



### **Introduction: God’s Word & Creation**

Christians have often spoken of how God has revealed Himself as *general* (natural) and *special* (supernatural) revelation. While special revelation refers to the ways God has made Himself known in the world which are recorded in Scripture, general revelation refers to how He has done so through His creation.

“...the power of God displayed in nature is the power of his *word*; nature is God’s self-expression. Nature behaves as it does because God’s word tells it what to do. It is important to remember that nature is not the word of God, but only a medium of the word. The word...is God himself.”  
—John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*

**Main Point:** We are called to stand firm on the truth that natural revelation is both a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ revelation of God and it therefore makes authoritative demands on mankind.

## ***Has God Spoken Through Creation?***

### **What’s at Stake?**

To live in the world as an agnostic (doubtful or noncommittal) regarding ultimate questions about God and meaning is to live as a functional atheist. It is to place mankind in general, and the individual in particular, in the place of authority to determine what is true, good, and beautiful and what it means to live well in the world.

Rom. 1:19-20—<sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

**Key Point:** The Creator-Creation Distinction is ultimately about submitting to or rejecting God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

### **The Witness of the World**

#### 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (***The Cosmological Argument***)

Psa. 19:1-4—<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

⇒ The word cosmology comes from the Greek word *kosmos* that is often translated ‘world’ and refers to an “orderly arrangement or system.” That something rather than nothing exists and that what exists demonstrates order leads us to ask the question “How did this come to be?”

The Arguments of Thomas Aquinas — *Summa Theologica* (AD 13<sup>th</sup> C.)

- (1) *Motion* - Everything in motion must be moved by something else. God is the first mover.
- (2) *Cause & Effect* - Every effect has a cause. God is the first cause for the existence of all things.
- (3) *Contingency* - All beings are contingent. There must therefore be a necessary being. God is the necessary being.

#### 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (***The Teleological Argument***)

Psa. 104:14-15—<sup>14</sup> You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth <sup>15</sup> and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man’s heart.

⇒ The word teleology comes from the Greek word *telos* that means “end, goal, or purpose.”

“The order of the universe provides evidence that there was a Designer. In particular, that non-thinking entities can function in harmony of purpose seems a strong evidence for the reality of a Designer.”—Christopher Cone, *Prolegomena*

**Key Point:** The order and design displayed in the world demonstrate that our existence is purposeful and that its meaning is found in relation to God as our \_\_\_\_\_.

### **The Witness of Human Nature**

#### 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Psa. 139:13-14—<sup>13</sup> For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

⇒ The fact that we are personal beings (conscious selves) living in a world of impersonal matter is evidence that there is a Personality behind our existence.

“In a very real sense, the question of all generations...is “Who am I?” ...In short, an impersonal beginning explains neither the form of the universe nor the personality of man. Hence, it gives no basis for understanding human relationships, building just societies, or engaging in any kind of cultural effort.” —Francis Shaeffer, *Genesis in Time and Space*

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 3:22a—Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.”

“Conscience is our knowledge of good and evil, our knowledge of morals and ethics. But it is not a merely academic knowledge...[it] is not only our knowledge of what is good and bad, but our actual sense, or feeling, of good and bad in ourselves and others. Conscious...nudges us, or irritates us, or even attacks us.” —John Frame, *Nature’s Case for God*

⇒ Although the human conscience still functions to determine right from wrong, it has been affected by \_\_\_\_\_.

Rom. 2:14-15—<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

**Key Point:** The personal and moral aspects of human nature demonstrate that being rightly related \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is foundational to living well in the world He has made.

## Living Well in God’s World

1. The proper response of man to the order and design of creation should be a recognition of \_\_\_\_\_.

“...there is an order or rule of human conduct which is (1) based upon human nature as created by God, (2) knowable by all men, through human intuition and reasoning (beginning from his observations of creation, in general; and human nature, in particular)...and thus (3) normative for all human beings.” —David Haines & Andrew Fulford, *Natural Law*

Acts 14:15-17—<sup>15</sup> “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. <sup>16</sup> In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

⇒ The assumption here is that unbelievers have a sense of what is “\_\_\_\_\_” in the world which should point them to the reality of a benevolent Creator.

Rom. 1:26b—For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;

⇒ The implication is that the actions of these unbelievers are \_\_\_\_\_ because they are contrary to clear design of the human body.

2. The proper response of man to the vastness of creation and his place within it should be to \_\_\_\_\_ His Creator.

Psa. 8:1,3-4—<sup>1</sup> O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens...<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

⇒ When we consider the size and scope of the universe as well as the vastness of the microscopic world, we cannot help but be overwhelmed by how comparatively small we are to the one and how large we are to the other.

“For in fact, what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes...he is equally incapable of seeing the Nothing from which he was made, and the Infinite in which he is swallowed up...The Author of these wonders understands them. None other can do so.” —Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* 72 (AD 16<sup>th</sup> C.)

**Key Point:** To worship God in the world that He has made is to \_\_\_\_\_ Him by living in accord with His design and to give \_\_\_\_\_ to Him for His good provision for us.

## Concluding Thought

Though natural revelation can give us a true \_\_\_\_\_ of God, it does not tell us how we can be \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

Acts 17:24-31—<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.” <sup>29</sup> Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. <sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”



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#### **1. Order (The Cosmological Argument)**

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## **Concluding Thought**

**Though natural revelation can give us a true knowledge of God, it does not tell us how we can be Reconciled to Him.**

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