

Revelation

General Revelation is general in two ways. It is general in its scope and general in its content.

- **External**—It is knowledge that is given to **everyone, everywhere**. God's self-revelation goes to every human being. *Nature is a grand theatre and every human being is in the audience.* There is no one who does not have access to it. It is knowledge of God as creator.
- **Internal**—Conscience—by nature God reveals right and wrong to everyone. We all have an internal knowledge of right and wrong, which reveals God's standard to everyone intrinsically. By our conscience, God reveals truth about himself through our knowledge of right and wrong. His standard is revealed.

Content of general revelation

What is the content of this external knowledge? It is that God "is". His eternal power is seen through the created order. His "otherness", his deity and transcendence above us, outside of us, greater than us. The information we receive in general revelation is **general information about God**. From general revelation we cannot get information about the cross, the atonement, salvation. That is given in special revelation. Romans 1 tells us, however, that this general information (the visible world) reveals to us attributes and character of the invisible God. He is revealing himself to us through what is seen in our created world. It is not exhaustive knowledge about God, but it is sufficient to condemn us if we reject it (Rom 1:18-21).

Can we learn anything about God from nature? Romans 1:18-21 says "yes." Everyone is judged guilty not for the rejection of Jesus, but for the universal rejection of God the Father as he has revealed himself in general revelation. Even in our fallen condition we can respond to general revelation. He hasn't hidden clues about himself. It is clear and plain for everyone to see. His invisible attributes are clearly seen. If a person pays attention to God's general revelation of himself and his character, that also gives him, at the same time, knowledge of himself. He can see himself and know because of his conscience, that he is not God, that he falls short. That would send a person on a search for special knowledge of God.

Knowledge of God given to us in general revelation is not adequate for redemption, but it is adequate for condemnation if the person rejects the general knowledge that God has revealed to him.

"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 people are without excuse." (Rom 1:19-21)

This sounds like a contradiction. We don't see the invisible God but the visible world carries to us the knowledge of God. He is revealing his unseen character through what is seen.

What excuse is Paul talking about? Perhaps: God hasn't made it clear—There wasn't enough proof—We can't know for sure—There isn't a good case—We don't know if he is there—if he exists. Paul says that God's power and divine nature are clearly seen and understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Again, they are held accountable for their rejection of God as he has revealed himself in general revelation.

No one who rejects God (general revelation) is going to be damned for rejecting Jesus, who is part of the content of special revelation. That person is condemned for rejection the knowledge of God

that he does have through creation and conscience. If they appropriate-pay attention-to the general revelation of God-his holiness/man's unholiness, man's conscience and knowledge of himself in light of God, he will see his is out of whack with God's holiness, that he is not God. Knowledge of general revelation is not adequate for redemption.

Paul says that "they suppress the truth" and "their foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom 1:18, 21). The darkness of their hearts and minds does not excuse them. It is a result of their actions. There is an "a priori, innate, intuitive, before experience, born with" knowledge of God that they are accountable for.

It is interesting to note how secular culture deals with the innate sense of right and wrong. They often attribute it to a person's (supposed) basic, inerrant "goodness" which is not found in scripture. Their conscience is where they get that innate sense of right and wrong, yet many are unwilling to attribute it to a God that they are accountable to.

Special Revelation

Jesus is God's special revelation in human form

The Bible is God's special revelation in human words

Content: The content of special revelation is specific knowledge of God as redeemer in the person of Jesus Christ

How much beauty will you see if you are standing in the dark? Unless things are set in the light, even our most acute senses are inadequate to see it. Just as you need light to see anything physically, so you need divine revelation to see any spiritual truth. All truth rests upon God as the source and the one who makes it possible to see anything. He gives us the capacity. Illumination is what happens in our mind and heart as we read the scriptures and God makes plain to us his truth. He shines a light on our mind and heart so that we can understand and grasp spiritual truth and come to a fuller knowledge of him through his revealed Word. The content of Special Revelation is information that we could never glean from nature. It is salvific, i.e., it tells us about Jesus, redemption, our state. It "reveals" our need of Christ. It reveals to us what cannot be gleaned, derived by general revelation. It is the further unveiling of God. More specific content containing truth propositions.

In the process of inspiration, God doesn't just act and humans respond with their own insight and judgment. God is working by the Holy Spirit to superintend to make sure what is recorded is what he wants-His Word and his words.

Revelation

The unveiling of truth-pulling back the curtain-concerns the **origin** of truth

"Give yourself to know him in his Word and in his world."

General Revelation-knowledge of God as creator

Special Revelation-knowledge of God as redeemer

Inspiration

Revelation—the origin of truth—the unveiling of truth

Inspiration—the reception of truth

Inscription—the recording of truth

2 Timothy 3:16 God-breathed (theopneustos)

God breathed into human writers (like blowing up a balloon)

Expire—God breathing out

Inspire—Human authors being blown into by the Holy Spirit

Inspiration is not poetic inspiration, but divine authority. Inspiration is the process by which God communicates his authoritative message to humans. By revelation God spoke to the prophets (Heb 1:1). Inspiration is the way God spoke through the prophets to others (the “how”) Spirit-moved men wrote God-breathed words which are divinely authoritative for Christian faith and practice.

Inspiration gives authority because of its source and origin, it comes from God.

The first time the NT uses the word inspiration it is applied only to the writings and not the writers. The product is inspired, not the writers. In the bigger picture, the writers were part of the process of inspiration, but they themselves were not inherently inspired, i.e., everything they did in their normal life was not inspired. So the process of inspiration results in a final product, the scriptures, that are divinely inspired for ever. They are the product of inspiration and the **writings retain the divine authority**. The writers have died, the writings live on. The authority didn't die with the writers. The process of inspiration resulted in a product that is always and forever inspired.

Inspiration applied to NT: How can we extend OT statements to apply to NT? Because it claims to be and “all” (NT) is considered scripture (2 Pet 3:16, 1 Tim 5:18). If all scripture is God-breathed and the NT is considered scripture, then by implication, the NT is on an equal level of authority with the OT.

Verbal Plenary

Inerrant—without error

Infallible—cannot err

The Bible is always a true representation of reality. What it records is a true representation of events. It sometimes records comments and dialogue that are not God's truth. It records what people said even though they might not be aligned with God's truth, i.e., “there is no God” (Ps 14:1), “All is vanity” (Ecc 1:2). We believe that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant word of God.