

REVELATION

Introduction

- When we talk about revelation concerning God, we mean God revealing Himself to mankind.

Definition

Apokalupto = to uncover or unveil

- To show something that was previously unknown
- God's disclosure of Himself to mankind; the unveiling of veiled truth
- Always used in NT to refer to uncovering of religious truths (1 Cor2:10; 3:13; Eph 3:5)

- The theme of revelation: God's Word and works of salvation in Christ. This includes primarily, but is not limited to man, Christ, God, the will of God, the kingdom of God, and salvation

- God's revelation of Himself is important for a number of reasons:

1. Because of Man's Nature

A. Man is a creature

- Though man is made "in God's image," a major distinction still exists between God and man
- God naturally knows man since He created man, but man does not naturally know God
- Even unfallen Adam had to be addressed by God to know Him

Genesis 2:16-17 ~ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

B. Man is a sinner

- Sin has blinded eyes of man such that no natural way for man to know God exists
- Man can only know God if God freely places Himself before man so man can know Him

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 ~ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2. Because of God's Nature

A. God is Holy

Isaiah 6:3 ~ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

B. God is Unapproachable

1 Timothy 6:16 ~ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see

C. God is Invisible

John 1:18 ~ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

- Therefore, had God not revealed Himself to us there could be no accurate statements about God or even a knowledge that God exists
- The key here is that God has disclosed the truth about Himself that man would not have otherwise known
- Thus, the purpose of revelation is to restore fallen man to a relationship with God
- Types of Revelation:

General Revelation	Special
Found in nature, history, and the conscience.	Found in Christ and the Bible.
Available to <i>all</i> men.	Available to those exposed to the Word of God or Christ.
Leaves men without excuse.	Leaves men with a remedy.
Leads to condemnation.	Leads to salvation

General Revelation

- Definition: The fundamental revelation based on creation and demonstrated in history, nature and the conscience. It is that revelation which is addressed to, and available to, all men at all times.
- General revelation provides evidences for the existence of God.
- It is intended to incite man to search for a fuller revelation of God and his plan of salvation and constitutes a general call of God to man to turn to Him.
- It can bring light and truth to all by driving them to God, but can bring judgment for all who reject it.
- The Nature of General Revelation:
 1. It is general in Content
 - Simply shows that God exists, nothing more
 - Does not reveal how God can be known personally
 2. General in Audience
 - Available to all men
 - Not everyone has read Bible or heard Gospel, but all know Him generally
 - God’s general revelation of Himself is available to everyone, in every place, at all times
- 4 types of general revelation:

A. Creation

Psalm 19:1-6 ~ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, ⁵ Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. ⁶ Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

NOTE:

- The revelation of God in creation is continuous (vs. 1-2)
- The revelation of God in creation is non-verbal (vs. 3)
- The revelation of God in creation is universal (vs. 4-6)

- Every person can know it; in the same way the sun makes its presence known, so too God makes His presence and glory known through creation.
- The purpose, order, and design we observe in this world calls for a designer, someone who planned it.

A Precise & Planned Creation!

- The earth is 93 million miles from the sun, which allows for a perfect temperature for man to live; if any closer, earth would be too hot to survive, if any further it would be too cold to survive.
- If the moon were any closer than 250,000 miles, tides would engulf the earth with water from the oceans

Romans 1:18-21~ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God...

NOTE:

- God has revealed Himself in creation such that all people have some inner sense that God exists (vs. 19)
- God is justified in holding all men responsible for acknowledging Him even in a remote part of the world where the Gospel may have not yet reached because they are without excuse (vs. 20)
- All people in some sense "know God" (vs. 21)

- How do you respond to those who say this is not fair?
- Issue is not that they haven't heard of Christ or read Bible
- Issue is that they suppress truth they have received and understood!

B. History

Psalm 75:7 ~ But God is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another.

Daniel 2:21 ~ He changes times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them...

Romans 13:1 ~ Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God"

Acts 17:26 ~ and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation

- A prime example of God's revealing Himself through history is seen in the nation of Israel
- God appeared personally to patriarchs, communicated His message directly to them, and revealed His character in the Mosaic Law, sacrificial system, and service at the tabernacle and temple.

C. Providence

- Providence is God's superintending activity over humans

Matthew 5:45 ~ in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Acts 14:17 ~ and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 17:25 ~ neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things;

- Through God's providential goodness, He supplies people with the sunshine and rain that enables them to live and function.
- Even the air we breathe is from God...All this attests to the existence of God.

D. Conscience

Conscience: A person's intuitional knowledge that judges whether an action or attitude is in harmony with our moral standard or not and urges us to do that which is in harmony with it and to refrain from that which is contrary to it.

Romans 2:14-15~ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

- Our conscience reveals not only that God is, but also that He sharply distinguishes right from wrong and that he always does what is right.
- Our conscience reveals that there is an absolute law of right and wrong in the universe and that there is a supreme lawgiver who embodies this law in his own person and conduct.
- Man intuitively knows that God not only values goodness and abhors evil, but also that he is ultimately accountable to God.

Conclusions about General Revelation

- It is intended for man to realize that God exists and must be sought
- But simply embracing the fact that there is a God is not sufficient for salvation because there is no revelation of the atoning death of Christ in general revelation
- The problem is because man is blinded by sin he does not acknowledge God; rather he creates foolish speculations leading to idolatry
- Hence, there is a need for SPECIAL REVELATION

Special Revelation

- Definition: God's provisional revelation to specific people enabling them to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him; it is that revelation which God has given to particular people at special times
- While all mankind is a recipient of general revelation, not all are recipients of special revelation
- Special revelation has a narrower focus than general; it is restricted to Christ and the Scriptures.
- Because of man's sinful state through the fall and in order to restore fallen humanity to fellowship with Himself, it was essential that God reveal the way of salvation and reconciliation.
- Thus, the essence of special revelation centers on the person of Christ.
- 2 types of Special Revelation:

A. Jesus Christ

John 1:1 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 ~ The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

John 1:18 ~ No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Hebrews 1:1-2 ~ In the last days God has spoken to us in His Son.

John 14:6, 9-10 ~ I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work

Colossians 1:15 ~ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

- Christ has fully revealed the Father to a sinful humanity and through His redemption has enabled mankind to be restored to fellowship with God.
- No one has ever seen God, but we know him through his Son. In Christ, God is revealed to us in terms of his existence, his nature, and his will. He (Christ) is the best proof for the existence of God, for he lived the life of God among men.
- The revelation of God through Christ is the most profound fact in all of history.

B. The Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ~ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

2 Peter 1:21 ~ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:3 ~ His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness

- Because the Bible is God-breathed and written by men carried along by the Holy Spirit, the Bible is entirely reliable and accurate in its portrayal of Christ.
- Scripture reveals all we need to for good living and godliness.
- There is a correlation between the two aspects of special revelation:

Scripture	Christ
Living, written Word (Heb 4:12)	Living, incarnate Word (John 1:1, 14)
Human authorship, but Holy Spirit carried writers along (2 Peter 1:21) ensuring an inerrant Word.	Human parentage, but the Holy Spirit overshadowed that event (Luke 1:35) ensuring sinless Christ.