

Deuteronomy 29:29

Knowing God's Special Revelation: The Bible

In Deuteronomy chapter 29, Moses prophesies of Israel's future apostasy and judgment from the Lord.

Moses ends his sobering prophecy by stating that the nation of Israel will reject the Lord.

Read verses 25-28

Moses then concludes the chapter with the profound words in verse 29, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

This verse seems to have no apparent connection with the flow of thought in the chapter.

It is thought by some commentators to have been said in answer to the looks of astonishment or the words of inquiry from the people as to whether they would be ever so wicked as to deserve such punishments.

Imagine what the people must have thought when they heard the grim words of Moses. There must have been feelings of shock and unbelief.

“When will this happen? What will happen to us? What will happen to the pagan nations?”

A Bible commentator writes, “Perhaps verse 29 was written to calm Moses’ own mind, and satisfy the inquiries of others, who perceiving God to deal so severely with his own people, when in the meantime he left alone those nations which were guilty of grosser atheism and idolatry to escape divine judgment.”

Such thinking would only lead to wrong conclusions about the justice of God.

Therefore, to set things straight, Moses declares in verse 29, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

Moses reminds us that the ways and judgments of God, though never unjust, are often times hidden from us, unsearchable by our shallow, finite minds, and therefore are not profitable for us to inquire into.

The recorded history of God's providential dealings towards Israel presents a wonderful combination of "goodness and severity."

There is much of it involved in mystery too profound for our limited capacities to fathom; but, from the comprehensive wisdom displayed in those parts which have been made known to us, we are prepared to enter into the full spirit of the apostle's exclamation in Romans 11:33, "How unsearchable are his judgments.

God is infinite and we are finite. There are things that will always remain secrets with God. And that's OK.

God has secrets, and it is not for us to discover what they are. What are some of God's secrets?

The secret of the universe. The universe is so mysterious to us. But not to God.

We read in Isaiah 40:12, “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted (measured) out heaven with the *span*, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?”

A span is the distance between the thumb and the tip of the little finger, for us about nine inches.

In 1995, the Hubble Space Telescope focused on a small section of space and found 2,000 galaxies in 1/25 of one degree of space. They are now estimating that the universe contains 40 billion galaxies, with each galaxy containing somewhere between 50 and 100 *billion* stars.

The secret of providence.

John Calvin writes, “By Providence, we mean, not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven, from which He merely observes the things that are done in the world; but that all-active and all-concerned seatedness on His throne above, by which He governs the world which He Himself hath made.

So that God, as viewed in the glass of His Providence, is not only the Maker of all things in a moment, but the perpetual Ruler of all things which He hath created. That Providence, therefore, which we ascribe to God, pertains as much to His operating hands as to His observing eyes.

When, therefore, God is said to rule the world by His Providence, we do not merely mean that He maintains and preserves that order of nature which He had originally purposed in Himself, but that He holds and continues a peculiar care of every single creature that He has created.

And true and certain is the fact, that as it was the wonderful wisdom of God that originally made the world, and disposed it in its present beautiful order, so, unless the omnipotent power of God, ever present, sustained it thus created and disposed it, it could not continue in its designed order and form one hour.”

We find it difficult enough to manage our lives for one day, yet the Lord keeps the universe running by His mighty power, and he doesn't break a sweat.

The secret of the Lord's second coming. When will the Lord return to earth?

Read in Acts 1:6-7

Verse 7. *It is not for you to know.* The question of the apostles respected the time of the restoration; it was not whether he would do it. Christ's answer meets precisely their inquiry; and he tells them in general that the time of the great events of God's kingdom was not to be understood by them. The disciples asked a similar question in Mt 24:3, "Tell us when shall these things be?"

Jesus answered them then by showing them certain signs which should precede his coming, and by saying, (Mt 24:36) "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

The times or the seasons. The difference between these words is, that the former denotes any time or period indefinite, or uncertain; the latter denotes a fixed, definite, or appropriate time. They seem to be used here to denote the periods of all classes of future events.

In his own power. That is, he has fixed them by his own authority; he will bring them about in his own time and way; and therefore it is not appropriate for men anxiously to inquire into them. All prophecy is remarkably obscure in regard to the time of its fulfillment.

The secrets of divine election. Why does God save some sinners and pass over others?

We read in Ephesians 1:11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The word *predestinated* appears earlier in verse 5. Paul wants to make it perfectly clear that believers are what they are because of what God chose to make them before any man was created. Neither fate nor human merit determines our destiny.

The counsel of His own will.

