

if you have your little ladies Bible study doctrine of God booklet we are on the third lesson which is entitled a revelation and begins on page 8 we are starting on page 8 the The title again is just Revelation here. We're kind of continuing to learn a bit about how we can know who God is and we only know who he is through his revealing of himself. Revelation is a really important word. It's a really important idea because it informs us that God has spoken and we can know about who he is because he has chosen to make himself known. One of the things that makes the study of God so interesting and even different than the study of other things in the world is that if you want to study, say, astronomy, you begin to study the stars and maybe look at them through a telescope and you learn what you can about the stars.

But the stars are not going to choose what they do or do not reveal about themselves to you. When you study stars or anything else, the object is simply passive, and you, using your study, your skills, your tools, learn what you can about that object.

It doesn't get to tell you, well, I don't want to disclose this about myself to you. The star doesn't have that authority. The animals you study don't have that authority. They can't choose what they will and will not reveal to you when you study them.

However, when it comes to God, You can only know what He is pleased to allow you to know about Him. Even as you're striving to study Him, you are in a sense completely at His command. You can't know something about Him that He doesn't choose to reveal about Himself to you. What that tells us is that insofar as you know things about God, it's only because God has said, I'm going to make myself known to you.

And he has done that primarily, as we'll see in our study, through his word. Now, I've said this before, but the reason we're starting with the idea of revelation in a study on the doctrine of God is because this revelation is how we know God. This is why our Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, is not God. Chapter 1 is Scripture. Chapter 2 is God. And so that's why we're following that outline here. So we're going to kind of build our study today off of this Westminster Shorter Catechism question number three.

What do the scriptures principally teach? The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. two scripture proof texts that affirm this catechism question would be John chapter 20 verses 30 and 31, which say, And Jesus did many other things in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. So that's John chapter 20, verses 30 through 31. So what that teaches us is that The Bible, and particularly the book of John, is about Christ and about God making himself known to us through Christ that we might believe in him and have life in his name.

So it's first about the things concerning God. But then secondly, our catechism does say that it also tells us about the duty that God requires of man. A proof text for that particular point is Micah 6, verse 8, which reads, But what is meant by the word principally in the catechism?

Mainly, yeah. Mainly primary, main focus, right? So it's not saying that there aren't other things in the Bible. Say there's historical places like Judah or Israel, Jerusalem, whatever, all the different tribes. There's a lot of other

things in there, but the primary, the main thing is about concerning God and what duty God requires of man. Are there things the Bible doesn't teach us? Are there things we can't learn from the Bible?

If so, maybe give an example. Exactly. It doesn't teach you how to cook, that's right, that's right, yeah. Yeah, that's right, that's right. The only one I can think of is the one you'd want to try to repeat. There is that one where Elijah, or Elisha, I forget rightly, comes and they're either eating that pot of food and it's poisonous, and then he says, well, let me throw some sticks in there or something to make clean.

But I wouldn't try to reduplicate that particular meal. So yeah, it doesn't teach you how to cook, doesn't teach you how to do math. So yeah, there are things that it doesn't that it doesn't teach us in the Bible. So then this next question, can you think of a subject the Bible says nothing about explicitly?

I mean explicitly, right? We kind of already touched on that, right? Math, cooking, I didn't really explicitly explain, you know, go through these things. I thought of Latin, and that just came to my mind, right? You're not going to learn Latin by reading your Bible. It doesn't tell you anything about the language of Latin. So we're building up to something here.

So does this mean the Bible is incomplete? Does this mean the Bible is incomplete? No, right? It does not mean the Bible is incomplete. A math book doesn't teach you Latin, right? And does that mean that math book's incomplete? Well, no, it doesn't mean that math book's incomplete. It's not the design or the focus of that math book to teach you about Latin. That's not the goal of the math book.

And so we can say this, the Bible is sufficient for its intended purpose. The Bible is sufficient for its intended purpose. Yeah, so the Bible is sufficient for its intended purpose. Yeah, I once heard a story about somebody who had a big... engineering exam coming up, and they were newer to the faith, and so they decided, I'm just gonna spend three days in, I think, fasting and prayer to prepare for my engineering exam. And that's just, that's just not the way God has designed His world. You're not gonna, that's not gonna help you pass your, I mean, God could use it, I'm not saying it's not gonna help, but it's not, you need to study your books for your math exam.

