

PRESBYTERIAN BELIEFS
A Brief Introduction

Revised Edition

Donald K. McKim

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Preface to the Revised Edition

When this book was published in 2003, it joined my *Introducing the Reformed Faith* as a source for laity, seminary students, and pastors to study and reflect on our Reformed and Presbyterian theology. Then followed *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers*; *More Presbyterian Questions, More Presbyterian Answers*; and *Presbyterian Faith That Lives Today*, along with other further resources for those interested in understanding Presbyterian beliefs.

Recent changes in the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PC(USA)) have meant that it is useful to update books to reflect the addition of the Confession of Belhar to the *Book of Confessions* and present understandings and terminology in the *Book of Order*. Some other modifications have been made along the way in *Presbyterian Beliefs*. For superb help and suggestions about what to adjust here, I would like to thank David Maxwell of Westminster John Knox Press. His comments have been very valuable. He also has prepared some case study questions to enhance the use of this book. My thanks also go to David Dobson and Julie Tonini of the press for their support and splendid work.

The need for these modifications highlights that change is a feature of our Christian faith and that Presbyterian understandings and expressions, particularly in the PC(USA) do take place—by the leading of the Spirit of God, we believe. A theological way of understanding “change” is to see change as God moving us from where we are to where God wants us to be. Even when the changes

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seem relatively small, they still represent this action of God's guiding providence. As it is in the church's life, so it is in our own lives.

Changes in my life in these last years have led my beloved wife, LindaJo, and me to our sons' spouses, and we have welcomed grandchildren to our family. We now rejoice in life with Stephen and Caroline and their children, Maddie, Annie, and Jack; as well as with Karl and Lauren. These blessed members of the family that God has given lead me to praise, thanks, and gratitude. To them, this book is lovingly dedicated.

Changes come, within the church and in our own experience. As we move along, my hope is that these books will continue to benefit the church. May they be a blessing to all who seek further understanding and nurture in their lives of faith. May we all seek to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

Donald K. McKim
Germantown, Tennessee
Advent 2016

Preface to the First Edition

I am a Presbyterian. I have written this book out of a deep love for Presbyterian theology and the beliefs that have shaped generations of Presbyterians throughout the world. My desire is to communicate the major elements of Presbyterian beliefs as simply and clearly as possible.

This book has chapters titled with theological words. They are some of the vocabulary of Christian—and Presbyterian—theology. My goal is to unpack these words and to say as plainly as possible what Presbyterians believe about these terms.

Those who have studied Presbyterian theology will know it is impossible to do full justice to all the varieties of viewpoints on theological issues that one finds among Presbyterians. Every chapter here can be expanded greatly. I have quoted directly from only two theological sources: the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (cited as *BC*) and the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, written in the sixteenth century by John Calvin (cited as *Institutes*). Many other sources could be used. But for simplicity's sake and because these two are important, I have used only them.

This book will not answer all your questions about Presbyterian beliefs. I trust it will answer some. I hope it will raise others. If it does, there are a number of resources listed as “For Further Study” in the back of the book that can point the way to help you think about these further issues.

The basics of the chapters that follow have been shared in several Presbyterian churches. I would like to thank the sessions,

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people, and pastors of First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, Mississippi, and Dr. Emmett Barfield; First Presbyterian Church, Helena, Arkansas, and the Rev. Richard Goodman; as well as Trinity Presbyterian Church, Berwyn, Pennsylvania—where I have gratefully served as interim pastor—and Dr. Jay Wilkins. I would also like to thank the Rev. Betty Meadows and the Committee of the Synod of Living Waters Congregational Development Conference for the opportunity to present much of this material to this conference.

I dedicate this book to my family—LindaJo, Stephen, and Karl. Their love and support bring meaning and abundant joy to my life.

Donald K. McKim
Germantown, Tennessee
September 11, 2002

Introduction

*T*his is a book for those interested in Presbyterian beliefs. Perhaps you are considering joining a Presbyterian church. Perhaps you have always heard of “Presbyterians” and have wondered what views these people hold. Or perhaps you have been a lifelong Presbyterian—baptized, confirmed, even married in a Presbyterian church—and now it is time to examine more closely what Presbyterians believe.

