

# **Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature,**

## **Lecture 2, Revelation, Inspiration, Canon**

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Okay, I'm still working on names, so you can keep talking, but I'll wander around and ask this gentleman here. What's your name? I'm Matt. Another Matt? Oh dear, we've got two Matts to contend with.

Matt and Matt, alright. Who are you? I'm Wes. You're Wes.

Who's from southeastern Pennsylvania? I read your cards, and there are at least three of you. Maybe you're not here yet, but you're from southeastern Pennsylvania. Nobody's going to say anything about that? No? Okay, maybe they're coming from another class. I used to live there, that's why I'm so interested in that, to find out where exactly you're from.

Okay. Near Philly? Did I say, yeah? Are you near Philly? I'm on the New Jersey side.

Which is, what particularly? Okay. Do you know the Soderton and Telford area? Okay, northwest of Philadelphia, that's where we used to live. Where were you from? Uh, Telford. Oh, sure. Yeah. What brought you up to Boston? I don't know. Okay, that's good. What was your name again? Wes. Wes. Thank you.

Alright, we'll get there, eventually. It's about time to start, I think, as we're sort of moseying our way along. It's cold today, isn't it? This room has a, how many of you have had class in this room before? It tends in the wintertime to be chilly. Please feel free to bring your blankets. I've had students do that in the past, it's kind of fun.

At any rate, if you're using laptops and you need to have some power supply, there's always this front row, which then makes it easier for me to connect with you, rather than sitting in the back row. But that's alright, we can do that too. Please notice the announcements.

Let me clarify a couple of them a little bit or expand on them. I won't have this. Please turn off your cell phone thing every time, but just to get us used to it. The second thing is that Carrie's review sessions have now been settled.

Did I get it right? Yes. Okay, great, I got it right. So, Tuesday, and that will mean this coming Tuesday is when you're starting. I'm guessing that's true. Okay, good. And then Matt, pardon me, that's going to sound good on the tape, isn't it? If I start drooling over a cough drop fairly soon, you'll understand, won't you? At any rate, Matt won't start until the 26th because, obviously, we're not having class on Martin

Luther King Day. But do, as I said last time, compel yourself to take advantage of the review sessions.

You'll find them eminently helpful, and they're certainly going to give you a lot more peace of mind when you get to the day before the exams. I'm still working on your names, by the way, and I'll have to do that for the next week and a half or so, and then maybe we'll get it down pat. If you've looked at your syllabus now and have downloaded it, you may notice that next Wednesday evening and that's our next class. Since we do not have class on Monday, next Wednesday evening, there will be a lecture here, which is optional entirely, but I offer it every semester that I teach this class.

My husband is an astrophysicist. He's also a strong Christian, so don't let the astrophysics outweigh that in any way. They integrate fairly well.

But I always have him come in and give a lecture on the Big Bang as we're starting to discuss Genesis 1 and 2 and creation and all those things, and I would encourage you to come if you have any interest in those kinds of things because I think you'll get a good sense that contrary to some strands of thought, the Big Bang as a scientific construct actually integrates very well with the whole idea of creation as we see it in Genesis 1. So, I'd encourage you to set that time aside if you can. Are there any problems with Blackboard? Are there any problems with downloading the syllabi or anything else that you need? We're all set there? Okay, good. We're going to start today.

As I said last time, I always like to start class with a psalm, and I'd like you to turn to Psalm 100. Last time, we did Psalm 86, verses 10 and 11, but I want to start this day with Psalm 100 because we're going to learn to sing the last verse of Psalm 100. So that's our thing for this day. We'll read all of Psalm 100 now; I'll introduce you to the last verse in Hebrew, and then, Lord willing, on Wednesday, we'll learn to sing it.

But here we go. Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth, or if you're reading the King James, make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God; it is he who has made us, and we are his. We're his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.

In other words, this is how we're to come into God's presence as we worship him. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good, his love endures forever, and his faithfulness continues throughout all generations.

That's the verse we're going to learn to sing in Hebrew, along with about five other Psalms throughout the course of this semester. So, here's the way it is in Hebrew. You never thought you were signing up for a Hebrew class, did you? When did you

sign up for this class? But you're going to learn about, well, maybe 25 or 30 significant words in Hebrew.

Some of the most important ones are right here in Psalm 100, verse 5. I'm giving you in white a painfully literal English translation of this because good is the Lord, okay, kitov Adonai, forever we know, or literally to eternity is his hesed. We're going to have a lot to say about hesed throughout the course of this semester. It's a Hebrew word that really can't be translated.