So what does it mean, though, to say the Bible teaches implicitly on all things? So while we said it doesn't teach explicitly on all things, is there a sense in which we can say it teaches implicitly on all things? And if so, how? Yeah. In what way could we say, yeah, in what way could we say, and if nothing immediately comes to mind, that's fine, I think we can get there, but in what way might we say the Bible does touch on math? Not just in the sense of, you know, one. Exactly. Right. Who created math? Why does math exist? Yeah. Right.

They're using math and he's ultimately the creator of all things. He's the one who orders the world. So the reason the world works the way it does. is because God is behind it all. God is the one who orders it all. God is the one who structures it all. You know, God created math and he is, all those formulas that the mathematicians think are so wonderful, when they originated because of the way that God created the earth and things to work and the formulas to work out.

Yes. They're just discovering what God has created. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. So in this sense, we can say actually the Bible does implicitly touch on all things. And here's how. Because it's the ground of all things. It gives you the ground for all things. It gives you the why for all things. It explains to you why it is that math works the way it does. It explains to you why it is, ultimately, that the sun rises and sets.

Not in the sense of it gives you all the formulas and so forth, but it tells you that ultimately, what does Job say? What does God say in Job? The sun rose today because I told it to, right? There's a sense in which While we can acknowledge the helpfulness of science and the way it helps us see the way God is working, but the reality is behind it all is God saying to his son, get up, go to sleep, moon, rise.

He's the one who's in control of all the things that happen in our world and the one who orders it, instructs it. So it does give you the ground for all things. It also, we could say, is a guide in all things because it helps you see how He is working in all things. It grounds and guides all things, helps you understand the way His world works. Yes. Exactly. And I think we certainly should. I think it's very appropriate to thank God for the sunrise.

So here's what Here's one way of perhaps thinking about it. It is in this sense that we can say the Bible has something to say about everything, but not everything to say about everything, right? So I think I made that up. So it doesn't mean it's good or bad. It just means maybe it's not. I can't, I can't. If I'm making something up, I'm usually, you know, there's a caveat there, you know, use with caution.

But I think it's helpful because I'm trying to get at this idea that I'm not saying it's saying everything about everything. I'm not saying if you have a Latin exam, you should just go read your Bible more or whatever. But I am saying it touches, it explains why grammar works, all these structures. Can someone, I meant to say someone there, can someone who doesn't submit to the Bible understand the why of anything? Not really. They really can't. They really can't understand the ultimate reason for anything. Why does this exist? Why does it work? They can say that it works, and they can give you formulas, and they can tell you, you know, if I mix this thing with this thing, the outcome is this, but why is that?

Well, that's just the way it is. not just the way it is, it's just the way God created it. Things don't just happen this way because they happen this way, they happen because God is a God of order. That's the only reason, you know, historically, y'all may already know this, but historically it's just a fact. I'm not an expert in this area, but I do know it is absolutely true. Historically, you know that all the best scientists have come out of Christianity. I'm not making that up, it's just a fact.

There's whole books on these things. that science grew out of Christianity, and it's because people said, well, I believe in a God of order. I believe in the God of the Bible, a God who would make Himself known in creation. And so I'm going to go study this thing, and I can expect to find order, to find working things in this world. Why? Because there's a God that I know exists behind all this.

But when you get rid of Him, then you have no actual basis to believe that things are going to work. People assume they will, but they don't have any grounding for that assumption. It's why people are discontented. God doesn't

have to explain why. He certainly doesn't have to explain why, yeah. And a lot of times when things happen that we don't want, we want a why, but that may not be our business at that moment.

Yeah. It certainly is a sin. It's 1000% a sin. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, and I think we can ask those questions. I think you see a great example of this. You think of Luke chapter 1. Isn't this interesting? I remember in Luke chapter 1, Zechariah asks why, and he gets in trouble for it. He can't speak. But you know who else asks why in the very next chapter or later on in the same chapter? Mary.

And the difference was, you can ask the question why from a place of trust, but I don't understand. You see that all in the Psalms. You can also ask why from a place of, I don't, I'm angry with you and I hate you and I don't believe in you. But you can ask, we can complain, this is Matthew Hinner here, you can complain, I think he's right, you can complain to God, but don't complain God so you can bring God you can bring your complaint. You can say why God I don't understand this I don't think that's it. I think you can absolutely do that unless you want to call 95% of the psalms in It's a heart issue.

