



Canon: Which Books Belong?

Lesson Two: Revelation—The Need and the Process

1. ☞ Consider this question: “WHAT IS REVELATION?”

☞ Revelation—Its PRODUCT is the bound Bible that we cherish today!

a. Many today take the Bible for granted. It is a book that has become “casual” in man’s views and “common” in the respect given to it. Many fail to recognize that the Bible is God’s “revelation” to mankind.

b. The Bible is the **product** of God’s revelation. ☞ The Bible exists today only because God sought to reveal the divine mind to mankind.

c. The Bible is indeed a marvelous volume. Yet its value is seldom recognized. Contemplate some basic facts about the Bible. These facts are essential if we are to appreciate the Bible as the “revelation” from God that is the order our religious faith/practices (See Neil Lightfoot, *How We Got The Bible*, p. 19ff).

1) ☞ God first communicated with man via oral methods. He spoke directly to man (Hebrews 1:1-2). But oral transmission was not permanent. There was a need for a more permanent record. ☞ Thus, a written record was compiled.

2) Moses was the *first* person mentioned in the Bible as “writing” (Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27, 28; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24, 22). Moses authored the first five books of the Old Testament.

3) Following the writing practice of Moses, others wrote the revelations and events of God:

- a) Joshua (Joshua 24:26)
- b) Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25)
- c) Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:2)

4) The Old Testament Scriptures thus grew and were assembled into an acceptable collection. ☞ Ezra is credited with assembling all the written Old Testament Scriptures into the formal volume of the “Old Testament” (this was compiled around 400 B.C.).

5) ☞ The New Testament Scriptures also gradually grew. The books were written within a short time frame (50-100 A.D.). The process of the New Testament

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Scriptures being recognized as “God’s Revelation” was...

- a) Letters were written by men who were regarded as distinctively authoritative and were received with respect and read as God’s Law (1 Thessalonians 5:27).
 - b) ☞ Letters were interchanged between congregations (Colossians 4:16).
 - c) ☞ A distinctive history of Christ’s life was compiled as the oral accounts began to be insufficient (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30, 31).
 - d) ☞ The history of the gospel’s spread and the climatic victory of the Christian’s faith (Acts and Revelation) were the last pieces to be written.
- d. ☞ The present form of our Bible exists because of centuries of compilation, revision, and ordering.
- 1) The division of the Bible into “Testaments” (a better term would be “Covenants”) suggests that God has made two significant contracts with mankind. The “New” replaced the “Old.” *Note:* The arrangement of the English and Hebrew Old Testaments is very different (see Lightfoot, p. 22), BUT they both include the *exact* books, just in a different order and group naming.
 - 2) The Bible, as a written record, employed three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek (see Lightfoot, p. 24-26 for discussion of these languages).
 - 3) Summary—“Our Bible is a collection of extraordinary books written over a period of sixteen hundred years. The Bible gradually grew until its completion near the close of the first century A.D. As a collection of books the Bible through the years has been arranged in various ways. The order of books in our English Old Testament goes back to the Greek version that was used widely in the early church. Our New Testament writings are arranged according to a logical pattern, although different orders can be found among various manuscripts” (Lightfoot, p. 26).
2. Revelation—Its *ORIGIN* is from God. The topic of “revelation” is critical to our series. Since God desires to guide man in the way that will bring happiness and joy, man must, in some fashion, come to *know* what the divine will is for his life. The transmission of this knowledge is called “revelation.” A failure to understand the critical nature of “revelation” will cause one to depreciate the Bible. Consider this vital topic (See Rene Pache, *Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, Moody Press: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, second printing 1971 chapter 1, p. 11ff).

☞ There are two significant questions that must be considered:

a. *Why is revelation necessary?*

Even though man possesses vast intelligence, he is unable to answer the basic mysteries surrounding him. What is his origin? End? Etc. It is the answer to these mysteries that man seeks. Man has attempted to answer these mysteries with a multitude of methods but his efforts have been in vain. He has created imperfect “gods,” designed complicated systems, and accepted absurd beliefs in order to answer life’s mysteries. In order for man to have true understanding, he must have a revelation from above. Two reasons explain this urgency for “revelation”:

- 1) God, by definition, is inaccessible to the creature (Isaiah 55:9; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; Isaiah 45:15).
- 2) Man, by the entrance of sin into the world, broke the contract with God. Prior to the Fall man had a delightful fellowship with God. After the Fall man was spiritually dead (Genesis 2:17; 3:24; Ephesians 2:1, 5). This made man incapable of comprehending spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4).

b. ☞ *Is God willing to “reveal” certain knowledge to mankind?*

- 1) Some have denied that God is willing to reveal divine directions to mankind. But God has condescended to communicate His Truth (Psalm 119:130).
- 2) Revelation is an act of God by which the divine thoughts are disclosed in such a way that mortal men can understand! (1 Corinthians 2:11).
- 3) Mankind is capable of understanding God’s communication. The entire Bible emphasizes God’s desires to communicate with man (Isaiah 1:2; John 17:3).

c. ☞ God has revealed Himself to mankind through universal truths.

