

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Dear Terry, For 14 years my husband...has been receiving 'Diakrisis', which we have kept all editions. We found the articles very interesting and a blessing. In September my husband passed away...I will continue to receive the newsletter...
(M.S., Vict)

Pastor Wanted

Dear Terry, greetings in the name of our Saviour. Central Mountains Baptist Church in the Blue Mountains, NSW, is looking for a pastoral associate, or a new pastor. We are an independent Baptist church, conservative in doctrine and practice. Our time frame for the new position would be about mid 2019 but we want to begin discussion with any interested person as soon as possible. Any interested candidates can check us out by visiting our website www.mountainsbaptist.org.au

If there are specific questions or more information is needed you can contact Wayne Robilliard, the present pastor, at wayne.robilliard@gmail.com

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- Pray for the evangelists that this ministry supports from time to time with these tracts.

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'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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Newsletter of TA Ministries Vol.4, No.2 March/April 2018

TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry, **teaching, informing and equipping** the church.
Editor: Terry Arnold (Dr.Th; MABS; Dip.Bib.&Min.)

The editor may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments or items contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be *taught, informed and equipped*.

This newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donation to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Notice To All Hardcopy Subscribers

Praise the Lord for a generous donation to help with the printing costs of the Diakrisis newsletter. However, if you are currently on hardcopy only we would ask that you consider receiving your copy by e-mail and advising us by e-mail. A link to download Acrobat Reader is provided. You can also print the newsletter in the same booklet format as the mailed version.

Editor's Comment

Increasingly today I hear subscribers saying they are finding it more difficult to find churches that preach and teach the word of God *as it is*. The messages often are feel good, social and topical extra-biblical humanistic homilies. Expository preaching is now rare. Increasingly we do not say what we should say and we don't want to say what we know God says. The problem to many in a post modern society is that God, the Bible, the Gospel and scripture are not 'politically correct'. But then, we should not be surprised, considering we are in an era of great apostasy from the faith once delivered. Most denominations do not preach now what they used to preach even just a few decades ago. Many actually stand opposite to where they once stood on many divisive issues. Added to this we have new modern translations and new interpretations which each decade gravitate further and further away from what scripture actually says.

More than ever we need to '*Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*' (2Tim.2:15).

Although I am loath to recommend but few Bible colleges in this country, I do sense that there is a great need for Christians to be trained in 'dividing the word of truth' and in principles of interpretation ('hermeneutics'). But there is one group of people that especially I am passionate for - those pastors, teachers and church people who present the Word of God to the masses each week, whether it be in the pulpit or in Sunday school. The responsibility here before God is to be revered and feared.

Interpretation skills and disciplines in preaching and teaching the Word of God can be taught and learned. There is a great need for this discipline. It is this author's opinion too that preachers and teachers can bring some of these skills to the knowledge of everyday hearers in their sermons and studies...

All scripture is in harmony. The scriptures do not have a '*private interpretation*' (2Pet.1:20,21) other than what the text and the original author says under the inspiration of God himself. There are no contradictions. If it seems there are contradictions then the problem lies with the saint, not God, and thus the text requires further study.

Scripture interprets Scripture. When Scriptures are unclear then look at other scriptures. For example, who is the '*woman*' in Revelation 12:1-6? When I was a Roman Catholic I was told this was Mary. But the '*woman*' in Revelation 12 is a '*wonder*' ('*semeion*' - a 'sign'). Later I discovered that in Genesis chapter 37 Joseph dreamt that '*the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me*' (Gen.37:9). The twelve sons of that family were to become the twelve tribes of Israel. In Revelation the child is revealed as Jesus Christ who rules '*with a rod of iron*' (Rev.2:27,19:15). Christ is born of the nation Israel (Heb.7:14). The nation Israel is often characterised as a '*woman*' (Micah 4:9,10; Is.54:5, Jer.31:32, etc). *Scripture interprets scripture.*

It is crucial that we attempt to understand what the original author meant and in his day. It is in this area of interpretation that modern preaching has often gone

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Dear Terry, Why do we in the Anglican and Lutheran churches still have the 'Eucharist' since we don't believe in 'Transubstantiation'. As far as I understand it is a thanksgiving service?

Editor's reply:

The word '*eucharist*' is the Greek '*εὐχαριστία*' (*eucharistia*) for '*thanksgiving*'. In 1Corinthians 11:23,24 the word is used when Jesus '*gave thanks*'. In higher Anglican and in some other churches it is seen as '*sacramental*' and a means of grace rather than an '*ordinance*', a command. Roman Catholics believe that the communion bread and wine are *actually* and miraculously changed at the words of a priest as mediator to become the body and blood of Christ himself ('*transubstantiation*'). Lutherans believe the true body and blood of Christ are really present '*in, with, and under*' the forms of the bread and wine ('*consubstantiation*'). Many Reformed Christians believe in a spiritual presence of Christ in the communion. Others, including Brethren, take the communion to be more a symbolic re-enactment of the Last Supper.

The term '*Eucharist*' is referred to in the '*Didache*' (early 2nd century) and later by Justin Martyr, but there is no evidence of the Roman '*Transubstantiation*' which came much later. The term '*Eucharist*' came to be used mostly in Roman Catholicism with the false teaching of '*transubstantiation*' associated with this term. Hence many Christian churches prefer to use the terms '*communion*', '*the Lord's supper*' or the '*breaking of bread*'. Whatever we call it - in scripture it is simply *the remembrance of the death of the Lord* using the figures of *bread* and the *cup* for his *body* and his *blood*. '*For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come*' (1Cor.11:26).

