

# The Revelation of God

Bibliology: Revelation





# Two Approaches to the Knowledge of God

- Through our own efforts
  - Emotional experience
  - Reason alone
- Through revelation



# Revelation

- **Revelation** (Rev. 1:1) – *apocalupsis*
- Means “unveiling or disclosure”
- God’s drawing back the veil to show us Himself
- *God’s self-disclosure*
- Two Forms:
  - General
  - Special



# Two Forms of Revelation

## a) General revelation

- Cf. Ps. 19:1-6
- General in two senses...
  - The scope of its message is universal.
  - The content of its message is general.

## b) Special revelation

- Cf. Ps. 19:7-11
- *Special* in two senses...
  - The scope of its message is limited.
  - The content of its message is specific.
- Primarily God's self-revelation in Scripture.





# I. General Revelation

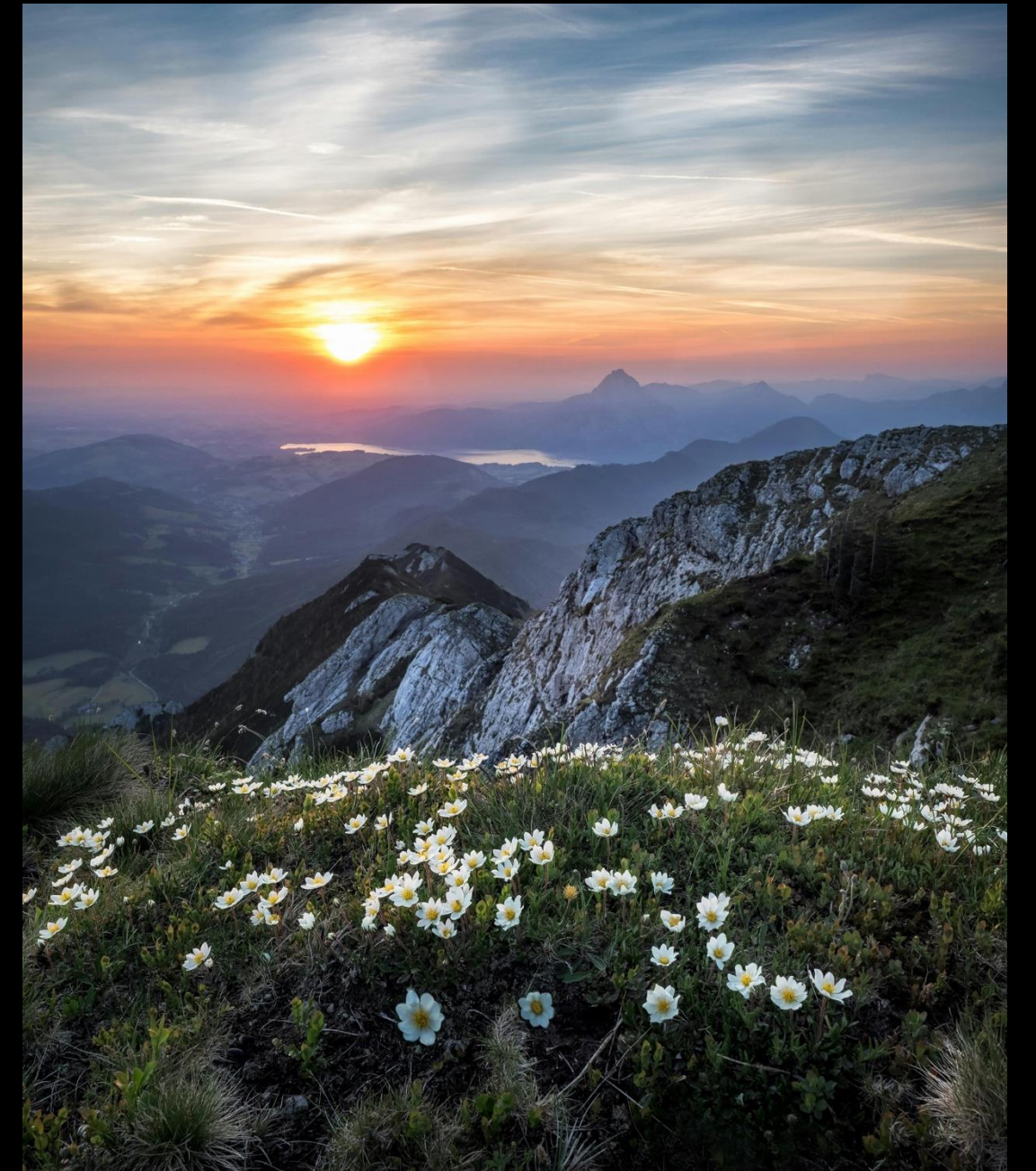




# I. General Revelation

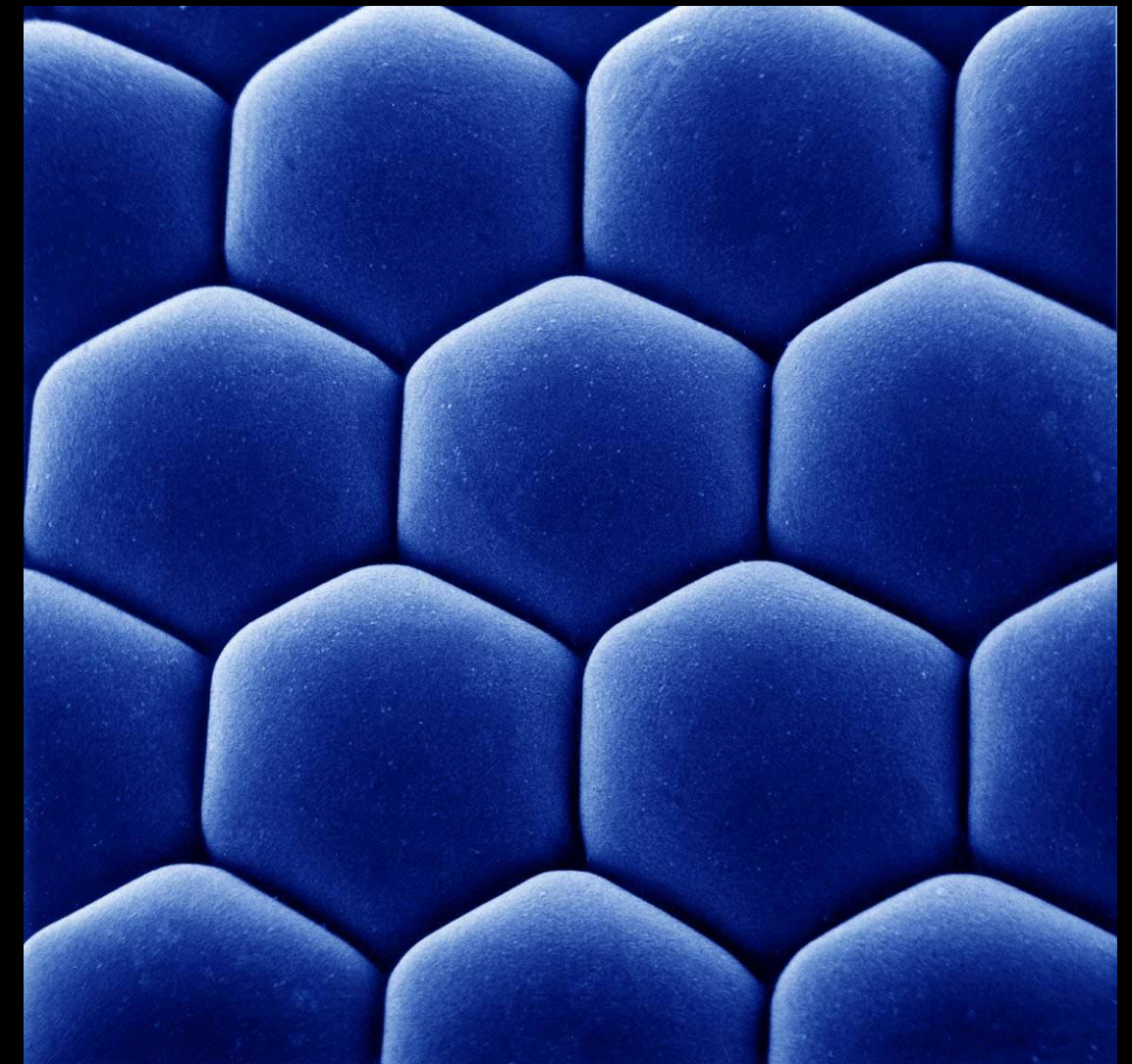
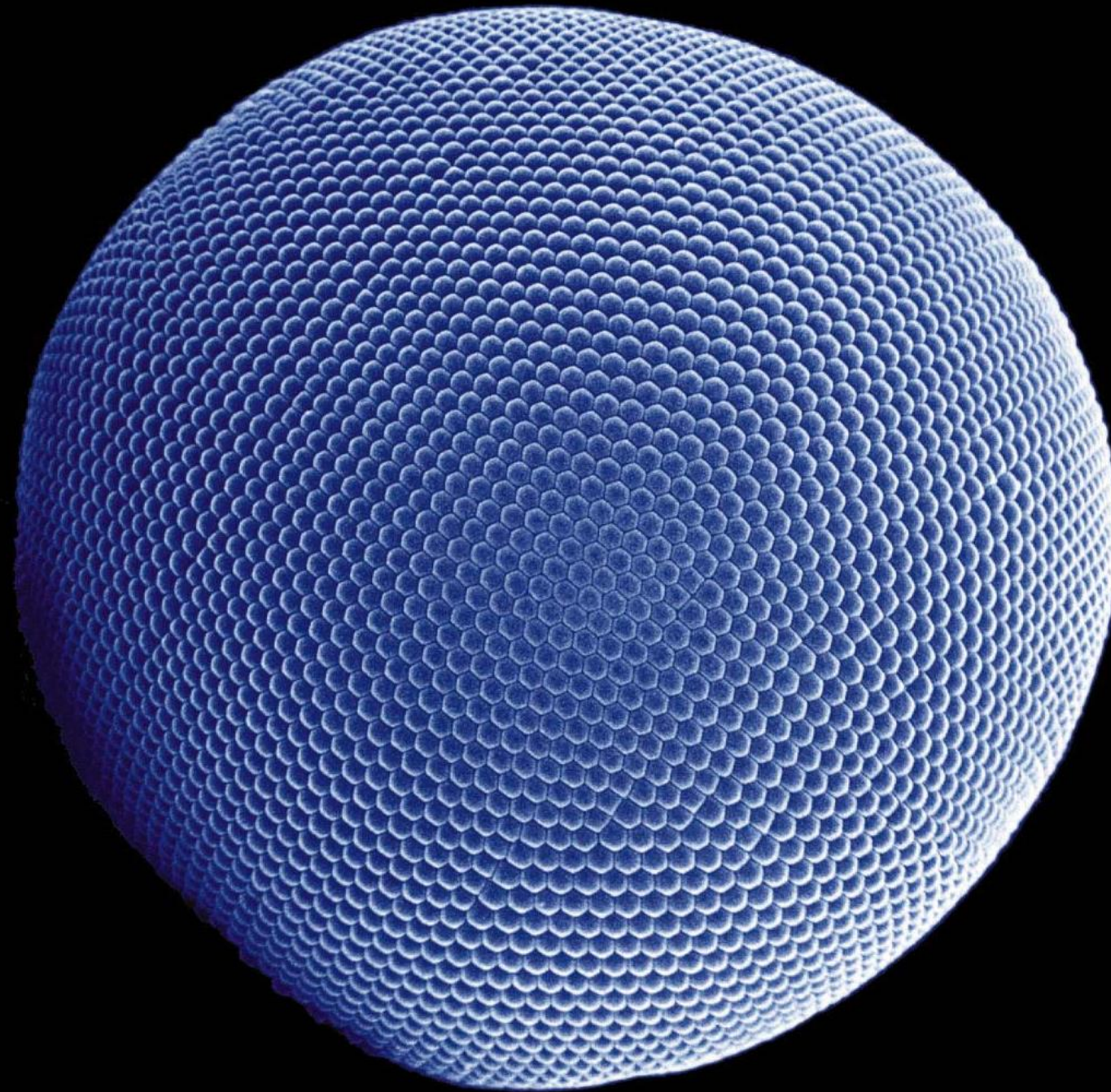
## A. The Messengers of General Revelation