Sometimes, your translations have mercy, and sometimes, they have loving kindness, but it really means everlastingly loyal covenant love. Try and sing that in one word. So, we stick with hesed, and it's a word that you get to ch on.

Practice your guttural sounds, h, got it, okay, hesed, all right, le'olam hasdo, the O is on the end of it because pronominal suffixes that are possessives. In other words, his hesed, if they're masculine, they end up with that O sound, ve'ador, vador, unto generation and generation, his faithfulness, emunato, notice the hasdo, emunato, his hesed, his faithfulness. Speak that with me, if you will. Let's do it slowly, ki tov Adonai, le'olam hasdo, oh, that didn't sound nearly h enough.

Start from the beginning again, ki tov Adonai, le'olam hasdo, oh yes, ve'ador, vador, emunato. Again, Lord willing, we'll sing that on Wednesday, but let's take some time to pray together as we start.

Our gracious God and heavenly Father, precious Redeemer, most Holy Spirit of truth, as we start this day together, we pray earnestly for your presence with us. Father, teach us by your Spirit, which is living and active. Teach us through your Word, which is also living and active. Teach us, Father, because we need to know you and know more about you.

Teach us how to love mercy and do justice. Compel us to pray for justice, righteousness, and truth, not just for ourselves but for our communities, for our nation, and for the places in the world that are torn apart by injustice and strife. Father, we would be bold to appeal to you as master of the universe for peace in Israel, for cessation of hostilities on both sides.

Lord, be merciful to your people. And now, as we study together, may your name be honored and glorified. We ask in Christ's name with thanksgiving, amen.

Well, let's carry on a little bit here. Here, we are going to talk about revelation and inspiration. Let me warn you ahead of time that what we're doing for most of today is going to be highlighting stuff that you've read if you've read your assignment for today.

So, if you've read Theological Primer, some of these doctrinal issues came out, and I'm going to highlight them. The reason I'm doing it is because I think they're important. So, is that a clue? It's stuff you're going to want to know.

In addition to that, we're going to talk very briefly about authority, about the idea of the canon of the biblical text, particularly the First Testament, and then about some overarching textual characteristics themselves. If you've got the lecture outline downloaded, you know where we're going today. A couple of things to get started with, however, review.

What does Tanakh stand for? Go ahead, Mary. Right, Torah, which means instruction, Nevi'im, prophets, which includes both historical writings and the writing prophets, and Ketuvim, which means writings, including our poetry and several other things as well. Great.

Let's look ahead a little bit. This is drawing on what you've read for today. Let's see what answer we have.

What doctrine is eminently clear in Psalm 19? Your options are salvation through atonement, redemption via the payment of a price, revelation in nature and in scripture, or creation and sustaining of the universe. Who says the first one? Nobody. Second one? So far, so good.

Third one? We have a few tentative hands. Am I counting, ooh, about five or six or so? Fourth one? Lots of folks are doing the fourth one. Here's the answer.

Whoops. We skipped the answer way too fast, didn't we? Oh, and I'm not going backward. All right.

Hang on. The reverse is not working. There it is right there.

The third one. The others are wonderful pieces of truth, and we're going to come to them, but it is in Psalm 19 that we have a very excellent combination that talks, first of all, of the heavens, declaring the glory of God and at the end of the Psalm, and we're going to look at it a little bit later on, it's particularly clear in the fact that the scriptures themselves are revealing things that we need to know. All right.

That's our review and preview questions. Some questions that we also want to think about a little bit more. And these are not rhetorical questions.

I'm just curious in terms of what you think. Why? Why is it imperative for you and me to have a sound understanding of the nature and authority of scripture? This is something that we don't have very much, even in the Christian context. We often say

the Bible says with no basis for thinking that the Bible has any greater truth than the Shack, if anybody's read that.

Has anybody read The Shack? Okay. Interesting book. C-plus in terms of literary capabilities, maybe a B in terms of the issues it's dealing with.

It's not quite up here with this, all right? Why? What do you think? Why is it absolutely necessary? Does anybody want to venture into this? Sarah, go ahead. Okay. So if we're indeed going to have a presupposition, and we're going to talk about those in a moment, that the God of the universe, who's transcendent, which has all sorts of implications that we won't get into right now, and also personal, which also has all sorts of implications, that God has chosen to speak to us, then it's really imperative that we have a sense that his word, as embodied in scripture, is going to have some authority to it.

And we want to know something more about it. Anything else? Tell me your name. Kaelin? Okay, good.

Go ahead. Good. Let me just reiterate what Kaelin has said, for those of you who may not have been able to hear it.

