

May 29, 2015

The Content Of God's Revelation

Romans 1:20 (NASB), **“For 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.”**

God has chosen to reveal Himself and does reveal Himself to all of mankind through the world around us. Paul write, **“since the creation of the world,”** God has made His **“invisible attributes”** visible for all of humankind to observe. The specific **“attributes”** that we can perceive in part through our senses are God’s **“eternal power and”** His **“divine nature.”**

God’s **“eternal power”** which Paul refers to here concerns God’s never-failing omnipotence, which is reflected in the awesome creation which that **“power”** both brought into being and which He sustains. God’s **“divine nature”** of kindness and graciousness is reflected, as Paul told the believers at Lystra in Acts 14:17 in the **“rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”**

The great theologian Charles Hodge once wrote concerning this in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* , **“God therefore has never left Himself without a witness. His existence and perfections have ever been so manifested that his rational creatures are bound to acknowledge and worship him as the true and only God.”**

God’s natural revelation of Himself is not obscure or is it selective and observable by only the few who are supposedly specially gifted to perceive. His revelation of Himself through His Creation can be **“clearly seen”** by every single person on earth, **“being understood through what has been made.”**

Even in the most ancient of times, long before we had the modern technology of the telescope and microscope and many other technological wonders that help us observe the natural world, the greatness of God was evident both in the vastness and in the tiny intricacies of nature. Men could look at the stars and discover the fixed order of their orbits. They could observe a small seed reproduce itself into a giant tree, exactly like the one from which it came. They could see the marvelous cycles of the seasons, the rain, and the snow. They witnessed the miracle of human birth and the beauty and glory of the sunrise and sunset. Even without the special revelation which King David had, they could see as he wrote in Psalm 19:1 **“the heavens are telling the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.”**

In John MacArthur's commentary on Romans he touches on some of the incredible and amazing ways God reveals Himself to us in the natural world.

“At any given moment there are an average of 1,800 storms in operation in the world. The energy needed to generate those storms amounts to the incredible figure of 1,300,000,000

horsepower. By comparison, a large earth-mover has 420 horsepower and requires a hundred gallons of fuel a day to operate. Just one of those storms, producing rain of four inches over an area of ten thousand square miles, would require the energy equivalent to the burning of 640,000,000 tons of coal to evaporate enough water for such a rain. And to cool those vapors and collect them in clouds would take another 800,000,000 horsepower of refrigeration working night and day for a hundred days...

The Museum of Natural History has determined that there are at least 10 million species of insects, including some 2,500 varieties of ants. There are about 5 billion birds in the United States, among which some species are able to fly 500 miles non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico. Mallard ducks can fly 60 miles per hour, eagles 100 miles per hour, and falcons can dive at speeds of 180 miles per hour...

The earth is 25,000 miles in circumference, weighs 6 septillion, 588 sextillion tons, and hangs unsupported in space. It spins at 1000 miles per hour with absolute precision and careens through space around the sun at the speed of 1000 miles per minute in an orbit of 580 million miles long.

The human heart is about the size of a human fist. An adult heart weighs less than half a pound, yet can do enough work in twelve hours to lift 65 tons one inch off the ground. A water molecule is composed of only three atoms. But if all the molecules in one drop of water were the size of a grain of sand, they could make a road one foot thick and a half a mile wide that would stretch from Los Angeles to New York. Amazingly, however, the atom itself is largely space, its actual matter taking up only one trillioneth of its volume..."

Except for the mind of the individual that is willfully closed to the obvious, it is inconceivable that such power, intricacy, and harmony could have developed by any means other than that of a Master Designer who rules the universe. It would be infinitely more reasonable to think that the separate pieces of a wrist watch could be torn apart, put in a bag and shaken and then eventually become a dependable timepiece than to think that the world could have evolved into its present state just by blind chance.

Even a complete pagan should be able to discern just as the Psalmist did in Psalm 94:9, "**He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see?**" If we can hear, then whoever made us surely must understand hearing and seeing. If we, His creatures, can think, then surely the mind of our Creator must be able to reason as well.

Humankind is judged and sent to hell not because we do not live up to the light evidenced in the universe but because ultimately that rejection of the truth of creation and nature leads them to reject the Lord Jesus Christ. It says of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-9, "**And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.**" But if a person lives up to the light of the revelation he has,

God will provide for his hearing the gospel by some means or another. In His sovereign, predetermined grace He reaches out to sinful mankind. In Ezekiel 33:11 the Lord declared, **“As I live! I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live.”** In 2 Peter 3:9 it says, **“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”** In Jeremiah 29:13 it says, **“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”**

In Acts 2:26-39 we read the account of the Ethiopian eunuch who was sincerely seeking God, the Holy Spirit sent Philip to witness to him. Upon hearing the gospel he believed and was baptized. In Acts 10 we meet the Roman centurion Cornelius who it says in verse 2 of chapter 10 was **“a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.”** God sent Peter to Cornelius to explain the gospel to him. It says in verse 44, **“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.”** Then in verse 48 it says of them, **“And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”** In Acts 16:14 we read the account of Lydia who was a true worshiper of God and it says, **“and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”**

We are ultimately then without excuse. God reveals Himself daily to us but tragically over and over again so many reject the One True God. As we will learn as we continue through Romans 1 they exchange the God of the Universe, the God of mercy and Grace, the sovereign God, and the God who saves for the idol of self and the god of Universalism. As we will learn though those gods are mere idols and they absolutely do not save.