

Question

- How do you, personally, best encounter God?
 - Reading the Bible
 - Walking through nature
 - In worship
 - Alone
 - With others
 - When helping someone else

Question

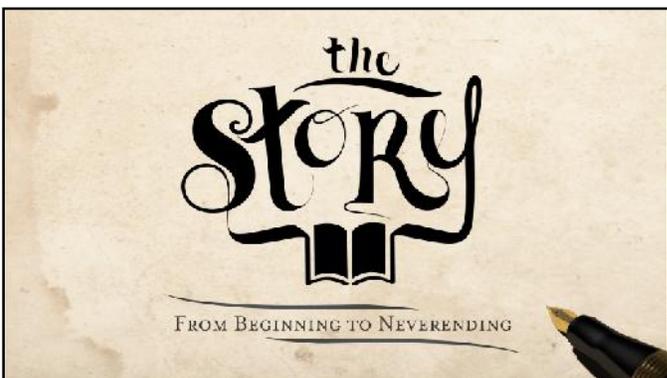
- Agree or disagree
 - All truth is God's truth
 - The Bible is all true
 - The Bible contains all truth
 - All truth is in the Bible

Review

- **The One Story**
 - The story of God
 - A story with God as the producer, creator and main star
 - The story of us
 - Life only makes sense and has meaning when understood as part of God's story
- A unified story
 - God's plan from beginning to never ending, revealed in the Bible

One Story—Overview

- **Handouts**
- **Sermon outline**—in the bulletin
- **Episode summary**—in racks around the building
 - Previous weeks located at the Connection Centers
- **Themed studies**—distributed in ABFs, and in racks around the building
- Binders are available—lobby overlook
- **the-OneStory.org**



Question

- How would you answer a child who said...
 - “Mommy, if we can’t see God, how do we know He exists?”



The paradoxical question

- Where should theology begin?
 - The Bible
 - God



The paradox

- Where do we start our thinking about God?
 - With God
 - He started everything. He is the “object” of our search.
 - With us
 - We cannot start anywhere else. We are the searchers.
- Both are true
 - We begin with revelation to us from God about God
 - We discover God there
 - Our discovery—first requires God’s self-revelation

Revelation

- How do we gain information or understanding about God?
 - Bible
 - Nature
 - Conscience



Revelation

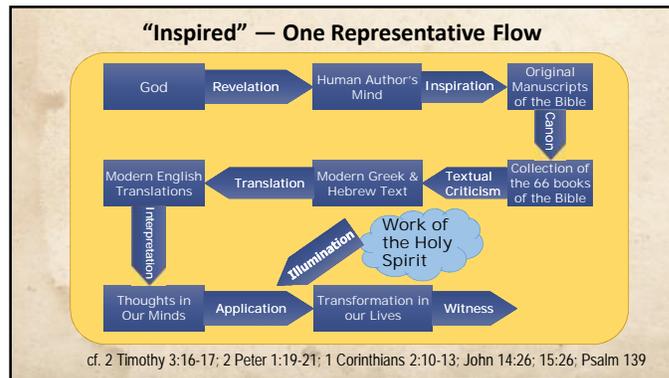
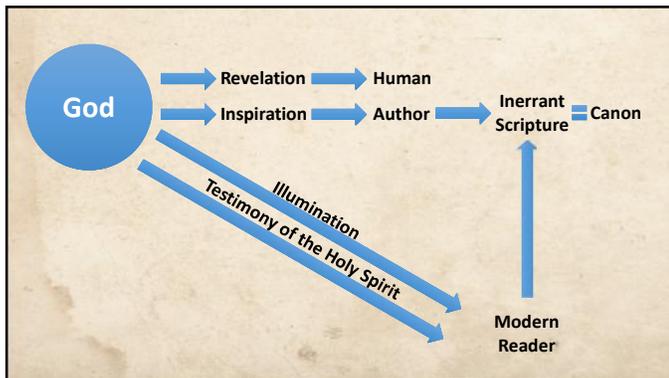
- General
 - Nature and conscience
- Special
 - God communicated directly to people
 - The Bible
- Specific
 - Jesus Christ



