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Mathers Systematic Theology - Chapter 1

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CHAPTER 1
BIBLIOLOGY

1.1 General Revelation is God's witness to Himself by creation.

1.1.1 These Scriptures testify to God's witness by creation.

1.1.1.1 Psalm 19:1-6

1.1.1.2 Romans 1:18-28

1.1.1.3 Acts 14:17

1.1.1.4 Acts 17:23

1.1.2 Psalm 19:1-6

This is a universal message that goes out day and night that God created the heavens. The firmament is the work of His hands. The heavens testify to the creation of our world by God. The figure of speech used to convey this literal truth is personification (Bullinger 1974:865). Calvin (1975:1:5:51-237) argues that the knowledge of God is evident by the creation of his world and universe, and the continuing sustaining of it. This Psalm attributes a witness of His divinity to man. Ross writes that the creation points to the creator. This silent message is communicated day after day and night after night. It is the truth that God is the creator. It is not an audible message that one can hear but the heavens declare the truth of God as the creator. This silent message reaches to the very ends of God's earth (1983:807 in Walvoord and Zuck (eds.) 1983). Man looking up to the heavens receives this message. The heavens become an object lesson declaring both the glory of God and that the heavens are the work of the creator, God.

1.1.3 Romans 1:18-28

God's revelation of wrath each day is just for two reasons (Rom. 1:18). The knowledge of God is manifest within man (1:19). Men have speculated and created their own god (1:21). Men possess the knowledge of the truth of God. The truth is the truth of God. The truth of God is a genitive of apposition that names the specific category of the knowledge. Men have rejected that truth for the formulation of their own concept of God. Romans 1:19 and 1:21 are causal clauses giving the reasons why God is just in allowing men to live in all unrighteousness and ungodly living. They suppress the truth of the fact of the existence of God through creation. Paul says that God is just because men have the knowledge of the existence of God. This knowledge of God's existence is via the testimony of creation. This knowledge is manifest within them. *Phaneron* is used of a public notice. God has revealed that knowledge to them (1:19). His invisibles- His eternal power and divinity (deity –Godhead) are seen and understood (reflection – rationalism) (1:20). Man perceives through his senses and understands with his mind that creation testifies to the existence of God.

Paul concludes that men are without excuse (1:20). Man perceives and formulates knowledge of God's power and deity by God's testimony to man through creation.

Creation testifies to the existence and presence of God. Men can see God's eternal power and divinity from creation. Man says that God did not create the world (1:25). The Apostle Paul states that man has exchanged the knowledge of God's existence for the lie (1:25). Man believes that the creature is God. God never condemns without just cause. His judgment of the pagan world is just, for man has ignored God's revelation (1:19-20), for perverting God's glory (1:21-23) and for putting the knowledge of God out of mind (1:29-32). Man is without excuse since he can see and understand God's everlasting eternal power and Godhead through looking at (perceiving) creation. Man is without excuse unable to mount a defense (Liddell & Scott 1973:117). Can God justifiably judge man based on his response to general revelation? Man is without excuse before a righteous God because of man's suppression of that truth (Rom. 1:20). Paul's world and our world is further charged in Romans 1:21 with not glorifying nor thanking God. Man became futile in his speculations and their understanding was darkened (1:21). The word futile means empty. It is used of idolatry (Acts 14:15), rationalism in (1 Cor. 3:20), religion (James 1:26), futile way of life (1 Pet. 1:18), and thinking sensuality (Eph. 4:17). The empty thinking is that man is God. The creature is God (images of man, birds, four footed animals, and reptiles). For this very reason God has given them over to shameful passions (1:26). The judgment of God is to be seen in lesbianism (1:26) and homosexuality (1:27). Such are clearly a judgment on modern man. God has given them over to a reprobate mind (1:28). Three times Paul declares that God gave them up and over. Three times declares Paul that God is just. The progression is noted from shameful passions (1:26), sexual perversions lesbianism and homosexuality (1:27), and a reprobate mind (1:28).