We need to have a sound understanding of the truthful nature of scripture, and how we can indeed trust that to be truth. Or otherwise, why even assume that it has anything to say to us? I've really rephrased what you've said. Did I do it okay? Are you all right with that? Let's go on to a couple more questions.

We'll keep moving. As you think of scripture, what troubles you? I mean, if we're talking about, as Sarah said, you know, we're talking about, at least as our presuppositions go, the transcendent God of the universe making himself accessible to our minds and hearts via words. If that doesn't knock your socks off, or whatever it is you're wearing on your feet today, something's wrong with you.

Or else you've just been, you know, dulled by how many years of just hearing things and not thinking about them. I know that sounds really rude. But we're all in this position of being a little bit semi-comatose when it comes to thinking about the real implications of some of these things.

Maybe because we've heard them too often. What questions do you have? One of mine is, how could this possibly happen? Is God himself going to actually speak to folks like you and me? Caitlin, is that a question? Yeah. I'm sorry, say it again.

Right. How can we claim, I'm going to put it in a positive sense, how can we claim that scripture is infallible? Now, what prompts that question? It's a great question. Say it again.

I have a great thing for you to read. I'll put it on blackboard. It might already be there.

But yeah, that's a good question in terms of, if we've got this text that has come through the hands of human beings for, in some cases, thousands of years, how is it that we can claim that it's infallible in its doctrinal statements? And it is a whole statement, as a matter of fact. I'm going to come back to that, I hope, when we talk about 2 Timothy. We'll get there.

Any other questions? My name, your name, sorry. Tell me your name. Susanna, thanks.

Good. To what extent do we have, if not multiple meanings, at least the possibility of different interpretations from people coming from different contexts asking different questions? Another excellent question.

What kind of major are you going to be taking? Oh, let me encourage you to take biblical hermeneutics at some point, where we really do pursue that question at length. It's a good adjunct to the philosophy major. All right.

We can go on and on. Do you think your questions do have credible answers? I'm going to suggest they do. We may not have the complete answer to anything, but I'm going to suggest that the questions that you have, maybe that you haven't asked yet or have been able to phrase at this point, have some credible answers.

I'm only going to begin to give some of them today as I do an overview. Let me encourage you: there are open forums for this class. They're on Wednesday evenings, the first one being the Big Bang Talk, but after that.

Please bring your questions to those, and we can talk about them further if they don't get answered here, rather than walking away saying, this is not a reliable document. All right. We're going to start with some of the things.

Well, actually, we're going to start with this. Sorry, I forgot I had that in there this year. For you art majors, Rembrandt is one of my favorite painters.

You're going to see a lot of him throughout the course of the semester. This is one of his absolutely lovely paintings. I hope you can see it from the back.

What do you know about the artist? As you look at this, tell me your name: Nick.

Okay. The artist has a profound sense of beauty. Can we say that? Is that fair to say? All right.

He perceives nature and is able to represent it, which means he's skilled. What else? Should I know your name yet? Try me again. Ginger.

Thanks. In other words, you think this artist is presenting something about contrasts here, able to perceive them, able to represent them, and maybe having some kind of message in mind.

Although, we don't know what that is yet. You're making some guesses about moral components that are part of this. Okay.

Good. Anything else? Ah, don't tell me. Zach.

All right. Okay. Judging by his style, he is a non-contemporary painter.

Right. And, of course, we're going to move this back about 500 years, as a matter of fact. Good.

Anything else that you know about the artist, simply by virtue of looking at this picture? His perception of beauty is skilled enough to present it, is able to see something about contrasts, and perhaps we can guess some implications there. Kaylin, do you want to try? Your hand isn't up. Okay.

All right. Well, let's leave that for a second. We're going to come back to that idea, but think of this artist and just think of what we can know simply by virtue of looking at his work.

We can know skill. We can know ability. We can know ability to perceive.

Sense of beauty. Sense of representing something that is in nature and doing it fairly accurately. Okay.

Just hang on to that. Let's go on. We're going to define revelation at this point, and we're going to move on to some things in a moment that may come back to our painting.

This is a definition that you don't have to write down because it's already in your lecture outline notes and it's in the primer. Okay. But it's important to know.

When we're talking about revelation, and by the way, memorize it. It won't hurt you. This is divine self-disclosure, which teaches otherwise inaccessible truth about God.

And it draws forth a response. That part of it is also important. As you looked at that picture, you responded in some way.

Oh, I don't like it. Oh, it's too old-fashioned. Oh, that's wonderful.

Oh, he really knew what he was doing in getting that bridge in there and that color contrast. Some kind of response is there. This is another way of thinking about this whole concept, and we're going to look at a couple of the passages in a moment that supports this, but divine communicative action is another way of thinking about revelation.