Terry, Thankyou for Mike's editorial (Nov/Dec 2017) as my family background was Lutheran and my wife and I left the Lutheran Church over 27 years ago over the issue of infant baptism...We joined a Christian Outreach Centre in 1990 and was there for 9 years. The Lord opened my eyes to see where that was heading...many being prepared to receive the Antichrist, 2Thess 2:9-10...When we came out of the Christian Outreach Centre the Bible verse that was impressed in my mind was Rev.3:19. The Lord could have left me there, but He had abundant mercy on me and grace on my family and they followed. All Glory to God.

The Lord continued to be merciful to us and led us to where we have been for over 6 years now, with a fellowship group at Mt. Barker [Editor has these details] You and all involved in this ministry are continually in my prayers...

(K.K. Sth Australia)

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Greetings Terry, Just finished reading your latest 'Diakrisis' (P.17) and noted the question re the One Spirit...

ONE (true) BAPTISM: Differing viewpoints: Lewis Sperry Chafer - Systematic Theology Vol.6 P.146-150 states clearly, quoting also others sharing his view, it is Spirit Baptism. Also George Eager (Mailbox Club) and the Wycliffe Comm. P.1310: 'The one baptism is undoubtedly the Baptism of the Spirit'.

Conversely: F F Bruce, H A Ironside, Albert Leckie, Emmaus Bible Course quoting from Van Ryn all teach the One Baptism is water baptism.

Note however: - One interesting observation is that Water Baptism has not had a unifying effect on the Church (as in the Ephesian passage)!

Hebrew Greek Study Bible: 'The Baptism in the Spirit by Christ of every believer into His Body is an historical event similar to His Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and His Coming Again. Christ did it once and for all in joining all believers into His Body'.

(G.J. Qld)

Hello Terry, I met you many years ago...I run 'Free in Christ Ministries' which helps people come out of cults...I recommended to you 'Reasoning From the Scriptures With Jehovah Witnesses' by Ron Rhodes...

I was interested in your article on the Rapture and 2Thess.2:3.. I just cannot get my mind round the teaching that this verse refers to a 'rapture'. With Vines Expository Dictionary and a KJ Interlinear I could not make 'apostasia' read anything but 'a falling away' no matter how hard I tried...

(Ray Beharrell, Free in Christ Ministries Sydney)

Editor's reply:

Yes I remember you...I still use your helpful resources when I meet JW's.

On the issue of 2Thess.2:3 being used for the 'rapture' - this is relatively new teaching. Many churches that teach it now, did not teach it even decades ago. Sadly many more are now teaching this new and unorthodox teaching which cannot be substantiated from the original language and exegesis.

Dear Mike, What an amazingly good last 'Diakrisis' (as always!). Loved reading it all and found your editorial and article on the Salvation Army especially good. Also enjoyed reading 'The 10 Commandments for Megapastors' and Terry's article on Social Media and Facebook. I intend to read it all again tomorrow to let it soak in more! Thank you both for all you do in His Mighty Name!

(C.E., Qld)

amiss. The very early church read the scriptures in a literal sense. But at the end of the second century allegorical and figurative interpretations began to enter into interpretation methods. It is a fact that as the centuries went on the interpretations of the church fathers became more fanciful and less literal. An example of this is seen in the interpretations of eschatology and in particular the 'millennium'. Most of the early church fathers read the millennium as a literal 1,000 years. Few in the early centuries actually taught this as figurative only. But in the third century and beyond such a *Literal Grammatical method* was lost in a sea of varying interpretations.

When the Old Testament is used in the New Testament it is used in a literal sense - the prophecies of Jesus are literally. No prophecy that has been fulfilled has been fulfilled in any other way but literally. The reader may well ask '*but are there not scriptures to be taken figuratively?*'. The answer is 'yes', but most of them are *obviously* figurative. In 1Corinthians 4:15 we read '*...you have ten thousand instructors in Christ*' and in 14:19 '*ten thousand words in an unknown tongue*'. The *context* tells us it is obviously a play on words, a hyperbole. The Greek word for 'ten thousand' is 'murios' - an *indefinite* number - we get the word 'myriad' from this. (Note the Greek word used in Revelation chapter 20 for 'one thousand' is *not* the indefinite 'murios' but 'chillio').

Why is it that we will take the coming of the Lord literal yet not many of the signs with it such as the signs in the sun, moon and stars as mentioned in several Old Testament books, in the Gospels and in Revelation? The most consistent method is that *the scriptures mean what they say unless they are obviously figurative*.

There is also the *Law of double reference* - two aspects are referred to but at different times. One is close in time, the other future further off. Books such as Daniel and Joel display this often - where the context will switch from a near event to a distant event. In Acts 1:16-19, Judas's betrayal of Jesus is quoted from Psalm 41:5-13. The passage in Psalms actually has a primary context referring to a man named Ahithopel who being a close friend of David, betrayed him. In regard to prophecies I call this 'dual prophecy'.

Lastly, the most important aspect of interpretation is *context*. Two aspects can be considered here - the historical aspect and the context of the text itself. 'Out of context' teaching today is rampant. How often do we hear such scriptures as Joshua 24:15 '*choose you this day whom you will serve*' applied to evangelism, when the context clearly is referring to Israelite *believers* who had turned to idolatry? The context is not salvation at all, but *idolatry* as the verses to follow show clearly.

How often do we hear Revelation 3:20 '*I stand at the door, and knock*' used for the pleadings of the Lord to the unsaved, when in fact it is a warning to a *church*! The misuse here in these scriptures would be corrected if the hermeneutical question '*who is the passage speaking to*' was asked and answered correctly.

