

## The Earth Declares

### Romans 1:18-20

#### Introduction

Today we wrap up our 3-part series on revelation. In this series, we've endeavored to look at the various ways in which God reveals Himself to us in our lives. In the first week, we talked about wise counsel, and the value of listening to fellow believers, whom God might choose to work through in order to speak truth into our lives. Last week, we talked about special revelation, that is, God's sacred Word, the Bible. We discussed not only the important characteristics of the Bible, but we also examined how the Bible impacts us in our daily lives.

Today, we're going to talk about general revelation, also referred to as natural revelation. The concept of natural revelation states that God reveals Himself to us in nature, the world, the universe, and even in who we are as people. By looking at ourselves and our surroundings, we can deduce facts about God, who He is, and what His characteristics are. This type of revelation is not meant to replace what God reveals to us in the Bible, but rather, it is meant to supplement it. Natural revelation is a valuable piece of telling us who God is and how He operates.

I'd like to begin by looking at a verse of Scripture from the book of Romans. Please read along with me as we look at Romans 1:18-20.

**Romans 1:18-20** – The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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.

What is Paul saying in these verses? He's saying, in short, that the wrath of God will befall godless and wicked people because, perhaps in spite of not having

heard God's Word, the existence of God has been made evident to them through what can be observed in the world. He indicates that people are without excuse for not believing in God, because there is evidence of God's existence in the world around them. Further, people can glean, from this evidence, some of God's attributes. In short, people have no excuse not to believe in God, given what He has done for them and shown them in the very world and universe in which they live.

Has anyone ever heard of the theory of intelligent design? I have in my pocket here, my iPhone. Now my iPhone is a sophisticated piece of equipment. Android fans need to bear with me and take me at my word for a moment. It has mechanical and electronic components that all work together to produce a device that can perform many functions. If someone were to encounter my iPhone on the side of the road, God forbid, it would be most reasonable to assume that the device was created by someone intelligent. The alternative assumption is not very viable. One could assume that, over the course of some amount of time, the chemicals and materials necessary to comprise what is my iPhone randomly formed together and made a complex device. Anyone hearing this must surely believe that such a postulation is ridiculous. The former explanation is far more favorable. Someone designed and assembled the device with intelligence, care, and precision. We know this to be the only explanation that truly makes sense.

The same principle can be applied to many things, not the least of which is the marvel of the human body. While some would prefer to believe that the human body randomly formed or evolved from primordial soup, that is, a liquid comprised of rich biological compounds suitable for the random introduction of life, the human body is equally if not more so complex and functional than my aforementioned iPhone. With that in mind, it's reasonable, perhaps most reasonable, to believe that the human body itself had an intelligent Designer. We as Christians, of course believe this to be true, for it says in the book of Genesis.

**Genesis 1:27** – So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The human body is simply too complex and perfectly functional to have been a random occurrence. Such perhaps is a piece of the evidence that Paul was referring to when addressing the Romans in our opening verse. There are many other examples of such evidence, and we will explore some of them now. Later, we'll examine what this evidence can indicate to us about who God is and what His attributes are.

Along with the human body goes the human mind and soul. Equally intricate as the body, humans in general have an important sense of conscience built into who they are. Look at what Paul says, again, in the book of Romans.

**Romans 2:14-15** – (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. 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.)

Paul again refers to people who do not have the law. . . . That is, people who have not received the Word of God. And yet, in spite of this, he indicates that they, at least some, are capable of following the law. How can this be? Paul says that, “they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,” with, “their consciences also bearing witness.” This would plainly indicate that a conscience is a standard element of a human being, at least most, and if this is the case, where would such a conscience come from? Again, we look at our verse from Genesis.

**Genesis 1:27** – So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

And... We find our answer. It is because man has been created in the image of God, and God Himself, is, moral law personified. This is one failing of science that our bibles help to explain. Science does not know what a soul is, but our bibles make the origin of a soul very clear. And so by observing the innate conscience of a human being, we get a glimpse into the morality of God. Again, this is all evidence for God found in elements of nature.

Thus far, we’ve talked about what we can glean about God by looking at the human being, but what other examples are there? Certainly not only humans, but every biological organism seems built to be uniquely suited for its habitat. And what about the Earth itself? We can deduce a few things about God by observing this planet that He has placed us on. The Earth is rather fascinating, and has the following features which help to keep us alive.

1. It has a molten core – The Earth’s molten core helps to keep it at a temperature that is conducive of life. If the Earth’s core were to cool

completely, or did not exist in the state that God created it in, the planet would become cold and dead. Nevertheless, God provided the Earth with its molten core so that it could sustain life.

2. The earth has ecosystems and weather patterns – The Earth’s ecosystems and weather patterns make it just so suitable for not only sustaining the planet itself, but also for sustaining life on it. Were our weather patterns much different, were there no rain to fall on the earth, life as we know it would not be sustainable. But again, nevertheless, God has made everything ‘just-so’ so that we might have the right environmental conditions in which to live.
3. It has food chains – The earth has food chains that ensure abundant sustenance for all of the life which it contains. Food chains have been weaved together masterfully by God to ensure quite simply that every creature has something to eat. From the minnow to the man, all have been provided for. Was this not the case, entire species would become extinct from starvation.
4. It has abundant water – Water is the backbone of life, and the earth has been interlaced with lakes, rivers, streams and oceans, providing much needed water to all life forms on the planet. God spoke this water into existence in the book of Genesis, knowing that all life that he created would need it. Were there not abundant water on our planet, life would dry up and die of thirst.

