

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

Intro: purpose of these lectures is to think thru the process by which the thot of God gets to man today, esp. thru Bible. Thot-rev-inspir-preservation-interp.

I. The Meaning of Revelation

A. The Word. Uncover, unveil. Usual def: God making known what otherwise unknown. Acts 27:8: don't need rev. to know geographical facts. Death of Herod, Acts 12:23.

B. The Usages. *Rom 1:19*

1. Mystical experience. Dixon

2. Leading of the Lord, Gal. 2:2

3. Illumination--understanding of Scripture, 1 Cor. 2:10, Eph. 1:17

4. Ordinary conversation, Prov. 11:13

5. Particular parts of Bible, Dan. 2:10. The Rev.

6. All of Bible in sense of making God known, or God making known. *5:13*

Concl: rev is the sum total of the ways in which God makes Himself known.

II. The Categories of Revelation

A. Few use prelapsarian vs. postlapsarian or soteric.

B. Most use general and special rev. Both are (1) from God and (2) about God.

III. General Revelation

A. Characteristics.

1. General in scope--to all people

2. General in mode--Ps 19:4 no voice is heard.

B. Examples

1. Creation: glory of God, Ps 19; power, Rom 1:20.

2. Organization: goodness of God, Acts 14:17; Matt 6:26-30; Col. 1:17

3. Man: personality of God, Acts 17:28-29 Rationality

4. Morality: moral nature of God, Rom 2:14-15. "inner moral dialogue"

C. Value.

/common grace

1. Evidence of continuing grace of God throughout history giving men some ethical sense.

2. Lend weight to case for theism, not God of Bible. 1 Cor 1:21

3. Condemns man if rejected, Rom 1. Illus of rejecting little money.

IV. Special Revelation

(A. Means or Avenues)

1. The lot, Prov. 16:33; Acts 1:21-26. We don't regard it highly, but it did serve.

2. The Urim and Thummim, Ex 28:39, used to ascertain divine will, Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6; Ezra 2:63.

3. Dreams.

a. When? many times in past and also in future, Gen 20,31,40,41 Joel 2:28

b. Redeemed and not alike, Gen 20:3; 31:24, Pharaoh, butler, baker.

Ordinary experience used in extraordinary service; thus psychological analysis not germane. When God uses, it is a dependable means of spec rev.

4. Visions. Emphasis on what is heard (dream on what is seen), Ps 89:19, and human agent more active (doesn't have to be asleep). Isa 1:1; 6:1; Ezek 1:3.

5. Theophanies

Angel of Lord. Vision of God (Moses, Ex 33; Isa, 6; Ezek 1; Dan, 7;)

6. Angels. Lk 2:11; many times in Rev. Very frequent means of rev.

Note: these means can be counterfeited and God warns against. Visions: Jer 23:16; familiar spirits, divination, astrology, Deut 18:10.

a. Characteristic

7. Direct communication. Heb 1:1-2. This is still mediated tho might think of it as not, bec God uses language, often speaking is part of a dream or vision. Prophet is the instrument; speaking the mode; word of God product. 2 Sam 23:2. Dabar is something concrete, living, it comes to the prophets. Torah is divine instruction.

b. Forms. (1) Silent inward hearing (1 Sam 1:13; Acts 10:19; 13:2). (2) audible voice (1 Sam 3:1; Amos 3:8). (3) inspiration (Gospels, Acts).

8. Historical events. Rev as divine activity in history

1. Examples. X, Jn 1:14; Lk 1:1. Ta megaleia of God, Acts 2:11. Mic 6:5 ASV(righteous acts). megala, Lk 1:49. Ex 20:2. Reveal His power, grace, truth, righteousness.
2. Interpretation of these events. Event and word (inter) must go together. Otherwise like TVpicture without sound track.
 - a. Events are historical and factual. Today men put existential faith before historical horse. Actually it is creative faith. Existential historiography not part of mental framewrok of biblical writers.
 - b. Interpretation is thru divine inspiration. Many crucified. How know one was for atonement? In the word of spec rev is the opacity of events overcome.
3. Characteristics of this kind of spec rev.
 - a. It is historical
 - b. It is unified (thru Savior and glory of God)
 - c. It is progressive, Heb 1:1-2. Good way to study. Tab without NT. Makes you appreciate this side of cross.

