself. So, next week we will consider the related theme God Reveals Himself, which will further focus our understanding of what God revealed about Himself in the Scriptures.

[41 : 38] And what I want you to see is that there is both unity and diversity in Scripture, both of which must be held in balance. But most liberal scholarship tends to focus so much on the diversity that the unity disappears.

We need to recognize the unity of the Scriptures, that there is one text, one God revealing Himself through them. See, without that unity, the canon of Scripture in its entirety cannot function as the authoritative foundation for Christian belief and practice as it has historically done so.

Without an appreciation of the diversity that comes from each text, looking at each book and author in its own terms, we also risk misinterpreting the Scriptures. But the Scriptures are one.

The unity of the text, of the speaking God, marks out the limits of thought and behavior beyond which individuals or churches may not legitimately be called Christian.

I look forward to the next week with you and the two weeks in December after that. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. For now, For now, The Scripture Asssst.

[42 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.