

## √41 Understanding the Bible

revelations believed to be guaranteed by external proofs, such as accompanying miracles and fulfilled predictions whose validity must be evident to all observers; but it holds all the more now that this kind of guarantee carries so little conviction among us.^16

From a conservative stance, James I. Packer speaks to this question. He writes:

The history of salvation (the acts of God) took place in the context of the history of revelation (the oracles of God). But the epoch of revelation ended with Christ and the apostles: how, then, does God reveal Himself to us today? By saying to us the same things that He said to others long ago, only now in direct application to ourselves, in the situation in which we are.^17

The Christian studying the recorded words of God will often feel that what God said to someone thousands of years ago speaks to his own condition so perfectly that it might have been written specially for him. (And so, of course, it was! -- for, just as every Christian can truly say, with Paul, that Christ, "loved me, and gave Himself for me" [Gal 2:20], so he can truly say that God "loved me, and wrote this book for me." What God caused to be written for the Church in general ... He caused to be written for each Christian individually. The devotional maxim that one should read the Scripture as one would read a personal letter from one's best friend, rests not on pious fancy, but on the hardest theological fact.)^18

The Bible as a whole, viewed from the standpoint of its contents, should be thought of, not statically, but dynamically; not merely as what God said long ago, but as what He says still; and not merely as what He says to men in general, but as what He says to each individual reader or hearer in particular. In other words, Holy Scripture should be thought of as God *preaching* -- God preaching to me every time I read or hear any part of it -- God the Father preaching God the Son in the power of