

Revelation! (Psalm 19:1-4; Exodus 3:1-4 & 2 Timothy 3:14-17)

06-Jan-19

Intro

So, throughout the month of January we're going to be doing a series on "SHUN" words in the Bible - that's words in the Bible that end in "TION". Words like: Revelation, Substitution, Salvation, Redemption and so on. We'll also continue this look at "SHUN" words in January 2020.

Let me ask God to speak to our hearts and minds. Let's pray

Our first "SHUN" word - is Revelation

So, we'd better define what Revelation is:

[PowerPoint 1-Defintion]

A couple of definitions from the Oxford Dictionary:

The making known of something that was previously secret or unknown.

A surprising and previously unknown fact that has been disclosed to others.

Which reminds me of a story I heard recently where a young girl had a startling revelation about her mummy

One day a little girl noticed that her mum had several strands of white hair sticking out of her mummy's beautiful brunette hair

She looked at her mum and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mummy?"

Her mum replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white."

*The little girl thought about this stunning revelation for a while and then said, "Mummy, how come **all** of Grandma's hairs are white?"*

(pause)

When it comes to God - there are two ways - that He reveals to us - what was previously unknown

The two ways are:

[PowerPoint 2-2 types]

That is ***General Revelation***

And ***Special Revelation***

General revelation refers to the general truths that can be known about God through nature.

And Special revelation refers to the more specific truths that can be known about God through supernatural means

General Revelation (Psalm 19:1-4)

Let's look at General Revelation first.

We see that in our OT reading from Psalm 19:1-4

[If you'd like to turn there]

[PowerPoint 3-Psalm 19]

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

3 They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

According to Psalm 19, God's existence and power can be clearly seen just by observing the universe around us. It's like Creation is speaking to us - the Psalm is saying - but without words - just with pictures. Like looking at a picture book. The order, intricacy, and wonder of creation speak to the existence of a powerful and glorious Creator, God.

So, we can - either look at Creation and say to ourselves - all this happened by accident - or we can say to ourselves - there is a Creator God - who created all things - and keeps it all together

Application: Applying this to our lives today. Look out at night - and see the moon and stars and planets. Look out during the day - sunrise & sunset, oceans, beaches and tides; mountains and valleys; trees and flowers; and animals. Look at the birth of a baby - each baby born is a miracle - and a gift from God. God's handiwork is all around us - if we care to look!

(pause)

The Apostle Paul picks up on this idea of General Revelation in Romans 1:20

He says:

[PowerPoint 4-Rom 1:20]

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Like Psalm 19 - Romans 1:20 teaches that God's eternal power and divine nature are "clearly seen" and "understood" from what has been made, and that there is no excuse for denying that a Creator God exists. Yet some people do.

[PowerPoint 5-General Revelation]

With these Scriptures in mind, perhaps a working definition of general revelation would be "*the revelation of God to all people, at all times, and in all places that proves that God exists and that He is intelligent, powerful, and transcendent (that is - above the range of normal or physical experience)*"

Special Revelation (Exodus 3:1-4 & 2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Next, we look at the 2nd type of revelation

Namely - Special Revelation

[PowerPoint 6-Special Revelation]

Special revelation is how God has chosen to reveal Himself through miraculous means. Special revelation includes: physical appearances of God, dreams, visions, the written Word of God, and most importantly—Jesus Christ.

The Bible records ***God appearing in physical form*** many times - here's some examples:

In Genesis 3:8 - God comes walking in the Garden of Eden

In Genesis 18:1 - God appears to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre

In our OT reading from Exodus 3:1-4 - God appears to - and speaks to - Moses - in the form of a burning bush that doesn't burn up

The Bible also records ***God speaking to people through dreams*** - for example

In Genesis 28:12 - Jacob has a dream where he sees a stairway from Heaven to Earth - and angels ascending and descending on it

In Genesis 37 - Joseph has dreams that His brothers would one day bow down to him - which later proved to be true

In 1 Kings 3:5 - God appears to Solomon in a dream and says "Ask for whatever you want me to give you"

And so on...

The Bible also records ***God speaking to people through visions***

In Genesis 15 - God appears to Abraham in a vision - and makes some amazing promises to Abraham - God promises Abraham - land, many descendants and many blessings - all these promises came true!

In Isaiah 6 - Isaiah sees a vision of Heaven - He see what Heaven looks like

In Daniel 7 - Daniel sees a vision of the future of the Babylonian Empire he was held captive in

And so on...

Of primary importance in the revealing of God is *His Holy Word, the Bible*, which is also a form of special revelation. God miraculously guided the authors of the Bible to correctly record His message to humankind, while still using their own styles and personalities.

