



“The Bible: the Book God Wrote—Part 1”

Psalm 19; Romans 1:18-25

Lesson 2

In A Nutshell

The doctrine of the Bible is a good place for the theologian to start because everything he will learn in his theological studies will be based on the Bible. In lesson one we thought about the theologian’s need for child-like faith in God’s self-attesting revelation as the most credible starting point possible for knowing God (Heb. 11:6). The claims of anyone else can be better attested by some other higher authority. This is not possible with God, so we begin where He tells us to begin, with His Word (Ps. 19:7-14). God’s Word has much to say about why it can be trusted. The Bible is actually a subset of a larger category of God’s work we call *special revelation*, which is itself only part of the picture when it comes to understanding the entirety of God’s work of revelation. In addition to special revelation, God has used general revelation to reveal himself (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:18-25). Special revelation is the direct communication of God to man, whereas general revelation is God communicating to man indirectly through one of His other mighty works: creation, providence, salvation, or judgment. In addition, general revelation is general in the sense that it is available to all, whereas special revelation often is not. In this lesson we will study features of general and special revelation, providing a context for our study of the doctrine of the Bible, the book God wrote.

Our Ryrie reading for this lesson is pp. 27-38, 71-75.

To The Testimony!

General Revelation

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Ps.
19:1-3 | 1. The psalmist calls the heavens God’s handiwork, and he says that they speak. Paul speaks of how the creation of the world makes certain things visible. What specifically do the heavens |
| Rom.
1:18-25 | say and the creation of the world make visible? |

Interesting Insight!

Charles Haddon Spurgeon on Psalm 8, after having visited the Alps:

“Yet in all these how great soe’er they be,
We see not Him. The glass is all too dense
And dark, or else our earthborn eyes too dim.
“Yon Alps, that lift their heads above the clouds
And hold familiar converse with the stars,
Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not,
Compared with His divine immensity.
“The snow-crown’d summits fail to set Him forth,
Who dwelleth in Eternity, and bears
Alone, the name of High and Lofty One.
“Depths unfathomed are too shallow to express
The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord.
“The mirror of the creatures has no space
To bear the image of the Infinite.
“‘Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ His name,
And set His seal upon creation’s brow.
“But as the skillful potter much excels
The vessel which he fashions on the wheel,
E’en so, but in proportion greater far,
Jehovah’s self transcends His noblest works.
“Earth’s ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap,
If freighted with the load of Deity.
“Space is too narrow for the Eternal’s rest,
And time too short a footstool for His throne.
“E’en avalanche and thunder lack a voice,
To utter the full volume of His praise.
“How then can I declare Him! Where are words
With which my glowing tongue may speak His name!
“Silent I bow, and humbly I adore.”
(Treasury of David)

- Ps. 19:2-4 2. From Psalm 19, describe how often God’s general revelation speaks and how many hear that revelation. From Romans 1, describe how those who hear God’s general revelation react to that revelation. What more is necessary to create the response of faith in those who hear according to Rom. 10:13-17?
- Rom. 1:18-25
- 10:13-17

Matt. 5:14-16 3. We have noted that creation is a work of God, which He uses to communicate general revelation. Other works used this way mentioned in these passages include His work of providence, His control of creation through nature's laws (Ps. 19:4b-6), and His work of judgment, a revelation of His wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18, 24, 26-32). According to Matt. 5:14-16, in what sense does God intend His work of salvation to be a work of general revelation?

Special Revelation

Heb. 1:1-3 4. Whereas general revelation is God's revealing Himself to everyone indirectly through His other works, special revelation refers to the direct revelation of God's Word to certain men. The author of Hebrews reminds us that this was done at different times in different ways. Name five of these ways in which God spoke directly, authoritatively, and infallibly to man.

Ps. 19:7-14 5. What can special revelation do that general revelation is powerless to do?
Rom. 10:13-17

Interesting Insight!

“The rejection of what is revealed in general revelation is sufficient to condemn justly. But this does not imply that the acceptance of general revelation is sufficient to effect eternal salvation. It is not, simply because there is no revelation of the atoning death of God’s Son.

“If what I have said appears to erect a double-standard, so be it. There is nothing inherently wrong with two standards as long as both are just. And in this case both are. . . .

“If a concerned student goes to his fellow student who needs one thousand dollars for tuition and offers with genuine loving concern ten dollars (which is all he has), and if his ten dollar bill is thrown scornfully on the floor with a mocking ‘What good will that pittance do me?’ what further obligation does the student have to provide additional help to his fellow student? If he should suddenly be able to give the entire one thousand dollars, would anyone charge him with injustice if he gave it to another needy student? Accepting a ten dollar gift will not ‘save’ the person who needs one thousand dollars, but rejecting it will condemn him. We must not forget that the majority of people who have ever lived have rejected the revelation of God through nature, and that rejection has come with scorn and deliberate substitution of their own gods. They have condemned themselves, and when God rejects them, He does so justly” [Ryrie, p. 38].

Heb. 1:3 6. In what sense is Jesus Christ the most important form of special revelation given to us from God?

John

1:1, 18

14:6

Matt.

11:25-30

John 14:25-26 7. From the standpoint of special revelation, why was it advantageous for Jesus Christ to leave us and send the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?
16:5-14