One of the most 'out of context' uses of scripture seen by this author is 2Peter 3:9 '*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;*

but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance'. This passage is commonly used for proving God wants all to be saved. Yet neither the context nor the grammar gives this interpretation. Answering the question 'who is this speaking to' can only be answered by the 'usward' and the word 'beloved' which is mentioned numerous times throughout the passage. But also the more specific context shows the subject is concerning the *sureness of the Lord's coming* for his 'beloved'. Indeed, sometimes we can miss the 'whole' of the context by focusing too much on the 'parts'. For example, the issue of meat offered to idols in 1Corinthians 8-10 is linked to the principle of the 'stumbling block' (8:7-13); and foot washing is linked to *servanthood*.

Context can be read with a biased vision. We need to be careful of reading in our own cultural or traditional bias. The Seventh Day Adventists are masters at this, systematically and in a 'shotgun' approach putting verses together on top of each other to prove that Saturday is the only day we must rest and worship and that keeping Sunday is serious error. But a look at each individual text will soon see that each alone do not teach the final premise taught by them on this issue.

Yet in other situations, some flatly refuse to accept what a scripture text *obviously* says and so they begin semantic gymnastics to resolve the emotional or logical issue they have in their own *human* minds. For example, when the Bible says 'No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him...' (Jn.6:44) - it means what it says: 'no man' and 'no man can come'. God must 'draw' before any 'decision' or 'will' is involved. It never ceases to astonish us how some authors contort this scripture (and their minds) to a 'free will' eisegesis which has man playing a part in this salvation by grace.

Much of today's Bible study also has the mentality which asks: 'what does this text say to you'? The switch here is from the text to the *individual*; from objective exegesis to *subjective* eisegesis. This post-modernist trend steers many away from the author's meaning and what the text literally says.

Granted there are 'applications' that can be derived from the text and brought to bear by the Holy Spirit on our personal lives. However, those *applications must not contradict the text itself*.

Finally, any who preach or teach the word of God, whether it be in a home group, Sunday school or in the pulpit, must do the 'hard yards' in researching and exegeting the passage. This will enable the preacher to better understand what the original author originally meant *before* making the 'applications' to the congregation. Many of today's teaching sermons are filled with cute stories, illustrations and anecdotes that barely resemble what the passage of scripture being used actually says. Sermon preparation therefore must be an exercise in digging and searching out the authors original meaning, working from the 'whole' to the 'parts' and then from the 'parts' back to the 'whole'. The 'whole' with the main point or points must not be lost.

'Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' (2Tim.2:15).

Terry Arnold

[Unless they 'hear'...and the Spirit draws and quickens they cannot understand and be born again *in and of themselves*] *It does not make sense and contradicts the whole Bible with new and old testaments...* [No contradiction at all. The Holy Spirit simply draws and they come, but not in and of themselves, but by the Spirit's quickening] *God clearly declared...that He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 18, and repeats with an oath in ch.33 when God said clearly 'as I live I do not take pleasure in the death of the wicked'...* [Correct] *I stand by God's Word and I think Calvinism is in total contradiction with the Bible...* [You are standing by your own fallen human logic which refuses to accept that God has an 'elect', that he does indeed 'predestinate' and that only by the Holy Spirit will people be saved. This is the 'contradiction' to you, but not to God.]...*My head can't get around Calvinism [Therein lies the problem, my brother. It's your 'head' in logic trying to solve an 'antinomy' which God the Holy Spirit has the answer for out of time and 'before the foundation of the world'] and I have been a believer in the Lord longer than you since 01/02/1984...* [And yet you still deny 'what is impossible with man is possible with God' (Matt.9:26)?] *The more I read and study the word of God the more I see Calvinism is in contradiction with the Bible. [You read through your own human lenses in trying to solve what God calls a 'mystery' and 'his pleasure and good will' (Read Eph.1)]...Calvinists...my brothers in Christ...contradict the Word of God.*

[What I teach on this issue is the same as almost all of the Divines - most of the Reformers, Puritans (Spurgeon, Whitefield, Edwards, Bunyan...), all the martyrs I know of (Tyndale, Latimer...), Missionaries (Brainerd, Carey, Livingstone...), Leaders (Darby, Mueller, Strong...), the KJV translators, many early commentators and in the major historical Confessions.

Why make something a 'contradiction' that God has a distinct plan for by His quickening Spirit? God is quite capable of solving what seems to us like a 'contradiction'. The Bible is clear - an unregenerate person *cannot* and does not seek after God. The Word of God and the Gospel is 'foolishness' to them. However, we are commanded to preach the Gospel to *all*. We do NOT know who the 'elect' of God are, or those who God is preparing, 'quickening' to receive the Gospel and be saved through his imputed righteousness. This is NO contradiction. Please allow Charles Spurgeon to bring a rather blunt correction: '*How dare you, because God reveals to you two things, which two things you cannot make square with one another - how dare you charge either the one or the other with being false? If I believe God, I am not only to believe what I can understand, but what I cannot understand; and if there were a revelation which I could comprehend and sum up as I may count five upon my fingers, I should be sure it did not come from God. But if it has some depths vastly too deep for me - some knots which I cannot untie - some mysteries which I cannot solve - I receive it with the greater confidence, because it now gives me swimming-room for my faith, and my soul bathes herself in the great sea of God's wisdom, praying, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief'*.

(Letter from D.J., Sydney)

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'Contradictions' or God's 'Quickening'?