Theological beliefs have always been important to Presbyterians. This has been good in that it has given us a highly developed theology that expresses clearly what is believed about a whole host of topics. We have confessions of faith, theological books, and thousands of pages to articulate what theological beliefs Presbyterians hold dear. On the other hand, sometimes our concerns for scrupulous theology have made Presbyterians lose sight of broader visions or have caused splits or breaks in the body of Christ, the church. There’s a bit of a sting in the story of two Presbyterians who were marooned on an island: one started the “First Presbyterian Church” and the other started the “Second Presbyterian Church.” Meticulous concerns for theology can sometimes make us neglect other important issues like care and love for others.

This book is to introduce Presbyterian beliefs in a simple and straightforward way. It is pretty much “straight theology”—a concise statement of the major theological viewpoints that Presbyterians hold.

Yet we should also note that as the little story of the two Presbyterians suggests, there are varieties within “Presbyterian”

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beliefs. This has always been the case, as long as there have been “Presbyterians.” Today in the United States there are a number of church bodies that call themselves “Presbyterian.” These churches hold many theological beliefs in common—enough to make them “Presbyterian.” Yet they are often distinctive because of some particular beliefs or emphases that set them apart from others who hold the name “Presbyterian.” Often this relates to the particular confession of faith (or “creed”) that a church regards as authoritative. Many Presbyterian churches regard the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as the best statement of Presbyterian belief. The largest Presbyterian denomination in the United States, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), has a *Book of Confessions* as its standard for what to believe. These are creeds and confessions of faith that span history from the early church period up to the end of the twentieth century. So this wider expanse of theological statements naturally introduces more variety and variations into the Presbyterian belief tapestry.

Presbyterians belong to the Reformed theological tradition. When we join a Presbyterian church, we enter a family. It is a family with an impressive genealogy. It is a family that traces its origins to Christian believers who lived in Europe during the sixteenth century. These were Christians who followed the views of several significant theologians who lived during and after the time Martin Luther began what is commonly called the “Protestant Reformation.” When Luther questioned certain teachings of the dominant Roman Catholic Church in 1517, a revolution of reformation swept through Europe. Those theologians who followed Luther in rejecting Roman Catholic theology but who went on to develop theological views different from Luther’s were called “Reformed” theologians. Those who followed these “Reformed” writers believed these theologians had provided the most compelling ways of reading the Holy Scriptures and understanding who God is, what Jesus Christ has done, and how God wants Christian people to live in the church. The theologian regarded most highly was John Calvin (1509–64), who spent most of his ministry in Geneva, Switzerland. Other important theologians were Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) and Zwingli’s successor as

minister in Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–75). The theological understandings these and other Reformed theologians promoted were distinguished from other theological groups, including the Lutherans—who followed the views of Luther—and the Anabaptists—who are the ancestors of our modern-day Baptists and Pentecostals. They got the name “Reformed” because they wanted to reform God’s church on the basis of Scripture.

Reformed theology and the Reformed tradition spread from Calvin’s Geneva throughout Switzerland, France, and Germany and into the Low Countries during the next decades. Important emigration led to the Reformed faith—as a way of understanding the Scriptures and as a theological belief system—being spread throughout the world. Today there are Reformed Christians all over the globe. In America, streams of the Reformed tradition came from England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. The establishment of American Presbyterianism at the end of the eighteenth century came through the efforts of thousands of Christian believers who understood themselves as Reformed Christians.

In the United States today, the Reformed faith is shared by a number of denominations. The Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church, for example, reflect the legacy and influence of the Dutch Reformed settlers in America. The United Church of Christ has emerged from New England Puritan settlers who embraced Reformed theology but organized their churches on a congregational model. They were known as Congregationalists. In this polity, each individual congregation is essentially autonomous and makes its own decisions without the oversight of a wider body. Many of the various “Presbyterian” denominations in the United States trace their roots to European church bodies. These churches are rooted in Reformed theology and are organized on a “presbyterian” model of church government.

