**Realms** or **Spheres** of **Reality** Dec. 4, 2022

**GOD**

**Creation**

**Cosmos** -  **Universe**

 **Material / Spiritual**

 **Physical matter & energy / Meta-physical concepts**

 **Natural processes / Supernatural events** - **Miracles**

 **“Nature” / “Laws of Nature”**

 **Man**

 **Body /** Mind - **Soul - Spirit**

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 **GOD’s Revelation**

How Does God **Reveal** Himself To Us?

**I.** **General Revelation** – Through God’s **Creation** /“**Nature**” – ***All people*** have access to General revelation.

**A. The Cosmos** – the **Physical** (Material) Sphere / Realm of Reality –

 **Ps. 19:1 – 6**, *“The heavens declare …and the firmament shows His handywork…”*; **104:1 – 35**, is a poetic version of **Gen 1**; **Job 38 – 41**, likewise glorifies God through the *wonders* of His Creative acts in poetic genre; **Rom. 1:18** – **22**, *“…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 [all men] are without excuse.”* (emphases *added* throughout)

B. The **Image of God** in **Man** – the **Meta-physical** (Spiritual) Sphere / Realm of Reality –

 Our minds, awareness, reasoning, “hearts,” thoughts, souls & consciences – **Rom. 2:14 – 15** – *“[The Gentiles] 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;”*

 However, **I Cor. 2:14, 16**b says – *“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are* ***spiritually discerned****. But we have the mind of Christ.”*; **Heb. 8:10** (**Jer. 31:33**)– *“I will put my laws into their* ***minds****, and write them on their* ***hearts****,”*

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**II. Special Revelation**  – Through **God’s** **WORD**

A. Through the Spoken **Word**. God spoke directly to Adam – **Gen. 2:16**; to Noah – **Gen. 6:13**; and Abraham – **Gen. 12:1**.

B. Through the Written **Word** – **Scripture** – God also spoke directly to Moses – **Ex.** 17:14, *etc.*;

 and told him to write down on a scroll God’s words. God also wrote the Ten Commandment on stone.

 **Ps. 19:7 – 11** – *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting / reviving the soul; …the testimony of the LORD is sure,”*; **Deut. 4:2** & **12:32** & **Rev. 22:19** – *“You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it,”*; **II Tim. 3:16, 17** – *“All Scripture is breathed out by God …, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped ….”*; **II Pet. 1:19 – 21**  – *“And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention … no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”* (NASB)

 C. Through the Incarnate **Word** – **Jesus** – **Jn. 1:1 – 5**  – *“In the beginning was the* ***Word****, …. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”;*  **Heb. 1:1, 2** – *“Long ago, at many times and in various ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”*

**WCF, I.**, 1.

 How Are We To **Interpret** Scripture?

**WCF, I.**, 4 – Its **Authority** – from God – **II Tim. 3:16**, *etc.*

**WCF, I.**, 6., 7. – Its **Completeness** & **Comprehensiveness** – **Deut. 4:1, 2**; **12:32**; **I Cor. 2:9 – 12**; **II Pet. 1:3**; **Rev. 22:18, 19**, *etc.*

**WCF, I.**, 9, 10 – Its **Interpretation** – **II Pet. 1:20, 21**; **3:16**b, *etc.*

 **Luther**, “… I was aware that **allegories** were empty **speculations**…. It is the ***historical sense*** ***alone*** which supplies the ***true*** and ***sound doctrine***.”

 (LW 1.283 – emphases added)

 “How long did the Work of Creation take? When Moses writes that God created heaven and earth and whatsoever is in them in six days, then let this period continue to have been six days, and do not venture to devise any comment according to which six days were one day. But if you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are.” (A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active, p.1523)

 **Calvin**, “Let us know, then, that the ***true meaning*** of Scripture is the ***natural*** *and* ***obvious*** meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as

 doubtful, but boldly set aside as ***deadly corruptions***, those ***pretended expositions***, which lead us away from the ***natural meaning***.” (Calvin’s Comm. on **Gal. 4:22** – emphases added)

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 The **Literal, Historical, Grammatical, Contextual,** & **Genre** based **Interpretation** of Scripture

**A. Literal** – the most ***basic*** and ***primary*** meaning — versus an ***allegorical*** meaning However, figurative language (**Heb. 11:19** (NIV); **I Cor. 10:1 - 5**), such as

 figures of speech (**Jn. 10:6**, **7, 11**), parables(**Ps. 78:2**; **Mt. 13:34, 35**; **Lk. 8:10**),

 and hyperbole (**Mt. 19:24**; **23:24**) are not uncommon in Scripture.

