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R. C. SPROUL

Can I Trust the Bible?

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Chapter One

Special Revelation

In the 1970s, Harold Lindsell published a book titled *The Battle for the Bible*. In that book, Lindsell addressed what had become a huge matter of controversy—the truthfulness and reliability of the Scriptures. In the face of myriad arguments against the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of the Bible, Lindsell took a stand and declared that the Bible remains trustworthy.

It was this same desire to stand against the persistent

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questioning of the Bible's integrity that brought together more than 250 evangelical leaders in Chicago in October 1978. That summit meeting, convened by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, sought to draw a line in the sand, affirming the historic Protestant position on the Scriptures. The result was the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

The issue of the Bible's reliability is crucial. It is via the Scriptures that the church historically has claimed to understand matters of faith and life, from God's creation of all things out of nothing to the significance of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ to the ultimate consummation of all things toward which history is moving. If the Bible is unreliable in what it teaches about these things, the church is left to speculate and has nothing of value to speak to the world.

In the years since the summit meeting, the battle for the Bible has not abated. It is more crucial than ever that believers understand what the Bible is and why they can trust it wholeheartedly. Christians still need to be equipped with the understanding of why they can and should trust the Bible.

Special Revelation

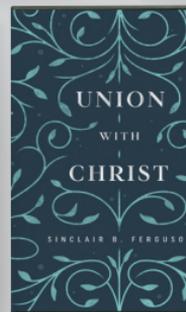
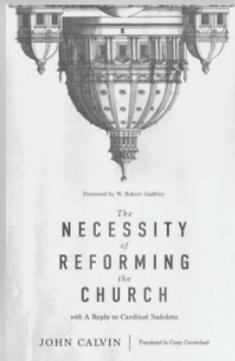
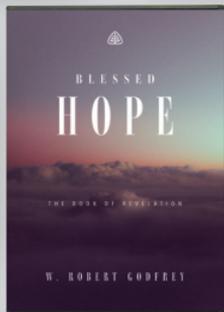
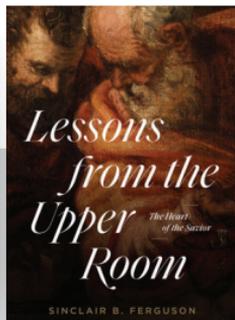
The Nature of Revelation

Christianity at its heart is a revealed religion, and there is a content to that revelation. The issue of the nature of divine revelation focuses on a question that's been disputed for ages, not least in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Theologians have offered other explanations for what revelation is, how we have received it, and how it can be understood and interpreted. This is the disagreement that is at the heart of the battle for the Bible: whether God can and does reveal Himself in a way that people can understand. Historically, the church has affirmed that God reveals Himself, and that He does so in two distinct ways: through general revelation and special revelation.

General revelation is just that: general. It is available to people everywhere. The Bible speaks of God as revealing Himself through nature and conscience (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 2:15). This is general revelation. It tells everyone in the world some of who God is: that He exists, that He is good, that He is powerful (Rom. 1:19–20).

Special revelation, on the other hand, is not available to everyone. In that sense, it is not general information, but its content is more specific. Special revelation discloses

We want to see men and women
around the world connect the deep truths
of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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