5. Revelation (2Q 2009—Walking the Walk: The Christian Life)


Quotes

• The need of the world is to listen to God. Albert Einstein
• Our need of revelation is like our need of redemption: it is total. Robert Horn
• Apart from special, saving revelation—the revelation that centers upon the Lord Jesus Christ—we do not and cannot know God. J.I. Packer
• Christianity… is the revelation of God, not the research of man. James A. Stewart
• Christianity is the one revealed religion. Benjamin B. Warfield

Questions

Why is revelation so important? What would we know about God without his revelation? How does revelation impact freedom of choice? How does Jesus reveal the Father? Why is this so important, especially as part of the great controversy? How do we validate revelation? How is God’s self-revelation consistent? What does this mean to us?

Bible discussion

In Exod. 7:1–6, God tells Moses how he will reveal himself through Moses and Aaron very specifically. David in Psalm 19 asserts that the heavens declare the glory of God. In Romans 1 Paul explains that since God has clearly revealed himself, those who refuse to know him are “without excuse.” Scripture is inspired by God and reveals him to us (2 Tim. 3:16). God spoke through his prophets, and now reveals himself through the Son (Hebrews 1). This is the message that God gives to us, he comes to reveal himself: (all NIV): No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known. John 1:18. When a man...looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. John 12:44, 45. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. John 14:7, 9. I in them and you in me. John 17:23. No-one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Luke 10:22. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6.

Comments

Flying from Dallas to Washington on a half-empty plane, I was seated next to a lady who almost immediately asked me about God! She seemed very ready to dialogue, and was amazed and delighted when I shared the good news about God. She had many questions—particularly about evil, pain, and suffering. I explained that suffering was not punishment by God but the consequences of our sin in an evil world—that the innocent suffer along with guilty. We are not experiencing the vindictive punishment of an angry God. For God is not hostile but friendly, the one who has demonstrated his true nature in trying to win us back to love and trust him.

“Then—what about Hell?” she asked. “Isn’t that terrifying eternal torture by a tyrant?” I told her what we know God to be like, and what we believe about Hell. Then I told her what I believed God to be like—as based on the revelation of God in Jesus. She
couldn’t believe it! “Is God really that good?” she kept on asking. We had a wonderful talk for more than four hours! Before we parted I shared a copy of my book “Fear Not? Why Not?” so she could learn more about this friendly Father God who loves us so much.

God was in Christ, revealing himself to the world. The gospels explain just how Jesus revealed the character of God to the world. God truly is love and has shown himself to us in Jesus. He explains to us what the great controversy is all about. He further explains that the whole universe is involved in God’s answers to the charges of Satan the Accuser. And through the revelation of Scripture we see so clearly how God has answered these questions about his character. For if we do not know God then we can never rightly relate to him, never love him as he truly is, never understand his incredible gift of himself to us.

Why did Jesus come? So many answers—but the one Jesus keeps on referring to is the essential one. To show us the Father. This is the essence of our belief. We have seen God revealed in Jesus, and in response love and trust such a God eternally. God is our loving Father. Jesus is God’s self-expression. The on-looking universe sees as well—for the plan of salvation is not just about us! So we should talk about this light of the world that reveals God. Talk about the goodness of God. We are not to remain in Satan’s shadow. We are to talk Jesus.

God is not an enemy. God is not hostile. He is our loving Father and friend who wishes all of us to come to him. He says, “If I be lifted up... I will draw all unto me.” He is “long suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” What do you say to such an incredibly loving Lord?

Ellen White Comments

In the word of God… the curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin, to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God. {CE 65}

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God’s glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God’s love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan’s sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God’s love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. {DA 761-2}

We are to study the revelation that Christ, the Great Teacher, has given of the character of God, that in spirit and word and act we may represent Him to those who know Him not. {MM 92}

Christ was willing… to undertake the case of fallen beings who had lost their original holiness, and who were in ignorance of the perfection of God’s character... In the grand counsels of Heaven it was found that it was positively necessary that there should be a revelation of God to man in the person of His only-begotten Son. He came to earth to be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” {SW 25}