

# Revelation And The Bible

## Introduction:

The word "revelation" simply means a revealing, and in theology is applied to God's revealing of Himself to mankind. Without revelation, we would not know anything about God - or even that there was a God. Thus we begin this study with the premise that God desires to make Himself known to man, and has in fact revealed Himself at various times and in different ways. Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4

## I. Revelation Defined

"Revelation is the unveiling of something previously hidden so that it may be seen for what it is."

All revelation is supernatural in that it has God for its source and truth as its end.  
Deuteronomy 29:29

## II. Revelation Explained

The revelation of God to man falls into two basic categories:

### A. General Revelation

General (or Natural) Revelation is that knowledge of God which is derived from the light of natural things.

General Revelation is accessible to all men and is addressed to all intelligent creatures. It is the revelation of God to man in:

#### 1. Creation

Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 40:12, 26; Acts 14:17; Psalm 8:1; 104:24

#### 2. History

Psalm 9:16

#### 3. Conscience

Romans 2:15

General Revelation bears witness to the existence of God, the power of God, and the need for God. However it does not testify to the personality of God or the plan of salvation.

According to Romans 1:18-20, the effect of General Revelation is to condemn man.  
Why? - See: Romans 1:21

General Revelation alone is inadequate to save man for two reasons:

- Creation has been affected by the entrance of sin. Genesis 3:17; Romans 8:22  
The witness is marred and blurred, and is now a monument to God's curse upon sin.
- Man himself has also been affected by sin, to the extent that he is not able to read the evidences of God afforded in nature aright.

### B. Special Revelation

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Special Revelation is direct, divine intervention in the affairs of this world, and is God revealing Himself through special acts done by His Person.

This kind of revelation has come to man by various means:

1. Through Dreams - Genesis 37:5-10
2. Through Visions - Daniel 8:1
3. Through Audible Voices - I Samuel 3:1-10
4. Through Animals - Numbers 22:28
5. Through Angel - Luke 1:26-37

The “**crown**” of God’s special revelation of Himself to man was in the coming to earth of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:14; 14:9.

The “**completion**” of God’s special revelation of Himself to man is the BIBLE.

According to Psalm 19:7-14, the effect of special Biblical revelation is to save man. Thus this kind of revelation is redemptive and remedial.

Special Revelation is necessary because of:

- The effects of sin.
- The transcendence of God (the fact that He is so separated, holy, that man could not find Him.)
- The Personality of God (the fact that He is a God of love Who desires fellowship with man.)

### III. Revelation Contrasted

A number of terms are frequently associated with any discussion on the doctrine of the Bible.

#### A. Revelation vs. Inspiration

1. Revelation makes truth known <-> Inspiration provides for its inerrant recording.
2. The Bible contains Revelation <-> The entire Bible is Inspired.

The writers of the Bible drew from two different sources for their narrative:

- Special revelation - i.e. things that only God could make known.  
e.g. the account of Creation or the fall of Satan
  - Personal observation - i.e. known facts that resulted from what the writer saw.  
e.g. the crossing of the Red Sea, or, from existing documents, Ezra 6:1-12.
3. Revelation is progressive <-> Inspiration is plenary (all the Bible is inspired and every part of the Bible is equally inspired).  
God did not reveal all truth at the beginning. Much truth was revealed progressively over centuries. (I Peter 1:9-12)  
Some examples would be:
    - The Name of God. Exodus 6:2-3
    - The Coming of Messiah. Ephesians 3:3-5

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On the contrary, there is NO SUCH THING as progressive inspiration.  
All parts of the Bible are inspired of God, and equally inspired.

### B. Revelation vs. Illumination

Illumination is the Holy Spirit-given understanding of revelation or revealed truth.

The believer enjoys this blessing today as he studies the Word of God. John 2:20, 21, 22.

The presence or absence of illumination with the writers of the Word of God had no bearing on the inspiration of the Bible.

1. Sometimes the Biblical writers both understood what they were writing and recognized the words they were penning as coming directly from God. e.g. II Samuel 23:2. In such cases, the writers had full illumination as to what was being written.
2. Sometimes the Biblical writers did not know the importance of the words they penned, recognized them as divine, but not understanding them. e.g. Daniel 12:8, 9
3. In some cases, the source of the words neither understood the word nor recognized them as divine. e.g. John 11:49-52

The point is, whether the writer had illumination or not, inspiration provided that God's exact message was truthfully recorded.

I Corinthians 2:9-10 - Revelation - "Disclosure"

I Corinthians 2:12 - Illumination - "Discovery"

I Corinthians 2:13 - Inspiration - "Documenting"