William Hendriksen writes, “The benevolent purpose—that we should be holy and faultless (Ep 1:4-note), sons of God (Ep 1:5-note), destined to glorify him forever (Eph 1:6) is fixed, being part of a larger, embracing plan.

Not only did God make this plan that includes absolutely all things that ever take place in heaven, on earth, and in hell; past, present, and even the future, pertaining to both believers and unbelievers, to angels and devils, to physical as well as spiritual energies and units of existence both large and small.

He also wholly carries it out. His providence in time is as comprehensive as is His decree from eternity.”

Although we will never know some secrets of God, the Lord has graciously revealed some things that we can know. We are directed and encouraged, diligently to seek into that which God has made known.

The end of all Divine revelation is, not to furnish curious subjects of speculation and conversation, but that we may do all the words of God's law, and be blessed in our obedience. This, the Bible plainly reveals.

There are two ways God reveals himself.

First, God reveals himself by natural revelation.

We read in Psalm 19:1-2, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

In the creation and government of the world, the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, may be so clearly seen, that all who do not render him worship will be without excuse. Romans 1:20.

Secondly, God reveals himself by special revelation.

God's special revelation is God's written word. God reveals certain things in the Bible that we can understand by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us everything we need to know about God.

Therefore, the title of my message is, **Knowing God's Special Revelation: The Bible**. John Flavel wrote, "Providences often puzzle and entangle our thoughts, but bring them to the Word, and your duty will be quickly manifested." We must know the Bible.

Let us consider first.

1. The Bible reveals those things which we need to know and do (read verse 29).

"...but those things which are revealed..."

You don't have to read the Bible to realize that this world is full of pain, suffering, and death. Just turn the television on and watch the news. Read the obituary section in the newspaper. There is suffering and death all around us.

We need answers to the most important questions of life, and the Bible answers those questions.

Why is there so much suffering, and pain in the world? Why do people die?

We need to know of an authority that we can trust and depend on in this world. The Bible is that authority. It is divine authority. It is not the opinions of men. It is not the philosophy of the world.

We need to know the truth. Jesus declares, “that I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

The Bible is divine truth. It is God’s Word. It doesn’t sugar coat things so that it will taste sweet to our liking.

The Bible teaches that “the wages of sin is death.”

“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

“There is no one righteous no not one.”

The Bible tells us that we live in a sin cursed world and because of sin there is disease, war, sorrow, and death.

Sinners think, “How could God be good when there is so much suffering and death in the world? How could God be a loving god when there is so much hatred and evil on the earth?”

Although there is great darkness on the earth, we need to know that God is good all the time.

We read the words of Christ in Luke 18:19, “And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.”

Psalm 143:10, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”

3 John 1:11, “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

Job blessed the Lord when he lost practically everything he had: his children, his wealth, his health.

We read in Job 1:20-22, “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; *blessed be the name of the LORD*. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

 "Good when he gives, supremely good;
 Nor less when he denies;
 Afflictions from his sovereign hand,
 Are blessings in disguise.

Seeing I have lost my temporal goods, and all my domestic comforts, may God alone be all my portion.”

We must know how to be saved from sin. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and if we call upon Him we will be saved. We are not saved by religion or good works. We are saved only through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We must know that there is a hell to shun and a heaven to gain. We must flee from the City of Destruction and flee to the Celestial City.

The Bible reveals what we must know and do.

2. The Bible must belong in our lives (read verse 29)

...“belong unto us and to our children for ever.”

Belong signifies something that is dear and precious to us. I cherish it.

The Bible belongs in our life because it blesses us, especially in the home.

The Bible belongs in our life because it keeps us thinking on eternal things.

The Bible belongs in our life because it strengthens our faith. “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

3. The Bible must be obeyed (read verse 29).

What is the purpose of God’s Special Revelation?

“...that we may do all the words of this law.

We read in James 1:22, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

We must obey the gospel, and do not merely listen to it.

Matthew Henry writes, “If we heard a sermon every day of the week, and an angel from heaven were the preacher, yet, if we rested in hearing only, it would never bring us to heaven. Let the word of truth be carefully attended to, and it will set before us the corruption of our nature, the disorders of our hearts and lives; and it will tell us plainly what we are. In hearing the word, we look into it for counsel and direction, and when we study it, it turns to our spiritual life. It is not talking, but walking, that will bring us to heaven.”

The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 7:21, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

In conclusion, God has secrets. The universe, providence, the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of election are some of the secrets of God that we can't understand. However, God reveals certain things in the Bible that we can understand by the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches us what we need to know and do. The Bible belongs in our lives. The Bible must be obeyed. May the Lord increase more love in our hearts for the Bible so we can become more like our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us pray.