Though we speak of the Reformed tradition and the Reformed faith, it is important to realize that this is a tradition and a faith that has had a variety of ways of expressing itself theologically. Basic insights are found in the writings of Calvin, particularly his classic *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (editions from 1536 to 1560). This book has been like a spine, or backbone, for Reformed

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theology. But other Reformed theologians have formulated their understandings in differing ways. In addition, it has been characteristic of Reformed Christians wherever they have been to express their faith through the construction of confessions of faith. These “creeds” are formulations of what believers understand the Scriptures to teach on various theological doctrines. These many confessions from the Reformed heritage also exhibit various ways of understanding and expressing Christian doctrines or teachings. Even the order with which the doctrines are dealt is different from confession to confession. So we have variety within the Reformed faith.

Presbyterianism is one part of the Reformed theological tradition. Most directly, Presbyterianism gets its name from the ways in which its churches are governed. A “presbyterian” system of church government or polity features a “presbytery” as a key governing body, now called a council. Local churches are governed by church sessions, which are composed of “elders” who are elected by the congregation (in the New Testament, the Greek word *presbyteros*—from which “Presbyterian” is derived—means “elder”). A number of churches in a particular geographical area constitute a presbytery. The presbytery is made up of elected representatives (clergy and laity) from the regional churches. A number of presbyteries in a particular region constitute a “synod,” and all the synods jointly constitute the “General Assembly,” which is the highest council of the church. It’s often pointed out that governing structures of the United States mirror Presbyterian church government. There are local city governments, county governments, state governments, and then the national or federal government. Presbyterianism is a representative system where those who serve in the councils are elected. The main unit beyond the local church is the presbytery. Thus the name “Presbyterian” emerges.

“Presbyterian theology” refers to what Presbyterians believe about Christian theology. A definable “shape” to Presbyterian theology can be distinguished, both historically and among contemporary Presbyterians. The confessions of faith that have been part of the Reformed and Presbyterian heritage have been chief expressions of Reformed or Presbyterian beliefs. So have the

writings of those theologians who have self-consciously considered themselves to be “Reformed” theologians.

The chapters that follow outline some major emphases of the Reformed faith on a number of important Christian doctrines. In many cases, Presbyterians share key insights with other Christians and other expressions of Christian doctrines. Basic beliefs in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are held in common with all other Christians. These are our significant, ecumenical beliefs that unite us as sisters and brothers in Christ with the whole Christian church, worldwide. These common affirmations of unity are the “big picture.” We hold much more in common with other Christians than we hold as distinctively “Presbyterian” beliefs.

But as we move on into the details of Christian doctrine, we find that Presbyterian theology and Reformed confessions have spoken with distinctive accents and with particular emphases. These distinctives help set our Presbyterian understandings apart from other theological views—for example, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, or Baptist views. Today we tend to emphasize commonalities in our Christian faith and experience. These are tremendously important. But when it comes to understanding what makes us distinctively or particularly or especially “Presbyterian” Christians, we can turn to these Reformed perspectives that give us our unique blend of theological understandings.

To help us get handles on some of these, we will examine a number of Christian doctrines in the following chapters. Broadly, we will first look at “The God Who Reveals, Creates, and Guides.” Here we will consider the doctrines of God’s revelation in Scripture, the Trinity, creation, and providence. A second segment will consider “The Christ Who Saves People like Us.” Here our focus will be on the doctrines of humanity, sin, the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, election and predestination, and salvation by grace. In the third section our attention will be on “The Church, Where Faith Begins, Is Nourished, and Grows.” Here we will look at the doctrines of the church, the Christian life, and the future life.

Presbyterian belief is one way of being a Christian believer. It is not the only way. It may not even be the best way. But Presbyterians have taken their theological beliefs seriously because

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they take God seriously. Whenever we make any statement at all about God, we are being a theologian. Presbyterian theology is one way of helping us understand who God is and what God has done in human history, on the basis of God's communication to humanity through Scripture. The following "Presbyterian primer" introduces us to one way of doing theology and one way of understanding God's wonderful, glorious gospel, centered in Jesus Christ our Lord.