1.1.4 Acts 14:17

“God has witnessed to himself giving men the refreshing rains and fruitful seasons filling man's heart with food and gladness” [author's translation] (Aland & Black 1968:472). God has not left himself without a witness. He did good. This is a present active participle of *agathourgeo*. Robertson underlines as well two additional participles that are parallel to doing good. These are *didous* translated giving you and *empilon* to be translated filling. God's witness to good is his giving rains and also fruitful seasons. Secondly, he fills (filling) man's heart with both food and gladness (1930:3:212).

1.1.5 Acts 17:22-31

Paul was in Athens on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:16). The philosophers brought Paul to “*areios pagos*” the Hill of Mars (Newman 1968:24). This was where the Athenian court was held. The apostle observed that among their objects of worship an altar with the inscription “to agnostic God” [author's translation] (Aland & Black 1968:468). The Athenians verified the truth that man suppresses the knowledge of God's existence by creation. They blamed God for not revealing Himself (Acts 17:23). This is an example given by Paul of the religiousness of the Athenians. The “*ta sebasmata humon*” should be translated the objects of your worship. This word

is from the verb *sebazomai* which means to worship. The objects of your worship refer to temples, altars, and statutes. Next, Paul observed an altar with an inscription “*en o epegegrapto*”. This verb is a pluperfect passive voice which needs to be translated “it has been written” (Han 1974:269). The action has been completed. Robertson explains lest their gods be angry they dedicated this altar to the unknown god in case they missed one (Robertson 1930:3:285). The greek word “*agnosto*” is the word from which we derive the word agnostic. The Athenians had 30,000 gods (ibid:3:286). Paul presents the facts that “God made the world (*kosmos*), and all which [is] in it, this one exists lord (*kurios*) of heaven and earth, he dwells not in handmade temples” [author’s translation] (17:24) (Aland & Black 1968:486). The Lord is the absolute sovereign of both heaven and earth. Robertson draws our attention to the fact that the backdrop for Paul’s words are from Isaiah 42:5 and 45:7 (1930:3:286). The emphasis is on the fact that the temple was not made by human hands as indicated by the emphatic negative (*ouk*) (Aland & Black 1968:486). This Lord of heaven and earth was not in need of anything (17:25). Robertson adds this was far different than their gods who were in need of their offerings to obtain happiness (Robertson 1930:3:287). The Lord of heaven and earth “is not served by hands of men nor needing anything” [but] “He gives” (giving present active participle of *didomi*- continuous action) “to all life and breath and all things” (Aland & Black 1968:486). Robertson points out that here Paul has raised the thought of the Greek philosophers (1930:3:287). “He has made from one blood every race of men to dwell on all face of the earth” (Greek word *ges* is the world of nature) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:486). Paul expounds the fact that God determined beforehand (*prostetagmenous*) seasons. This word seasons is the Greek word *kairos* which is a special time a fulfilled moment of history. The Germans during the 1920’s through the 1940’s thought a new world order was appearing on the horizon. God has foreordained the length of a nation’s life and their boundaries (Acts 17:26). He has done this so that the nations might seek God (Robertson 1930:3:288). “If indeed, they may have searched” (Arndt and Gingrich 1973:900) “for Him and they may have found Him” [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:486). The apostle adds: “and not existing far from each one of us” [author’s translation] (Acts 17:27) (ibid:486). The Greek word *ge* coming after the coordinate conjunction *kai* (and) stresses the emphatic *kai* (and). Robertson categorizes this as an intensive participle (ibid:3:289). The apostle introduces the reason why this is true with the *gar* clause in 17:28: “for in him we live and we move and we are as also some of the poets among us have said” (perfect indicative active of *eipon* – Han 1974:270)[author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:486). The apostles’s partial conclusion in 17:29 is indicated by the word “*oun*”(Hoehner 1975). “Existing offspring of God, we are not obligated to think the divine nature to be like gold or silver or stone, image of a skilled trade and thought” (*idea*) “of man” (17:29) (Alan & Black 1968:487). Robertson adds to the discussion pointing to God’s sovereign control of history which accounts for the rise and fall of the nations of the world. God has determined both the length of the life of a nation and their boundaries. Paul proves the immanence of God in 17:28 (Robertson 1930:3:289). The special revelation of Acts 17:30-31 points to the meaning of the resurrection for unbelievers that they are under judgment. God commands men to repent (Acts 17:30). He has appointed a day by which he will judge men by the standard of righteousness. He has furnished proof to all men by raising Christ from the dead (Acts 17:31).

