

“The Forms of God’s Revelation”
The Revelation of God - Week 3 - Summer 2019

- The Forms of God’s Revelation

- God’s self-disclosure comes to us in various forms.
- Three particular forms of God’s Revelation:
 - ▶ Events
 - ▶ Words
 - ▶ Persons

- Event Revelation

- We can begin by thinking about the categories of “Nature” and “General History”.
 - ▶ Nature is God’s functioning creation.
 - ▶ General History includes the everyday events of the past and present.
- Everything in those two realms is governed by God.
 - ▶ All nature is His creation.
 - ▶ All events in history occur according to God’s providence.
 - ▶ That means that nothing in those two arenas can be truly understood without their reference to God.
- Nature’s events and God’s revelation:
 - ▶ *“Nature behaves as it does because God’s word tells it what to do.”*

Frame, J. M. (2010). *[The Doctrine of the Word of God](#)* (p. 76).
 Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

***Psalm 148:8** - Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word...*

***Psalm 107:25** - For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea.*

- ▶ This means that the events of the created world are always speaking about God.
- ▶ They speak about His kindness to sinners.

Acts 14:16–17 - ¹⁶ “In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; ¹⁷ and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” (also Matt. 5:45)

- ▶ They speak about His judgement upon sin. See the passages above.
- ▶ They also, especially in their “imperfect ferocity,” speak of redemption.

Romans 8:20–22 - ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

“Indeed, nature is preoccupied with the hope of redemption, and it cannot rightly be understood apart from that hope.”

Frame, J. M. (2010). [*The Doctrine of the Word of God*](#) (pp. 77–78). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

- The events of General History do all of those things as well.

Psalms 46:8–10 - ⁸ Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. ⁹ He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. ¹⁰ “Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

- We’re blind to these messages until our hearts are opened.
 - ▶ But the Divine Revelation of such events is still true, clear, and authoritative.
 - ▶ The blindness of mankind’s fallen eyes doesn’t change that.

Romans 1:20 - For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

- The fact is that we are surrounded by God’s Revelation!
 - ▶ We can’t escape it.
 - ▶ This should give the believer a fondness for disciplines like “science” and “history”.
- The events of Redemptive History:
 - ▶ Though the events of Nature and General History reveal God’s kindness, holiness, severity and so on...
 - ▶ They do not reveal how men and women can be delivered from their sin.
 - ▶ That message belongs to the events of Redemptive History.
 - ▶ Those events include:
 - ❖ God’s clothing of Adam and Eve, the call of Abraham, birth of Isaac, the Exodus, and so on.
 - ❖ They include Christ’s interactions and miracles.
 - ❖ They culminate in the death and the resurrection of Jesus.
 - ❖ All of those events truly and clearly reveal God’s intent and process to bring about the salvation of His elect.
- Summary: God is revealed truly and authoritatively through the Events of Nature, General History, and Redemptive History.
 - ▶ Yet sin and the Fall keeps us from receiving and interpreting that Revelation.
 - ▶ To remedy that, we need an additional vehicle for receiving and interpreting Event Revelation...namely Word Revelation.

***Romans 10:17** - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

- Word Revelation

- The Divine Voice
 - ▶ Our God discloses Himself through His own personal speech.
 - ❖ God spoke to Adam and Eve, Cain, Abraham, Moses.
 - ❖ God spoke directly to the prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.
 - ❖ God the Father spoke to all who were present at Christ's baptism ("This is My beloved Son...").
 - ❖ Every word Christ spoke during his incarnation was also the direct word of God.
 - ❖ Whenever God speaks, His spoken words are always inerrant and authoritative.
 - ▶ In the ancient world, this distinguished the true God from all other gods.

Habakkuk 2:18–19 - ¹⁸ "What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols. ¹⁹ "Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.
- The Written Word.
 - ▶ Some in our day maintain that while God's spoken words were authoritative, the written Word is suspect, a later invention.
 - ▶ The notion of a written, divinely authoritative written Word is found in the earliest moments of the Old Testament:
 - ❖ Genesis is broken up into several main divisions:
 - "These are the generations of..."
 - It is definitely possible that these were early historical records that Moses, under the guidance of God's Spirit, shaped into the complete book of Genesis.
 - ❖ God wrote the 10 Commandments with His own finger (Ex. 31:18).

- Yet these were binding on all generations.
- Their written nature didn't remove their authority.
- ❖ Moses also received a book of the covenant from God on Mt. Sinai.
 - This likely was the latter half of Exodus and Leviticus.
 - This written word was to be received with Divine authority:

***Exodus 24:7** - Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"*
- ❖ The sermons that made up Deuteronomy were compiled into a book that was binding on subsequent generations:

***Deuteronomy 31:10–13** - ¹⁰ Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. ¹² "Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. ¹³ "Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."*
- ❖ Biblical prophets, who heard the voice of God, were commanded to write down their message for later hearers:

***Jeremiah 30:1–3** - ¹ The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, ² "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book. ³ 'For behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.' The Lord says, 'I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.' "*
- ❖ Even Jesus routinely referred to the already written Word as fully binding and authoritative:

***Luke 4:4** - And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone.' "*

- ▶ Why did God give us an inerrant and authoritative written Word?
 - ❖ So that God's spoken Word to one generation might be preserved to the next.
 - ❖ The written Word allows believers to test those who claim to be speaking God's truth in their generation.

Acts 17:11 - Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

- Implications/Applications of Word Revelation

- ▶ It's not just liberals, we too balk at God's written Word, even if it's only privately in our hearts.
- ▶ We're slow to obey His commands to the full, etc.

- Person Revelation

- The Person of Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's Revelation to us.

Hebrews 1:1-3 - ¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- The Person of the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of God's Revelation to Us.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 - for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...

- ▶ When the Revelation of God - in any of its forms - sinks in, it is because the Spirit is there to supernaturally convince us of its truth.
- ▶ Note the Trinitarian union of God's Revelation to Us.
 - ❖ God the Father speaks.
 - ❖ The Speech that goes forth is God the Son.
 - ❖ God the Holy Spirit enables us to receive the Son, and with Him, the Father.

- ▶ Our Triune God is so profoundly and intimately with us at every moment we receive His gracious Revelation.
- ▶ He's the Sender, the Deliverer, and the Receiver of His Revelation to Us.
- Believers
 - ▶ We are meant to reveal God.
 - ▶ We were created in His image, as His representation.
 - ▶ We are being remade into the Image of Christ
 - ▶ As His people, we are to live in such a way that reveals God to others.
Matthew 5:16 - Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
 - ▶ What kind of Revelation are you?