PART I

The God Who Reveals, Creates, and Guides

Revelation

*H*ow can we know God? This is one of life's most basic questions. Perhaps there is no God. Perhaps there is. If there is not a God, then we don't need to worry about this question. If there is a God, and if we are interested in finding out anything about this God, then we wonder: How can we know God?

One thing seems obvious. If there is a God, that is, a God who is not immediately apparent to our senses or our intelligence, then we need a way to know God that is something more than what we ourselves can invent or concoct. We need a way of knowing God that enables us to know that which is beyond us or greater than us—to know God. This means of knowing must be a method that we can trust. It must be a method that provides truth about God while at the same time being a way that we can understand and comprehend. This way of knowing God needs to be a way that is available to all people. It should not be a “secret knowledge” or the private preserve of an elite group of persons. The knowledge of God should be open universally to all persons. It should be able to be apprehended by all, even if—and it seems this is the case, based on our experiences—not all persons accept this knowledge, or trust it, or believe it. In short, we need a way for the knowledge of God to be made known to us.

Since we are limited human beings who recognize our restrictions and boundaries as humans, if we are to gain any valid knowledge of God, it would seem that God must impart this knowledge to us. Since the idea of a “god” has been around since the beginning of human history (we assume), and since persons throughout

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history have not agreed on who this God is or what this God is like (this is evident from the great number of religions and philosophies that have been part of human experience through the centuries), then it is clear that human knowledge, reason, or experience alone cannot come to a common agreement on the knowledge of God. Every religion or philosophy has its own teachings about who “God” is or what “God” is like. This points us to the conclusion that if there is a God, then true and valid knowledge about this God can only be obtained if that God chooses to be revealed. If this were not so, we would never know anything about God at all. If God were not revealed—in some way, somehow—we would have to remain forever silent about God.

This seems obvious, doesn’t it? If God is revealed, it is God who must do the revealing. Humans cannot storm up to the gates of heaven, peel away the clouds, and peer into the face of God! There’s no way that can happen! If we are ever to “see the face

of God,” it is God who must reveal that face. God is the one who is revealed; and God is the one who must do the revealing. God must make the first move.

If God is revealed, it is God who must do the revealing. Humans cannot storm up to the gates of heaven, peel away the clouds, and peer into the face of God!

This is one of the basic assumptions of Christian faith. We believe that God

takes the initiative and chooses to be revealed or communicate with humanity. When we speak of God revealing God’s self to us, we are referring theologically to the doctrine of revelation. “Revelation” means an “uncovering,” a making known that which is hidden. God is unknown to humans; God is hidden from us and the whole human race. Since we cannot see God, or hear God, or perceive God with our senses, many people assume that God does not exist. But Christians affirm that while “no one has ever seen God” (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12), God is real. God is active and God has—astonishingly—chosen to be revealed to humanity and to communicate with the human race. This is the doctrine of revelation.

The doctrine of revelation is basic and fundamental to all Christian theology. Without it, there could be no theology or “study of God.” Without God’s revealing, we would know nothing of God at all. Many of the world’s great religions speak about finding a way to God. How do humans discover the path to the divine? Christianity affirms, however, that God has found the way to humanity and has chosen to be made known to the created creatures of this world.

General Revelation

Christians have distinguished between General or Natural Revelation and Special Revelation. General revelation refers to a knowledge of God that can be conveyed in nature or through human reason. If we look at the world and say: “Ah, such a creation must have a creator; it couldn’t just come into being all by itself,” or look at human beings and think: “Ah, we are so marvelously made, so intricate, so complex—we couldn’t have just evolved all by ourselves”—then we are in the realm of “natural” or “general” revelation. General revelation is not communicated in words. Rather, it is the perception arrived at by our own human means—whatever they may be—that there must be a “God” who has caused the world and human beings to exist.

Some Reformed theologians have upheld a revelation of God in nature. They have appealed to certain scriptural passages, such as the text: “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). The text seems to say that if we look around us, we see all creation and that creation “tells” or “declares” to us “the glory of God”—or the fact that there is a God behind it all.