He has a heart posture, right? Am I angry with him? I hate him? Or am I saying, I don't understand. Yeah, I'm hurting. I don't understand. This doesn't make sense to me. I'm not saying I don't believe that you're faithful, but I am saying I am completely confused, right? So, the unbeliever, this is Cornelius Van Til, the unbeliever can count but he can't account for counting, right? He can't account for it. He's got no basis for why 1 should then go to 2 and 2 should then go to 3. He has no basis for these things. What is the purpose of the Bible according to Catechism Question 3? What are the two main lessons the Bible teaches us?

Exactly. Perfect. Yep. What we should believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. So, this is important because the Bible is the one that tells us God, in his word, is the one who tells us what we're supposed to believe about him. And that's important because all of us at some level, and certainly unbelievers are like this, but even Christians, we can want to come to God and tell him what he is like, and tell him who he's supposed to be, what we think he should be like. But what this is telling to us is that God is telling us who he is, that I don't have the authority to tell him who he is.

I have to listen and believe that who he is is in fact who he is. Now imagine how this would work with any other relationship. So you have a friend maybe, maybe it's your husband, somebody in your life, and they start telling you things about who they are and, you know, so forth, and then you start, no, no, this is who you are, this is, no, they're telling you, and you're, you should, you know, assuming they're a trustworthy person, you should receive that. You should trust that they're telling you about who they are. You don't have the right to tell them otherwise.

Now, again, human relationships are different because sometimes we do lie and we are sinners, but with God, he tells us when we are to receive it, and we also don't get to tell him how we should live, right? Sometimes people will say, you know, you can't tell me how to live my life.

Well, God absolutely can, and He does, so we are to receive this revelation. If man tries to understand the world without reference to God, what will be the result? Yeah, it'll ultimately fail. There'll be purposelessness, even if they find things that are true. There'll be an incomplete knowledge, right? There'll be an incomplete knowledge.

Yeah, discontent, that's great, discontent, that's a good way of thinking about it. Yeah, so does a Christian who is a scientist or historian have more understanding of the world than a non-Christian scientist or historian? Yes, it's sort of a trick, somewhat of a trick question in some ways, to be completely honest. Not that it's trying to be, but there's a sense in which we can say, here's what I've written. Maybe not. So a Christian doesn't automatically have more understanding in terms of raw knowledge. So just because, like, I studied history doesn't mean if there was an atheist beside me who studied history, he wouldn't potentially know more about history than I do. That's certainly possible. So maybe not in terms of content, right? In terms of just amount of factual data points or whatever. But, yes, in terms of understanding the origin and purpose of these things. So, for example, let's take history.

The unbeliever who studies history can know a lot of facts and dates and even have a good understanding of why did X king make this decision and not that decision, but They don't understand that God is in providential control over whatsoever comes to pass. They don't understand that these things were part of God's plan in his world to accomplish his goals ultimately in the world. So it opens up a depth to the knowledge The believer can have a depth to the knowledge of events in history that an unbeliever is not able to have. So, Beckbeck, I know that you will sometimes bring up in the Reformation how you had the printing press and you had several other things that happened historically and some...

Yeah, at the same time. So some unbelieving historian might look at all that and say, oh, look at all these coincidences, it all just worked out just so perfectly for these things, and they'll boil all these things down to mere matter in motion, mere coincidence, when we know that these things were clearly part of God's perfect plan, part of his providential outworking of history. So it does give us a depth and understanding to the world that the unbeliever simply doesn't have. Does being a Christian encourage or discourage the study of science? It encourages it, right? Because you can study God's world.

Now here's just one example. I like this guy a lot. If you enjoy him, you can go find more of him. I like this scientist up here. He's going to refute this guy's stuff, because this guy doesn't love Jesus. And this guy does. His name is James M. Torr. He's awesome. He's a leading scientist. He's at Rice University. If you have any interest in just thinking about science and Christianity, I would encourage his videos. I've watched a lot of them before.

I don't always under... James M. Torr. How do you spell the last name? T-O-U-R. His first name is James. So he's at Rice University. He's a leading... He's actually a Jewish man who was converted to Christianity. You should watch his testimony. It's very powerful. Essentially, he went off to college. He only knew the Jewish kind of religion, did not believe in the Messiah, and then basically got confronted by somebody and was converted to Christianity. And it's incredible testimony, but he's a very, very, very, very devout Christian. He and I learned about him actually through our friend, oh, our friend, so passionate Latino, Professor at...