9. Christ

1. Fact of. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb 1:2.
2. Content of
 - a. Mirror of the divine nature, Jn 14:9
 - b. Power of God, Jn 3:2
 - c. Wisdom of God, Jn 7:46
 - d. Glory of God, Jn 1:14.
 - e. Life of God, 1 Jn 1:1-3
 - f. Love of God, Rom 5:8
3. Method of
 - a. His acts, Jn 2:11
 - b. His words, Mt 16:17. Note that in X various avenues are combined
 - c. Direct communication. Jn 1:1

10. Scripture

Scripture is the record of various methods of rev (dreams, visions, words, events, X), and it is revl too. In strictest sense Bible is product of rev. and record. Rev is deposited in the Bible. *this rev. re selectivity.*

a. Characteristics

1. Partial, Jn 21:25. Not all rev is in Bible, Heb. 1:1
2. Accurate. Belongs to discussion of inspiration
3. Progressive. Heb 1:1
4. Unto redemption, 2 Tim 3:15.

b. Credibility of Scrip rev.

(1) Fideists=Scrip and rev it contains is self-authenticating (autopistic). Infallibility of Scrip must be presupposed. Van Til, Young, Calvin, Murray, Clark, Bavinck, Kuyper. In this view there are 2 facets: Bible is inspired bec it says so and bec Spirit accredits it subjectively. Thus Barth is a fidesit. Weakness: valid authority must present credentials, not completely self-authenticating.

(2) Revelation-empiricists=stress intrinsic credibility of rev and Bible axiopistic (worthy of belief). Bible's claim to authority is not proof of authority. But there are factual, historical evidences which constitute Bible's credentials and validate truth of Xn message. Gerstner, Kantzer, Fuller (tho not inerrancy), Montgomery, Pinnock.

Concl: "with the reality of revelation, therefore, Xnty stands or falls." Bavinck. Without it, no autobiography of God (Ramm).

V. Contemporary Views of Revelation

- A. RC. Tradition still gives rev.
- B. Rev as Personal Encounter. Barth, Bultmann, Temple, Baille. Rev does not offer us info about God, but God Himself. (1) cuts off rev from history to some degree. (2) existentially based. Its claim to credibility is based on my say-so.
- C. Rev as divine activity or as found in the past mighty acts of God. More conservative say that God's saving acts are factually based, but interpretation is left up to human genius (a kind of divine charade). More liberal fact and miracle are denied or relegated to supra-history. B and C are similar in that they are existential, mystical, subjective and consider Bible errant. Both have truth in them. Rev is personal (but also propositional), and is in mighty acts (which are real).

"There is no such thing as revealed truth. There are truths of revelation, that is to say, propositions which express the results of correct thinking concerning revelation; but they are not themselves directly revealed." Temple, Naure, Man and God, p. 317.

"The Bible is an objective strand of history reporting man's response to God's Christ-deed, his sending of the Holy Spirit, and his founding of the Church."
 ...Because they responded as finite human beings, touched with sin, to the holy facts of God's saving presence and mighty acts, the biblical record shows us the absolute truth but not absolutely." Nds Ferre, Where Do We Go from Here in Théology?, pp.10-11.

"It is further to be noted--though not all ages and branches of Christendom lay equal stress on this--that, in the Bible, God's self-revelation is personal rather than propositional. That is to say, ultimately revelation is in relationship, "confrontation," communion, rather than by the communication of facts..." CFD Moule, Rev, Int. Dict.