

# How God shows us the Big Picture

# The Doctrine of Revelation

- Revelation is unveiling something hidden.

# The Doctrine of Revelation

- Hebrew = *gala* = nakedness

*“And do not go up to my altar on steps, lest your nakedness be exposed on it.”*

(Exodus 20:26)

*“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”*

(Isaiah 53:1)

# The Doctrine of Revelation

*"O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer."*

(2 Samuel 7:27)

# The Doctrine of Revelation

- Greek = *apokalypto*

*“At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”*

(Luke 10:21)

# The Doctrine of Revelation

*“which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.”*

*(Ephesians 3:5)*

Christian Faith is based on the claim that  
God has revealed Himself to us.

# 1. Why is this important?

- i. Face fundamental truths about our faith.
- ii. Prepares us to have an answer for our hope.

*“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”*

(1 Peter 3:15)

# 1. Why is this important?

- iii. Strengthen us.
- iv. Lead us into thanksgiving for Jesus.
- v. Knowing God is impossible without Revelation

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God without revelation?

### i) **We are creatures.**

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

(Genesis 1:1)

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

(Genesis 1:27)

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God without revelation?

- God, as Creator, exists freely apart from anything else in creation.

Creation depends utterly on God for its existence.

*“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

(Colossians 1:17)

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God without revelation?

- God and humanity belong to different orders of being - only God truly knows God. Therefore, if we are to know God He has to approach us...even Adam.

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God without revelation?

*“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.””*

*(Genesis 1:28)*

*“And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;”*

*(Genesis 2:16)*

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God without revelation?

### ii) We are sinners.

- Every aspect of our being is affected by the fall. Especially our perception of moral and spiritual reality:

*“sin renders us spiritually blind and ignorant of God”* (Milne)

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God

*“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness”*

(Romans 1:18)

*“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.”*

(1 Corinthians 1:21)

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God

*“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

*(2 Corinthians 4:4)*

*“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”*

*(Ephesians 2:1-2)*

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God

*“They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”*

(Ephesians 4:18)

## 2. Why is it impossible to know God

- If these are true then there is no way for a person's intellect or moral perception to form a genuine knowledge of God.
- The only way possible to know God is if He were to... *“freely place Himself within range of our perception and renew our fallen understanding”* (Milne)
- i.e. reveal Himself to us.

### 3. The likelihood that God would reveal Himself

- i) If made to relate then made to relate for a purpose.
- ii) Would a wise and intelligent creator leave His creatures to grope in the dark, without some clue as to His existence and their purpose?
- iii) Would a kind, loving parent hide forever from a child?

# Three Types of Revelation

1. General (or non-redemptive) Revelation
2. Special Revelation
3. Redemptive Revelation

# 1. General Revelation

## A. Universal sense of God

- All (?) people have a deep sense that God exists, though some deny it.

*“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”*

(John 1:8)

# 1. General Revelation

*“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

(Romans 1:18-21)

# 1. General Revelation

- This knowledge comes to us in three ways - two of which are inherent and one learnt.

i) **Image of God in humans**

# 1. General Revelation

*“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

(Genesis 1:27)

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”*

(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

# 1. General Revelation

## ii) Conscience.

*“since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”*

(Romans 2:15)

# 1. General Revelation

*“The natural ability of man to reflect on himself in the light of what he knows is right and wrong.”*

(Kendall)

# 1. General Revelation

## iii. Reason

- *Cosmological* = Everything in the universe has a cause, therefore the universe must have a cause.
- *Teleological* - (Similar to above). Everything has an end, goal or purpose, therefore there must be a purposeful God.

# 1. General Revelation

## B. Creation

- All that we see

*“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”*

(Psalm 19)

*“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.”*

(Psalm 8)

# 1. General Revelation

- The provision of the earth

*“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”*

(Acts 17:26)

# 1. General Revelation

## C. History

- Seen in the rise and fall of nations

*“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.*

(Acts 17:26)

# Summary of General Revelation:

- It reveals God's creation.
- It comes through nature and to the conscience.
- No one is saved by it.
- Yet it leaves us without excuse.

## 2. Special Revelation

- i. **Jesus Christ**, the Eternal Word, Who became flesh and lived among us.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

(John 1:1)

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

(John 1:14)

## 2. Special Revelation

ii. **The Bible**, God's words to His creatures.

*“If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came - and the Scripture cannot be broken -”*

(John 10:35)

## 2. Special Revelation

*“Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.”*

*(Romans 3:2)*

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”*

*(2 Timothy 3:16)*

## 2. Special Revelation

### ii. The Bible

- Written to specific generations, by God's Providence, it addresses all generations.

*“He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.”*

(Acts 7:38)

## 2. Special Revelation

*“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”*

(Romans 15:4)

*“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”*

(1 Corinthians 10:11)

## 2. Special Revelation

iii. **Christian witness** - serving God's Revelation. How will they hear unless someone tells them?

*“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*

(Romans 10:14)

## 2. Special Revelation

- This would have been enough for Adam, but not for us...

# 3. Redemptive Revelation

*“If we are to truly know God, then revelation must redeem us as well as inform; transform as well as teach.”*

*(Milne)*

- **The Cross of Christ.**

# 3. Redemptive Revelation

*“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*

*(John 3:3)*

*“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.”*

*(John 15:26)*

# 3. Redemptive Revelation

*“because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.”*

*(1Thessalonians 1:5)*

*“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”*

*(Titus 3:5)*