

Revelation is the act of self-disclosure in which God makes Himself known. The revelation or knowledge of God includes every type and mode of manifestation to the human consciousness.

I. Our Great Need

- A. The reality of Man fully alive is to eternally encounter the revelation of God. There is an unescapable longing in every human heart to encounter the creator in both their knowledge and experience. We have been designed with 2 very clear and powerful longings that only the revelation of God will satisfy.
1. Fascination – We are born with the desire to be fascinated and exhilarated by something vastly bigger than ourselves. We loathe boredom and yearn to find something that we won't ever tire of no matter how much we enjoy it. However, everything created we encounter eventually will grow experientially dull.
 2. Intimacy - At the same time we have a powerful longing to know things and people to the fullest measure. We crave deep knowledge of what is around us and intimate connections with others. We all disdain shallowness and superficiality.
- B. Through the revelation of God, we find the One who we can relate to in relational intimacy but who is at the same time transcendent. In Him alone our longings are eternally satisfied and our desires for endless fascination and inexhaustible deep personal knowledge.

II. His Desire in Revealing Himself

- A. Desire – We must always keep before us that the act of creation and any movement toward humanity thereafter is entirely voluntary, and thus rooted in desire. Redemptive history is the testimony of God's longing to be known and understood by His beloved ones. This desire moved Him to the point of taking on flesh to radically clarify the intentions of His heart toward us. (Ps. 115:3, 135:6, Is. 46:10, Eph. 1:11)
1. Exposing lies in our Experience – We must take our thoughts captive

when we experience boredom, confusion, or feelings of distance from God. We often draw wrong conclusions about who God is, and what He is like. We must root ourselves in the truth of His desire and remain confident in His love even when we experience a delay in our encounters.

III. Hindrances to Revelation

- A. There are a few foundational truths that hinder the revelation of God that we must consider as we grow in our understanding of the doctrine of Revelation.
1. Incomprehensibility of God - Also referred to as the transcendence of God. We must recognize the aim of our pursuit is inconceivably high, and it is impossibility for one to ever fully know or understand the living God. This is not due to a relational separation but to a fundamental difference between Creator and creature in existence. We find our origin in Him alone, and so an inescapable inequality will always exist. (Gen 1-2, Ex. 15:11, 1 Sam 2:2, Is. 44:6-8, Rev. 4:8)
 2. Our Finite Compacity - Because God is infinite and we are finite or limited, we can never fully understand God. It is not true to say that God is unable to be understood, but it is true to say that He cannot be understood fully or exhaustively. (Ps. 145:3, Ps. 147:5, Ps. 139:6; Job 26:7-14, Rom. 11:33)
 3. Limited Access – God has no responsibility to reveal anything to anyone. He is completely free to hide Himself from humanity and we are at the mercy of His self-discloser. (Job 23:13, Dan. 4:35, Mat. 11:25-26, 1 Cor. 2:10-12)
“In the study of all other sciences man places himself above the object of his investigation...but in theology he does not stand above but rather under the object of his knowledge. In other words, man can know God only in so far as the latter actively makes Himself known.” Louis Berkhof
 4. Limited by the fall – The separation that resulted in the fall acts as another boundary in the revelation of God. Our ability to fully receive revelation is hindered by fallenness and sin. There are aspects of this condition that even the salvation experience cannot overcome in this age. This is extremally important to understand and must balance our expectations for what we can attain. (1 Cor. 13:12, 2 Cor. 5:1-8, 12:1-4, Phil 1:23)

5. His Desire to be Pursued - God's Delight in Hiding Himself. Though God is passionate about His glory and deeply enjoys revealing Himself, He does not desire understanding without love. He unfolds His heart progressively, that voluntary affection would be produced through the process of intentional pursuit. Ultimately this pursuit becomes our greatest delight and highest pleasure. (Pro. 25:2, Is. 45:15, Mat. 11:12, 13:10-17, Luke 10:21)

IV. Types of Revelation

- A. General Revelation - General knowledge or common revelation, is the knowledge of Himself that God has made known to all mankind throughout all time. This knowledge occurs in two distinct forms, Internal and External.

1. Internal General Revelation

- a) Immortality - There is a desire and an internal knowing of "eternity" or "immortality" in all of men's hearts. We despise the decay that comes with growing older, and there is no greater a common fear than the fear of death. There is not a culture in the world throughout history that does not hold to some form of belief in an afterlife. Even in our mainly secular culture almost everyone will refer to the deceased to be in a "better place". (Ecc. 3:11)
- b) Conscience - Everyone shares a common desire to see that which is good, right, noble and beautiful. Our hearts are vulnerable to love, mercy, forgiveness, and valor. Even more compelling and persistent is the recognition of some standard of wrongdoing. While widespread disagreement exists regarding what is right, deeds of great wickedness arouse a common cry for justice, and it is fair to say that all hold to a belief in a Judge and justice for injustice. (Job 27:6, Rom. 2:14-16)

2. External General Revelation

- a) Witness of Creation - No one is hidden from the created order in all its various forms. The cosmos, our planet, even our physical bodies are a constant reminder of the power, wisdom, creativity, and love of our God. No one has ever concluded that man created nature. (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:20)

- B. Special Revelation – Also referred to as specific revelation. Special revelation refers to the knowledge of God concerning His specific nature, character, and actions that He has disclosed to humanity apart from general revelation. This form of revelation is the greatest source of intimacy with Him. (1 Cor. 1:21, 2:14)
1. Manifestations - His direct encounters with Humanity. These specific instances of revelation include the visions, appearances, dreams, angelic messengers, and utterances of the Lord which abound in the Pentateuch and throughout Scripture.
 - a) Theophany's – Direct Appearances of God – (Gen. 3:8-9, Ex. 34:5-7)
 - b) Direct Speech – The Lord speaking audibly – (Gen. 6:13,18, Jhn 12:28)
 - c) Dreams, Visions, Trances – (Dan. 7:1-2, Acts 10:9-11, 16:9-10)
 - d) Angel Encounters – (Dan. 9:20-22, Luke 1:8-12, Mat. 2:13)
 - e) Miracles, Signs, & Wonders – (Exodus, Jhn 2:9,11, Acts. 5:14-16)
 2. Covenant – Covenant is both personal and corporate and is greater in magnitude than the most spectacular manifestation. The promises of covenant disclosed a lasting pledge of the deep things in Gods heart. (Mat. 26:26-29)
 3. Old Testament Prophets – Prophets were given profound understanding of both information and the emotions of God as they declared the word of the Lord. They were given much more depth and detail of revelation than the Patriarchs. (Jer. 1:9-10, Eze. 3:1-4,10)
 4. Wisdom – He is the source of all wisdom and knowledge of every aspect of the created order. He graciously imparts His council to inform our ignorance. (Deut. 34:9, 1 Kings 4:29-30, Col 1:9-10)
 5. Instruction – Over and over He answers the desperate pleas of men to be shown, led, and taught the ways in which we should walk. He gives the light to our path. (Ps. 23:3, Ps. 143:10, Mat. 4:19)