



SURVEY OF THEOLOGY
Bibliology
Grace Institute - Pastor Jim C. Davis

Lecture One: Revelation

1A. Definitions

- 1B. "Revelation is restricted to the divine act of communicating to man what otherwise man would not know," L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, I:48
- 2B. "Because man is finite and God is infinite, if man is to know God it must come about by God's revelation of Himself to man...in such a way that man can know and fellowship with Him." *Erickson, Christian Theology*, p153
- 3B. All of man's knowledge of God comes as a result of God's determination to make Himself known.

2A. Types of Divine Revelation

1B. General Revelations (sometimes called natural theology)

1C. Definitions

- 1D. "General revelation includes all that God has revealed in the world around us, including man." Ryrie p.28
- 2D. "General revelation rests on the basis of creation, is addressed to all intelligent creatures as such, and is therefore accessible to all men; though as a result of sin they are no more able to read and interpret all aright." Berkhof, *Introductory Volume*, p.128
- 3D. General (or natural and original) Revelation of God communicated through the created universe, the constitution of man, and the normal historical processes of the earth as inhabited by man.
(notes Witmer, *Prolegomena & Bibliology*, Fall 1986)

2C. Manifestations (see chart on Divine Revelation)

- 1D. In Nature Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-21
- 2D. In Providence Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:15-17; Daniel 2:21
- 3D. In Conscience Romans 2:14-15

3C. Characteristics

1D. Prelapsarian = Pre-Fall knowledge of God

2D. Is general in its scope = Affects all people everywhere at all times

3D. Brings light and truth or if rejected, condemnation

2B. Special Revelation (Revealed Theology)

1C. Definitions

1D. "Special revelation includes the various means God used to communicate His message to man" Ryrie p.28

2D. Special (or supernatural and soteriological) Revelation "which comes as an intervention into the natural course of things and which is supernatural both as to source and mode" Chafer, I:53

3D. "God's manifestation of Himself to particular persons at definite times and places, enabling those persons to enter into a redemptive relationship with Him" Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p.175

2C. Manifestations

1D. In Christ: John 1:18; John 5:36-37; John 6:63, 14:10; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:17

2D. In Scripture: 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; Ps. 19:7-14

3C. Characteristics

*1D. Postlapsarian = After the Fall

2D. Soteric = Both supernatural and salvific

3D. Answers to the problem of human finiteness and moral limitation of sinfulness

4D. Accurate – John 17:17

5D. Progressive – Hebrews 1:1-2

6D. Purposeful – 2 Timothy 3:15-17

3A. Some Contemporary Views of Revelation



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1B. Revelation as a synonym for religious experience:

“I do not believe that man ever found God when God was not seeking to be found. The underside of the process is man’s discovery; the upper side is God’s revelation.” H.E. Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, p.61

2B. Revelation as mighty acts in history:

Interpretation of the acts is left to the genius of the interpreter. Some deny the historic reality of the events, yet assign significant meaning in the interpretation. Revelation becomes a psychological event in the mind of the interpreter.

3B. Revelation as a personal encounter:

“Revelation is the continuous personal activity of the infinite God (i.e., the eternally contemporaneous Christ) unveiling Himself through self-communication and the appearance of that which is new to men, confronting them with the divine imperative for the redemptive purpose of establishing a transforming fellowship with them.”

J.A. Witmer, “A Critical Study of Current Trends in Bibliology” p.191

4B. Revelation as propositional truth – Kant

These views are:

1. Subjective
2. Unstable without objective standard
3. Sub-Christian – elevating human mind and reason over God’s revelation