Revelation

- How can we know anything about God?
 - He must reveal Himself
- Key Premise of the One Story
 - We can know God and His will, because God revealed Himself and His plan.
- Put another way—Our presuppositions
 - There is a God
 - He has revealed Himself





Overview

- Special revelation
 - God's acts and words of communication
 - Special details about who God is
 - Special details of what God has done or will do and to some degree, why
- Specific revelation
 - Jesus Christ

Overview

- Special revelation about God
 - His essence
 - Who God is
 - Self-existent, spirit, free, alive
 - Trinity—One in Essence; 3 in Persons

Overview

- Special revelation about God
 - His essence—Who God is
 - His attributes
 - What God is like—his character
 - *Non-Communicable Attributes*—not shared with human being made in God's image
 - Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Immutability, Sovereignty
 - *Communicable Attributes*—shared with human beings made in God's image
 - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

What can we learn from God's special revelation about His general revelation

- Key point
 - God never asks us to guess that He exists

Overview

- General revelation
 - Called “general” because
 - It is generally accessible to everyone
 - **All live in God’s world and are made in God’s image**
 - It provide general knowledge
 - True and useful but not able to save
 - Creation—outer witness
 - Conscience—inner witness




What can we know about God from General Revelation?

Psalm 19:1-6
 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
 In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (ESV)

The observable universe tells us there is a God

His revelation is continual

His revelation is everywhere

The sun is an example of God’s revelation and power

Group Activity—What can we know about God from General Revelation?

- Group A
 - Romans 1:18-31
- Group B
 - Acts 17:22:31

Romans 1:18-32

- 19-20—God’s revelation is “plain” and “clearly perceived”
- 20—invisible attributes, eternal power, divine nature
- 20—God’s revelation has been perceivable from the beginning (i.e., constant)
- 21—Everyone should honor and thank God from general Revelation
- 22—Those who recognize God in General Revelation are wise
- 23-25—when we don’t worship the Creator we worship creatures, exchanging the truth for lies.
- 26-27—sex between those of the same gender is not “natural”
- 28—exchanging truth for a lie results in all manner of “unrighteous” activity
- 32—these activities deserve the punishment of death

Conscience

- “There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity” (*divinitatis sensum*). *John Calvin*



Acts 17:22-31

- 22-23—human beings worship something, but need to be told who
- 24—There is a God who created everything, has dominion over it and cannot be reduced to a created thing
- 25— God is the giver of everything, needs nothing
- 26—human beings are of one race God has guided and graced to live for generations (see Acts 14:17)
- 27-28—God is not far from anyone, as our poets recognize
- 29—we bear a relationship with, and responsibility, to the God who made us
- 30—Now is the time to change our minds about who God is
- 31—General Revelation, when perceived properly, supports and leads to Special Revelation about Jesus Christ.

Value of General Revelation?

- **Reveals the existence of God**
 - Should cause us to glorify God
 - It can serve to reveal the foolishness of idols (things worshipped rather than the worship of God)
- **Reveal the power of God**
 - Should cause us to understand the greatness of God
 - It can serve as a means of connection with unbelievers (where Paul started with a totally pagan audience)
- **Reveal the uniqueness of God**
 - Should cause us to understand that there is more beyond us
 - *God made us for Himself and we are restless until we find our rest in Him.* St. Augustine

Summary

- Understanding what God has accomplished and wants to accomplish through general revelation should result in
 - A desire to develop a habit of seeing God in His creation
 - A praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonder of His creation
 - Thanksgiving that He also gave us His Word to enable us to relate to Him

Rate Yourself from 1 [I don't!] to 10 [I do to the max!]

- **Do I want to know more about God, as much as I can, whatever He reveals?**
 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - *How do I plan to take advantage of The One Story of the Bible at Calvary Church?*
- **Do I live as consistently as I can with what He reveals?**
 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - *How do I plan to get my life more in sync with God's General Revelation?*
- **Do I worship God spontaneously, consistently and enthusiastically for all He reveals about Himself?**
 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - *How do I plan to up my worship personally and corporately?*