

WHAT GOOD IS GOOD DOCTRINE?

What Good is the Doctrine of Revelation?

TEXT: Ps. 19

INTRODUCTION: I am eager to begin this new series with you! For eight weeks I plan to ask and answer the question “What good is good doctrine?” We live in a culture that does not much like the word “doctrine.” Doctrine sounds rigid and academic.

But folks, doctrine simply means teaching. When we talk about Bible doctrine we are simply talking about what the Bible teaches, especially those principles and ideas that are taught repeatedly through the Scriptures.

It is my hope that in this series I can show you how very practical the major teachings of the Scripture really are. Far from being a treatise on how many angels can sit on the point of a needle, these doctrines are very practical and useful guides to navigating life. And we all have to do a lot of that, every day!

So, let's take the first one: “What good is the doctrine of revelation?”

- First, get this. **The doctrine of revelation is not about end times.**
- **The doctrine of revelation answers the questions,**
 - “How can we know the truth about God?”
 - “How do we know what God is really like?”
 - “How do we know what God has said in the past?”
 - “How do we know what God has done, is doing, and is going to do?”

The doctrine of revelation answers those questions.

Would you not agree that is good? Actually it is grand! It is fabulous! For any of us to be able to actually, factually, know for certain what God is like, what He really has spoken, what He is doing now and is going to do is nothing short of, what word comes to mind? All I can think of is **SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS!**

So, what is this teaching that makes such bold promises? It is beautifully described in Psalm 19. As we read you will note that there are two parts to the Doctrine of Revelation. We will read them separately. Part 1, verses 1-6.

Psalm 19:1-6 NKJV 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 *There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.* 4 Their line has gone

out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *And* rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven, *And* its circuit to the other end; *And* there is nothing hidden from its heat.

I. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF THROUGH HIS CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE.

Sometimes people call this revelation “General Revelation.”

It refers to what can be known about God by observing His creation.

1. The naked eye can see plenty of the grandeur, majesty, beauty, complexity, and order in creation.
2. The telescope reveals both the magnitude of God’s creation and the fact that the order we observe in our world extends into the heavens, far beyond what the unaided eye can see. The universe is filled with more galaxies than can be numbered. Each one has its own uniqueness, yet each testifies of consistency of design and operation. Within each galaxy solar systems revolve in elegant patterns, and within each system planets, moons, asteroids, and meteors rotate and revolve with intricate symmetry.
3. The microscope reveals more again. Looking into the structure of living beings fills the mind with awe and wonder. The inside of a living cell is a mini world all its own. The cell has an exterior membrane that permits entrance by chemicals or entities that benefit its enterprises, but exclude all other would be intruders. The cell continually remanufactures its own wearing parts, installing the new and disposing of the old. It metabolizes its food and discards its own waste. It does all of this while also performing the function for which it was designed, like a red blood cell carries oxygen to other cells. And each cell not only maintains itself and performs its function, it does it in harmonious concert with other cells through intricate means of chemical communication.

How do these things tell us something about God?

The complexity and order of the creation tells us there has to be a God. The created order tells us that God exists and is exceedingly powerful. Everything we see around us testifies of a Creator.

THE ARGUMENT NO ONE DENIES

There is an argument no one denies in their everyday life. They may deny it when talking about philosophy or religion, but they acknowledge the truth of it every day that they live. Let me illustrate.

If you unearthed an ancient axe with a wooden handle and stone blade, what would be one of your chief curiosities about this ancient tool? Most certainly one question you

would ask is, "Who made that?" Anyone would ask that question. The staunchest atheist would ask it. The most strident evolutionist would ask it. The most learned skeptic would ask it. Why would they all ask that question? Because **we all know that design comes from a designer**.

- No one would theorize about how the rock was randomly chiseled to a fine edge by wind and water.
- No one would hypothesize that the handle was a mere circumstantial piece of a tree that fell cut and shaped at just the right time.
- No one would waste time wondering how the strips of hide jumped off the cow to provide strands for binding the blade to the handle.
- Everyone would consider the presence of the axe as definitive proof of the presence of man who was the designer of this simple tool. In fact, evolutionist anthropologists consider the presence of the simplest of tools as definitive evidence for homo sapiens.

Because every person knows in the depth of their being that design comes from a designer, God has built the most infinite design imaginable not just into some things that He made in this vast universe, but in everything. Do you get this? Everybody thinks like this regardless of their philosophy or religion.

Listen again to the testimony of David in the first part of Ps. 19.

Psalm 19:1-6 NKJV 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

David said all the heavenly bodies testify that God made them.

- Their testimony goes out day after day and night after night revealing the knowledge that God exists.
- This testimony transcends every language and is heard through the whole earth.
- The testimony that God created the heavens goes out as faithfully as the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening.
- And as its rays warm the bodies of every man and woman upon whom they fall, so the testimony of God's creation warms the heart to make it say, "There is a God."