### 1. Creation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-21)





# The Alaskan Krill





# Psalm 19:1–6

## Five Characteristics of General Revelation

- 1) Explicit (1)
- 2) Constant (2)
- 3) Silent (3)
- 4) Universal (4a-b)
- 5) Illustrated by the Sun (4c-6)





# Romans 1:18

## a) A General Summary (18c)

- 18c – Men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

## b) A Detailed Explanation (19-23)

### i. God revealed Himself

- 19 - because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

### ii. When God revealed Himself

- 20a - For since the creation of the world.

### iii. What God revealed about Himself

- 20b - His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen.



# God's Invisible Attributes in General Revelation

- a) "His eternal power" (20)
  - i. His eternity
  - ii. His eternal power
- b) "His divine nature" (20)





# Romans 1:18 *(continued)*

## iv. How God revealed Himself

- 20c-d - His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.

## v. What results from God's revelation in creation

- 20d - so that they are without excuse.



# I. General Revelation

## A. The Messengers of General Revelation

- 1) Creation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-21)
- 2) Providence (Mt. 5:45; Acts 14:15-17)
- 3) Conscience (Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15)





# B. The Message of General Revelation

## 1) Creation

- i. There is a God Who created it all
- ii. God is eternal.
- iii. God is all-powerful.
- iv. God is a personal being like himself.

## 2) Providence

- Mt. 5:45 – God is good and universally loves all those made in His image.
- Acts 14:15-17 – God is good and all powerful.

## 3) Conscience

- Rom. 2:14-15 – God is righteous & holy.
- Rom. 1:32...
  - They know what's right and wrong.
  - When they do wrong, they know it's sin against God.
  - They know God's judgment is coming.
  - They know that they deserve eternal death.



# The Effects of General Revelation

1. Personal Guilt (Rom. 1:20; 3:19-20)
2. Moral Decline (Rom. 1:24-32)
3. God's Wrath (Rom. 1:18; 1:32-2:5)





**J.I. Packer:** “Human beings cannot entirely suppress their sense of God and his present and future judgment; God himself will not let them do that. Some sense of right and wrong, as well of being accountable to a holy divine judge, always remains. In our fallen world all whose minds are not in some way impaired have a conscience that at some points directs them and from time to time condemns them, telling them that they ought to suffer for wrongs they have done; and when conscience speaks in these terms it is in truth the voice of God.”



# The Weakness of General Revelation

1. Because of the fall, man doesn't rightly interpret the message of general revelation.
2. The message of general revelation does not include the gospel, so it cannot produce a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.





# Our Response to General Revelation

1. Worship and praise the one true God who has made Himself known!
2. Choose to really see and consider God's general revelation.
3. Praise God for what He has graciously revealed about himself to all people everywhere through general revelation.
4. Thank God that He has also made Himself known in His special revelation.



