Review: Christian theology is committed to this premise: the ultimate truth is the truth of God and God is the foundation and source of all truth.

There is truth and the truth is that God is.

You can never go north without true north. You can never have truth without true truth.

Theology is the logic of God. It has to be this way and it makes sense that it is this way. That is the conclusion of theology rightly done.

The value and urgency of theology as a guidance system keeping the focus on Jesus

NEW TOPIC

There is truth so how can we know the truth. Because if there is truth but we can’t know it the existence of truth is meaningless to us.

-Certain honest philosophers who have rejected God teach that nothing can be known because there is nothing to ultimately know. Nietzsche/Nihilism/Nazi.

We know Truth because God has graciously revealed the Truth of Himself.

And God performs this act of self-revelation by 2 distinct methods:

General Revelation and Special Revelation

God has given a General Revelation of Himself in two ways: To a general audience and with general content.

God’s general revelation is general first in the sense that it is directed to a GENERAL AUDIENCE. That is-God reveals himself to EVERYONE not just a select few. Not a mystery religion as most religions have been.
God reveals himself to everyone in 2 ways: Through the **Creation** and through **Conscience**.

**The general revelation of God in creation is that creation makes the existence of God necessary.**

*Psalm 19:1*  How can everything come from nothing without the action of an outside first cause?  It is not logical

How can design exist without a designer?  It is not logical

Anyone with an honest intellect can see a power outside of what is created with the energy of creation and the eye of design.

So God’s first act of general revelation is in the creation

-God’s second act of general revelation is in the conscience of man.  Humanity’s haunting sense that there is right and wrong.

*Romans 1:19-21*  *what can be known about God’s existence and power is plain to see and understand by looking at what God created.*

Therefore there is not excuse:  And now with this General Revelation there is the **foundation of morality.**

With the existence of God so plainly revealed **the highest good** is to acknowledge God and **the greatest evil** is to deny God and suppress the truth of God.  And from this logic flows all the instincts we have about right and wrong being something real.

-There was a time when much of our society understood this:  Putting the words **UNDER GOD** in our pledge as opposed to the regime that denied God and suppressed this truth.

So General Revelation is general in the sense that it is extended to a general audience-to everyone-through both Creation and Conscience.
The second way that General Revelation is general is that it is general in its CONTENT.

- Creation tells us of the existence of God and some basic qualities like **power** and **genius for design**.

It does not tell us much about God’s character. Is God kind or cruel?

**Let’s think about the character of The God of nature:** The God of nature is kind and then cruel with no predictable pattern which is terrifying. Blesses you with perfect weather and abundance of crops and then refuses to send the rain no matter how much you pray and could care less as your children die.

-I am always amazed and amused with people who love the “God of Nature” and find that an easy and comfortable thing. This God is really the God that does not expect me to go to Church.

-I acknowledge the God of nature with wonder and terror as all honest nature religions do. Nature religions are full of wonder and terror.

So the creation gives us the logical necessity of God and morally compels us to acknowledge God as the foundation of an inner morality.

God is powerful, poetic, but also pernicious. God delights with a beautiful sunset over the ocean one day and then crushes you out by a tsunami the next day. But blessed be God.

But God has also given us a SPECIAL REVELATION and that is given only to those who can hear the gospel and read the bible in a language that they understand.

What is this special content? The story of redemption culminating in the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus of Nazareth.

For this you need the Gospel preached and Scripture taught.

**Hebrews 1:1-3**

More specifically, how did God give us this special revelation?

In the OT he spoke through the **PROPHETS**. They were agents of revelation

In the NT the role of prophet is given to the **APOSTLES**

**Ephesians 2:20** built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles.
The things revealed by God through the prophets and apostles that God chose to have written down and preserved we call the **Sacred Scriptures**. Also known as the Bible which means books.

So the sacred scriptures are the written special revelation of God or more simply the written Word of God.

**NOTICE** I seldom hold up the bible and say THIS IS THE WORD OF GOD because that is inaccurate.

The accurate thing to say is *These are the sacred scriptures, the very Word of God revealed and written.*

This must be **believed and confessed and enforced**.

The second form in which God gave his special revelation is in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnate Word of God. God clearly revealed in the divine person of Jesus who took on human form. The Divine Revelation of God in human form.

One word of God in written form and one word of God in human form.

**John 14:8-10** See me-see the Father

In Jesus the revelation or self-disclosing of God is **fulfilled** and therefore **final**.

No next prophet because Jesus was not just a great prophet.

No next testament because Jesus said his blood was the blood of the new and final testament.

Both Islam, that ranks Mohammed above Jesus and Mormonism that claims an additional testament of Jesus grossly pervert the Word of God Jesus

Both imply that there is more that God means to reveal beyond Jesus and the Scriptures. This we reject and condemn.
We can know truth because God has graciously chosen to reveal himself to us.

**General Revelation** in 2 ways: General Audience and General Content

God reveals himself to everyone through Creation and Conscience and so the fundamental structure of morality is that acknowledging God is good and denying God and suppressing that knowledge is evil.

General content is the God of nature: powerful, designer.

But sometimes kind and sometimes cruel and therefore Great but not good.

**Special Revelation in 2 ways:**

Writings of the Prophets and Apostles called Sacred Scripture.

The divine person of Jesus in human form, the incarnate word of God.

This Jesus, revealed in scripture is the full and final revelation of God.

- Anything claiming that Jesus is less than the Son of God or that there is more revelation to come in an additional testament is saying that Jesus is not who he said he is and the scriptures are not God’s true and final revelation.

Next week: The inspiration and authority of sacred scripture. The very word of God revealed and written.

Closing: pioneer church planting and bible translation as proof of theological seriousness.