

**Introduction:**

- I want to continue tonight in our study of the knowledge of God. Last week when I finished we had reached a place where we found that God manifests Himself to us by revelation. Let go deeper into that understanding tonight. We saw some ways man can respond to revelation.
  - He can suppress it.
  - He can dishonor God and be thankless towards Him.
  - He can harden his heart and darken his understanding
  - Or, he can receive this revelation, give thanks to God and be enlightened more by God.
- When God reveals himself through nature, we call that natural theology. Natural theology is weak in that mans limited scope of being finite will fail to grasp an infinite God. Secondly, man because of his sinfulness will naturally suppress truth. The most man can expect to perceive of God is creator and judge.
- Tonight I want to talk about special revelation. Special revelation is a theological term that refers to the knowledge of God discovered through supernatural means. God reveals himself and has revealed himself to us through special revelation.

**I. What Make Special Revelation Unique?**

- A. Special Revelation is particular in that God reveals himself to a particular people. These people make up the better part of our Biblical history...The Jews. These people of God are the children of Abraham and Sarah.
  1. “... *Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.*” (Deuteronomy 7:6, NLT)
  2. The NT also uses a similar expression: “... *you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*” (1 Peter 2:9, NLT)
  3. Therefore, we see that this OT and NT people have received special revelation knowledge of God.
  4. Does this mean that God confines His knowledge to a particular people? NO! God simple has chosen a people though whom He would make himself known to all people. The knowledge is that people everywhere would come to know Him.
- B. Special Revelation is also progressive. It is not a movement of man from untruth/lie to know truth but it is a revelation from a lesser to truth to fuller revelation of who God is.
  1. God is not changing. He is revealing more of himself to his people. As we move from Adam to Abraham to Jesus, we are seeing more and more of who God is. He is not just creator and judge but He is also holiness and love.
  2. It is best seen in these words, “You have heard but I say....” That is progressive truth. A further unfolding of who God actually is.
- C. Special Revelation is Saving. Through general revelation we discover that God is creator and judge (by our conscience and history) but we know nothing of Him as Savior or as a saving God.
  1. General revelation does not have saving power!
  2. Our issue is that in spite of receiving universal revelation, we suppress it because of the hardness of our hearts. So God breaks in with special revelation, first by the law and then by Christ.
  3. That is why when you read Romans 1 we see general revelation but we do not see special revelation until Ro 3:21
  4. The special revelation of the OT also contain the redemptive nature and qualities of God. “*For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt as a ransom for your freedom; I gave Ethiopia and Seba in your place.*” (Isaiah 43:3, NLT)
- D. Special revelation is verbal/spoken.
  1. God manifests or discloses Himself through His Word. He communicates through the voice of a living person.
  2. Revelation in creation is wordless and therefore indirect. But when God communicates in special revelation it is direct by audible word. We need that because of our nature to suppress the truth and our inability to perceive clearly.
  3. Now we see God communicating what He would have us to know.

- E. Special revelation is personal. God not only speaks but comes onto the scene and makes Himself known. Ie. Moses and the burning bush. He appeared to Samuel.
  1. The apex of this personal revelation is His Son Jesus Christ.
  2. *“So the Word became human and made his home among us... And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.”* (John 1:14, NLT)
  3. In general revelation God remains distant but in special revelation He comes very personally and intimately!

## II. How is Special Revelation Given?

- A. First, special revelation came through the OT prophets. The prophets were spokesmen for God. They were men appointed by God to communicate His special revelation.
  1. The importance of the prophet was to let Israel see history in light of God’s divine perspective. Without that perspective, history is just another event. But the prophets let Israel see God’s judgment, rule, and mercy.
  2. It is through the combination of the events and the special revelation God is manifest and man is able to see the movement of God.
  3. The prophet not only interpreted events but also declared in multiple ways such as poetry, psalms, wisdom, or writing the Word of God.
  4. Very important to NOTE!!!! The special revelation of the prophets was preparation for greater revelation that would come in Jesus Christ.
- B. Secondly, special revelation came through Jesus Christ. Heb 1:1-2 “In former times God spoke many ways, many times, through many people but now He has spoken once for all.”
  1. Again, as was said earlier, “You have heard it said, but I SAY to you...”
  2. I am the Way the Truth and the Life. Jn 14:6
- C. Thirdly, the apostles brought special revelation. Note this did not happen until the outpouring of Holy Spirit!
  1. Holy Spirit kept the focus on Jesus and brought revelation of greater understanding of who He is!
  2. Eph 3:4-6 declares that all in Christ Jesus are joint heirs of the promise and no longer confined to one nation.
  3. Special Revelation is always focused on Jesus Christ!
- D. God gives revelation now to individuals to edify them and to build up the body of Christ. God wants us all to go deeper in the knowledge of His Son. Eph 1:17.
  1. Let me state this explicitly clear. This knowledge given to individuals now is subordinate to the knowledge of Jesus Christ/special revelation!
  2. The special knowledge OT, Jesus, apostles are all centered around the WORD MADE FLESH!

## III. How Do I Receive Special Revelation?

- A. One way! Faith.
- B. *“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.”* (Hebrews 11:1, NLT) Through faith there is an abundance of assurance and conviction.
- C. Theologian Rodman Williams said this, *“When faith is present, the things of God become manifest.”*
- D. Faith is the acceptance without hesitation or reservation of divine truth. It is the exact opposite of suppression of truth. Faith gladly receives truth and honors God because of it. It does not dishonor God by being ungrateful, it joyfully glorifies Him for revealing Himself to us. Faith is a wholehearted affirmation and rejoicing in God having revealed himself.

## Conclusion:

- Now we can know God not just as Creator in general revelation but as Redeemer and Friend!