

## General and Specific Revelation

By

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### **General and Specific Revelation**

According to Romans 1:18-25, God has given enough knowledge of Himself in creation that all people everywhere know there is a Creator. “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them” (Romans 1:19).

Wherever mankind dwells on the earth, the heavens declare and shout to all people that

there is a Creator, and we are His creation (Psalm 19:1-2). With the mind God has given to mankind, people are able to see design in creation and know there is a Designer. All people can look at the wonders of creation and know there is a Creator. Not only has God revealed Himself as Creator through His creation, but God's "invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived...in the things that have been made" (Romans 1:20). Through what God has made, man can comprehend that the Creator must be all-powerful. And, for God to create all things He must be all-knowing. If God created people with personalities, than God Himself must be a person and able to talk and communicate. All these qualities of God and much more can a person in the deepest jungles of Brazil understand about God. Because of the revelation of God through His creation, the Bible makes a very defining statement that people "are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). No one can say, "I didn't have the knowledge to know there was a God." Or, "I didn't know any better than to worship a tree or an idol." God has made it very plain that we are a fragile creation of an all powerful and wise Creator.

### **The Need for God to Reveal Himself More Than the Evidence of Creation**

Mankind knows God exists. Mankind can also comprehend many of His attributes, but to know God personally, the Creator must reveal Himself intimately with His creation. J.P. Moreland illustrated this point well when he asked an audience if they could describe what his mother looked like, what her name was, and where she was born. Of course the people in the audience did not know, which was his point exactly. We know from obvious observation that J.P. Moreland has a mother, but to know her name and what she looks like, Professor Moreland would have to reveal that information. The

same is true with God. Mankind is held accountable for knowing God exists, but to know God's name, what He expects from man, and how to know Him personally is dependent on God to make this known. This is what theologians call specific revelation. Without God revealing Himself specifically to man, a personal relationship is hopeless.

In human relationships, when a person wants to get to know another human being, communication is required. Similarly, God has communicated with man for the purpose of a relationship being formed. Since verbal communication is necessary for the building of human relationships, God communicated verbally to mankind.<sup>1</sup> The Lord spoke verbally to Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets and eventually the Word of God becoming flesh to communicate His specific message (John 1:1, 14).

To pass on God's specific message to man throughout the ages, the Word of God was written down known as the Scriptures or "Sacred Writings." It is through these sacred writings, people today become knowledgeable about salvation in Jesus Christ ( 2 Timothy 3:15). Just as listening to Jesus would have been necessary in 30 A.D. to know God's will on how to be saved, God's Words have been recorded for us so that people who did not live to hear the prophets or the Son of God can hear the same message. Therefore, without knowledge of the Scriptures, saving faith *in Christ* is impossible (Romans 10:17).

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<sup>1</sup> Samples, Kenneth *Without a Doubt*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 50.