Take a moment to consider the planet you are on, and reflect on the way it is perfectly designed for you. The psalmist reflected on this same fact in Psalm 147, when he said:

**Psalm 147:8-9** – He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

The Earth, like an iPhone, and like the human body, is intelligently designed. The faith that it would take to believe that everything fits together so cleanly by random chance or happenstance, I simply do not have. Someone was behind this intricate creation, and we know that Someone to be God Almighty.

King's Business was a Christian publication that ran from 1910 to 1970. Listen to this excerpt from that publication.

Laws and forces of nature stand ready to be harnessed for man's use. Nor does nature exist merely on a subsistence basis. God has filled the earth with beauty and charm. There are majestic mountains and verdant valleys. There are tall trees and lush carpets of grass. The moonlight, the stillness of the desert, the melodious thrill of songbirds all witness that God has made the earth for our pleasure. Food for man grows plentifully, and beneath the soil are abundant minerals and oils for tools a fuel. Surely this minute agreement between man's needs and his environmental provision gives evidence of a miracle-working God. – **King's Business**

What about evidence beyond the Earth's surface and its environment? Is there anything in our solar system that speaks to the intelligent design of God? Consider the following facts as you weigh out this question in your mind.

1. The Earth is approximately 93 million miles from the sun. Were it much closer, the surface of the Earth would be too hot to sustain life. Were it much farther, the surface of the Earth would be too cold to sustain life! The Earth has been placed exactly where it should be in order that we may live.
2. The Earth is approximately 240,000 miles from the moon. Were the moon any closer, gravitational fields would cause flooding over the entire Earth. Again, the moon has been placed exactly where it should be in order that the Earth can sustain life.
3. If we were on Venus, it would be too hot, and we'd be dead. If we were on Mars, it would be too cold, and we'd be dead. Within the solar system, we have been placed on the single planet that is perfectly suited to sustain life.

So, given these scientific facts, what can we deduce about God his character, and his attributes from man, the Earth, and the solar system? Here is a list of four items which we can safely deduce from the evidence of God in nature.

1. God is Powerful – Put simply, God, to be able to create everything as He has, must be a being of immense power. He has control over everything, down to its finest detail. God in His ability to create and sustain the universe is truly a God to be held in awe and reverence.

2. God is Intelligent – We have seen this theme throughout the entire sermon today. Everything from the human body, to the conditions of the Earth, to the Earth’s placement in our solar system points to the notion that God is a being of immense intelligence. Every minute detail is adequately in place for a universe that functions like clockwork.
3. God is Provident – God has arranged everything just so in order that life, and more importantly, man, has everything he needs to live. From food and water, to suitable climates, mankind has been provided for. This would indicate that God loves and cares about His creation. King David said in Psalm 8.

**Psalm 8:3-4** – "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Herein lies a beautiful truth about God to be seen by all through natural revelation. David asks, “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” I don’t know what God’s exact answer to this question would be, but it is evident that apparently, we are indeed a treasured possession of our Lord. God loves all people, which is surely one reason that he has endeavored to make Himself known to us in so many ways.

4. God is Orderly and Precise – Along with God’s intelligence, it is evident that He values order and precision. God has controlled and constructed existence with care down to its every last detail. Nothing has been left to chance, and nothing has been weaved together poorly. This is evident in how everything quite frankly ‘just works’ together in harmony within existence.

The scope of natural revelation is worldwide. That is to say, ALL people have been exposed to the truths that God has revealed about Himself within nature, and, as Paul said before to the Romans, because of this, none are without excuse for believing that there is a God who made it all. King David again proclaims in Psalm 19.

**Psalm 19:1-4** –  
The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech;

night after night they reveal knowledge.  
They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.  
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.

Natural revelation then, speaks volumes without speaking a word. General and natural revelation point to 'a' god, and that is why it is critically important that we spread special revelation, that is, God's sacred Word, the Bible, to the ends of the Earth as we were commanded in Acts 1:8. This is perhaps the only way that those who have been exposed to and even enlightened by natural revelation can truly know the name of the Christian God. Nevertheless, the Heavens and the Earth declare the glory of God. Let us never forget this fact as we look into the world around us.

### **Conclusion**

We've seen various ways, over the past three weeks, in which God reveals Himself to us. He reveals Himself and His will to us through one another, in the form of wise counsel. We must be careful to listen to the truths that we speak into each other's lives, and we must also be careful not to surround ourselves with those who would provide us with unwise counsel. He reveals himself to us in his sacred Word, which serves to both inform and guide us in our daily lives. The Bible teaches us about who we are and where we came from, and it convicts our hearts and helps to keep us on a godly and righteous path. And finally, today, we've examined what God reveals to us about ourselves in nature.

We're going to close with a short poem by Martha Snell Nicholson entitled "He Hath Made Everything Beautiful." After listening to this poem, I want to challenge you to two things. First, I challenge you to put your emotions about our current Indiana weather aside. This is critical if you are to accept my second challenge. That challenge is to go, and spend some amount of time outside in contemplation of the world around you that God has created. Consider its splendor, and how God has provided for you through it. Praise God for what He has done for you through his creation. And now, here's the poem that I promised you.

When God invented beauty  
He made such lovely things!  
My happy heart is soaring

With every bird that wings.

His master brush spreads colors  
On palettes of the skies  
And over the ripening grain fields  
The haze of autumn lies

He gave us for our pleasure  
Each lovely flower that blows,  
Then added for good measure  
The perfume of the rose

He knows the singing rapture  
That comes with each new Spring –  
Oh, when God gave us beauty  
He made a wondrous thing

Please stand with me as we prepare for the invitation.

<b>Invitation</b>
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