Medeiros. Yeah, Medeiros. Thank you. I don't know why it's not his name. I don't know why. But anyways, Professor Medeiros showed me his stuff, and he's also good friends with John Lennox. If you don't know John Lennox, he's also leading Oxford. He led John Lennox at Oxford, leading Scientist Christian. Also awesome guy.

Because these guys are like leading, like they're not like... you know, mid-grade. They're like the leading tier scientists, and they're like, yeah, this stuff's garbage. Like, they're like throwing all the other scientists get annoyed with them because these guys are like, yeah, well, let's talk about it, let's talk about it. And they're like, you know, they get annoyed with them because they won't just go with the flow. They're like, hey, I'm as smart as you were smarter, so don't pretend like, because people like me, like, I'm not a science guy.

I'm interested, but I don't, I can't admit that I know a lot. I just find it interesting. So if I'm talking to a guy who's, you know, PhD, whatever, I'm going to be like, yeah, you know, I can't refute. I mean, I know you're wrong, but I can't actually refute you, but he can. So anyways, with all that being said, here's. I didn't go wrong because God told me things in the Bible that I can read, but I can't read all the big words and stuff. So this is James in tour, and he's going to refute this guy.

It's a very quick little video, but I just use him as an example of, you know, he's a leading scientist, and he's going to tell you science does not contradict the Bible, and that Christianity actually is promoting and encouraging the study of God's world. It's not that I'm looking in the Bible to figure out what to do, but I pray a lot.

Lord, give me wisdom. Give me insight. Lord, make me like Bezalel. Give me understanding across diverse areas. Asking God to work in the lives of my students, to give them creativity. for people he has no idea. Can you see why people don't like James M. Torr? doesn't give an inch. He's like, you don't know what you're talking about. You're just saying all these things like science and Christianity don't work together. And he's like, you just have no idea. Why are you saying all this? You're making stuff up.

So how do general and special revelation differ? So we could just say that general revelation is general, general in content, right? It tells you things like there's clearly a powerful creator, right? We can all gather that from general revelation. might even say that there's some order in this Creator. There are other general things we can learn in creation, in general revelation, but special revelation is while it contains some of those general things, it's also specific in content.

It's specific in content. It reveals to us the way of salvation. General Revelation doesn't tell you these things, that there is a Savior, there is a Redeemer, His name is Jesus Christ. Repent, believe in Him, and you will be saved. So you learn these things from specific revelations. So we might recognize other ways in which they differ, but the big way we want to see is that General Revelation is general in its content, and Special Revelation, while it does have some of those general things, its main priority is to be specific in content about the way of salvation. So these two differing modes of revelation have been called the book of creation and the book of salvation. So somebody has called these two different things, general revelation and special revelation, one a book of creation and one a book of salvation. Remember there are two things here.

What we are to believe about God and what God requires of us. Why is the priority in the catechism given to what we are to believe concerning God? In other words, why is it prior to our duty? So why does the catechism begin stressing what we're to believe about God and only then does it move to duty? exactly right yeah you can't know yeah if you don't know who he is yeah and And it's great that you bring that up too, Bec, about the Ten Commandments, because they're a great example of this very point.

Because how does the preface to the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." So first, how does the preface, how does the Exodus 20 begin? It begins with not, do this. It begins with, I've done this for you, and here's who I am, right? I am the Lord thy God. who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. And then it's sort of like, therefore, right, because of who I am, out of that then comes the commandments, the Ten Commandments. And so the structure's important because it's telling us, first, this is who your God is.

Now, because of who He is, obey Him. Do these duties. It's not saying, do this and live. It's saying, live. and do this, right? Be born again, receive who I am, and out of that fact, do this. So there's a big difference between do this and live, and live and do this.

Yeah, so what I had written down here is we must begin with who God is, as Beckbeck was saying, before we can talk about what we're supposed to do. So we have to know who he is before we start to learn about what we're supposed to do. We know God in order to obey him.

Another great example of that is what maybe you all know, but is that way of the structure of Ephesians, the book of Ephesians is a great example of that as well, where we have Ephesians chapter one through three telling you, here's who God is, here's what he's done for you, here's what he's done for you, here's what he's done for you, all the way for the first three chapters. And then only in chapter four, verse one, Is there a big shift from who God is to then how do you respond? We start in chapter 4 verse 1 of Ephesians. I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. So because of all the things you've been saying for three whole chapters about who God is and what he's done for you, Now I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. And so it's this idea of knowing who God is and then out of that reality living for him. Well, that concludes our study today. Any questions?