
Revelation

Revelation

1

What is Revelation?

- P Migliore is talking about a larger category than scripture (which is the subject of the next chapter)
 - P “Revelation” means unveiling or disclosure (19)
 - P In Christian theology revelation is concerned with God’s self-disclosure in
 - Creation
 - History of people of Israel
 - Ultimately in the person Jesus Christ
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What is Revelation?

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What is Revelation (cont.)

- P Revelation is primarily disclosure of one subject (God) to another (humankind)
 - “not simply knowledge *that*, or knowledge *about*, but knowledge *of*” (20)
 - Question is not what we must “know” but who must I “be” and what must I “do” to be saved (21)
 - P Migliore suggests that revelation is not information but an experience of a new paradigm by which we know (22-23)
 - Human reason and imagination remain, but are given new vision and direction
 - Calvin’s “new spectacles” that enable us to see God, world, and ourselves in radically new way (23)
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What is Revelation (cont.)

3

Five Characteristics of Revelation

(Page 24)

- P Revelation refers to God’s self-disclosure
 - P Revelation points to particular events and people through whom revelation has been communicated
 - P Revelation calls for personal response and appropriation
 - P Revelation is always disturbing; disrupts way we previously understood God, world, selves
 - P Revelation becomes new interpretative focus for understanding God, world, selves
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Five Characteristics of Revelation

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General and Special Revelation

God revealed through natural world as well as through

Christ

- P What we call special revelation – God’s unique disclosure that comes through Christ – speaks of God being revealed in natural order
 - God revealed in creation, conscience, other religions is “general revelation”
 - Sometimes identified with God’s “prevenient grace”
 - P General revelation provides a common ground for connecting to special revelation, e.g., C.S. Lewis
 - P General revelation means that Christians are free to learn from what is good in science, moral philosophy, and other religions
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General and Special Revelation

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General Revelation vs. Special Revelation

- P General revelation can help non-Christian know that there is a God
 - P General revelation discloses part of what can be known about God, where special revelation discloses the whole
 - P Some theologians (Thomas Aquinas) believe that general revelation allows non-Christian to know there is a God and basic moral law
 - P Some theologians (John Calvin) believe that natural knowledge about God is so corrupt because of sin that it is fundamentally idolatrous
 - P All agree that saving knowledge of God comes through special revelation
 - P Prophetic self-criticism is essential to both kinds of revelation
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General Revelation vs. Special Revelation

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Models of Special Revelation

(29 ff.)

- P Propositionalist model – revelation is transmission of accurate or infallible information
 - P Historicist model – revelation as historical turning points in personal or corporate history
 - P Liberationist model – revelation as crucial experience of new insight and self-discovery
 - P Interpersonal communication model – God’s self-revelation is analogous to personal knowledge with human beings
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Models of Special Revelation

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Interpersonal Model

- P Knowledge of persons comes through attention to patterns of behavior or character (God’s intentions known through character of God’s interaction with humankind)
 - P Knowledge of persons is never complete – they are free and do surprising things (God’s freedom does not limit God to past)
 - P Knowledge of persons involves invitation to trust and live in response to promises (trustworthiness and loyalty through change)
 - P Personal knowledge involves narrative dimension (God’s character is displayed through story of God’s interaction)
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Interpersonal Model

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Revelation, Scripture, and Church

(34-39)

- P Revelation refers primarily to God's activity in Jesus Christ and only secondarily to Bible and church
- "Word of God is threefold: revealed, written, and proclaimed" (Barth, 34)
 - Through church and Bible we come into contact with God's activity in Jesus Christ
- P "Luther says the Word is the cradle in which Christ lies; we may also say the church is the nursery in which the cradle lies" (Hendry, 36)
- P Scripture and church teaching have often been misused – judged in light of Jesus Christ
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Revelation, Scripture, and Church

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Key Points

- P "If we remember that God's grace and power are made perfect in human weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), we will have little difficulty in seeing the grace of God at work in the fact that fallible human beings are taken into the service of God's revelation" (37)
- P "Neither the witness of Scripture nor that of the church is more than a servant of the living God" (38)
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Key Points

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