1.1.6 Theological commentary is necessary to further analyze and explain natural or general revelation.

Chafer (1971:1:48-60) confirms God's revelation of Himself by means of nature (Gen. 3:18-19; Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-23; Rom. 8:19-21). Chafer adds a number of other revelations that are considered by some as fitting under special or supernatural revelation. Chafer continues by arguing that God has revealed himself through his providential hand (Deut. 30:1-10, Dan. 2:31-45, 7:1-28; Hosea 3:4-5). God the eternal Son has been revealed through the preservation of creation. Christ called all things into existence and sustains them by His own power (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:17). Thirdly, God has revealed Himself through miracles to man. These miracles (signs) proved Christ's words and His offer of the kingdom as the true Messiah. Finally, God has revealed Himself through communication with man via theophanies, visions, and dreams (Gen. 3:8; Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10) (ibid: 1971:1:53-60). Harold Lindsell in his book *The Battle for the Bible* categorizes these proofs beginning with God's providential dealings as belonging to special or supernatural revelation (1976:29-30).

Charles Hodge, the Princeton scholar, confirms that revelation is the communication of knowledge (1975:1:156). He argues that general or natural revelation testifies to God's presence by the witness of creation. He cites Psalm 19:1-4, Psalm 94:8-10, Acts 14:15-17, 17:24-29 and Romans 1:19-21 (Hodge 1975:1:24-25). Shedd (1979:1:62) defines revelation to be one of two categories. The first is general revelation. This is revelation that can be seen by the witness of creation. It is not written but is verified by special or supernatural revelation (the Bible). Special revelation will be dealt with later in this chapter. Shedd in his *Dogmatic Theology* defines general revelation as truth which man can perceive and process by reason (ibid:1:62). This knowledge has been available to man from the beginning of creation. If this were not true then God would be unjust. How could God declare men without excuse that spurn general revelation (Rom. 1:20)? Leitch (1975:1-2 in Henry (ed.) 1975) argues that both psalmist and apostle validate the fact that God can be known through his works. The knowledge is God which has been manifest within man (Rom 1:19). Man has suppressed this knowledge (Rom. 1:19, 21). The exegesis of the text is clear: "because the knowledge of God is manifest within them" (Rom. 1:19) [author's translation] (Alan & Black 1968:531). Man refusing to acknowledge God's testimony to his eternal power and God head, confirmed by His creation, are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). God can send the one who spurns this truth to Hell and still be just. It may seem harsh but this is what an accurate exegesis of the result clause of Romans 1:19 states. The apostle Paul uses man's infidelity to the truth of God's witness to Himself via creation to establish the guilt of the Gentiles in Romans 1:18-32.

Shedd concurs that natural revelation is inadequate for man to be saved (1979:1:66-67). Paul's revelation of natural or general revelation in Romans 1 points out the fact that creation is the witness of God to man of his presence via creation. The certainty of the witness of God to His existence via creation to man is proven by Romans 1:19. Men are said to be without excuse. The question of whether man will be given further revelation (special) concerning the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ alone is dependent on man's response to natural revelation. Charles Hodge

points to the certainty of the universal knowledge of God based on scripture (Rom. 1:19-21) (1975:1:195). His point is that the heathen have the knowledge of God so that they are rendered inexcusable regardless of their infidelity and immorality (ibid: 195).

