

# DOCTRINE 1

## UNIT TWO KNOWING GOD

### THE GOSPEL-WAY OF KNOWING GOD

- ↳ It Is By Gracious Revelation
  - Our knowing God depends upon his initiative in sending his Son into the world.
  - This is 'revelation' – it comes from beyond human resources.
  - The work of the Holy Spirit is called 'illumination' – human hearts are opened.
  - This is why salvation is by faith and not works.
  
- ↳ It Relies on Human Language
  - The true humanity of Jesus involved being born under particular conditions.
  - Being human involves being restricted, but Jesus had to be truly human.
  - The gospel as preached by Jesus therefore has a human viewpoint.
  - For transmitting the news about Jesus, God did not bypass human language.
  
- ↳ It Involves God's Use of his Servants
  - God chose to save us through his Son becoming human and being the 'suffering servant'.
  - God does not bypass human nature in telling the world – he appointed his servants to preach.
  - Paul was "one of God's fellow workers", but made clear the real power was God's.

## ↪ It Demands Response

- The gospel reveals what could not be known by speculation or experience.
- It brings the reconciliation that it announces.
- We are reconciled to God by submitting ourselves to Christ the Lord.
- The gospel is the crucial source of our knowledge of God.

## ↪ It Calls For Both Faith and Reason

- Many see faith and reason as being in conflict, thinking that we must choose.
- Some contrast faith and reason as two different ways of knowing God.
- The gospel itself suggests a more fruitful way of approaching the relationship between faith and reason.
- The gospel is from God and is about God.
- God's way of approaching us is through the gospel.
- The gospel is about a person and invites relationship.

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| • <b>G</b> racious revelation              |
| • <b>R</b> elies on human language         |
| • <b>A</b> ctively involves God's servants |
| • <b>C</b> alls for a response             |
| • <b>E</b> ntails both faith and reason    |

# KNOWING THE TRUTH OF GOD

- ↪ The Persuasive Power of the Gospel
  - However the gospel is preached, Jesus Christ must be at the heart of it.
  - John tells his readers exactly why the Gospels were written (John 20:31).
  - “That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
  - The New Testament suggests three basic reasons why people believe this claim.
  - Firstly, the person of Jesus Christ: Jesus has had an incredible impact on history.
  - Part of the power of Jesus lies in what he said: speeches like the Sermon on the Mount.
  - The power of Jesus also lies in how he acted.
  - Jesus' life conformed to and demonstrated the truth of his words.
  - Jesus' intervention in other people's lives was often decisive – a life changing moment.
  - People also believe because of the resurrection of Jesus.
  - The first Christian preachers invited examination of the truth of the resurrection.
  - They were also prepared to die for their conviction that Christ had been raised.
  - People believe because of God's prior witness in the Old Testament.
  - The Apostles invited people to examine the Scriptures to see if Jesus fulfilled them.
  - The Old Testament stops us seeing Jesus alone, it places him at the centre of God's plans.

## ↪ The Persuasive Power of the Holy Spirit

- The requirement of humility – the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit.
- The gift of faith and repentance – the gospel assumes humans to be in spiritual darkness.
- It is God alone who brings light and life, our salvation is down to God.
- The work of God in applying salvation is often attributed to the Holy Spirit.
- The work of the Holy Spirit is linked to knowledge of God through inspiration and illumination.
- By inspiration, the Spirit is responsible for the existence of Scripture.
- The second aspect of the Spirit's work is illumination – hearts are opened so that people can understand and believe.