Folks, **the way God has revealed Himself through His creation shows us** something very, very practical and important. It shows us **that God wants every person to know about Him. God has not hidden Himself. He wants to be known.**

On the very best day of my life, when I have wanted to know God more, like Paul who said, "I want to know Him more," even on that day, my desire to know God pales in comparison to how much God wants me to know Him.

God's great concern to reveal Himself tells us that when we get to a place that we say, "I want to know God better, I want to know more about Him," the reason that we lack in our knowledge of God is not God's fault. It is ours. God is not hiding from us. God wants us to know Him.

And so He did not stop with revealing His existence and power through the testimony of the things He has made. He revealed Himself a second way, and David writes of it in the second half of Ps. 19.

II. GOD REVEALED PARTICULAR INFORMATION ABOUT HIMSELF, HIS CHARACTER, HIS PURPOSES, HIS STANDARDS, AND HIS ACTIVITIES. STUDENTS OF THE SCRIPTURE CALL THIS "SPECIAL REVELATION."

How has God sent this Special Revelation? David tells us.

Ps. 19:7-11 NKJV 7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired *are* *they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

As you can tell from the multiple references, **David is talking about the Bible.**

A. The Bible is more than a record of revelation; it is revelation.

2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

B. Today, the Bible, this written revelation, **is the only means by which we can know any of the specific things God has revealed in the past.** When you want to know God more, the only way to become better acquainted is through the Bible.

1. It is a completed revelation. God's written Word is complete. In fact, we are warned not to add or take away from this written Word. Today's prophet does not add to the revelation already given but declares the written revelation God has already delivered.

Revelation 22:18-19 NKJV 18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

2. It is a purposeful revelation.

John 20:30-31 NKJV 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

3. It is a sufficient revelation.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV 16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

All we need to know of God's appearances to man, His words spoken to the prophets, and the life, ministry, and words of the Lord Jesus are written in the Bible. All we need to know to live meaningful, successful lives both in this age and for eternity is revealed to us in the Bible.

And here we have the third very useful practical application of the Doctrine of Revelation.

God has given us this complete, sufficient revelation of Himself so that we may know what is right. Last week we talked about Jesus telling the disciples to cast their net on the right side of the boat to catch a load of fish. And we noted that every other side of the boat was the wrong side.

God gives us this wonderful revelation called the Bible so we know the right side, the right way, the right choice.

Even for Christians, when we make wrong choices and decisions, we make them because we do not know the right one God reveals in His Word or we choose to disobey Him.

I did this in my college and early seminary days. The first weekend I came home from college, I scared my poor mother to death. I sat at the kitchen table on Saturday morning as she cooked us some breakfast. I said, "Mom, if you were able to count all the kinds of animals which existed in the days of Noah, and you computed the space required for two of every kind in the ark, and then you computed the volume of the ark given in the Bible and determined that the ark could not have held two of every kind of animal in existence, would you still believe the story in the Bible of Noah and the ark?"

My godly mother said, "Yes, I guess I would."

And I said, "I wouldn't." I said, "I believe you have to accept Jesus by faith, but after that, everything else has to be proved."

The next seven years of my life was a spiritual pit. There were no absolutes. Everything was subject to my own ill-informed and selfish evaluations. I was never able to disprove anything written in the Bible, but I didn't really try. I just assumed that the miraculous could be disproved by intelligent examination. And while I was supposed to be learning more and more about the Word of God, I became a doubter instead of a follower.

Then the Lord through a teenager presented me a challenge of really putting the Bible to a test. I begin an exceedingly thorough examination of Genesis 1-3. Expecting to find that all of the evidence men had accumulated would humiliate Moses or whoever wrote Genesis, I was shocked to find the evidence of physics and biology, and the mathematics of probability all weighed heavily in favor in the absolute truth of these first chapters of the first book of the Bible.

I became convinced by the evidence that Genesis was totally correct. It did not take long after that for me to agree with the words of the Savior when He said to His Father, "Your Word is truth."

You see, God's revelation of Himself in the Bible shows us the right way.

- That is why we need to read it and study it.
- That is why the first purpose of our Lifechange Groups is to study the Word of God.

CONCLUSION: God wants us to know Him. God wants us to know Who He is and what He is like. He wants us to know His ways and His desires and demands for us. God knows, even better than any of us realize, that we can never come to the right conclusions concerning Himself just through our own reasoning, feelings, or experiences. Therefore He has revealed Himself to us:

- First by showing us in dramatic and ever present ways the handiwork of His power and wisdom through creation.
- Second by declaring specifically the things we need to know through the Bible.

If you know what God has revealed in His Word, you may not be able to answer every question the world could ask, but you will be able to answer all of the important ones!

Are you allowing God's revelation of Himself to produce the full result in your own life that God intends? Do you faithfully read, study, learn with others, believe and apply all that is revealed within?

Do you need to commit yourself to receive and believe that revelation more than you have?