# II. Special Revelation

(Ps. 19:7–11)





# A. The Flow of Special Revelation

## Special Revelation in OT History

- Before the fall
  - Adam & Eve (Gen. 1:28; 2:16-17)
- After the fall
  - Audibly to...
    - Adam & Eve (Gen. 3:9, 11)
    - Cain (4:6-12)
    - Noah (6:13-21; 9:1, 8)



# Special Revelation in OT History

## The Time of the Patriarchs

1. Theophanies—visible manifestations of Himself
  - *Theophany* from *theos* (God) and *phaneia* (to appear)
  - God the Son (Jn. 1:18)
2. “The Angel of the Lord” (Gen. 16:7-13; 32:22-32; cf. 48:15-16; Hosea 12:3-4)
3. Visions (Gen. 12:7; 15:1, 12; 26:24; Job 4:13; 20:8; 33:15)
4. Dreams
  - God spoke (Gen. 15:12; 20:3, 6; 28:12; 31:10, 11; 46:2)
  - Symbolic and needed interpretation (Gen. 37:5, 6, 10; 40:5-16; 41:1, 5)





# Special Revelation in OT History

## The Time of Moses

1. Theophanies (The Angel of His Presence, the burning bush, the pillar of cloud and fire)
2. Moses Himself (Num. 12:6-8; Dt. 18:18; 34:10)
3. Miracles (Ex. 9:13-16)
4. Written Revelation (Ex. 17:14; 19:1 ff)
5. The Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 14:41; 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65)
6. Other revelation deposited in the Ark (Dt. 31:24-26)
7. Joshua added to the scroll (Josh. 24:26)



# Special Revelation in OT History

## The Period of the Judges

1. The Angel of the Lord (Jud. 6:12)
2. A dream to a Midianite soldier (Jud. 7:13-15)





# Special Revelation in OT History

## The Period of the Prophets

- From Samuel to Malachi
  1. Samuel (1 Sam. 3; 10:25)
  2. Spoke Audibly
    - David (1 Sam. 23:2-4)
    - Solomon (1 Kings 3:5; 9:2)
  3. Dreams (Dan. 2:1, 3; 4:5; 7:1)
  4. Casting Lots (Pr. 16:33; cf. Acts 1:21-26)
  5. Prophets
    - Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4-17; 12:1-14)
    - Ahijah (1 Kings 11:29-39; 14:6-16)
    - Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22-24)
    - Elijah (1 Kings 17—2 Kings 2:14)
    - Micaiah (1 Kings 22:17-28)
    - Elisha (2 Kings 2:13-13:21)
  6. The Writing Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi)



# Special Revelation in NT History

1. Gabriel's announcement of the birth of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:13-20, 28-37)
2. Five supernatural dreams to Joseph, the Wise Men (Mt. 1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22)
3. John the Baptist (Lk. 3:2)
4. Spoke audibly
  - Mt. 3:17 at Jesus' baptism
  - Mt. 17:5 at the Transfiguration
  - Jn. 12:28 during the Passion Week
5. Through His Son (Jn. 1:1, 14, 18)
  - His work revealed God's work (Jn. 17:4)
  - His Person manifested God's name and nature (Jn. 14:9-10; 17:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3)
  - His words revealed God's words (Jn. 12:44-50; 17:8; Heb. 1:1-2)
6. Post-Ascension Appearances
  - Stephen (Acts 7:56)
  - Paul (Acts 9).
  - Peter (Acts 10:9-16)
  - John (Rev. 1)





## B. The Avenues of Special Revelation

1. Personal Address, Theophany, Christophany
2. Mechanical Means (e.g., the lot; Urim & Thummim)
3. Miracles
4. Visions and Dreams
5. Angels
6. The Incarnate Son
7. The Written Propositions of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:6-13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17)



## Martin Luther:

- “God wants to give you His Spirit only through the external Word.”
- “Let the man who would hear God speak, read Holy Scripture.”

## John Piper:

“Luther called the Bible the “external Word” to emphasize that it is objective, fixed, outside ourselves, and therefore unchanging. It is a book. Neither ecclesiastical hierarchy nor fanatical ecstasy can replace it or shape it. It is external like God. You can take it or leave it. But you can’t make it other than what it is. It is a book with fixed letters and words and sentences.”



## Robert Reymond:

“Christians should be overwhelmed by the magnitude of this simple truth that they take so much for granted—that the eternal God has deigned to share with us some of the truths that are on His mind. He condescends to elevate us poor undeserving sinners by actually sharing with us a portion of what He knows.”