 There are even a couple of places where the Bible *explicitly* uses allegory –

 **Eze. 17:2** (NIV) & **Gal. 4:24** (ESV, NKJ, NASB). But, in each case, the context

 ***explicitly*** identifies the passage *as an allegory*, and then proceeds to ***clearly***

 explain the components and meaning of that allegory. (There is no such

 identification or explanation in **Gen. 1** & **2**.)

B. **Historical** – how the ***author*** and his ***original audience*** would have understood the passage in ***their*** historical and cultural setting

**C. Grammatical** – how the words, syntax and language control the meaning

**D. Contextual** – how the surrounding contexts (immediate & larger) affects the meaning of the immediate passage

**E. Genre** – a category of literature characterized by similarities in form, style, and/or subject matter, such as **narrative** / **prose**, **poetic**, **prophetic** or **apocalyptic** language forms

 **Hebrew poetry** is very different than English poetry. Hebrew poetry, specifically, is characterized *primarily* by 1) **couplets** (back-to-back lines that are joined by *meter* and/or an *idea*, to form a complete thought, 2) **parallelisms** (repetition in the 2nd part of what has already been expressed in the 1st part, but in different words – **Ps. 1:5**); or 3) an **antithetical expression** in the 2nd part – **Ps. 1:6**), 4) **anadiplosis** (a device in which the last word or phrase of one clause, sentence, or line is repeated at the beginning of the next – **Ps. 121:1, 2**), and 5) **acrostics** (where each line or couplet starts with a different letter of the alphabet – 13 **Psalms**). None of these characteristics, however, are not found in **Gen. 1.**

Another, but little-known characteristic of **Hebrew poetry** is the frequent use of the **Perfect** & **Imperfect** **verb forms** (*vs.* the preponderance of **Preterit verbs** in the genre of **narrative** / **prose**). This has been shown by PhD Hebraist, Dr. Steven Boyd, *scientifically* (*statistical probability* of 0.9987) to *clearly distinguish* Hebrew **poetry** from Hebrew **prose.**

Though not in the original texts, most modern translations also *clearly distinguish* these two different Hebrew **genre** from each other by the physical layout style of their respective paragraphs. (RSV, NASB, LB, MLB, NEB, ESV, NIV, NKJV)

Comparative / Contrasting O.T. **Narrative** / **Prose** passages *vs.* **Poetic** passages regarding the same biblical events, *based on their* ***finite verb forms***:

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 – **Gen. 1, 2** (note the **prose** **style** throughout, *except* for 3 *specific,* single **poetic** verses, **1:27**; **2:4**, **23**) *vs.*  **Ps. 104** (the ***Creation Story*** in **poetic style**)

 – **Gen. 37 – 50** (Joseph’s **prose** story) *vs.* **Gen. 49:1 – 27** (Jacob’s **poetic** “Blessings” ceremony)

 – **Ex. 14** (the “Red sea” **prose** account) *vs.* **Ex. 15:1 – 19, 21** (**poetry –** The  **Song** **of Moses**, except for the *contrasting* **prose** ofthe **first** *part of* v. **1,** and vv. **20, 21)**

 – **Jud. 4** (**narrative** story of Deborah & Barak) *vs.* **Jud. 5** (the same story in **poetic** form, except v. **1**, and the very last sentence)

 – note the style of various passages throughout **Isaiah** that distinguishthe alternating **prose poetry** sections

(*“Thousands… Not Billions”* Chapter 10,Dr. Don DeYoung, 2005, Master Books)

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Dec., 2022

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