

Systematic Theology Pt. 2 & 3

Bibliology A & B

“Revelation”

I. Terminology

A. “The Bible” - our English word Bible comes from the Greek words “biblos” Matt. 1:1 and “biblion” (adjective form) Luke 4:17- which means “Book”.

- Ancient books were written upon the biblus or papyrus reed and from this came the name biblos.
- See also - Mark 12:26; Luke 3:4; 20:42; Acts 1:20; 7:42

“The Bible is not merely a book, however. It is THE BOOK- the book that from the importance of its subjects, the wideness of its range, the majesty of its Author, stands as high above all other books as the heaven is high above the earth”. - William Evans

B. “The Scripture” and “The Scriptures”

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are called Scripture. It means “Holy Writings”. See 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 3:16, also John 10:35

C. “The Word of God”

“Of all names given to the Bible, the Word of God is doubtless the most significant, impressive, and complete.” -William Evans

John 10:35; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17; & 1 Thess. 2:13

II. Existing Attitudes toward the Bible

While there are many attitudes on the part of men toward the Bible, let’s look at four general classifications:

1. Rationalism- it has two forms.

A. The Extreme Form - Extreme rationalism denies any divine revelation and represents the beliefs or unbeliefs of infidels, atheist, and agnostics. Though the extreme rationalists were numerous in past generations, their number is greatly increasing at the present time and is destined to increase to the end of the age (Luke 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:13).

B. The Moderate Form- They admit the possibility of divine revelation, but say human reason is the final judge or authority.

2. Romanism- The Bible is the product of the church, therefore the church, not the Bible alone is the final authority.

3. Mysticism - The theory that divine revelation is not limited to the written Word of God.” Experience is as authoritative as the Bible.

4. Neo-orthodox- the Bible is a fallible witness to the revelation of God.

5. Cults - the Bible and the writings of the cult leaders or church are equal to or of more authority than the Bible.

6. The Orthodox or Evangelical View-

A. The Bible is the infallible Word of God.

B. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice.

C. Human reason and knowledge should be wholly subject to the Scriptures.

“There is no inner light or added revelation ever given beyond what is contained in the Bible. The ungoverned character and danger of the doctrine of individual divine revelation, being without standards by which to test various claims, is obvious; and its susceptibility to gross error is demonstrated on every hand by the claims of those who hold these views. The Spirit does guide the individual in matters of conduct and service, but not in the formulating of doctrine which might be superimposed upon the Word of God. No authority relative to the forming of truth has ever been committed to the church or to men beyond that given to the New Testament writers.” - Lewis Sperry Chafer

The Scriptures; The Embodiment of a Divine Revelation

1. What is Revelation?

A. The word “revelation” is derived from the Greek word “apokalupsis”, which means “disclosure” or “unveiling”.

B. So revelation signifies God unveiling Himself to mankind.

“Revelation may be defined as “that act of God whereby he discloses himself or communicates truth to the mind, whereby he makes manifest to his creatures that which could not be known in any other way. The revelation may occur in a single, instantaneous act, or it may extend over a long period of time; and this communication of himself and his truth may be perceived by the human mind in varying degrees of fullness”. The important emphasis here is that God discloses truth about Himself that man would not otherwise know.” -Paul Enns

2. Why is a Revelation Necessary?

A. Without it theology would be impossible; had God not revealed Himself, there could be no accurate knowledge of God. See Rom. 16:25-27

B. Because of the nature of God. God is transcendent and infinite. See Isa. 55:9 & 1 Tim.6:15-16

C. Because of the nature of Man. Man is finite and man is sinful. 1 Cor. 2:14 & 1 Cor. 2:9-10

3. Types of Divine Revelation

There are two types of divine revelation.

A. General Revelation- General revelation is God revealing certain truths and aspects about His nature to all humanity.

“It is sometimes called “natural theology”. General revelation provides evidences for the existence of God. (special revelation, on the other hand generally assumes His existence.) “General revelation is exactly that general. It is general in its scope; that is, it reaches to all people (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17). It is general in geography; that is, it encompasses the entire globe (Ps. 19:2). It is general in its methodology; that is, it employs universal means like the heat of the sun (vv. 4-6) and human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). Simply because it is revelation that thus affects all people wherever they are and whenever they have lived it can bring light and truth to all, or, if rejected, brings condemnation.” -Charles Ryrie

General Revelation is seen in three categories:

1. Nature or Creation

Ps. 19:1-6- God’s existence and glory!

Rom. 1:18-21 God’s power and existence. vv. 19-20 “conscience & creation”

2. In Providence

Matt. 5:45 - God is good to all.

Acts 14:15-17 God provides food for all.

Dan. 2:21- God raises up and removes Kings and Rulers.

3. In Conscience

Rom. 2:14 -15 - God has placed His law within the hearts of all people.

B. Special Revelation

Special revelation has a narrower focus than general revelation.

What are the avenues of Special Revelation?

1. The Lot- Pro. 16:33 & Acts 1:21-26

2. The Urim and Thummin- Exo. 28:30 & Num. 27:21

3. Dreams- Gen. 20:3, 6; 31:11-13; 24:40-41 & Joel 2:28

4. Visions- Isa. 1:1; 6:1 & Ezek. 1:3

5. Theophanies- (The angel of the Lord) Gen. 16:7-14; Exo. 3:2; 2 Sam. 24:16

6. Angels- Dan. 9:20-21 & Luke 2:10-11

7. The Prophets - 2 Sam. 23:2; Zech. 1:1 & Eph. 3:5

8. Miracles - John 2:11

9. Direct Communication- O.T. Adam, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. N.T. Paul, Acts 22:17-21

10. The Incarnation - Jesus Christ. John 1:1, 14, 18, John 14:9 & Heb. 1:1-3

Jesus revealed by His Acts and Words:

- The nature of God
- The power of God
- The wisdom of God
- The glory of God
- The love of God

11. The Bible - 1 John 5:9-13

“Actually the Bible serves as the most inclusive of all the avenues of special revelation, for it encompasses the record of many aspects of the other avenues. Though God undoubtedly gave other visions, dreams, and prophetic messages that were not recorded in the Bible, we know no details of them. Too, all that we know about the life of Christ appears in the Bible, though, of course, not all that He did or said was recorded in the Scriptures (John 21:25). But the Bible is not simply the record of these revelations from God; it also contains additional truth not revealed, for example, through the prophets or even during the earthly life of Christ. So the Bible, then, is both the record of aspects of special revelation and revelation itself”. - Charles Ryrie

“Because the Bible is God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16) and written by men carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21), the Bible is entirely reliable and accurate in its portrayal of Jesus Christ. There is, in fact, a correlation between two aspects of special revelation: the Scripture may be termed the living, written Word (Heb. 4:12), while Jesus Christ may be designated the living, incarnate Word (John 1:1, 14). In the case of Christ there was human parentage but the Holy Spirit overshadowed the event (Luke 1:35), ensuring a sinless Christ; in the case of Scriptures there was human authorship but the Holy Spirit superintended the writers (2 Pet. 1:21), ensuring an inerrant Word. The Bible accurately presents the special revelation of God in Christ.” - Paul Enns

The Scriptures are the fullest and the greatest of Divine Revelation

1. Objective not subjective - true & trustworthy.
2. They are inclusive - it's final - Jude 3.
3. They are purposeful - 2 Tim. 3:16-17, unto redemption.

The Chain of Revelation

1. God
2. Revelation
3. Inspiration
4. Recognition
5. Canonization
6. Preservation
7. Translation
8. Observation
9. Illumination
10. Interpretation
11. Application
12. Proclamation

NOTES:

