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Question 37 - What are the various sources of General Revelation?

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101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

37. What are the various sources of General Revelation?

The following five have been advocated by various theologians throughout church history.

A. The testimony of nature. Five key passages speak concerning this:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof” (Psa. 19:1-6).

“And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness . . . Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-28).

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto

them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:18-20).

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt. 5:45).

Thus, it would seem God has revealed the following facts about Himself through nature:

1. His creative power
 - a. Regarding the universe
 - b. Regarding life itself
 2. His glory
 3. His sovereignty
 4. His uniqueness
 5. His wrath
 6. His goodness
 7. His impartiality
- B. The testimony of providence. Providence may be defined as the hand of God in the glove of history. Note the actions of this invisible hand:
1. As seen in the life of Joseph-

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. . . . But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Gen. 45:4-8; 50:20).
 2. As seen in the entire Book of Esther
 3. As seen in the crucifixion of Christ

“Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. . . For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced” (Jn. 19:32-34, 36-37).

“But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled” (Acts 3:14-18).

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:7-8).

C. The testimony of man’s makeup

1. His conscience

“And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst” (Jn. 8:9).

“(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares” (Rom. 2:14-16 NIV).

2. His religious impulses

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Eccles. 3:11 NIV).

“Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious” (Acts 17:22 NIV).

D. The cosmological testimony

Here the argument is every effect demands an adequate cause. Inasmuch therefore as this world is an effect (not self-created), a sufficient cause is required, and that cause is God.

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4).

E. The teleological testimony

This advocates every design calls for a designer just as every pocket watch assumes a watchmaker. As life itself gives amazing testimony to design, from fingerprint to DNA, a designer is demanded – God Himself!

“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psa. 100:3).