In evaluation, creation testifies to the knowledge of God as the creator of the world. Known (Rom. 1:19-21) means that creation testifies to God's eternal power and deity. Man can not be saved by general or natural revelation but it determines whether he will receive additional light (special or supernatural revelation of salvation only through Jesus Christ).

1.2 Special Revelation must be defined.

1.2.1 Special revelation is the written Word of God.

1.2.1.1 The Written Word of God

Walvoord (1974:32-33) presents a case for special revelation. His main argument is that the 66 books of the Bible completed revelation ceased. Special revelation is the knowledge of Jesus Christ whereby man could be saved (John 14:6, Heb. 1:1-3, 1 Cor. 2:9-13). Kant the philosopher emphasized reason and knowledge. Schleiermacher, by contrast, reintroduced intuition and feeling. Schwarz informs us that these ideas lived on into the 19th and 20th centuries (2005:1). This is a stark contrast to special revelation whereby man would not have this knowledge unless it was revealed to him. It is interesting that Schleiermacher rejected natural revelation (ibid: 11). Christianity was to Schleiermacher a matter of feelings over facts (ibid: 13). Doctrine had to be verified by human experience. Schleiermacher's overemphasis on experience was a direct reaction to Kant's emphasis on knowledge (ibid: 14). Hegel, by way of a further contrast, was interested in theology. Religion was to him merely man's consciousness of a universal being (ibid: 19-20). Special revelation is revelation of the living Word of God, Jesus Christ (Chafer 1971:7:268). He supports his statement with these scriptures: Heb. 1:1-2, John 1:18, John 7:46, 1 Cor. 1:24, John 3:2, Rom. 5:8, and 1 John 3:16. Special revelation is better defined as the revealed Word of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11). It is true that Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. Special revelation must be defined as the revealed Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). The Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

Warfield begins defining special revelation as it is the supernatural intervention of God for the salvation of men (1948:71). He references the theophany of the pre-incarnate Christ in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). The fall of man broke this intimate fellowship between Adam and His God (ibid: 71). Special revelation is related to the purpose of God. The pattern of sin and judgment in Genesis 1 through chapter 11 caused God to turn from the world to choose one man. He called Abram through whom would come the Savior and the Scriptures (ibid: 71). The Lord God chose Israel as a people for himself. It was through Israel that blessing would come to the whole world (Gen. 12:2, 3; 17:4, 5, 6; 18:18; 22:18 and Rom. 4:13). Warfield cites those verses used to establish natural or general revelation (Acts 14:17; Acts 17:27; Rom. 1:20-21, and Ps. 19) (ibid: 72-73). He gives the long account of Hebrews 1:1-2. "God has spoken" [Aorist Active-Constative- just that He has without reference to the action] "formerly to the fathers many times and in many ways by the

prophets in last of these days has spoken to us by son, whom He appointed heir of all through whom also he has made the ages” (Heb. 1:1-2) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:747).

The word *reveal* is used in the Old and New Testaments many times. The Hebrew word *galah* or its equivalent in Aramaic *gelah* is used. The application of this word to revelation means the removal of either obstacles or the uncovering of the same to perception (Warfield 1948:97). The word *reveal* in the New Testament is the Greek word *apokalupto*. Warfield points out that in 2 Thessalonians 1:7 and 1 Peter 4:13, it is the noun derivative *apokalupsis*. This word used in the New Testament means to disclose. Other New Testament words are *phaneroo* to manifest, *epiphaneia* – manifestation in 2 Thess. 2:8, 1 Tim. 6:14, 2 Tim. 1:10, 4:1 and Titus 2:13. *Epiphaino* is used in Titus 2:11 and 3:4, and is translated appearing and appearance respectively. *Deiknuo* meaning to show is used in Rev. 1:1; 17:1; 22:1, 6, 8; Acts 9:16; 1 Tim. 4:15. *Exegeomai* is used in 1 John 1:18. *Chrematizo* meaning impart revelation is used in Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5, 11:7, and 12:25. *Chrematismos* has the idea of a divine communication. It is used in Romans 11:4 (ibid: 97-98). Warfield elaborates further on the Old Testament words *raah* (to see), *roeb* (seer), *marah* and *mareb* designates what is seen in the revelation. *Raah* is used with the external while *hazrah* is used of internal revelations (ibid:98). The word of the Lord is a common phrase in the Old Testament. Torah is used to indicate authority and a divine communication (Is. 1:10; 1 Sam. 2:3; Mic. 4:2)(ibid: 99-100). The word of God is the written word in John 15:25, and 1 Corinthians 15:54. The word of God is contrasted with tradition in Mark 7:10. The whole body of revelation is indicated in the term the prophetic word in 2 Peter 1:19 (ibid: 100). The Old Testament used by Jesus had a threefold division the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). Psalms is part of the third division known as the Writings.

