

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Bibliology – Study of the Bible – Part 1
Revelation & Reliability

Introduction

- Bibliology = The Study of the Bible (as a subject).
- Christians know the Bible is the Word of God and therefore is true.
 - The more we understand, the stronger our faith becomes.
- Our focus will be:
 - Revelation
 - Reliability
- Remember our presuppositions.

Revelation

- Presuppositions:
 1. There is a God.
 2. He has revealed Himself to mankind.
- How did God reveal Himself?
- There are two ways, or two types of revelation.
 1. General Revelation – creation
 2. Special Revelation – the Bible

General Revelation

General Revelation

- God's revelation given to all people in all times.
- It is found in 3 areas:
 1. Nature
 2. History
 3. Humankind
- First, we'll talk about nature.



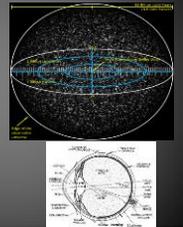
General Revelation

Psalm 19:1 – To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Romans 1:20 – For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Nature

- From nature, we can tell that God is:
 1. Powerful – size + structure of universe show God's power.
 2. Intelligent – incredible order; sophisticated design; irreducible complexity.
 3. Personal – personal humans must derive from a personal God.
 4. Transcendent – whatever made the universe must be separate from it.



General Revelation in Nature

- Acts 14:15-17 – "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

General Revelation in Nature

- Acts 17:28 – for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."



History

- Human History
 - Psalm 47:7-8 = God reigns over the nations
 - Isaiah 10:5-13 = God directs the rise and fall of nations (e.g. Assyria)
- Daniel 2:21 – He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;
- Acts 17:26 – And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

Humankind

- Just look at humanity.
 - Religious everywhere
 - Romans 2:15 = conscience
 - Image of God
 - Uniqueness of humans
 - Art, science, logic, writing, language, morals, empathy & sympathy, etc.



General Revelation & Salvation

- General Revelation cannot save anyone.
- Knowing there is a powerful God does not reveal:
 - How substitutionary atonement would occur.
 - Who the Savior is that made the substitutionary atonement.
 - That God had to become a man to do this.
 - That salvation is received by grace alone through faith alone.
- Also, just as general revelation is limited, man is limited by sin – we are darkened and reject the witness of general revelation.

General Revelation & Salvation

- Romans 1:21-23 – For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
- Calvin's Spectacles of Faith are necessary.
 - They come through regeneration.

Special Revelation

- It is God's manifestation of Himself to particular persons at different times and places, thus enabling persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him.
 - It is salvific
 - It's purpose is not just information, but a restored relationship between God and man.
 - Helps make sense out of General Revelation.



Special Revelation

- General Revelation is accessible to all, but Special is not given to everyone.
 - You cannot be saved without it.
- **gálah** (ἡγά) and **apokalupto** (ἀποκαλύπτω)
 - Uncovering that which was concealed.
 - Fall = man's inability to know God.
 - God had to seek man out. Special Revelation follows that pattern.

Characteristics of Special Revelation

- Personal
 - God shares His names; makes covenants.
 - Special Rev is personal since it is directed to persons.
- Anthropocentric
 - God reveals Himself in categories of human thought and action.
 - Language, dreams, visions, thunderous voice, burning bush, etc.
 - This is so we can understand and interpret what He reveals.
 - Man cannot comprehend God (He is unfathomable).
- Isaiah 55:8-9 – For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Characteristics of Special Revelation

- Analogical
 - Revealed in ways that are normal to our experience.
 - Parent/child relationship; love; etc.
 - He is original, we are derivative.
- Propositional
 - It asserts things that are true.
- Objective
 - Has a true and understandable meaning; tool to judge us.
- Permanent
 - It will never pass away; writing of it was necessary.
- Progressive
 - God continually revealed truth, making things more fully known as the Bible neared completion.
- Perspicuous
 - Clear and intelligible