Editor's reply in bold and brackets

Dear Terry, I commend you on many sound Biblical teachings like...in disagreeing with Infant Baptism (taught by R.C Sproul a Calvinist) **[You mean 'Calvinist']**; Standing against Homosexuality...Women not being leaders...in a Church...and that 2Thess.2:3 is not the 'rupture' **[You mean 'rapture']**...And many other things I agree with you...But brother Terry I still disagree with many of your Calvinistic views **[I am not a 'Calvinist' - I don't follow the teachings of John Calvin]** and I see contradictions like on P.3 of the last newsletter...You said we must accept that non christians cannot understand spiritual matters and they will not understand it until they are born again of the Spirit of God **[This is true from Rom.8:7; 1Cor.2:14 and many other scriptures]** and then you contradicted that when you said in the last paragraph of the same P.3 saying we must confront the lost sinner...with the scriptures that condemns him as a sinner needing to be pointed to faith and repentance in salvation in Jesus Christ...**[This is also true. The gospel is to all. We do not know who the 'elect' are]** This is a very clear contradiction...**[No. It is an 'antinomy' - two truths that may appear opposite to you]** If you say they will not understand the spiritual matters then how can you confront them with the scripture if they cannot understand until they are born again...**[How do you know they will not understand? You have left out the Holy Spirit! By the Spirit - that is how they will be changed and 'quickened' (made alive). '...With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible' Matt.9:26]**

...This is what makes me think that hyper-Calvanists are more consistent than moderate Calvinists because at least their views are consistent with what they believe. But moderate Calvinists contradict themselves all the time.

[The Doctrines of Grace are not in contradiction. They express what only the Holy Spirit can do in 'drawing' and 'quickening' a person. However, 'Hyper-Calvinism' has a form of 'double predestination' - a positive prior decree damning certain people to Hell; it also does not desire to preach to all, is not evangelistic, among other errors. It is false teaching]

The Bible clearly says Faith is by hearing and hearing by the Word of God...**[Correct]** This means when the sinner hears the word of God, the Holy Spirit makes them understand what they hear and respond **[Correct]** by a 'Yes' or 'No' **[Not quite. The 'drawing' by the Spirit will be a 'yes'. All drawn and called 'will come'. Jn.6:37- 'All that the Father gives me shall come to me...all which he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day...vs.44 No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day']** but you say that they cannot understand spiritual matters until they are born again and in that case hearing the word is of no use to them before they are born again... Continued over >

Why Has 'Lent' Become So Cool With Evangelicals?

'Born in the Bible Belt and raised in an evangelical church, I didn't know what Lent was until after I graduated from college. That was nearly ten years ago, and since that time I've seen an explosion of evangelical observation of Lent.

...The following factors seem to play the largest role in Lent's growing trendiness among evangelicals. The Internet rapidly exposes us to new ideas and social media gives us a virtual window into the lives of others, putting names and faces on practices, like Lent, that once may have seemed strange to us. Our society has a double-love of experience...'

(Excerpts from Christianity.com; 3/12/14, *Apostasy Alert*, March/2017)

Editor's Comment:

Lent (Latin 'Fortieth') is a Roman Catholic religious observance that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer through prayer, doing penance, mortifying the flesh, repentance of sins, almsgiving and self-denial. The preparation includes fasting, giving up luxuries and not eating meats on some days, to 'replicate' the 40 days of Jesus in the desert before his ministry.

The early church did not practise this 'lent'. It was in the sixth century (AD 519) the Pope ordered the observance of 'Lent'. However, this custom is very similar to the pagan annual festival in commemoration of the death and 'resurrection' of Tammuz. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that writers in the fourth century were 'prone to describe many practices (e.g. the Lenten fast of forty days), as of apostolic institution which certainly had no claim to be so regarded'. It is in fact observed today by Kurdistan devil worshippers, who obtained it from the same source as did Rome. 'Lent' is simply another pagan practise introduced by the Roman church, but one which some 'evangelical' churches and ministries appear to have adopted or 'christianised'. Even more conservative 'evangelical' publications such as the 'Daily Bread' have in recent years adopted the mention of this tradition.

Quotable

'Did the apostles preach the sacrifice of Christ? - the devil's apostles preached the sacrifice of the mass. Did the saints uplift the cross? - the devil's servants upheld the crucifix. Did God's ministers speak of Jesus as the one infallible Head of the Church? - the devil's servants proclaimed the false priest of Rome as standing in the self-same place. Romanism is a most ingenious imitation of the gospel: it is the magicians 'doing do with their enchantments'.

'One reason why Romanism is so popular is because it allows a man to get a deputy to do his thinking for him, and to do his praying for him; but what a poor affair it is with the man who keeps his brains in somebody else's head, and carries his heart in somebody else's bosom!'

Pope Says Devotion to Mary is a ‘Requirement’



At the start of the new year, Pope Francis said that having a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary isn't just something that is nice or good to do, but is an obligation in the life of a Christian. 'Devotion to Mary is not spiritual etiquette; it is a requirement of the Christian life'... 'The gift of the Mother, the gift of every mother and every woman, is most precious for the Church, for she too is mother and woman'. 'If our faith is not to be reduced merely to an idea or a doctrine, all of us need a mother's heart, one which knows how to keep the tender love of God and to feel the heartbeat of all around us'.

Pope Francis celebrated Mass in St. Peter's Basilica...reflecting on the line in Luke's Gospel that says, 'And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart'.

He pointed out that in the Gospel account of Christmas, Mary does not speak a single word, simply keeping everything in her heart, pondering it. What we learn from her silence, he said, is that in quiet is how we 'keep' ourselves, how we 'keep' our soul free from being corroded by consumerism...This is Mary's 'secret', he said... 'we have before us the point of departure: the Mother of God'. 'For Mary is exactly what God wants us to be, what he wants his Church to be: A Mother who is tender and lowly, poor in material goods and rich in love, free of sin and united to Jesus, keeping God in our hearts and our neighbour in our lives'. 'Today's feast tells us that if we want to go forward, we need to turn back to begin anew from the crib, from the Mother who holds God in her arms', he stated.

(Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica Vatican City for the Feast of Mary, Mother of God Jan.1, 2018)

Editor's Comment:

Many Christians and Roman Catholics alike may not be aware of the 'requirement' in the Roman religion to adore Mary as the 'blessed virgin', 'mother of God', 'queen of heaven' and as a 'gift' to the church.

In history she only became prominent in worship in the fourth century and in much later centuries officially in various doctrines. Mary is now taught as being a 'co-mediator', 'interceding' for us and the 'immaculate conception' (sinless virgin) - all in defiance of clear scriptures (1Tim.2:5; Rom.8:27,34; Heb.7:25; Acts 4:12; Lk.1:47). The Pope has also regularly taught that Mary is a 'co-redeemer' with Christ. Many of these teachings clearly contradict the Word of God or are extra biblical traditions made doctrine and a 'requirement' for Roman Catholics to believe.

These doctrines are explained and refuted in our book 'To Catholics Whom I love' - a book the author began to write in defence of the Catholic religion, but along the way seeing the truth of John 12:48 'He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'

were about 2,000 errors in Tyndale's Bible. These exaggerated charges caused many Catholics to fear the translation. Many also feared the danger to social structures if Christians could read the Bible for themselves in their own languages. (Most people could not read Latin).

Meanwhile Tyndale was translating the Old Testament also. But the New Testament translations were now spreading through England and causing much concern to the Roman clergy.

Tyndale embarked on a sea journey to Hamburg to print more books. On the way he was shipwrecked on the coast of Holland and lost all his writings and monies. In another ship he eventually arrived at Hamburg and was forced to start his work over again. He there met the translator, Myles Coverdale, who helped him for almost one year in translating the five books of Moses. Tyndale then returned to Antwerp.

Meanwhile the clergy in England were still decidedly against any translation into English. Some believed it was not lawful for any to have it in their mother tongue and that it would make people heretics, or that it would cause people to rebel against their king. The clergy worked to have the king on their side and eventually succeeded in having the translation outlawed in 1537. The clergy and Sir Thomas More began to investigate all of Tyndale's contacts and where he had stayed in England.

Tyndale continued to reside in Antwerp at the house of an Englishman, Thomas Pointz. Tyndale commonly dined with merchants and met a Henry Philips who had come from England. Philips stayed at the house and learned some of Tyndale's trade arrangements. Tyndale believed Philips to be an honest man.

While the master of the house was away Philips had met with a procurator-general and some officers of nearby Brussels. Philips then tricked Tyndale into coming to dinner with him and at dinner had the officers seize Tyndale and bring him to the emperor's attorney where he was allowed to eat. Meanwhile officers had gone to Tyndale's room and taken all his belongings. Tyndale was held for 18 months at the castle of Vilvorde, eighteen miles from Antwerp.

Tyndale refused legal aid, stating he would answer for himself. He preached to many in the castle and many were in sympathy with his plight. It is said while he was there he converted to the Christian faith, the keeper, his daughter and some others of the household. He wrote to friend John Frith '*I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honour, pleasure, or riches, might be given me*'.

In 1536 he was finally condemned by the emperor's decree at Ausberg and brought forth, tied to a stake, strangled by a hangman and then burned with fire at the town of Vilvorde. At the stake he cried out with a loud voice '*Lord! open the king of England's eyes*'. Within four years, four English translations of the Bible were published in England at the King's wishes, including Henry's official Great Bible. All were based on Tyndale's work.

Lest we forget the price paid for our Bible!

Terry Arnold

How Do We Hear From God?

Mummuth. He remained there about 1 year before going to Europe. Tyndale here took note of the priests, their characters and how they boasted of their authority.

Tyndale's desire was to translate the New Testament into English. But he could see that there was no room or encouragement for him to do this in England. He left for Germany. He confided in and corresponded with a John Frith of his desire that the poor man in the field would be able to one day read the New Testament in their own language. He believed that the average lay person could gain truth by reading scriptures for themselves. This idea was castigated by the Roman Bishops in England.

Tyndale was convinced that the Roman religion was corrupt, pharisaical and that they had hidden and forbidden the scriptures to the populace and had placed their own authority above the scriptures.

Tyndale's first New Testament came forth in 1525. Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, with Sir Thomas More, were angered by this printing and devised plans to destroy the work. A man, Augustine Packington, a mercer at Antwerp, near where the bishop was, favoured Tyndale, but displayed the opposite when with the Bishop. The bishop was devising a scheme to halt the translation by buying it out and burning every copy. Packington who knew the merchants who brought the copies into England agreed to secure the copies for a price. Packington then went to Tyndale and told him all he had heard. On agreement Packington received the books and Tyndale received the money.

Tyndale continued with another revised edition and had it again shipped into England. The bishop sent for Packington again and asked why he had not received all the copies and why there were still more printed. Packington simply explained that more had been printed since.

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic religion were at this time attempting to find as many errors in the translation as they could to convince people it was heresy. They found words they did not approve of because it did not favour Rome's teachings. Words like 'overseer' instead of 'bishop'; 'elder' instead of 'priest'; 'love' instead of 'charity' were cited.* Tyndale, citing Erasmus, contended that the Greek New Testament did not support the traditional Roman Catholic readings. He also explained detail about the Greek tenses and showed much evidence as to how the translation was done with accuracy.

Thomas More claimed that errors in the Tyndale Bible was 'similar to searching for water in the sea'. Bishop Tunstall of London declared that there

Continued over >

* Tyndale was accurate here. The word 'overseer' is found in several translations as 'bishop' (KJV) - this is the German/Latin equivalent for the Greek word 'episkope' ('epi' - upon / 'skopeo' - to look). The meaning is one who 'looks over', 'oversees'. It is used for the *function* of an 'elder' ('presbúteros'), the word 'elder' being used for the *office* of the *same person*. There is no place found in the New Testament for a 'priest' as an office or function. The references for a 'priest' are always to the Old Testament under the law. Roman Catholic Bibles and some modern versions wrongly translate an elder or overseer as 'priest'. But the Greek word for 'priest' is 'hiereús' and never used for a New Testament Christian office or minister. The very early church did not have 'priests' which was a later invention by Rome.