The question is, however, whether this perception of nature is adequate to reveal God. Can we know that there is a God by observing nature? Will all of us come to the same conclusion about the reality of God based on our perceptions of the world around us? Since everyone in the world does not appear to believe in a “God” based on the assessment of nature around us, it seems that natural or general revelation is not sufficient in itself to convince people of the reality of God’s existence. Even more, it does not at

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all indicate the nature or character of God or what God may have done in human history.

Other Reformed theologians, however, have pointed out that this verse from the Psalms was written to a group of people who already believed in God. The Hebrews believed God existed and was the creator of all things. This is apparent from the very first verse of the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 1:1). So it would be natural to say to these people that if you look at the world around you, you will see the glory of God: in the heavens as well as the earth. These theologians say that there is a “general revelation” of God in nature—not for the unbelievers, but for the believers. We come to a knowledge of God. After we do, then, there exists for us an amazing “general” or “natural” revelation around us. When those who already believe in God observe nature or the wonders of human life, they see the glory of God before their eyes.

But if there is not a “general revelation” in nature—or even if there is—will this be a sufficient source for our knowledge of God? Will we know all there is to know about God, or all we need to know about God, simply by looking around us and using our reason, perhaps, to deduce the existence of a God behind it all?

Special Revelation

Christian theologians have been unanimous in saying that, even if there is a “general revelation,” that does not tell us all we need to know about God. There are things we need to know about God that we will never be able to deduce from nature or from the reasoning powers of our minds. We need a “special revelation.” We need a revelation that tells us special things, gives us a special knowledge of God beyond what we could ever know by our human reason or by observing the world around us.

Scripture. We believe that this special revelation is what we have in the Scriptures, or the Bible. The Bible is God’s “special revelation” in that it conveys a knowledge of God we would not be able to attain in any other way or through any other means.

The Scriptures are called the “Word of God.” They are referred to in this way because it is through the Scriptures that God speaks.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, an important Reformed confession written by English Puritans during the English Civil War in the seventeenth century, referred to the Scriptures as “the Word of God written” (BC 6.002). The Scriptures are the means or the medium through which God communicates a knowledge of God. The Scriptures are the place to turn to learn of God in a complete and unique and authoritative manner. The Scriptures convey the nature of God—who God is and what God does. The Scriptures are the story of God’s activities in the created world.

The Bible is God’s “special revelation” in that it conveys a knowledge of God we would not be able to attain in any other way, or through any other means.

Through the Hebrew Scriptures we see what the people of faith in the nation of Israel believed God was doing in what we call the Old Testament. The Old Testament reveals God’s actions in Israel’s history and in choosing Israel to be a special people to carry out the divine purposes in this world. It tells us the story of Israel’s faith. We read of God’s creation of the world and humans, of God entering into a covenant relationship with Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 12) to establish what would become the nation of Israel to be a “light to the nations” (Isa. 42:6), to be God’s servant people. The Old Testament recounts Israel’s history from the perspective of its faith, and especially God’s astounding liberation and deliverance of the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt (Exod. 20:2) and the revelation of the Law of God in the Ten Commandments to show Israel how God wanted them to live as covenant people (Exod. 20:1–17).

In the New Testament, we see the culmination or climax of God’s divine revelation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the One the early Christian church called Jesus the Christ (“Messiah”). Israel anticipated that God would send a messiah to establish peace and justice on the earth. Christians believe that God’s Messiah has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:36; 3:20; 5:42). We believe the New Testament is also God’s divine

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self-communication, a divine revelation that takes its ultimate shape in the person of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:19).

In common with other theological traditions, Presbyterians have emphasized the authority of Scripture. God is revealed in the Scriptures. The Scriptures are God’s “special revelation,” the source of our knowledge of God. In the Bible, we encounter God as in no other place. Thus the Scriptures have authority for us—because they are the basis for our knowledge of God. We believe and obey the Scriptures because they are the unique source of our knowledge about God. The Bible is distinctive among all other books and literature, because it is in and through the Scriptures

that God speaks. Most clearly, God has spoken in the person of Jesus Christ.

In the Bible, we encounter God as in no other place. Thus the Scriptures have authority for us—because they are the basis for our knowledge of God.

