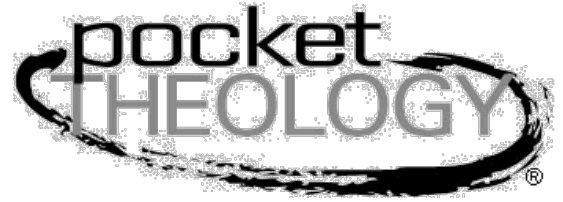


Week 2 - God is Revealed



In the last day, no one will have an excuse for ignoring God. He has written the awareness of Himself into our innermost hearts and painted it across the skies. He has spoken to us in his Word, and he walked among us in person to show us what he meant.

Natural Revelation

God reveals Himself through His creation (nature), in the human conscience and consciousness, and through the glory of the earth and universe. This general revelation and *sensus divinitas*, or sense of divinity, is available to all mankind. This sense of God can come both externally through nature as well as internally through moral actions, conscience, and just a general awareness and thinking about God. Universally, people testify of their awareness of God. The need to pray, it seems, is hard-wired into the human psyche and shows up in every culture, every age.

From astronomy to molecular biology, from philosophy to sociology, the testimony of God in the universe and world around us abounds!

The Incarnation

The incarnation (meaning coming in the flesh) took place when God took on human flesh in the Person of the Lord Jesus. In the words of the apostle John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1-14). In the incarnation, the Lord of the cosmos visited humanity at that chosen time in history in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was uniquely divine, an exact representation of God, and He was also completely human, fully man and fully God (Galatians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Special Revelation

Special revelation (the Bible) is the unique way God has revealed Himself. Through Scripture we learn about God's personality, what he likes and dis-likes, and His great faithfulness toward mankind. We gain insight into what matters to Him and how He works.

In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the apostle Peter talks about God's hand in the writing of Scripture, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

The Bible permits us the greatest privilege available to anyone...at any time...at any place: we can know God. With the Bible we have the knowledge of God we need to be saved and to gain a

personal relationship with Him. Many people are confused and uncertain about the Person of God. Some say God is aloof (deism). Others say God is in everything (pantheism). However, with the Bible as our guide, we need not create our own god to worship. Rather, we can know Him as He is when we take His Word by faith.

Scripture is God's self-disclosure to the billions who inhabit earth. Through the Scriptures we learn everything essential about God and the way of salvation. We also gain knowledge (God's mind) for every area of life. His Word is life to the believer. As the Lord Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

"Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!" ("Take up and read! Take up and read!") The debauched young Roman who became Saint Augustine heard these words sung by a child. As he wept about the sinfulness of his soul and his inability to follow God (Confessions, Book 8), Augustine felt the unfamiliar lyrics were a message from God to open the Word and read a passage from it. What followed was a true conversion and a new life after years of running from and rebelling against God. Millions of others have experienced something similar to Augustine where they were irresistibly drawn to God.

The Word is a powerful instrument to transform our souls and the world. Whether the question is how to come to God, treat our neighbor, run a business or effect justice, His Word brings the right answer and the route for positive change.

As we embrace the Word, it becomes the foundation for our believing, our living, our feelings, and our actions. Just as we go to the orthodontist to straighten out our teeth or to the orthopedic surgeon to straighten out our bones, we go to the Word to straighten out our souls – our doctrine (orthodoxy), our lifestyle (orthopraxy), and our emotions (orthopathos) (ortho, Greek meaning "straight").

Building our life on the Word equips us to succeed in every area of life (Joshua 1:8). The Bible gives God's rock-solid truth for guidance in virtually every area of life, for both the individual and society. C.S. Lewis said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

Review

1. What are the 3 ways God has revealed himself?
2. What does Psalm 19 say about God's revelation?
3. Why is Scripture really necessary?