

## 323 *How God communicates II*

When I first came to faith, over 50 years ago, a vicar-type chap I met at a Christian holiday venue said something I remember to this day. I told him that I'd seen the quality of life of Christians, and heard the story of Jesus and it seemed to make sense but it depended on the Bible – and how could I know *that* was true?

His response was that I should look at the *nature of the God* that the Bible portrays. Would such a loving God provide us with an unreliable document on which to base our faith?!

Although that is actually a circular argument(!), it certainly helped me because it pointed me to seeing things *relationally*. It's not about proving whether **something** is true, but about knowing that **someone** is true. And you don't know that by analysing the Bible, rather by spending time with Jesus, the **person** we meet throughout the Bible.

Then I started at Cambridge, joined the CU, and was soon warned about these 'liberal Christians', people who 'don't take the Bible seriously'. We, the CU, had to defend the truth of the biblical faith against this attack! The Bible is infallible and inerrant!

In my second year, I was shown that the Bible clearly teaches that the gifts of the Spirit (especially tongues and prophecy) were given *only for the early church*, before the *written word* was available: tongues is not real, and 'prophecy' actually means expounding and applying Scripture by preaching. That's what the Bible clearly teaches, so I believed it.

Well, I believed it until, a few years later, I encountered prophecy and healing, and they greatly enhanced my relationship with God. So I then went round trying to persuade fellow believers that, to be true and biblical, you had to be 'Spirit-filled'!

As I explained in my very first article,<sup>[0]</sup> I've spent most of my life trying to persuade others that (my version of) 'what the Bible teaches' is correct. At my worst, I believed that one tiny sect held the true truth, validated by the leader's spiritual gifts. Stupid boy!

What sparked today's article was one friend saying she believes in 'the absolute authority of the Bible' and another telling me that the Bible is indeed inerrant – it contains *no errors*.

For the first, I have, over the years, taken different (even contradictory) things as being 'biblically true', but this 'absolute authority' was actually not the Bible itself, but my particular group's *interpretation* of what the Bible teaches.

The second: (1) Who decides what is an 'error', anyway? (2) Why do we have to defend the Bible? (Google: 'Spurgeon defend a lion') (3) Anyone who thinks that the Bible does *not* contain contradictions hasn't really studied it (faith/works,<sup>1</sup> predestination/free will).

Coming back to my initial comment, the all-loving God has communicated in any and every way possible, throughout the millennia, especially through fallible and errant people, through their loving, speaking and writing.

Paul Bev. 13.4.24

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 2<sup>6,7,10</sup> states clearly that we receive immortality, etc by *doing what is good* = works, not faith! Ditto Mt 25<sup>31-46</sup>.