To say the Bible is authoritative or that the Scriptures are unique does not answer all our questions. We will want to know not only what to believe about God but also how God

wants us to live. We will need to know what values to adopt in life or what the basis for our decisions should be. This means there will always be the need to interpret the Scriptures, to use all the resources in our reach that can help us understand what the Bible means and what the meanings of the Scriptures are for our own situations. It is important to affirm the authority of Scripture. But it is also important to take the next steps and be serious about interpreting the Bible so that it can play an authoritative role in our Christian lives.

While Presbyterians believe that the Scriptures are inspired by God, diverse viewpoints are found here. But a common conviction remains: God is the one who is, in some sense, “behind” the Scriptures. The writers wrote. Yet the Holy Spirit was somehow involved in the writing. Just how the Spirit was at work is a contested question. Did the Spirit guide the writing of each word of Scripture so that the writers were more or less secretaries or

stenographers? Did God suggest the thoughts that writers wrote in their own words? Or does God's Spirit simply use the words that were written by the authors on their own—use them as witnesses to God's revelation in Jesus Christ? In the Reformed tradition, we find representatives of each of these three views. Some “good Presbyterians” believe each of these positions. But all of them affirm that the Scriptures are “inspired.” The Bible is unique because in and through the Scriptures God speaks in a special way.

The Scriptures are God's divine revelation. They are the “Word of God written.” They are inspired by God and are authoritative for our lives of faith—for what we believe and what we do. We also believe it is the Holy Spirit who is intimately connected with the Scriptures. The Spirit inspired the Scripture writers and those who shaped the biblical documents. The Spirit illuminates the Scriptures for us, meaning that the Holy Spirit of God is the One who enlightens us and convinces us that the Scriptures are God's Word. Through the Spirit we are enabled to perceive God in the Scriptures. Through special revelation in Scripture, God is communicated to us. God's will and purposes for our lives are made known.

The Holy Spirit also helps us interpret the Bible. Presbyterian Christians believe we should use all the tools we have to help us understand the Bible. There are various ways of approaching the Bible, using the insights of what is called “biblical criticism.” This does not mean a “criticism” that “criticizes,” or devalues, the Bible. Instead it means a way of evaluating the biblical writings. We study the language of the Scriptures, their backgrounds, the culture in which they were written, their literary forms, the communities that first read the Scriptures—all these dimensions. We study, using the best resources we have, in order to be as well equipped as possible to hear God speaking to us in the Scriptures.

But at the same time we also trust and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us in our interpretation. We pray when we read the Bible. We pray for God to give the Spirit to us, to lead us into God's truth, and to help us understand what God would have us know. We do not trust our own insights alone. We do trust that God will use our insights and, by means of the Spirit, will speak to us through the inspired Scripture to convey to us God's Word for us today. We are

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able to “hear,” or perceive, God’s Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures in many ways. One of the best ways is in the community of other believers, the church. Where the Scriptures are studied, preached, and taught, the Holy Spirit can work and give us the insights we need. God’s Word and God’s Spirit go together. The Spirit helps us interpret the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are the means God uses to guide us, through the Holy Spirit.

So the Scriptures are God’s “special revelation.” In the Bible, God speaks to us as in no other place. As we move along to discuss what Presbyterians believe, we will rely on the Bible as our authoritative source. Reformed and Presbyterian theology through the centuries has always been based on Scripture as its starting point. Our theological statements are statements drawn from what we believe the Scriptures teach. When we study theology and confess our faith, we do so on the basis of God’s self-revelation in the Scriptures. This is why the Bible has such a central place in our churches and in our own lives. We read and study the Scriptures to understand who God is, what God has done, and how God wants us to live. Through Scripture we gain a knowledge of God that is reliable and authoritative. We know God through the Scriptures as God speaks to us by Word and Spirit. When we know God, we love God and seek to obey God’s will for our lives. This is why the psalmist said that God’s word is “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105).

Questions for Discussion

1. What “evidence” do you see for the existence of God around you?
2. Why is “special revelation” important?
3. Why is the Bible, written in ancient times, able to be significant for us today?
4. What do we mean by the “authority” of Scripture?
5. Why is it important to believe that we have a trustworthy Bible?