

It Is Written

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Is There A Need For Continuing Revelation?

By Kent E. Heaton, Sr.

When man approaches God, he must ask himself whether God has given him everything he needs for salvation or whether God must continue to reveal Himself to man with further revelations. God manifests himself to man in two ways: natural revelation and special revelation. In natural revelation, God unfolds His majesty through the agency of nature and the world about us. Paul spoke of this natural revelation in Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

Man will not be able to stand before God and say that he was unable to know the existence of God. In the very basic nature of the world God has revealed Himself by the things that are made. If man rejects this knowledge, he will be lost. Paul declared in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, "To give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." No man will be able to stand before God with an excuse!

The second manner that God has revealed Himself is through "Special Revelation." This type of revelation goes beyond the elements of this world to reveal the character and message of God. Through special revelation, God reveals to man His will and how man must approach Him. The first example of special revelation is when God gave commandments to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:16-17. Later, when the children of Israel became a nation, God instructed Moses to write down the law (Exodus 24:1-8). The kings of Israel were instructed to write the law with their own hand to abide by its commands (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

The apostle Peter affirms the message of these holy men in 2 Peter 1:20-21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." God revealed His will to men so they could read and understand His will. Paul shows this process of revelation in Ephesians 3:3,4 – "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)."

The question we must ask today is whether God is able to reveal Himself to man in the written word conclusively throughout generations upon generations or whether He must continue to reveal Himself through special revelation until time is no more? Many in the religious world suppose that God is unable to reveal Himself without continuing revelations today. An understanding of the meaning of revelation will clarify this.

A revelation is a revealing of something that was previously unknown. If God reveals something to man today that is already written in His word, there is no revelation. If God reveals something that is not in the written word, that would be a revelation. There are numerous passages in the N.T. that anticipated the completed written revelation of God's will to man. Hebrews 2:1-4 says there is no excuse for ignorance and neglect. 2 Peter 1:1-4 says we can only be as complete as our available knowledge. 1 Peter 3:11 affirms that the oracles of God were established. Jude reminds us in verse 3 that the faith was once for all delivered to the saints. According to Galatians 1:8,9, all systems of continual revelations must maintain either that the Scriptures are not accurately translated or are not complete.

If there is continual revelation today, the Bible is a hoax and God is a liar. The reason that men today seek continual revelation is not to teach the will of God but to teach the will of man. In the realm of continual revelation, man becomes God. The God that I serve is a God who is able to reveal Himself in the written word and preserve it for all mankind. Glory to God for His power.

What Am I Worth To The Local Congregation?

By Ben Shropshire

Answering this question requires some honest introspection. It also assumes that all members of a congregation have some interest in whether they are of any value to the accomplishment of the congregation's purposes. This is a question that is easily avoided by those who may be afraid of the answer.

A congregation, according to the New Testament pattern, is made up of Christians who have agreed to three things: (1) to be a congregation whereby the many may act together as one in worship and work; (2) to submit to a common oversight; and (3) to pool their resources together to accomplish mutually agreed upon work. Such a covenant is effective only when "the whole body, joined and knit together by which every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share" (Eph. 4:16).

To some what the congregation does is something, apparently, just to watch sort of like a spectator sport. They come to services, but hardly participate in the worship. They don't sing, and we can only wonder whether they join in the prayers. They seem to have little interest in the sermon and may sleep through most of it. The Lord's supper seems to be observed perfunctorily. There would be no worship if it were up to them, but fortunately, others find joy and strength in participating in divine worship.

Some folks, I'm reluctant to say, view the local congregation only from the standpoint of what it does for them. The question they most frequently ask is: 'What is the congregation worth to me?' They seldom stop to realize that the congregation can give to them only what someone else has contributed to it. If they are learning, it is only because someone else is willing to teach. They meet in a clean building because someone else has cleaned it. They profit from the singing because someone is willing to use his talents to lead it and others wholeheartedly join in. If all of these "someones" were to be like them, nothing would be done.

What am I worth to the church? Can I be counted on to help when there is work to be done? Do I accomplish what I commit myself to do? Am I carrying my share of the financial burdens of the congregation's work? Am I willing to do my share in the teaching program? Do I faithfully attend the services of the congregation? Is my membership in the congregation worth something to the other members, or am I looking at it only from the standpoint of what they can do for me?

Am I of negative value to the congregation; that is, as a constant complainer, a critic of the efforts of others, as one who selfishly insists on having it his own way all the time, or a pessimist who discourages everyone else?

Am I one who helps solve problems that come up in the congregation, or am I a part of the problems?

Instead of avoiding the answer to the question, "What am I worth to the congregation?" let me try to answer it introspectively and honestly. To paraphrase a former president, "Ask not what the congregation can do for you; ask what you can do for the congregation."

What is my purpose in life?

By Kyle Campbell

A question that people inevitably ask is "What is my purpose in life?" Some believe that they exist to have fun. Some believe that they exist to start a family and to raise children. Some believe that they exist to help mankind through philanthropy. As you can see, some of these are noble and admirable.

The true duty of man is found in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. It reads, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." It is sad to see that instead of fearing God, people go their own way (Titus 1:16; Philippians 2:21).

You will only find true happiness by complying with God's will. Life will always have ups and downs, but the hope that you will possess will anchor your soul in eternity (Hebrews 6:18-19). If you would like to study more, please email us. We would love to hear from you and help you learn more about the Bible.