Okay. What this particular phrase communicates to us is that the scriptures themselves, the scriptures themselves, are not just words. They're words about God's actions, and the words themselves have an active component, too.

Hebrews chapter 4 will tell us that. Okay. So, divine communicative action, if you like that better than revelation, may have been overworked a little.

All right. Let's carry on a little bit. I mentioned a moment ago that we want to talk about presuppositions here.

Maybe you want to think of them as foundational understandings. This is not, in what I'm saying next, an attempt to prove that God exists. You can go to your philosophy class to try and work through some of those issues.

But what I want to do is just lay out some of the things that are foundational to our discussion, and yes, they come from looking at scripture. But I wouldn't say that's circular necessarily. I think we're going to build and have sort of a spiral of understanding here.

But first of all, in terms of our presuppositions, we're going to presuppose for now that a divine being and the scripture does call him God, amongst his other names, has indeed chosen to communicate. Okay. He's chosen to communicate.

And not only that, he's personal. Now, a divine being implies transcendence, at least in our sphere of things, but he's personal as well. Those two going together are really remarkable.

He's intentional, and he's intentional in his communication because his creation, and we'll talk more about that later on, has a need. That's why we're even discussing any of this stuff. That's why we talk about doctrine.

That's why we talk about these issues such as salvation, redemption, and so forth and so on. We're needy sorts. The purpose of revelation is the communication of truth, and indeed that is accomplished.



We don't know everything there is to know about God. We can't. That's obvious.

That's a no-brainer. But contrary to some schools of thought, we can know enough. We can know enough to know the things that are going to shape and guide our choices and what it is that God wants us to do in terms of participating in his kingdom.

And here's another thing that we want to keep in mind as well because a lot of people look at scripture and say, well, words are so inadequate. A picture is worth a thousand words, et cetera, et cetera. Well, not necessarily.

Sometimes a picture such as the one we looked at a moment ago needs words to understand it better. So, they both have to work together. So, words are adequate, fully adequate, even though not perfect to communicate this.

I want to make a couple of comments here. There's something called the Logos Doctrine, which I will discuss in class later. I think it's in the primer that you've read.

At least, I hope it is. But at any rate, I can't remember. I read the primer a long time ago.

One of the things we need to keep in mind is that when God created the universe, Genesis chapter one, he did it by virtue of speaking. And because he did it by virtue of speaking, that tells us something about the connections and the interrelatedness and the correspondence between what God says and what's out there, the created reality that's out there. Logos is a Greek word, means word.

But it has a bunch of other meanings too. Does anybody know what they are? I'll put it on the spot. That's wicked, isn't it? What else does Logos mean, Ted? And it also means, and I'm going to pick up on that.

When you look at the meaning of Logos in a Greek dictionary that's outside of the New Testament, it means logic, which you'd expect. Correspondence is interesting. Reason, also very interesting.

So, if you take that whole pool of meanings and expand beyond word, we can see that indeed, when God speaks the created order into existence by virtue simply of speaking and simply by virtue of the word, there can be a connectedness here between what he says and what we see out there, what we experiment, what we measure, and what we represent. Words talk about natural phenomena. They represent them.

I'm looking down at a desktop here. So, are you if you're looking at your desktops. When you talk about it, you are representing it to an audience that's out there.

You can't see the one I'm looking at, but I can describe it to you, and by virtue of my words, you get a picture of what it's all about, especially if you've seen one before. Words also talk about supernatural phenomena. And in that case, they present them.

Now, here's a fascinating little datum for you if you have a little skepticism about supernatural phenomena. And you can ask my husband more about this next Wednesday night. How many of you are coming from a physics background or are going to study physics? Anybody? Natural sciences? Physics chemistry? Something of that sort? Maybe? How much of the universe, percentage-wise, is stuff that you and I can measure and see, etc.? How much of it, percentage-wise? Do you know? Probably not a lot.

That's great. 4.6%. Now, how do we know that? Because physicists do a lot of experiments. They're talking about things like dark matter and dark energy.

Have you heard those terms? Right? Okay, dark matter and dark energy combined make up about 95% of the universe. What they are, we don't know. So, if what I can talk about, see, measure, touch, I'm baryonic matter.

So are you. So is the chair you're sitting on. So, is that light up there?

That's 4.6% of the created order of the universe. The rest of it is stuff we can't measure. If that's true in the physical realm, doesn't that give you some kind of, think along analogy now?

