

Paper 212 – Theology

GENERAL REVELATION HAS SALVIFIC OR CONDEMNATORY ELEMENTS? A THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Scholars are intensely divided over the issue of salvation derived between special and general revelation. There are two major views. First, the exclusivistic view that holds that only special revelation (the Bible) mediates the saving knowledge of God. This view holds that general revelation is bereft of cognitive salvific intention. The second view, the inclusivistic, holds that general revelation (nature) has saving element. The argument of the exclusivistic view is that the knowledge of God derived from general revelation is not sufficient for salvation. Instead of saving a person, this revelation rather condemns a person, for it lacks redemptive content. It is an inadequate basis for religion for it has not salvific effect. There is no assertion of the Scripture that special revelation invalidates general revelation. It is true that there have been people who have knowledge of the Bible and God but this does not mean that these all have a saving knowledge. However, in this theological analysis, the position that this study has arrived is that all revelation has salvific element. To deny any redemptive aspects of the general revelation suggests denial of God's all-encompassing grace as knowledge of God is not restricted to special revelation. The Scripture asserts that God desires all men to be saved, therefore, to limit His sphere of knowing Him only through the Bible, seems too restricted and narrow. Consequently, God even utilizes general revelation as a vehicle for salvation even if it is limited.

Keywords: Revelation, Special Revelation, General Revelation, Subjective Revelation, Salvific Effect, Inclusive, Exclusive