

Ways in Which God Reveals Himself

General Revelation - This revelation is found both in the external creation (Ps. 19:1, “the heavens declare the glory of God”) and in internal human experience (Rom. 1:19–20, “what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 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”).

General revelation shows attributes of God—such as his existence, power, creativity, and wisdom; in addition, the testimony of human conscience also provides some evidence of God’s moral standards to all human beings (Rom. 2:14–15). **This means that from general revelation all people have some knowledge that God exists, some knowledge of his character, and some knowledge of his moral standards.** This results in an awareness of guilt before God as people instinctively know that they have not lived up to his moral requirements. Thus in the many false religions that have been invented people attempt to assuage their sense of guilt.

But general revelation does not provide knowledge of the only true solution to man’s guilt before God: the forgiveness of sins that comes through Jesus Christ. This means that general revelation does not provide personal knowledge of God as a loving Father who redeems his people and establishes covenants with them. For this, one needs *special revelation*, which God has provided in his historical supernatural activities, in the Bible, and definitively in Jesus Christ.

Special Revelation - The Bible is God’s written revelation of who he is and what he has done in redemptive history. Humans need this divine, transcendent perspective in order to break out of their subjective, culturally bound, fallen limitations. Through God’s written Word, his people may overcome error, grow in sanctification, minister effectively to others, and live abundant lives as God intends.

Means of Revelation	Examples
actions	creating, judging, redeeming
names	“LORD” (Hb. <i>YHWH</i> , or <i>Yahweh</i>) “God Almighty” (Hb. <i>el Shadday</i>) “Master, Lord” (Hb. <i>’Adon</i>)
images	Father, Rock, Husband, Shepherd
attributes	holiness, goodness, love, grace, wrath

Practical Implications of the **Incommunicable** Attributes of God

Attribute	Scripture	Implication
Independence: God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy.	“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:24–25 ; cf. Ex. 3:14 ; Job 41:11 ; Ps. 50:9–12 ; 90:2).	God never experiences need, so serving God should never be motivated by the thought that he needs us. He is the provider in everything.
Immutability: God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, although as he acts in response to different situations he feels emotions.	“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed” (Mal. 3:6 ; for “being,” cf. Ps. 102:25–27 ; Mal. 3:6 ; James 1:17 ; for “purposes,” cf. Ps. 33:11 ; Isa. 46:9–11 ; for “promises,” cf. Num. 23:19 ; Rom. 11:29).	God can always be trusted because he always keeps his word, and is never capricious or moody.
Eternity: God has no beginning or end and is in no way bound by time, although he sees events and acts in his world in time, which is in fact one dimension of the created order.	“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Ps. 90:2 ; cf. Ex. 3:14 ; Job 36:26 ; Ps. 90:4 ; Isa. 46:9–10 ; John 8:58 ; 1 Tim. 6:16 ; 2 Pet. 3:8 ; Jude 24–25 ; Rev. 1:8 ; 4:8).	Those who trust the God of eternity can know peace, rest, and comfort in the busyness of life and in spite of impending death, for God keeps them in safety and joy forever.
Omnipresence: God does not have spatial dimensions and is present everywhere with his whole being, though he acts differently in different situations.	“Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth?” (Jer. 23:23–24 ; cf. 1 Kings 8:27 ; Ps. 139:7–10 ; Isa. 66:1–2 ; Acts 7:48–50).	God can be sought anywhere regardless of place. Believers should never feel lonely, and the wicked should never feel safe.

Practical Implications of the **Communicable** Attributes of God

Attribute	Scripture	Implication
Holiness: God is absolutely and uniquely excellent above all creation (majesty) and without sin (purity).	“And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’” (Rev. 4:8 ; for “majestic holiness,” cf. Ex. 15:11 ; 1 Chron. 16:27–29 ; Isa. 57:15 ; for “moral holiness,” cf. Isa. 5:16 ; 6:1–8 ; Acts 3:14 ; Heb. 7:26).	God should be feared and obeyed, and his people should earnestly pursue moral purity.
Omnipotence :God is able to do all his holy will.	“Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isa. 46:9–10 ; cf. Ex. 6:3 ; Job 37:23 ; 40:2 ; 42:1–6 ; Ps. 24:6 ; 33:10–11 ; 91:1 ; Dan. 4:34–35 ; Matt. 28:18).	God’s ultimate will is never frustrated by evil, so there is peace and confidence in the face of suffering for those who trust God.
Sovereignty: God has absolute rule over creation as King and total control and determination over all that happens.	“His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” (Dan. 4:34–35 ; cf. 1 Chron. 29:11–13 ; Ps. 22:28 ; 24:1 ; 47:7–9 ; 103:19 ; Prov. 16:19 , 21 , 33 ; Dan. 4:25 ; 7:1–28 ; 12:1–13 ; Matt. 6:13 ; 10:29 ; Acts 17:26 ; Eph. 1:11 ; 1 Tim. 6:15 ; James 1:13–15).	Mankind should obey and submit to God as humble subjects of his kingdom.
Omniscience: God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible—past, present, and future.	“Whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything” (1 John 3:20 ; cf. Job 28:24 ; 37:16 ; Ps. 139:1–3 ; 147:5 ; Isa. 55:8–9 ; Matt. 10:29–30 ; Rom. 11:33–34 ; 1 Cor. 2:10–11 ; Heb. 4:13).	All God’s thoughts and actions are perfectly informed by perfect knowledge, so he is perfectly trustworthy.
Wisdom: God always knows and chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. Wisdom is a moral as well as an intellectual quality.	“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might” (Dan. 2:20 ; cf. Job 9:4 ; 12:13 ; Ps. 104:24 ; Rom. 11:33 ; 16:27 ; 1 Cor. 1:21–29 ; Eph. 3:10–11).	God’s wisdom is not always clear to us, but it is great, deep, valuable, and should be highly desired and sought, and we should not doubt its reality even in circumstances that upset us.
Love: God freely and eternally gives of himself. The ultimate historical demonstration	“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we	God is eager to extravagantly give of himself to meet the needs of lost sinners, so they should flee to him with confidence (cf. Rom. 8:32).

<p>of God's love is seen in the cross of Christ.</p>	<p>might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:8–10; cf. John 3:16; 15:13; 17:24; Rom. 5:8; 8:31–39; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:16; 4:16).</p>	
<p>Wrath: God intensely hates and responds with anger to all sin and rebellion. God hates every threat to what he loves.</p>	<p>"Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb'" (Rev. 6:15–16; cf. Ex. 34:7; Rom. 1:18; 2:4; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Pet. 3:9).</p>	<p>God should be greatly feared. Unbelievers should fear his judgment and turn to Christ for salvation. Believers should fear God's fatherly discipline. The God who loves us is also the holy God who hates sin (1 Pet. 1:17).</p>