

## LIFE GROUPS STUDY GUIDE

# Doctrine

Foundations of Faith in the God of the Bible



### WEEK TWO: The God Who Speaks The Doctrine of Revelation

- Last weeks study looked at the doctrine of the Trinity. Briefly recap last weeks study by seeing if you can summarise the Doctrine of the Trinity into the three succinct statements made by Wayne Grudem. (Try to do it with out referring to last weeks notes)

- 1) God is \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Each person is \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) There is \_\_\_\_\_

- This week we are looking at the doctrine of Revelation - that is, God is a God who has made Himself known. God is a God who speaks. (Literally, He is a God who reveals Himself).

Read author Peter Adams' statement below and then read Genesis 1, paying attention to the "God said" statements. Do you agree with Peter Adams' statement? Why/Why Not?

*"God's Revelation begins with a sermon; God preaches and the world is made. 'God said, "Let there be light", and there was light.' Six sermons are preached and in a wonderful sequence, the Word of God is proclaimed in heaven's pulpit and all comes to pass, the preaching forms the universe ..."*

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## General and Special Revelation

Throughout the Scriptures, this notion that God is a God who speaks, who reveals Himself to humankind falls into two categories: the first being **'general'** revelation, the second, **'special'** or **'specific'** revelation.

**J.I Packer writes:** *'General revelation is so called because everyone receives it, just by virtue of being alive in God's world. This has been so from the start of human history.'*

- General revelation breaks down into 3 basic categories:

- 1) Creation
- 2) Common Grace
- 3) Conscience.

### **1) CREATION**

- Read the following verses and discuss what they reveal to us about God, mankind, and the notion of God's 'general' revelation of Himself to all humankind.

*"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands ... their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Ps. 19:1,4)*

*"And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory." (Isaiah 6:3)*

*"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse" (Rom. 1:18-20)*

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- The Bible says that all people are without excuse when it comes to knowing God exists because from the beginning of creation God has made plain what may be known ... that there is a creator; The whole earth is full of His Glory ...If people don't see and acknowledge this truth it is because they have suppressed the truth by their own wickedness. Discuss and respond to this statement.

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### **2) COMMON GRACE**

- *COMMON GRACE* is God’s goodness to the sinner and the ‘saint’ alike. Common Grace can be seen in that God provides water for all to drink, food for all to eat, sun for all to enjoy and rain for all crops to grow, etc.

Pastor Mark Driscoll writes in his book: *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*: “God’s Common Grace allows even those who despise HIM to learn and make gains in areas such as science, philosophy, technology, education, and medicine. God’s COMMON GRACE allows societies to flourish, families to exist, cities to rise up and nations to prosper”

- Read the verses below and discuss the notion of Common Grace in light of Pastor Mark’s statement and what you read in the verses. Can you see other areas of God’s ‘Common Grace’ in our world?

*“You care for the land and water it; You enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so You have ordained it.” (Ps. 65:9)*

*“He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth” (Ps. 104:14)*

*“that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45)*

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### 3) CONSCIENCE

- God also reveals Himself generally through the conscience He has given all human beings as His image bearers. The ability to have a sense of right from wrong is built into all human beings at one level or another.

Let’s go to Pastor Mark Driscoll again, He writes: *“Almost everyone knows it is wrong to murder your neighbor, lie to your neighbor and steal your neighbor’s wife, because God has written His morality on human hearts”*

- Read the verses below and discuss the implications of the truths of God’s revelation through conscience.

*“Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.” (Rom. 2:14-15)*

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**SPECIAL or SPECIFIC REVELATION**

Where ‘general’ revelation falls short is that it does not necessarily point a person to the knowable, personal and loving attributes of God. That is where ‘special’ or ‘specific’ revelation comes in.

It is through ‘special’ revelation that God has made ‘HIMSELF’ known.

The ultimate expressions of ‘special’ revelation come by way of the *Scriptures*, and most specifically in *the person and work of Jesus Christ*.

**THE SCRIPTURES**

Read the following verses and discuss what they reveal to you about the scriptures.

- 2 Peter. 1:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Timothy 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- John 17:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalms 19:7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 30:5-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- Deuteronomy 4:2 \_\_\_\_\_
- Deuteronomy 12:32 \_\_\_\_\_
- Acts 17:2 \_\_\_\_\_
- James 1:22 \_\_\_\_\_

**JESUS: THE WORD OF GOD BECAME FLESH**

“If the Bible is the written story of God’s revelation of Himself to humankind, then the culmination of this story comes in the person of Jesus Christ.” (Pastor Matt Lucas)

Respond to the above statement. Do you agree? Why/Why Not?

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- Read the verses below and discuss how each of them add to the claim that Jesus is the culmination and pinnacle of God’s revelation of Himself to humankind:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was God in the beginning ...The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:1-2, 14)

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*“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross”* (Colossians 1:15-20)

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## Credits

### Bibliography

Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears: *“DOCTRINE: What Christians Should Believe”*

J.I. Packer: *“CONCISE THEOLOGY: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs”*

Wayne Grudem: *“SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine”*

Millard J Erickson: *“INTRODUCING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE”*

NOTE: Discussion questions in this study have been adapted from an essay by Pastor Matt Lucas on “Preaching the word of God is the word of God”.