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Chapter 2: The Word of God: What are the different forms of the Word of God?

A. "The Word of God" as a Person: Jesus Christ

1. The Bible sometimes refers to the Son of God as "the Word of God." John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13

B. "The Word of God" as Speech by God: Various forms

1. God Decrees

→ A decree of God is a word of God that causes something to happen or even causes things to come into being. Gen 1:3, 24;

Ps. 33:6: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

→ The decrees of God also assure the continuing existence of all things.

Heb. 1:3: He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power (*fe,rwn te ta. pa,nta tw/ | r`h,mati th/j duna,mewj auvtou/*). After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

2. God's Words of Personal Address

i) God speaking directly with people. Gen. 2:16-17; 3:16-17; Exod 20:1-3; Matt 3:17
Ex. 20:1-3: And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me.

→ These instances of personal address are always seen in Scripture as the actual words of God. The words of "personal address" are also *human* words spoken in intelligible human language.

→ People are wrong to object that if God speaks in human language it must contain errors and mistakes

3. God's Words as Speech Through Human Lips

i) God often raised up prophets through whom he spoke.

ii) These are prophets are ordinary humans speaking with ordinary human language, but these facts do not diminish the authority of the words.

Deut. 18:18-20; Jer 1:7, 9, etc., etc

iii) Anyone who falsely claimed to be speaking for the Lord was severely punished.

Deut. 18:20-22; Ezek 13:1-7

4. God's Words in Written Form (the Bible)

i) There are numerous instances where God's words were put in written form: Ex. 31:18; 32:16; Deut 31:9-13

ii) Further additions were made to the collection of God's written words: Josh. 24:26; Isa 30:8; Jer 30:2; John 14:26; 1 Cor 14:37

iii) Several benefits from the writing down of God's words

(1) More accurate preservation of God's words

(2) Opportunity for repeated inspection

(3) Accessibility

iv) Still considered to be God's words: just as true; just as authoritative; people have just as much obligation to believe and obey

C. The Focus of Our Study

→ In the study of systematic theology the focus is on God's Word in written form, the Bible.

Josh. 1:8: This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Ps. 1:1-2: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

2 Tim. 3:16: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

D. Questions for personal application

1. Would you pay more attention if God spoke to you with a voice from heaven or through a living prophet as in the Old Testament?

2. What does the fact that God spoke to people in different ways tell us about the nature of God and what he delights in ?

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(Connie also has electronic copies of these outlines starting in about June, 2005)