[PowerPoint 7-Special Revelation-The Word]

According to Hebrews 4:12

...the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

So, God's words are not just historical words written in a book

They are alive and active today. As we read God's Word - the Bible - they jump out at us - and can be like a sharp sword penetrating our thoughts and our attitudes and speaking to our hearts

In our NT passage reading today from 2 Timothy 3:14-17 [Which you can turn to] - the Apostle Paul acknowledges how his colleague Timothy has known God's Word from childhood

And Paul explains exactly what God's Word is and how useful it is -

[PowerPoint 8-Special Revelation-2 Tim 3]

¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How important it is to teach young people God's Word?

Why?

Because God wants them to grow up to know about Him and to believe in His Son, Jesus

And because God's Word makes people *wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*.

As we read God's Word and learn from it - it actually teaches us that we all sin - that we can't stop sinning - that we need someone to fix sin - and that that person is Jesus - God's Son - and that He died on a cruel cross - to take our sin away - and give us forgiveness - and He rose again - so we can be saved from sin and death - and have eternal life in Heaven - ALL THIS teaching comes from God's Word - which is what Paul means by saying *God's Word makes people wise for salvation*

Paul also says that Scripture (the Bible) is God's Words - not human beings' words. Yes, human beings wrote it down but **God breathed out** His Words - and gave the authors of the Bible - His Words to write down

And Paul says it's God's Word - as we read it:

- That - teaches us - about God - about Jesus - about ourselves - and about how to live a life pleasing to God
- It's God's Word - that rebukes us - God's word shows us our bad behaviour as we say or do things which God says are wrong

- It's God's Word - that corrects us - God's word shows us how we can correct our commitment to worship and love Him - and correct how we treat others
- It's God's Word - that trains us in righteousness - God's word shows us how to be right with God - and how to be more like God and His Son - Jesus - in our character and in our behaviour
- And it's God's Word - that equips us to be God's servant and do good stuff for Him - things like - loving our neighbour - helping those in need - caring for others, practicing hospitality - and sharing our faith and so on...

Basically, God's Word is the Book for Life - but we have to read it, study it and meditate on it - and apply it to our lives

God determined to have the truth regarding Him recorded in written form because He knew the inaccuracy and unreliability of oral tradition. He also understood that the dreams and visions of people can be misinterpreted. God decided to reveal everything that humanity needs to know about Him, what He expects, and what He has done for us - in the Bible.

Ultimate Special Revelation - Jesus (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 1:1-3)

[PowerPoint 9-Jesus Christ]

The ultimate form of special revelation is the Person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Word of God

Jesus - the Word of God - was with God in the beginning and it was this Word - that created everything (John 1:1)

And This Word of God became flesh - became a human being - in the form of Jesus - which we celebrated at Christmas - John 1:14 - says the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us

So, Jesus is fully God and fully human

Hebrews 1:1-3 summarizes best how God's Special Revelation through Jesus - the Word of God - actually works - it says:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days [that's today] he has spoken to us by his Son [Jesus], whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

So, God became a human being, in the Person of Jesus Christ, to identify with us, to set an example for us, to teach us, to reveal Himself to us, and, most importantly, to provide salvation [SHUN word in a couple of weeks] for us by humbling Himself in death on the cross (Philippians 2:6-8) Jesus Christ is the ultimate "special revelation" from God.

Challenge

Let me leave us with a couple of challenges today:

[PowerPoint 10a-Challenge 1]

1. In terms of **General Revelation** - I encourage us to - Look around in awe of what God has done and continues to do. Look at the moon and stars and planets. Look at the sunrise & sunset, the oceans, beaches and tides; the mountains and valleys; the trees and flowers; and animals. Look at the birth of a baby - each baby born is a miracle - and a gift from God. Look at family and friends. Look at God's handiwork all around. And praise Him for His Awesomeness!

(pause)

[PowerPoint 10b-Challenge 2]

2. 2nd challenge. In terms of **Special Revelation** - Because, God has ultimately chosen to reveal himself through His Holy Word and through the Word made flesh - Jesus Himself - we need to have a close relationship with Jesus - don't we? As we start a New Year - my challenge to us all is to commit ourselves to a daily feeding on His Word - to commit to daily and constant prayer - to commit to listening to God's Holy Spirit - as His Spirit reveals more and more about Jesus, reveals more and more about God and His plans and purposes, reveals more and more - about how to live a life pleasing to God - and reveals how we can share our faith with others. Friends, let us pray for a revival in 2019 - let us pray that God can use us to reveal His Son Jesus - to the young people we know - to the friends and family who don't know Jesus - to our community that doesn't know Jesus

Let's pray...