

## Doctrine of Revelation

The Doctrine of revelation sets out to answer the age old question, can humans, with finite knowledge and understanding comprehend anything about God, an infinite transcendent being? To answer this question we must first lay down some pre-conditions. The Christian God is both omniscient (all knowing), meaning He has truth to reveal, and omnipotent (all powerful), thus He has the ability to create a way of revealing His truth. According to the Bible, man, being created in God's own image (Gen. 1:27) is a rational moral being and therefore capable of receiving a rational and moral revelation from God. But God must first choose to reveal something about Himself for man to know and understand who He is and what His purposes are. This leads us to a good working definition of revelation, "Revelation is the manifestation of God Himself (personal) and His will (propositional). It includes mighty acts but with an accompanying explanation. It is not human discoveries about God but divine self-disclosure. God has chosen to reveal Himself to man in two diverse ways which we categorize as general revelation and special revelation.

General revelation refers to God's revelation of Himself through creation, human history, moral laws, etc., whereby all persons at all times and all places gain a basic knowledge of Him and His moral demands. The Bible is clear that only the foolish declare there is no God (Ps.14). "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands" (Ps. 19:1). "The heavens proclaim His righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory" (Ps. 97:6). The fact that we can even experience goodness and gladness is a testimony for God (Acts 14:15-17). God's nature and His

power have been clearly seen since creation, hence no man has any excuse to deny His existence (Rom. 1:20). General revelation not only reveals some things about God but also reveals some things about humanity. For example God has manifested a moral consciousness in every human's heart (Rom. 2:14-15), therefore all of mankind has a basic understanding of right and wrong. General revelation reveals God as creator and sustainer, therefore serving as a means of condemnation for anyone who denies His existence.

Special revelation is the divine self-disclosure found in the scriptures. Christians believe the Bible to be divinely inspired, literally God-breathed and suitable for instruction, rebuking, and training for godly living (2Tim. 3:16). The Bible is infallible, as attested by Jesus (Matt. 5:17, Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Heb. 10:7), meaning that it will not lead astray. It is inerrant, the scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact and therefore is truthful and trustworthy (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18; 2 Pet. 1:19-20). The Bible is the only source of both God's revelation as Redeemer and His plan of salvation. The climax of God's special revelation is Jesus Christ, the personal incarnation of God in the flesh (John 1:18). In Jesus Christ the source and content of revelation converge and coincide. The Holy Spirit superintends the communication of divine revelation, first by inspiring the original authors and second by illuminating and interpreting the word of God. General revelation is sufficient grounds for condemnation but is not sufficient for salvation. In order to be saved people must confess "Jesus is Lord" and believe in their hearts "that God raised him from the dead" (Rom. 10:9). But they cannot call upon someone whom they have not heard, and "how

can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom. 10:14). The heavens declare the glory of God (Ps.19:1), but salvation is only found in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).