I want to share with you a most wonderful experience I had before writing this article: I was praying and God actually spoke to me! I heard the words clearly in my mind. The words had a ring of authority about them. There is no doubt I heard from God. I felt God's presence really close. As I pondered on His words, time seemed to slow up and many minutes passed to I do not know where. God still speaks to us today! He told me to keep standing on His Word and to be like a tree planted firmly and to delight in his words and ways. He told me he knows my ways and to meditate on what I had heard. He spoke to me personally!

Some readers at this point might be thinking and expecting some new revelation outside the word of God, extra biblical revelation given to the author by the Holy Spirit. But how did he speak to me? I was reading, meditating and praying on Psalm 1:1-6! ***'Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish'***

This experience has increased my love for the Bible as the final word of God, that revelation of Jesus Christ, the more sure word of prophecy - the prophecy of the scriptures, which Holy men of God once wrote down - the faith once delivered!

How does God speak to us today? Does he speak apart from the Bible? People often talk of God speaking to them in audible voices, inner voices, impressions, promptings, feelings. Why are there so many different views on this? What is the difference between general revelation and special revelation? Are there other revelations? What about personal words from God and 'prophecies'? What about impressions, promptings, inner voices? How does the Holy Spirit 'lead'?

General Revelation

General revelation is taught in Romans chapter 1: ***'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse'*** (vs.19,20). Creation and the revelation in nature screams out 'there is a God!'. Even the complexities of the human body show a higher creator. Our blood vessels are intricately arranged and if laid out would travel a distance around the world in length. The information contained in a single DNA cell would fill 30 volumes of encyclopedias. The amount of information in the DNA on a pinhead would fill a stack of books 500 times the

distance from the earth to the moon. The molecules of DNA contain threads with codes with exacting reproducible information - even for such characteristics as hair shade and colour. The information is programmed with *a language with instructions* which copies - and each new cell knows which part to follow. The DNA cells are virtual cities in themselves! Creation screams out 'there is a God!'

Special Revelation

The Bible testifies that God spoke particularly to individuals such as Abraham, Moses and Paul. This 'specific revelation' is stated in Hebrews chapter 1: '**God who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past unto the fathers by [in] the prophets, Has in these last days spoken unto us by [in] his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds**' (vs.1,2). Note the 'various times' - there were gaps in revelation, hundreds of years when *God did not speak*. Note the 'different ways' - first natural revelation as in Genesis; then the patriarchs; then the prophets in dreams, prophecies, visions, audible voices, tablets of stone and law; then the apostles; and *finally in Jesus Christ*. Note the phrase '*spoke in time past unto the fathers by [in] the prophets*' - the tense here is literally '*having spoken*' - it is past and done - no more revelation to 'prophets'. Prophets were ones who prophesied - literally meaning to 'speak forth the word of God'. Jesus is the final 'prophet' to speak God's revelation. Note '*these last days spoken*'. Commentators use the phrase 'last dispensation' to describe this as the 'church age' or 'Gospel age'. Note the phrase '*spoken unto us by [in] his Son*'. The words '*has spoken*' (Greek aorist indicative active) - is something that is *past* and done *once in time*.

Christ's Spirit guided certain '**holy men of God [who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost**' to write down the '**prophecy of the scripture**' (2Pet.1:19-21). The early church called this the 'canon' [rule] of scripture. It was written and settled in the 1st century and sealed in the 2nd. The Scriptures themselves are clear that God has spoken *finally* in and through this word.

Are there other ways that God speaks?

What about personal words/prophecies from God?

Some use examples in scripture where God spoke to people in differing ways, even audible voices. The problem with this is that these were rare instances and *written down* by God as *revelation to be fulfilled* in Jesus Christ (Heb.1:1,2), and not to be added to. If we accept new words from God today why are we not writing them down in the same way again and adding them to scripture? '**For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book**' (Rev.22:18). The issue is *how* God has chosen to speak in time. In the Old Testament he spoke through mediators; but now there is only '*one mediator*' (1Tim.2:5). He chose to speak through the prophets for a limited time only - '*in time past*' (Heb.1:2). Examples of God speaking in audible words

William Tyndale

During the Reformation in England one of the most famous martyrs put to death at the will of the Roman church was William Tyndale. Tyndale would, with his English New Testament, shake the foundations of the Roman Catholic religion in England and on the European continent.

William Tyndale was born in Gloucester, and later studied at the University of Oxford, where he was trained in languages. He especially took a great interest in the languages of Scripture. He was known for reading and sharing his knowledge privately to certain students at college. All who knew him characterised him as a godly man of 'good disposition'. At Oxford he gained several degrees in languages, eventually moving to Cambridge University.

He later held a position under a Master Welch, a knight of Gloucestershire, as schoolmaster to his children. At this house he had access to the company of archdeacons and doctors of various sorts and he was privy to many discussions concerning the topics of the day including concerning Luther and other divines. He often was free to enter into these discussions where he was able to show from the scriptures his views. He disagreed with many and some it seems were to hold grudges against him, particularly the priests of the area. Some accused him of heresy and made mention of this to the bishops. He was once ordered to appear before the chancellor of a bishop where he was threatened strongly with charges of heresy, yet no witnesses could be brought forward. Tyndale escaped this threatening without further action and returned home to his position at Gloucester. His resolve to honour the scriptures only deepened and he purposed in his heart to speak the truth of scriptures as he saw it.

