

General Revelation:

Defined: This is the revelation found in nature, history and the conscience.

1. Through Nature:

- a. To the Pantheist — God is in nature
- b. To the Naturalist — Nature is independent of God
- c. To the Christian — God created all things and is independent from His creation, yet aspects of the Godhead can be understood as we observe all that God designed in nature.
- d. **Scriptural Support:**
 - 1) Romans 1:19-20
 - 2) Psalms 8:1-3
 - 3) Psalm 19:1-ff
 - 4) Job 12:7-9
 - 5) Isaiah 40:12-14
 - 6) Acts 14:15-17
- e. **Limitations to Natural Revelation**
 - 1) Natural Revelation is insufficient for salvation
 - 2) It is designed only to incite men to search further for God and His plan of salvation
 - 3) Natural/General Revelation is obscured by the problem of physical evil in the world.
 - 4) Nature is a general call of God to man to turn to Him (Psalm 50:1-6)
 - 5) The heathen world apart from specific revelation, comes to a feeble recognition of a Supreme Being; but nature does not disclose the truth that *“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* – John 3:16
 - 6) All naturalistic theistic arguments as to the existence of God are based on general revelation. These arguments are an effort on man’s part to reason

from nature back to its Cause, and since such reason is justified (ex. Rom. 1:19f) though limited as explained above, man is “without excuse.”

- 7) All men “are without excuse for their refusal to respond favorably to God’s clear manifestation of Himself by the things He made. This favorable response includes fearing God, making an effort to seek Him out, and contacting Him (cp. Cornelius; Acts 10:22, 31).” (Practical Christian Theology, p. 44)

2. **Through Providence:**

“Providence is that continuous activity of God whereby He makes all the events of the physical, mental, and moral realms work out His purpose, and this purpose is nothing short of the original design of God in creation” (Thiessen, p. 122).

That such a program exists is not only reasonable to the last decree, but is abundantly set forth in the Scriptures. (Deut. 30:1-10; Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-28; 9:24-27; Hosea 3:4,5; Matt. 23:37-25:46; Acts 15:13-18; Rom. 11:13-29; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 2:1-22:21.

In discerning of the providence of God, only spiritual vision avails. The restricted perception of the unregenerate, who have not God in their thoughts, most often see events in their lives as a product of a chance.

God’s revelation of Himself through providence is limitless. History is *His Story*, and on the pages of Scripture He has so related Himself to future events, both by covenants and prediction, that assurance is given that there will be a perfect consummation of all things and the end will justify the means used to secure it.

a. **God’s Providence Over The Gentile Nations:**

God establishes nations and brings them down (Isaiah 40). If this is true, then, we should be able to see God’s hand in history. Examples of this are below:

- 1) God deals with Egypt — Ex. 9:13-17; Jer. 46:14-26; Rom. 9:17
- 2) God deals with Babylon — Daniel 4:25; Jer. 50:1-16; 51:1-4
- 3) Daniel’s vision of the nations -- Dan. 2, 7 & 8; 9:24-27; 10:10 to 11:45

b. God's Providence Over The Nation of Israel:

God established the nation of Israel by calling out Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3 & 15. If God made the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in regards to the nation Israel, then God will fulfill these promises. As we observe how God deals with the nation of Israel we can learn about His character and His holiness.

c. God's Providential Control Over All-things:

- 1) Over the universe (Mt. 5:45; Ps. 147:18 etc.)
- 2) Over plant and animal kingdom (Jonah 4:6; Mt. 6:28-30)
- 3) Over each man's existence (Ps. 139:16, Jer. 1:5 etc.)
- 4) Over the most trivial of circumstances (Mt. 10:29)

d. God's Providence Seen In Biblical Patterns of Worship:

We can learn about God in how He revealed Himself to the Patriarchs; — i.e. through the sacrificial system and services of the temple.

3. Through Man's Conscience: — Romans 2:14-16

4. Through Preservation of the Universe:

The New Testament is specific in its declarations concerning the relation, which the Second Person in the Godhead sustains to this material universe.

a. His Preservation of the Universe as Creator:

- 1) Col. 1:16-17 He created all things. By Him all things consist (hold together).
- 2) Hebrews 1:3 He upholds all things and sustains all life.
- 3) Hebrews 1:10 He laid the foundation of heaven and earth.

b. He is the Bestower and Sustainer of life John 1:4; 5:26; Acts 17:25; 1 Cor. 15:45

c. He gives eternal life John 10:10, 28

d. He is Himself the life which He gives Col. 1:27; 1 John 5:12

e. In Him we live and move, and have our being - Acts 17:28

God is likewise revealed in the care, which He exercises in the preservation of each individual, especially those who trust Him (Matt. 6:31-33; Phil 4:19).

Thus it is seen that God is revealed through His preservation of all things in general, and His people in particular.