If that's true in the physical realm, doesn't that give you some kind of a basis for thinking there is a remarkably complex, wonderful, rich, supernatural realm out there? And the scriptures begin to talk about those supernatural realms. That's exciting to me. At any rate, I've waxed a little too long on that.

Let's go on. Pick up some of the things that, again, I want you to highlight from what you've read for today. God is the one who initiates this whole process of revelation.

We won't take time to turn to 1 Corinthians 1, but there it's very clear, Paul is saying, that humans do not, by their own wisdom, come to know God. Okay? This is true because God is holy. We're not.

We're sinful. God is infinite. We're finite.

And so, it's God who initiates this whole process of revealing himself, divine self-disclosure, if you will. Now, I'm not in any way denying the reason for saying this. It's just that we don't reason our way to God.

But we can certainly see, and these experiments, for example, that I just mentioned, that demonstrate very clearly that there's something out there called dark matter and there's something else out there called dark energy. You know, that's a reason. That's the ability of humankind to know that there's something that's really remarkable out there, even though we don't know what it is.

Okay? So please don't ever get the sense that I am putting down reason in the context of this discussion. I'm not. Well, I need to go on just a little bit.

We're going to define revelation a little more specifically, and I'm going to use some very standard theological categories. The first one is general revelation, sometimes called natural revelation. And we want to look at three passages of scripture in regard to this.

The first one is Psalm 19. So, if you've got your Bibles, let's take a quick breeze past Psalm 19, remembering that what he's revealing is his power and his attributes, and they're coming through creation. And by the way, again, think of an astrophysicist studying creation.

Study stars. Also, study black holes, dark matter, and dark energy. Both components are here.

At any rate, the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands day after day. In other words, continually.

This is an ongoing thing. Night after night, display knowledge. The next verse is a little hard to translate.

There's no speech or language where their voice is not heard. That's the NIV's rendition. Goes out to all the earth to the ends of the world.

So, it's everywhere. This tells us that the work of God is evident, and it's a continual declaration. And again, study astronomy.

You'll get an appreciation for this in a greater way. It goes on in verse 7, which talks about the nature of the law of the Lord. And then the closing of this psalm is wonderful because it sort of comes back and helps us with part of our definition of revelation, which is calling forth a response.

Notice verse 12. Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. In other words, the psalmist is recognizing that he is very quickly, and he's saying, forgive my hidden faults.

That's a response simply to the fact that he's been aware of and thinking about revelation and how it comes about. Keep your servant from willful sins, not just my hidden faults but my willful sins. The psalmist is really aware of the problems that he's got here.

May they not rule over me, then I'll be blameless, innocent of great transgression. And then, of course, the verse that many of us memorize as we grew up in the church, if we did, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. This is a response.

The revelation has called forth a response. If you want to turn over there, see the same thing happening in Romans chapter 1. Again, I know I'm reiterating what's in the primer, but you get the idea that this might be important stuff.

Starting in verse 16, Paul says he's not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God to save everyone who believes. All right. He's recognizing the nature of the gospel.

Now, verse 18. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of humans who suppress the truth. If they're suppressing it, it must be accessible, and there must be something intentional.

That's a response—tragically, it's a negative response. They suppress the truth by their wickedness since what may be known about God is plain to them.

God has made it plain to them. Verse 20 is the punchline if you want to put it that way. Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, His eternal power, and His divine nature have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse.

Romans 1 is a pretty sobering passage. From what has been made, from the things that we can observe out there, we are held accountable because we're supposed to know something about God's divine power and His attributes. As you looked at that picture earlier on, you know, there's some basic things that we picked up about the artist simply by virtue of looking at the picture.

There are some basic things we pick up about God simply by virtue of looking at the created order around us and studying it carefully. I'm going to just take a quick, quick turn into Romans 2. I won't read the whole of this.

I'm going to read verse 15 simply. Paul has been talking, making a tremendous argument here.

We're going to keep coming back to Romans throughout the course of this course. But here he's setting the stage for saying that all humankind is held accountable for what they know. In chapter 1 he's talked about what we can see in the created order.

Here comes chapter 2, verse 15. We show the requirements of the Torah, which are written on our hearts. Our conscience is bearing witness.

Our thoughts are now accusing, now defending. The very fact is that we are created with a conscience that recognizes what is good as opposed to what is evil and knows when we choose what's wrong. You guys I think read Mere Christianity right for CCC? Is that right? Do you remember his arguments there? People know what's right and wrong and we know what's fair and we know when we've been offended by something that somebody else has done against us.

There's an intrinsic nature there that says that's not fair, especially when it's been done against me. C.S. Lewis is simply drawing on what's theologically here in Paul's epistle to the Romans. There's much more we can say about that but we need to go on.