Tyndale had a friend who had once been a chancellor to a bishop and who was sympathetic to Tyndale. Tyndale confided in this friend who stated to him: '*Do you not know that the Pope is very Antichrist, whom the Scripture speaks of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life*'.

Soon after, Tyndale was speaking to a learned man and in disputing with him he heard the man in anger say '*We were better to be without God's laws than the Pope's*'. Tyndale replied with equal zeal '*I defy the Pope, and all his laws*' and added that '*if God should spare him life many years he would cause a boy that drives the plough to know more of the Scripture than he did*'.

The priests in the area grew increasingly angry with Tyndale's views, accusing him of heresy. As the attacks grew Tyndale said to his master: '*Sir, I perceive that I shall not be suffered to tarry long here in this country, neither shall you be able, though you would, to keep me out of the hands of the spirituality; what displeasure might grow to you by keeping me, God knoweth; for the which I should be right sorry*'. Tyndale went to London, preached for a while and tried to gain favour with the Bishop of London by sending an epistle he had translated from Greek to English. The bishop was not interested and Tyndale eventually found housing with an alderman of London, Humphrey

and perfect will of God' (Rom.12:1,2).

Further concerns...

The increase of teaching and testimonies of the Holy Spirit speaking apart from the word of God raises some pastoral concerns. There is a dearth of solid Bible teaching today and the statistics of the poor Bible knowledge of today's Christians is alarming. The lack of faith in God's final revelation is not helped by the plethora of extra biblical means of hearing from God. ***'The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables'*** (2Tim.4:2-4).

I sometimes hear testimonies of God supposedly speaking to individual Christians in voices, promptings, impressions, etc. - when *new or young Christians are present*. The pastoral concern is for these young Christians to be grounded in the word of God and not distracted by subjective testimonies of promptings, impressions, inner voices, which can never be objectively tested and are not *THE 'word of God' which does sanctify* (Jn.17:17)!

Is God's word inspired, inerrant, closed, completed and final or not? Is it all sufficient and enough for us? We walk by faith; not by sight, feelings and impressions. The constant urge to have more than what we have already in the Word is not the choice of the Holy Spirit. *He points to the Word!* ***'Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth'*** (Jn.17:17). But sadly that is not enough today? Where does our daily 'manna' come from? Are we to be like the Israelites who had it supplied to them for 38 years until they rebelled and wanted more? So too, we live in an era that seeks after signs, visions, dreams, promptings, inner voices and impressions. Like the Israelites the issue at heart may well be pride and arrogance that *we do not accept what God has limited!* We simply do not need to know or tell what God is doing or saying apart from His infallible Word. ***'Come now, you who say 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapour that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil'*** (James 4:13-16). Note *'if'* the lord wills. We cannot presume to know for sure the Lord's will in every situation and especially by promptings/inner voices/impressions. We become false prophets when we presume to hear from God other than the Word of God.

The call is to trust in the ***'more sure word of God...the prophecy of the scriptures'*** (1Pet.1:19-21).

Terry Arnold

(1) <https://thinkpoint.wordpress.com/2007/05/26/do-inner-promptings-reveal-gods-will/>

(2) John F. MacArthur, Jr., *'Reckless Faith'*, P.189-193.

is now *past* and were also *rare*. Again, there were long periods when God did not speak at all in any way. From the time of Joseph through 80 years of Moses' life, there was nothing. Moses killed an Egyptian, fled and then there were 40 years with no record of God speaking. Yet today *often* people are supposedly hearing the voice of God and he is speaking to them apart from the Bible?

But how do we know for sure God has spoken to us in this way?...*There is no objective test!* Even if it lines up with the Bible this does not mean it was a voice from God - that can be counterfeited! How do we know it is not someone else's voice; or our own imagination? Can we tell between the Lord's voice and a demon when *both speak truth!* Can we tell it is God and not 'an angel of light', a perfect counterfeit? If one answers yes, they have raised their egos to being divine and are prime candidates for deception! God does not speak by voices today but *'spoke in time past unto the fathers by [in] the prophets'* (Heb.1:1,2).

What about impressions/promptings/ inner voices...?

You hear a word/impression to sell your house and shift to another town. How do you test this? You cannot test this with scripture as there is no command to shift or not shift. I once had a friend who believed the Lord had shown him he was going to sell his house within so many days. But it did not sell in that time. What 'voice' did he hear? When he was challenged on this he had to admit *it was not God's voice*. But he was most disturbed when asked *'whose voice was it then?'*

One author addresses this issue: *'God guides through His Word and its principles. 'This is one of the most neglected dimensions of guidance today. It sounds terribly spiritual to say 'God led me', but I am always suspicious of a person who implies that he has a personal pipeline to God. When no one else senses that what the person suggests is the will of God, then we had better be careful. God has been blamed for the most outlandish things by people who have confused their own inverted pride with God's will. Occasionally I hear of a guy who, in the name of spiritual guidance, rushes up to a girl and says, 'Susie, God has told me you're to marry me'. I have news for him. If that is the will of God, then Susie is going to get the message too. If she does not, somebody's radar is jammed, and it's not hard to tell whose' (1)*

God, Satan, an angel, a demon, human emotions, hormonal imbalances, insomnia, medication, an upset stomach - all can cause a person to think that they have heard from God. Impressions, promptings, inner voices, etc *are not authoritative and cannot be tested objectively*.

Some claim to have heard from the Holy Spirit by 'promptings' and then when they see 'fruit' or 'testimony' that matches, then it is believed that this must have come from God speaking. But it must be understood that *Scripture never commands us to tune into any inner voice, prompting, impression*. We are simply commanded to study and meditate on Scripture (Josh.1:8; Ps.1:1-2). How do we know that inner voices and mental impressions are not the lies of a deceitful heart, imagination, or even demonic, even if it does not contradict scripture?