Cobb (1962:17) cites Tertullian who argued that in Christ we have all that is necessary to know. The speculative nature of rational philosophy is detrimental to the Christian’s faith. Aquinas held that revelation should not be replaced by philosophy (ibid:19). In the late Middle Ages, the distinction between natural revelation and special revelation was still maintained (ibid:20). Natural revelation is not natural theology. Special revelation is revealed theology. Natural theology should not be confused with natural revelation. Natural theology is based on reason. The cosmological argument argues from the existence of the world that a cause must be behind all of this. The teleological argument focuses on the design and purpose in the universe. A designer with creative intelligence and purpose must exist. The anthropological argument points to man’s intelligence. Man is able to understand this design. Design is seen in man himself. Why does not man have six fingers on each hand instead of five? The ontological argument points to the fact that man can not think of any higher idea or being than God (Leitch 1975:3-4 in Henry (ed.) 1975).

1.3 The Living Word of God

The Living Word is Jesus Christ. “No one has seen God at any time the only begotten” (the monogenes – used of the eternal word who was in fellowship with the Father in eternity past –John 1:1) “the one being in the bosom of the Father that one He himself has exegeted” (explained) [the Father] [author’s translation] (John 1:18) (Aland & Black 1968:322). John 1:18 refers to sense

perception of special revelation. God is not perceived through our senses. In the Old Testament, Moses and Jacob did see God face to face. John 14:5 gives a further explanation of John 1:18. Thomas admitted that rationalism (oidamen – know with the mind – used of intellectual knowledge) is not sufficient to see God. His question was:

“How are we ourselves able to know the way?” (14:5) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:386). Jesus answers that He is the special revelation of God (14:6). No one is able to be saved except through Him. Philip’s response demonstrates that sense perception is not enough to know God (14:8). He had a simple request. “Start showing us the Father and it satisfies us” (John 14:8) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:387). Jesus replied that he who had seen him had seen the Father. Orao (this is from the Greek verb to see) is used in scripture of spiritual perception. It took a revelation from the Father to understand the person of Christ (Matt. 16:7).

The theology of the Living Word, Jesus Christ, is the focus of the epistles of Colossians and Hebrews. Owen (1977:5) argues in this fashion. He points out that Colossians 1:17 argues for the fact that the Son of God holds the universe together by His power. The atomic structure- each atom a mini solar system- is traced to the omnipotence of the Son of God. Hebrews 1:3 testifies to the deity, omnipotence, and authority of the eternal Son of God (ibid:50). Christ was the creator of things visible and invisible (angelic realms) (Col. 1:16). Christ is “effulgence of His glory and express image” (character) “of His essence or substance” (Heb. 1:3) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:747). The brightness (effulgence) of His glory means Christ is God of very God (Owen 1977:5). The apostle John tells us that he beheld Christ’s glory “and the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we ourselves have beheld his glory as monogenes” (the one in eternal fellowship with the Father – John 1:1) “from the Father full of grace and truth” (John 1:14) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:321). Christ was the same essence as the Father (Moffatt 1975:7). Christ was God of very God. Owen argues that the brightness of His glory is an Old Testament reference to the truth of Jehovah God dwelling with His people (Zech. 2:8). Jehovah had sent the son. All that the Father is the Son is as well (Owen 1977:5). In addition, the writer of Hebrews adds that He (Christ) is the express image of His person. He is God of very God. The fullness of deity dwells in Christ bodily (Col. 1:19; 2:9). “The radiance of his glory” (Heb. 1:3) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:747) means Christ manifested the glory of God because he was God (Moffatt 1977:6-7). Christ is “same of His essence” (Heb. 1:3) means that Christ is all that the Father is God of very God. The church councils of Nicea (325 A.D.), Constantinople (381 A.D.), and Ephesus (431 A.D.) upheld the deity of the person of Christ (Douglas, Cairns, et al (eds.) 1974:706,381,344). Cairns (1974:144-145,148-149) confirms this fact.