We can get a whole lot from general revelation but let's use our painting. What don't you know about that painting? Picking up on Ginger was it you who were talking about light and darkness? Right. That was you know you were sort of trying to wisely read in some motives perhaps or some ideas or some thoughts that Rembrandt might have had but did you know him for sure? Maybe he was just painting a cloud and bright sky.

What else don't we know about that painting? Remember it had a bridge had trees. Ah, help me out with your name. Joanna.

I'm sorry say it again. Okay, we don't know the movement of the clouds. We don't know the weather patterns.

We don't know how that might affect what's going on on the ground. That's good. What else don't you know? It's Matt.

Right. Yeah. We don't know why he painted it.

We'd like to guess, but we have really no idea unless he were to write some kind of a document that says in the year such and such. I decided to paint this, and I was motivated to do it because I'm giving it to you because I like you or whatever. Those are the things you don't know. You don't know motives.

You don't know will. You don't know intentions. Same is true in terms of God and his revelation.

We can know a whole lot about him, but apart from special revelation, there are some things we simply don't know, and therefore, we need to talk about the word of God. Again, a term that theologians use by way of contrast to general or natural revelation, we have special revelation verbal statement of primarily propositional truth, which I'm going to define in a moment regarding God's character. Again, we didn't know the character of Rembrandt.

We don't know exactly what he was like simply by looking at that painting. We know God's powerful, but is he powerful for good? Is he a benevolent power or a malevolent power? We know that once we come to read the Scriptures. Character and will meaning of human existence as well as the nature of the spiritual realm.

These are the things that special revelation so beautifully articulates for us. And by the way just a little bit of a definition here. When people use the expression propositional truth, it has this meaning.

It's not oh. I've got a proposition for you. Instead, it talks about statements that have components of truth and falsehood. That chair is in front of me.

That's a true statement. Ah, woe is me is not. That's an emotive statement.

It's something expressing that I'm feeling kind of awful, but the ah woe is me. Well, you can infer from it something, but it's not a propositional statement necessarily. Well, in terms of categories and special revelation, we want to talk specifically about the word because it's a word in scripture,. It's a word in the person of Jesus Christ. And, of course, the scriptures are really kind of interesting in that you can think of them sort of like a big X, if you will.

All the stuff in the First Testament is looking forward to the place where the two lines of the X join the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All the things past it are looking back and interpreting that Christ event. The gospels tell us about it the epistles talk about the implications of it and have exhortations in terms of how to live in regard to that.

And, of course, isn't it interesting that X, our X, is representative of the Greek letter Chi Christos? Okay, and so all those things kind of fit together. All right, that's been too long, so we need to keep going. Words of scripture, the word in the person of Jesus Christ, the word incarnate, and then by mighty act and prophetic instructive word that kind of draws it all together, coming all the way back to our comment earlier divine communicative action.

Are we doing okay so far? I'm looking at the time. Any questions? Have I been blathering and twaddling to the point where I've lost you? Yes. Help me out with your name.

You're Katie. There's a Kate and a Katie. All right, go ahead.

Supernatural, yeah, that would work just fine. The reason I call it special is that it is indeed set apart in a way, and it doesn't necessarily use the term supernatural. One of the reasons for staying is that it's a fine term to use, but once you have the text, it's there as written text.

When you have Jesus as Jesus incarnate he's a human being. Now granted he's fully God but he's also fully human and people experienced him in that context as fully human but it's fine if you want to use that as a contrast that's great. Any other questions? Okay we've got a little bit more to do.

Inspiration. And this gets to some of the questions that were brought up earlier and hopefully we can address a few of those at least. This is another definition to be perfectly honest with you I'd like you to memorize.

Do you know that your brains have a phenomenal capacity for memory, much more than we give them credit for? I have to tell you about my favorite hymn writer, Fanny Crosby. Does anybody know that name? A woman who was blind. Do you know how much scripture she memorized? All the Gospels, all the Psalms, and by the time she was in her 30s, she decided to start working on the Minor Prophets, and I had trouble with a verse or two.

So, memorize some of these things, memorize some scripture, it's great. At any rate, special act of the Holy Spirit. Here's the thing, and we'll look at the passages about this in a moment.

The Holy Spirit is guiding the writers of scripture to accomplish some things, and there are a couple of so that's that I want you to have in line here. So that, their words would convey the thoughts. This is not a dictation process, but their words will indeed convey the thoughts that the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit wants communicated.

The second so that, they'll bear a proper relationship to the rest of scriptures. In other words, there's not going to be blatant contradictions and discrepancies here. That doesn't mean it's simple.