I once was in conversation with a man who was describing hearing God speak to him by impression/prompting that he could marry a certain person from

a non Christian faith. After marriage the partner came to true faith in Christ. He stated this was ‘proof’ his original impression was of God. I challenged him as to why God would disobey His own word *at any time* in decreeing a marriage against His Word (2Cor.6). Can God do this even for pragmatic reasons? The scriptures answer: **‘And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just’** (Rom.3:8). What does it prove if ‘good’ things or ‘bad’ things happen as a result? Does that prove the voice was from God? Again - it is subjective. New-agers and occultists can do the same! Mormons teach that if you read the book of Mormon and you have a burning in the bosom it is then the word of God.

I once was in conversation with a Christian on the issue of ‘tongues’. I tried to show real ‘tongues’ were known foreign languages as in Acts 2. She quoted Romans 8:26 ‘...*The Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*’. She then added that the Spirit had convicted, impressed, showed her, that this was Holy Spirit ‘tongues’. I asked her - if it was ‘tongues’ spoken from the Spirit then why does the same Spirit say it is that which ‘*cannot be uttered*’? The person was visibly checked before my next question - ‘*where did your prompting/conviction come from*’?

Today people want the experiential. They want the promptings, impressions, inner voices from God the Holy Spirit. Yet the Bible gives NO encouragement to hear God in these ways and NO means to test such. These ways encourage the subjective heart, not the objective mind where true discernment is couched. **‘He who trusts in his own heart is a fool’** (Pr.28:26).

‘Scripture never commands us to tune into any inner voice. We’re commanded to study and meditate on Scripture (Josh.1:8; Ps.1:1-2). We’re instructed to cultivate wisdom and discernment (Pr.4:5-8). We’re told to walk wisely and make the most of our time (Eph.5:15-16). We’re ordered to be obedient to God’s commands (Deut.28:1-2; Jn.15:14). But we are never encouraged to listen for inner promptings. On the contrary, we are warned that our hearts are so deceitful and desperately wicked that we cannot understand them (Jer.17:9). Surely this should make us very reluctant to heed promptings and messages that arise from within ourselves. Those willing to heed inner voices and mental impressions may be listening to the lies of a deceitful heart, the fantasies of an overactive imagination, or even the voice of a demon. Once objective criteria are cast aside, there is no way to know the difference between truth and falsehood. Those who follow subjective impressions are by definition undiscerning’. (2)

How Does the Holy Spirit ‘Lead’?

The Holy Spirit certainly ‘leads’. **‘Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God’** (Rom.8:14). But this verse does not suggest we look to inner promptings from the Spirit for guidance. The context is about abstaining from ‘sin’ and the ‘flesh’. It ends with **‘the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God’** (vs.16). It is this ‘bearing witness’ that is a key phrase in understanding how the Holy Spirit ‘leads’. Continued over >

The ‘Conscience’

The conscience is described as an inner witness; a self awareness. It is synonymous with the word ‘conviction’. It’s nature is to distinguish right from wrong with an inbuilt moral indicator which can also be a warning device. It ‘prompts’, persuades us to think or to do something. *People mistake this conscience for the actual voice of the Spirit.*

In John 8:9 Jesus finds a woman caught in adultery. He challenges any who had no sin to cast the first stone. **‘And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one...’**. The conscience bears witness, speaks, gives confirmation. But it does this to a *limited extent* depending on the foundation of information fed to it. But the conscience is not the law or the voice, but a ‘witness’ to it. **‘Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts...accusing or else excusing one another’** (Rom.2:15).

The Conscience is not the light itself (Pr.6:23) but it is a skylight. It is an indicator of information fed to it. The conscience is not the Holy Spirit - but is a tool of such in conjunction with the Word of God. *What people call ‘promptings, impressions, inner voices’ of the Holy Spirit is not the Holy Spirit speaking, rather it’s their conscience! ‘I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost’* (Rom.9:1).

The Holy Spirit does not speak to us separate to the Word. He may ‘lead’ us through the conscience which is being ‘renewed in the mind’. Paul spoke of the importance of a good conscience: *‘...a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned’* (Acts 23:1; 1Tim.1:5). Any ‘inner peace’ also has much to do with the conscience: *‘For our rejoicing is this, the testimony [confirming] of our conscience...’* (2Cor.1:12).

How is it that one person can say they have a prompting/inner voice from the Spirit not to eat or drink this or that; or not to go here or there; yet other Christians can have the opposite ‘prompting’? Does the Spirit say one thing to one and the opposite to another? Some have a strong conscience and others a ‘weak’ conscience through *lack of knowledge* fed to it: *‘There is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled’* (1Cor.8:7).

Developing the conscience enables the Spirit to witness to it in a Godly fashion. The more we feed our conscience and understand the Law and the Word of God, the better the foundation for the conscience. The way that God ‘leads’ is through the conscience in shaping our lives with convictions, attitudes, judgments. This is not a matter of inward promptings apart from the Word but of our consciences being fed and informed with the word of God as the Spirit directs.

God’s ‘leading’ is also found in *God’s providence* - the control of God in our lives. This leading is not seen till *after* the circumstances God brings to pass.

God’s leading is found in the *will of God*. It is the will of God for us to be sanctified (1Thess.4:3; Rom.8:27-29); filled with the Spirit (Eph.5:17,18); to give thanks in all things (1Thess.5:18). It is the ‘perfect will of God’ for us to be *‘transformed by the renewing of our mind’* - to prove that *‘good, and acceptable,*