Revelation in the Old and New Testaments is progressive (Chafer 1971:1:60). This means that revelation was given at different times to different writers in different ages. The Bible was produced by these different authors over a period of 1500 years. Isaiah knew more concerning the suffering servant than did Abraham (Gen. 22:7-8; Is. 53:1-12). The progressive revelation of God in revealing the scriptures does not nullify any earlier revelation. Later revelation adds to earlier revelation. This subsequent revelation adds additional details, truth, clarifies, and completes earlier

revelation. We find Old Testament principles set down that become the basis for the way the New Testament is interpreted. An example of this would be the just shall live by faith. This is found in Habakkuk 2:4. Paul presents this Old Testament principle as the theme of the epistle to the Romans (1:17). Progressive revelation adds completeness to earlier revelation received (Chafer 1971:1:72-85).

In analysis, the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was fully God while He was on the earth. The apostles saw the glory of God in Christ (John 1:18). The Logos is the revealer of God. The New Testament confirms the deity of Christ (Col. 1:16-19; 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3). Revelation is understood as progressive in nature. The writers of scripture received revelation at different times during different periods of history. A central passage for revelation is 1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

1.4 Chapter Summary

Men have the knowledge of God that is that God exists by creation. His Godhead and deity is evident by his witness to himself through creation (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:18-28). God has witnessed to his good giving man the rains and fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17). Paul in Acts 17:23-31 testified that the Lord is the absolute sovereign of both heaven and earth. The Lord God of heaven and earth gives “life and breath and all” (Acts 17:25) [author’s translation] (Aland & Black 1968:486). The word all has the article so that it is better understood as meaning both heaven and earth, all of creation (Arndt & Gingrich 1973:638:2:b:B). They extend the meaning of “the all” to mean the universe as well. God has made all races of men “from one blood” (Acts 17:26) [author’s translation]. God predetermined the length of a nation’s life and the boundaries of each nation (Acts 17:26). He did this so that the nations would seek him (Acts 17:27). Paul argues that man is the offspring of God since man lives, moves, and exists in him. It follows that such being true then we are his offspring (Acts 17:28). Man should not think of the Godhead (deity, divinity) in terms of idols of gold or silver formed by his own hands (Acts 17:29). God is the sovereign of heaven, earth, history and man. The Gentiles suppress the knowledge of God by unrighteousness living (Rom. 1:18). The Gentile infidelity to the truth of God’s existence leads to idolatry and immorality (Rom. 1:19-32). The **revelation** of God’s testimony via creation if spurned leaves man without an excuse (Rom. 1:20).

Christ held the scriptures to be the Word of God (Matt. 5:17-18, John 10:35). The matter of propositional truth must be stressed as well for the Bible testifies to its own authority (1 Cor. 2:10-13). Both the Old and New Testaments are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul confirms equal inspiration to both the Old and New Testament when he quotes Deuteronomy and Luke in 1 Timothy 5:18. The very words of scripture are inspired (I Cor. 2:13). The very letters of scripture are inspired by God (Matt. 5:18). Kant emphasized reason and knowledge arrived at by the process or rationalization (Schwarz). Schleiermacher introduced intuition and feeling (Schwarz). These speculations are a stark contrast to special revelation that man would not know unless it was revealed to him (Chafer). Schleiermacher exalted feelings over facts (Schwarz). Schleiermacher’s emphasis on experience was a direct reaction to Kant’s emphasis on knowledge. Hegel understood theology as man’s consciousness of a universal being (Schwarz). This is similar to Schleiermacher’s