There are some very interesting things that are part of this coherence, and they're complex, but nevertheless, there's going to be a coherence, a proper relationship to the rest of the scriptures. Then, of course, the third, so that is also very important,

should be infallible in thought, fact, doctrine, and judgment. Now, this is, of course, where sometimes antennas go up.

What does infallible imply? How do we understand that? Particularly with regard to the fact, though, not so bad. Doctrine is a theological construct, but what about fact? Can we say that the scriptures are infallible in terms of facts as well? Of course, the areas where this really becomes a challenge for some folks are the areas of science and history, and particularly science. Come on Wednesday next because some of those might be addressed from the scientific perspective just in one area of creation.

At any rate, thought, fact, doctrine, and judgment. Let's take a quick look at first an expansion of this definition and then at some of the passages, and we'll come back to what Paul says to Timothy. Here's the important issue.

The Holy Spirit doesn't squelch those writers of scripture. Instead, he enhances who they are in their cultural backgrounds with their particular capabilities. So unique combination of cultural background.

For example, what did Jeremiah have to write? How many of you were in chapel on Wednesday? Remember that Dean Carmer spoke from Jeremiah and the kinds of things that Jeremiah was enduring in his cultural context, such as his nation falling apart around him. What Jeremiah has to say is very shaped by who he is and what's going on around there. It's going to be a very interesting discussion.

It's going to be quite different from what Isaiah would say 100 and some years before that. So cultural context are going to shape personalities as well, language, backgrounds, etc. The point is that regardless of when these writers are living and who they are, the Holy Spirit is going to ensure that what is said in scripture is both culturally relevant as well as transcending culture, so that it speaks to you and me as well.

That's the thing we need to keep in mind. It will speak to you and me. It's particular in terms of its historical background, and we study that, we want to know it.

We just want to go back and find out when Rembrandt painted and why. But it also transcends cultures, the words of scripture, just like looking at that painting, which has a good deal of beauty that transcends culture. So, does the scripture transcend in terms of its truthfulness?

Well, I have something else coming up here. Yeah, what does the Bible say about itself? Just so that we can circumvent a problem here. Aristotle, none other than Aristotle, says something that I think it's important to keep in mind as we start talking about what the Bible says about itself.



Because some people may say, oh, you can't go to the Bible to find out what it's all about in terms of whether it's truthful and reliable. Aristotle, a fairly decent philosopher, I think it would be fair to say, said the following about texts. Benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not irrigated by the critic to him or herself in our culture.

So, in other words, we as readers don't have a greater say in terms of the component parts and the nature and the authority and the reliability of the text than does the author himself. At any rate, the Old Testament text over and over again says, thus saith the Lord. That says something to us.

It's God speaking. Through prophets, yes, but it's God speaking. Then, of course, this is the one we want to land on just a little bit.

2nd Timothy, if you've got your Bible, it's probably worth looking at it. Chapter 3. Notice that Paul is talking, and Paul is not talking about the originally penned manuscripts when he's talking to Timothy. I'll start with verse 14.

As for you, continue with what you've learned and become convinced of it because you know those from whom you've learned it. How from infancy have you known the Holy Scriptures? From whom did Paul learn Scripture? Do you know? If it says from infancy, take a good guess.

It says mother, isn't it? Interestingly enough, they're actually named. Your mother, Eunice, and your grandmother Lois, Chapter 1. We have the names of the individuals who have taught Timothy. Paul is simply affirming that.

You know those from whom you've learned it. How from infancy you've known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. So, the purpose of Scripture is to make you wise for salvation.

Then, of course, the passage that we're really aiming for in terms of the nature of Scripture. As Paul is writing this to Timothy, he says all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful. Teaching, rebuking, correcting, training, and righteousness so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Now, what the Scriptures are saying about themselves, in other words, is what Paul is saying, is that all these Scriptures, not just the parts you and I like, but all of these Scriptures are here. They're here because God has breathed them. We'll come to second Peter in a moment in terms of the Spirit's work, and he's breathed them so that they might accomplish the important purposes of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

That's pretty comprehensive. Which Scriptures are these? Well, most likely the First Testament. They are most likely already in translation because Timothy was living in Ephesus.

Well, we need to also look at 2 Peter. This gives us a little window into the role of the Holy Spirit in this process. Peter's going to say in verse 16 that we didn't follow cleverly invented stories; we were eyewitnesses.

I didn't put that up here. That actually starts with verse 16, but please notice the importance of eyewitnesses. In the first century, when Peter is writing, when the gospel writers are writing, when Paul is writing, eyewitnesses who were actually involved in events were deemed the most reliable sources for the truthfulness and the veracity of an event.