These revelations are evident to all mankind. By using these revelations God was providing all men with the basic knowledge that mankind is to serve a Master (Romans 1:18ff). Even before the Fall, God provided mankind with two revelations of His Person and attributes:

- 1) ☞ *The revelation of God in Nature.* (Romans 1:19-21; Psalms 19:1; 8:3, 4; Acts 14:15-17; 17:27, 28). As marvelous as the revelation of Nature is, it is insufficient. It teaches us about the power of God but fails to present His holiness, righteousness! There must be another avenue.
- 2) ☞ *The voice of God in conscience.* (Romans 2:14-16). God endowed man with a

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- moral and spiritual sense of “ought.” People can stray far from these implanted principles. This reveals the limitations of this revelation.
- d. Since the universal revelations are insufficient, it was necessary for God to use the following methods of revelation so mankind would understand the divine will. God desired to impart to mankind the Divine Truth (2 Peter 1:3). This great undertaking was accomplished by a progressive system of revelation that would eventually result in the Bible.
- 1) 📖 The THEOPHANIES (appearances of Deity). God would appear and directly give man the Divine Truth (Genesis 17:1,22; 18:1; 26:2; 32:30; Ex 3:2-6; 33:11; Judges 6:12,14-18).
 - 2) 📖 By DREAMS/VISIONS (Numbers 12:6; Genesis 28:12-16; 1 Kings 3:5-15).
 - 3) 📖 By DIRECT CONTACTS (Numbers 22:9; Ex 33:11).
 - 4) 📖 Via MIRACLES/SIGNS that focused man upon the power, holiness, and presence of God (Genesis 6-9; 19; Exodus 3-15; etc.).
 - 5) 📖 Through THE PROPHETS (Exodus 4:11, 12; Numbers 11:25, 29; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; Nehemiah 9:30; 2 Peter 1:21; Amos 3:7).
 - 6) 📖 In the sending of JESUS CHRIST to earth (John 1:18; 14:9; Matthew 11:27).
 - 7) 📖 By the HOLY SCRIPTURES contain all of the revelations used by God to communicate with mankind. Each of the above methods built upon the other and culminated in the compilation of the Holy Scriptures!
3. The “revelation” of God was necessary. Without this revelation mankind would be ignorant of all spiritual matters. The process utilized by God to provide the necessary revelation was designed so that mankind would have all knowledge necessary for salvation—peace, joy, and happiness in this life and in the life ahead. This urgent need and the divine process of revelation resulted in giving man the Bible! The Holy Bible is thus the revelation from God that has been designed to satisfy man’s basic spiritual needs!

WHAT IS “REVELATION”?



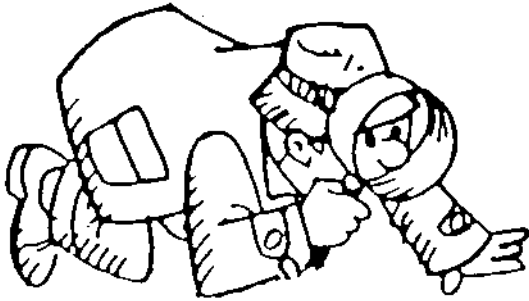


THE PRODUCT OF REVELATION: THE HOLY BIBLE!

Basic facts to contemplate...

- God first used oral communication with man.
- Writing was the better method.
 - Moses was the first to write (Exodus 17:14).
 - Others: Joshua (Joshua 24:26); Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25); Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:2); etc.
- Ezra compiled the Old Testament writings.
- The New Testament's growth was gradual.
 - Letters were distinctive authority (1 Thessalonians 5:27).
 - Letters were interchanged (Colossians 4:16).
 - Christ's life was validated (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30).
 - History (Acts) and the climatic victory of Faith (Revelation) were last written.
- The present form took centuries to process.

Transparency 2/2



**REVELATION:
ITS ORIGIN
IS FROM GOD!**

Two significant questions are asked:

“Why is revelation necessary?”

**“Is God willing to reveal
certain knowledge to mankind?”**

UNIVERSAL REVELATIONS FROM GOD

The revelation in Nature

Romans 1:19-21; Psalms 19:1;
8:4, 5; Acts 14:15-17; 17:27, 28

The revelation in Conscience

Romans 2:14-16



Transparency 2/4

SPECIFIC REVELATIONS FROM GOD



THEOPHANIES

Genesis 17:1, 22; 18:1; 26:2;
32:30

Dreams/Visions

Numbers 12:6; Genesis
28:12-16

Direct Contacts

Numbers 22:9; Exodus 33:11

Miracles/Signs

Genesis 6-9;
Exodus 3-15

Jesus Christ

John 1:18; 14:9
Matthew 11:27

The Prophets

Exodus 4:11, 12
Numbers 11:25, 29

The Holy Scriptures

Transparency 2/5