

and in the New Testament the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. In such instances history itself is revelatory -- there is in such acts themselves as Vos suggests a "self-disclosure of God."⁴ This means that there are instances where "*act-revelation*" must be considered in addition to "*word-revelation*."

It should be noted, however, that this emphasis on revelation through "act" or "event" is rightly qualified by Vos in a two-fold manner.

(1) When "revelation" and the "redemptive acts" of God coincide the *primary* purpose of such acts is not revelation, even though this is an important and essential aspect of their purpose. Vos says, "primarily they possess a purpose that transcends revelation, having a God-ward reference for *instruction*."⁵ Thus for example, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ primarily serve a purpose in reference to God -- to satisfy divine justice -- so that it would not be proper to view these acts exclusively or even primarily under their function with respect to revelation.⁶ Yet Vos holds that "the revealing element [in such acts] is essential . . . the two ends of satisfaction and revelation being combined into one."⁷

(2) The second way in which Vos qualifies his emphasis on revelation through "act" or "event" is to point out that such act-revelations are never left entirely to speak for themselves. He emphasizes that "the revelatory acts of God never appear separated from his verbal communications of truth."⁸ Word and act always accompany each other, usually with the act preceded and followed by word-revelation. Vos comments: "To apply the Kantian phraseology to a higher subject, without God's acts the words would be empty, without His words His acts would be blind."⁹ A look at Exod 1-12 in this connection is very instructive. Here the word of God consistently comes first. The deed of God follows. Revelation is not contained in a word which arises simply by *interpretation* from a deed. Revelation in these narratives consists initially in a word which is then subsequently *confirmed* by a deed. The words and deeds of God are joined together in a snug system of confirmatory revelation whereby God commits himself verbally to what he proposes to do, and then confirms that as a veracious word by doing precisely what he said he would do.

Those of the "revelation-in-history school" of approach to the Old Testament who would limit divine revelation to the medium of *event* do not take sufficiently into account the important role of word-revelation which in fact is indispensable for divine revelation in history to be perceptible with any degree of certainty and clarity.

There is perhaps no issue in contemporary biblical and theological studies that is more important than a correct understanding of the relation between divine revelation and history, or to look at the same issue from another perspective the relation between faith (which is the human response to divine revelation) and history. During the time of the Enlightenment or Age of Reason serious questions were raised about the biblical representations of God's speaking and acting in human history. The scientific and intellectual developments of this time fostered belief in natural law and confidence in human reason. A rational and scientific approach to religious, social and political issues promoted a secular view of the world. This intellectual climate spawned a new approach for the study