

# **The Azimuth Institute**

## **Directional Study Notes**

### **Bible Doctrines**

**11/24/15**

## **Theology – The Study of God**

### **How God Reveals Himself**

Revelation is God disclosing things about Himself that man could not know otherwise.

Revelation is divided into two areas: general and special.

General revelation of God comes through creation while Special revelation is the act of God whereby He reveals Himself and His truth at specific times and specific places and cannot be learned on one's own.

#### **A. General Revelation**

It is the revelation of God through creation.

1. General revelation is seen by all men (Acts 14:15-17).
2. The Bible declares that general revelation alone renders man inexcusable.

Romans 1:20 *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

3. General revelation is insufficient?

Some would argue that general revelation is sufficient while others would not.

Cf. Romans 2:12-16

Again, some would say that general revelation is sufficient for salvation.

Others will say that while general revelation is important, man must receive special revelation to be saved.

So, their line of thinking would be that if a man responds favorably to general revelation, it will of necessity lead to special revelation for salvation.

This can indeed sometimes cause a moral dilemma.

## **B. The Need for General Revelation**

### **1. It saves the world from chaos and cruelty.**

God has provided three channels of general revelation for mankind.

#### **a. Nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-25)**

Psalms 8:3-5 *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; (4) What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (5) For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

#### **b. Conscience**

cf. Rom 2:14-15

#### **c. History (Deut. 28:9-10, 15, 37)**

Proverbs 14:34 *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.*

It is through these channels that God has given man a natural sense of morality.

The world naturally knows wrong from right and that wrong needs to be punished for a society or nation to survive.

### **2. It supports and illustrates God's Word.**

The glories of God's creation are constant reminders of a Supreme Being.

The design of the universe demands that reasoning man recognize a Designer.

General revelation should make man seek Special revelation.

General revelation has been referred to as the “outdoor book” while Special revelation has been referred to as the “indoor book”.

The outdoor book is purposely designed to encourage men to seek after God.

The indoor book is purposely designed to show men just who that God is.

**3.** It is not sufficient for salvation.

Although general revelation may lead an individual in the direction of salvation, it is still not enough to teach an individual the way of salvation.

### C. Special Revelation

Special revelation is the act of God whereby He reveals Himself and His truth to men at specific times and specific places.

**1.** Special revelation cannot be learned on one’s own (1 Cor. 2:14).

Apart from the empowering of the Holy Spirit, an individual will never understand the Bible.

Therefore, it is useless to argue with an unsaved man about the Bible.

**2.** Special revelation is accepted by faith.

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Although reason can tell a man there must be a God, faith is required for salvation.

“Faith is always determined by its object.”

If the object of one’s faith is man, it is weak, because man is weak.

If the object of one’s faith is Jesus Christ, that faith is strong, because God’s Son is all-powerful!

There is a vast difference between “believing” and “believing-in”.

Cf. the man on the tightrope at Niagara Falls

**3.** Unlike General revelation, Special revelation is sufficient for salvation.

The Word of God contains the gospel which is necessary for a person to hear to be saved.

Again, I am forced to believe that if man responds positively to general revelation, God will grant him special revelation.

That is the urgency of the gospel message!

Cf. Romans 10:13-15

## **The Attributes of God**

Attributes are qualities or characteristics of a person or thing: God has both natural and moral attributes.

### **A.** God's Natural Attributes

Natural attributes are the very nature of God's being.

They are unique to Him and to Him alone.

1 John 3:2 says, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

When it says that we will be like him, it is referring to His moral attributes (love, holiness, mercy, etc...) and not his natural attributes (omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, etc...).

### **B.** Attributes Described

#### **1.** Transcendence (Isa. 57:15)

God is *above* His creation.

#### **2.** Immanence

Although God is ***above all*** (transcendence), He has seen fit to be actively involved ***within*** His creation (immanence).

Eph 4:6 *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

The climax of His immanence was His coming to earth as a Baby, living for 33 years on earth, and dying on a cross for man's sins.

### 3. Eternity

God has ***no beginning nor ending.***

There is no past, present nor future with God, only the eternal present.

He is not limited by time.

Psalms 90:2 *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

### 4. Infinity

God has ***no limitation*** in space.

All of His attributes are without limit.

Isa 55:8-9 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. (9) "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

### 5. Immutability (Psa. 102:24-27; Isa. 46:9-10)

God is ***unchanging.***

God is neither capable of nor susceptible to change.

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*