concept of man having a God consciousness that divine spark which had only to be fanned. Special revelation is more than revelation of the living word, Jesus Christ. It is the entire 66 books of the Bible. Warfield brings out an important point that supernatural revelation is God's intervention for man's salvation. **Special revelation** is what man would not otherwise know unless it was revealed to him (Chafer). The fall of man broke fellowship with the living God (a theophany of Christ in the Garden of Eden). The repeated pattern of sin and judgment in Genesis 1 to 11 is evident by a careful reading of the text. God turned from the world to choose one man, the man Abram. It was through Abram that both the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the scriptures would come. Hebrews 1:1-2 confirms that God spoke previously through the prophet but has spoken in these last days in the age of grace through his eternal son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the final and full revelation of God (Ryrie). The canon of revealed truth closed around A.D. 90-100 (Jude verse 3). Christ is the heir of all things. He is the one through whom God made the ages (Heb. 1:2).

The many words to reveal in the Old and New Testament give a variety of meanings. They are a removal of obstacles, uncovering to perception, disclose, manifest, appearing, appearance, to show, impart, divine communications, of what is seen in both external and internal revelations, the word of the Lord, written word, tradition, and prophetic truth. The Old Testament canon that Jesus used had a three fold division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (Luke 24:44). Rational philosophy can be detrimental to the Christian faith. It is the combination of Greek philosophy with the Old Testament that led to the erroneous system of Bible interpretation known as Amillennialism. Special revelation is revealed theology. Christ's Old Testament canon had a threefold division the Law, Prophets, and the Psalms. Psalms is from a third part of the canon known as the Writings. Natural theology must not be confused with natural revelation. Natural theology must be distinguished from natural or general revelation. Natural theology is dependent upon reason not revelation for its proof of the existence of God. The cosmological argument points to a cause behind the world for its existence. The teleological argument focuses on both design and purpose in the universe. A designer possessing creative intelligence and purpose must exist. The anthropological argument points to design and purpose in man. Why does man have five fingers on each hand instead of six fingers? The ontological argument points out that man can not think of any higher idea or higher being than God. The Bible testifies to itself that it is the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13).

Jesus Christ exegeted God the Father. He explained the Father. God is not perceived through sense perception (John 1:18). However, both Moses and Jacob did see God face to face in the Old Testament. The context of John 14 shows that the disciples realized that neither rationalism, experience, nor sense perception were sufficient to bring a man to God. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father's house. Truth was embodied in a person the God-man, Christ Jesus. In Jesus Christ, there is life eternal. The one who had seen Christ had seen the Father (John 14:9-10). However, it took a revelation from God the Father to understand the person of Christ (Matt. 16:7). The epistles of Colossians and Hebrews should be included to give a fuller and deeper insight into the person of the eternal son, Jesus Christ. He was the creator of all things both visible and invisible (the angelic realms) (Col. 1:16). The glory of God resided in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14-

16). Christ is God of very God (Heb. 1:3). Christ took upon himself the form of man (John 1:14, Phil. 2:7-8). Christ manifested the glory of God because he was God (John 1:14, 16, 17-18). There is one God and one mediator between God and man the God-man, Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

1.5 Chapter Study Questions

1.5.1 What proof has been given by natural or general revelation that God exists?

1.5.2 What has man done with that knowledge of God's existence according to Romans 1:18?

1.5.3 What is special revelation?

1.5.4 What does the Bible claim to be?

1.5.5 What are the natural arguments for the existence of God based on reason?

1.5.6 What does the Bible tell us concerning the person of Christ in regard to creation, revelation, and God?

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Study Notes

