

From *Lecture on Bibliology* in Systematic Theology 1, Paul Lamey.

A. What is the Source of Scripture's authority? It does not come from the following:

1. Authority does not come from General Revelation (vs. Special Rev.).
 - a. Definition: The revelation of God by which His invisible power and attributes are clearly seen and known by all mankind (hence "general") through creation (Psalm 19:1-6; Rom.1:20) and the image of God (Gen.1:26-27; Rom. 1:19).

general revelation. A term used to declare that God reveals something about the divine nature through the created order. This self-revealing of God through creation is called general because it only gives "general" or "indirect" information about God, including the fact of God's existence and that God is powerful. This is in contrast to special revelation, which is more "specific" and "direct," and includes the appearance of the living Word (Jesus Christ himself) and the written Word of God (the Scriptures), revealing a holy, loving and just God who graciously provides forgiveness of sin. General revelation is likewise "general" in that it is available to all humankind, in contrast to the divine self-disclosure that God revealed to certain persons. *See also* special revelation [*and evidentialism*].

special revelation. God's divine self-revelation evidenced specifically in salvation history and culminating in the incarnation as understood through Scripture. Although the Bible seemingly affirms both *general and special revelation (*see* revelation), only special revelation can disclose completely our sinful predicament, as well as God's promise of salvation and its fulfillment in Christ.

[See also, **evidentialism.** A method of defending the Christian faith (apologetics) that assumes that data drawn from history and experience (facts) can demonstrate the reasonableness of Christian claims and can therefore help to prepare a person for faith in Christ by removing obstacles to belief. Thus evidentialism attempts to give as much "evidence" as possible to substantiate crucial facts of the Christian faith such as the resurrection of Christ or the historical accuracy of the biblical accounts.] (*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 54-55, 109, 48.)

Romans 1:18-21 ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹**because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.** ²⁰For since the **creation** of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, **have been clearly seen**, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Genesis 1:26-27 ²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Psalm 19:1, 6 “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands....⁶ Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”

b. Important points to consider –

- 1) “General” refers to the audience, not to the content of the revelation.
- 2) Therefore the content is limited.
- 3) Therefore a specific message (i.e. the gospel) is not to be found in it.
- 4) It is “revelation” about God (therefore, it *is* about content) and not to be equated with the discoveries or theories of men (i.e. biology, sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc.).
- 5) It is knowledge that is “suppressed” by all men in all times and in all places.
- 6) It is sufficient only to condemn.
- 7) Therefore general revelation cannot be relied upon for specific and direct theology.