



Divine Revelation, Part I: God the Father and Creation

Eduardo P. Olaguer

What is Revelation?

- Revelation is God's free and undeserved communication of Himself to humanity.
- Revelation is always divinely initiated and inspired. We cannot manufacture it.
- Revelation is an invitation to faith, the trusting acceptance of God's Word.
- We grow in faith by acknowledging what God has already revealed, like walking backwards.
"We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)."

The Three Types of Revelation

- **Natural Revelation**

- The reflection of God in the created world.

- **Scripture**

- The prophetic revelation of God through the recorded history of Israel, the gospel summaries of the life of Jesus, and the apostolic writings.

- **Tradition**

- The continuing faithful transmission of the living Word of God through the Church.

Natural Revelation

- The order and beauty of Creation are the natural revelation of God.
- Natural reason is sufficient to know that God exists with certainty through “the analogy of being,” i.e., the partial similarity between God and creatures despite their infinite distance from each other.
- “For what can be known about God is plain... because God has shown it... Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature... has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made (Rom 1:19-20).”

Arguments for God's Existence

- ***The Ontological Argument***
 - God is the Perfect Being, “that than which no greater can be conceived (St. Anselm).”
- ***The Moral Argument***
 - Moral laws point to God's existence. If there is no God, then everything is permissible.
- ***The Henological Argument***
 - God is the ultimate Unity that explains the diversity of creatures.

The Five Ways of St. Thomas Aquinas

- ***Argument from Motion***
 - There must be a First Mover, who is unmoved.
- ***Argument from Efficient Causes***
 - There must be a First Cause, who is uncaused.
- ***Argument from Possibility and Necessity***
 - There must be a Necessary Being, upon whom all contingent beings depend.
- ***Argument from Gradation of Being***
 - There must be an ultimately Perfect Being, from whom all creatures derive their goodness to various degrees.
- ***Argument from Design***
 - There must be a Perfect Intelligence, who directs all things toward their ends.

Different Conceptions of God

- **Atheism:** There is no God.
- **Agnosticism:** There may or may not be a God.
- **Polytheism:** There are many personal gods.
- **Dualism:** There are two opposite gods or forces.
- **Pantheism:** God is the impersonal world soul (Brahman). The universe is God (immanence).
- **Monotheism:** God is a personal Being who created the universe (transcendence).

East vs. West

- ***Eastern Religions***

- Hinduism (pantheist/polytheist, reincarnation)
- Buddhism (agnostic, liberation from suffering)
- Taoism (dualist, balance between Yin and Yang)
- Confucianism (agnostic, ethical system)

- ***Western Monotheism***

- Judaism (Revelation through Abraham)
- Christianity (Salvation through Jesus Christ)
- Islam (Muhammad, the seal of the prophets)

The Judeo-Christian God

- The *Sh'ma*: “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD (Deut 6:4).”
- God is the Almighty (*El Shaddai*), Eternal (*El Olam*), and Most High (*El Elyon*) being.
- God made the world out of nothing (2 Mac 7:28).
- God is the holy ground of our being. His name to us is YHWH, “I am who am (Ex 3:14).”
- God is a personal being (I-Thou, not I-It). He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex 3:15).
- God reveals Himself in history, through the Covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

The Christian Conception of God: The Holy Trinity

- There are three Persons (Father, Son, Spirit) in one God, who share one undivided Substance and one undivided Will only.
- The Father knows Himself in eternally begetting God the Son, the Logos (Word) by whom Creation was spoken into being (John 1:1-3).
- The love between the Father and the Son is personified by the Holy Spirit, the Breath of God, hence “God is love (1 Jn 4:8).”

God the Father

- “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible (Nicene Creed).”
- The idea of God the Father is the absolute foundation of Christianity, for it makes possible the revelation of our origin and of the economy of grace (the free gift of divine life).
- God made man in his image and likeness, both male and female. Denial of human gender is a denial of the goodness of God’s creation.

The Creation

- According to biblical scholars, there are two distinct creation stories in Genesis: a) Gen 1:1 – 2:4 (Elohism), and b) Gen 2:5–25 (Yahwism).
- It is possible that the creation of human bodies (nature) is a separate event from the creation of the human soul through grace (supernature).
- The Catholic Church does not prohibit belief in evolution, as long as we believe in monogenism (descent from a single male/female pair).
- Belief in pre-Adamic human races is allowed.