

# Tom's Pen

## "From God To Man"

by Tom Wacaster

When God created man, He did not leave man to flounder in the waters of ignorance and superstition insofar as his knowledge of God is concerned. God has communicated with man **"from the beginning"** (**Matt. 19:4 ASV**), albeit the different means of communications has changed from dispensation to dispensation (**Heb. 1:1-2 ASV**). We are assured by the apostle Paul that God **"left not himself without witness"** (**Acts 14:17 ASV**), and that **"the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse"** (**Rom. 1:20 ASV**). When our Savior ascended back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (**John 16:13 ASV**). That truth is made available to us through a combination of factors which include the origination, revelation, inspiration, and translation of that heavenly message. Let's give some consideration to each of these.

First, think about the *Origination* of the message. What we sometimes refer to as "the scheme of redemption," or what God refers to as the "mystery," was purposed and planned in Christ Jesus, **"according to the eternal purpose"** of God (**Eph. 3:11 ASV**). God's plan for the church, man's salvation, our heavenly home — all these things were in the mind of God long before He ever communicated these things to man. This tells me that the church is not some accident, or some "stop-gap" measure to precede the coming of the kingdom. The church *is* the kingdom, and both church and kingdom were in the mind of God from times eternal. There never was a moment in all of eternity where God did not have in mind the church and the role it would play in our salvation. What an astonishing thought.

Second, consider the word *Revelation*. Revelation is the process of making the "things of God" available to men, **"combining spiritual things with spiritual words"** (**1 Cor. 2:13 ASV**). It is important to keep in mind that God selected specific words to communicate the message to man. God did not give the apostles and prophets some "thought" and then leave it up to them to relay that "thought" to us. Instead, God selected the very word(s) that would most effectively communicate the message to the mind of men. Sometimes an entire truth revolved around the precise word that was selected by the Holy Spirit (**cf. Gal. 15-16 ASV**). Please keep this important truth in mind as we proceed. Revelation means simply, "to make known." Before these things were made known, insofar as man is concerned, it remained a "mystery" as to how God would save man (**Eph. 3:3-5 ASV**). Throughout the history of man God has used

**"divers manners"** (or different manners or means) for making His will known to man (**Heb. 1:1-2 ASV**). During the Patriarchal age God spoke to the oldest male member of a family and that "patriarch" would then teach his family (**Heb. 1:1 ASV**). As the world became more wicked, God found it necessary to preserve the "seed" from which the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would eventually come. Hence, the call of Abram (**Gen. 12:1-3 ASV**). Time and space does not allow us to trace the development of that "nation" that would produce the man-child, the One Who was from everlasting to everlasting (**Micah 5:2 ASV**), He Who is called **"Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"** (**Isa. 9:6 ASV**). When Israel had developed into a great nation, God gave them **"living oracles"** (**Acts 7:38 ASV**) through Moses, and from that time until the coming of the Christ, the nation of Israel was under the Law of Moses. But when the **"fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law"** (**Gal. 4:4 ASV**), and through His Son, God **"brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"** (**2 Tim. 1:10 ASV**). After Jesus ascended into heaven to sit at God's right hand (**Acts 2:33 ASV**), the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all truth (**John 16:13 ASV**), thereby completing the process of revelation and giving to man that which is **"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."** (**2 Tim. 3:16-17 ASV**). It is this third dispensation, the gospel of Jesus Christ, to which all men are amenable.

The third word we want to concentrate on is *Inspiration*. Inspiration is closely associated with revelation, for without revelation there can be no inspiration. Inspiration is the process by which God assured the accurate transmission of His word to others. As the apostles and prophets received the revelation they were **"moved by the Holy Spirit"** (**2 Pet. 1:21 ASV**) to record the message of God. They were guarded from error by the careful watch care of the Holy Spirit over these men who spoke and wrote that divine revelation. Inspiration is the means by which human agency was used to communicate the things of God to a lost and dying world.

Our last word for consideration is *Translation*. The Bible was not written in English. In order for God's word to reach the masses it is essential that the Greek manuscripts be "translated" into a specific "target language." In our case, the "target language" is English. The attitude of the translator toward the "original" language (in this case, the Holy Bible) will have a direct bearing on the process he uses in translating into the target language. If the translator has a low regard for the inspiration of the Scriptures, he is likely to discount the importance of Paul's statement in **1 Corinthians 2:13 ASV**. He will be looking for the "thought" contained in the passage more than the precise wording that appears in the original. This approach is called "dynamic-equivalence." The translator will give you the "equivalent" of what he thinks the passage says and/or

means. On the other hand, if the translator respects the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture, he will attempt to provide to his audience an exact duplication of every word, every tense, every shade of meaning that is humanly possible. This is called "formal-equivalence." In the former approach, the translator will tell you what he thinks the passage means; in the later he will tell you what it says and leave it up to you to determine what it means. It seems to me that, in view of what we are dealing with, i.e. the divine message of man's salvation, that those who love the truth would want a translation that reflects what the original said, as nearly as possible, in his own language, and leave it up to him as a student of God's word to determine what it means. Modern translations (such as the New International Version, Good News for Modern Man, etc.) that demonstrate a loose attitude toward God's word should be rejected as reliable study Bibles. On the other hand, when I use a reliable, trustworthy translation, a translation that is as close to the original as possible, I can rest assured that I am getting an accurate rendering of that truth that saves the souls of men.