It's no wonder that Paul will emphasize eyewitnesses in 1 Corinthians 15. It's no wonder that Peter does the same thing, says we were eyewitnesses. But having said that, notice verse 19.

We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it. Verse 20, above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. That's what lots of scholars say now.

Do you know that? There are lots of folks that write about the Old Testament that say, well, it's just the product of a community, a particular religious community or pardon me, communities throughout a span of 1,000 years or so, and these people came up with their own ideas in terms of a relationship with God and a divine being and spirituality.

Peter's saying, no, no, that's not true. Instead, in verse 21, the prophecy didn't have its origin in the will of humankind. Men spoke from God as they were carried along by none other than the Holy Spirit.

This is what the text says about itself. We need to take it seriously. Not only that, as Matthew presents the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus affirms the ongoing importance and truthfulness of the Old Testament.

Not a jot or a tittle is going to pass away from it, he says. And then, interestingly enough, in John chapter 14, Jesus' words were mentioned as well. What is Jesus, well, what's going on in John 14? You guys have come from New Testament, I think, last semester, right? What's happening in John chapter 14? Does anybody remember? He's got a band of very faithful followers. They're in the upper room.

Right, and that's what he's talking about at the Last Supper, and he says, he promises the coming of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 14, also chapter 16, it's reiterated. And one of the things that he says the Holy Spirit's going to do is teach and remind you.

Now, gathered in that room were some of the folks who were going to be writing scriptures a little later on, and the Holy Spirit would serve to remind them of the events and do it properly in terms of their writing of them. Paul will also say, and I won't turn to this, but in Ephesians chapter 2, he talks about this whole building, i.e. the church, being built on the foundation of Jesus Christ as the cornerstone with the prophets and the apostles. Notice he equates both of them, the prophets being the First Testament writers and the apostles being those who are contemporaries of Paul.

And Paul puts both of those on the same footing in terms of their truthfulness in addressing the Christ event if you will, and the revelation of God. So, that's a brief thumbnail sketch of what the Bible says about itself. You've read about that already, I trust, if you've read the Primer.

We need to carry on a little bit and just make a couple of comments about authority. One of you mentioned earlier the importance of inspiration and knowing the nature of the text in terms of our acceptance of it as authoritative in our lives. If it's a text, if we firmly believe that this is a text that God has revealed and it's inspired by him, how on earth can it not be authoritative? What foolish mistakes we're making if we don't affirm its authority in our lives.

As my pastor at Park Street Church repeatedly says, Gordon Hugenberger, you'll hear me over and over referring to him because he's a wise person. But he says, if God is the designer and you're the person that's been designed, then here we've got the owner's manual. We might as well take the words pretty seriously from the designer in terms of how to function.

That's what the scriptures serve as. Okay, at any rate, we submit to that authority as the rule of faith and practice. And I'm going to talk more about that in just a moment when I talk about canon.

But are there any questions so far? I know I've just skimmed the surface. I know I've skimmed the surface in terms of these issues of revelation and inspiration. But any questions before we move on to talk about canon a little bit? Sarah? Yeah, it's a great question.

When does the New Testament become recognized as authoritative? Well, my easy, nasty answer to you is come take Biblical hermeneutics where we deal with that at length. But here's a quick response. It's apparent that right away Paul knows that he's writing something that's profoundly important.

The very fact that he'll equate, as I said earlier, apostles and prophets and say, that is what you need to listen to, with the chief cornerstone being Christ. Peter's going to do the same thing. When Peter, in 2 Peter chapter 3, is talking about, I think it's verse 16, but somewhere around there, 15, 16.

He's talking about Paul's writings. And he says, you know, some people distort Paul's writings. They're a little hard to understand.

But he says some people distort the writings of Paul as they do other scriptures. He's using the term scripture there to refer to what Paul is writing, but what other people have written, too. So, it's kind of an interesting recognition right away that you've got something significant going on here.

Already at the end of the first century, one of the church fathers, whose name is Clement, quoted scripture and clearly did it as authoritative. And then this just grows and grows and grows in terms of ongoing numbers of people and communities around the Roman, well, around the Mediterranean Sea, let's say, that are recognizing this text as authoritative. Having said that, I'll say this in a minute when we talk about canon, but it's pretty clear to me, at least this is my affirmation, that the Holy Spirit didn't die in 50 AD.

And I would submit to you that the Holy Spirit is as active in forming and shaping the canon of scripture as he was in inspiring the text of scripture. And I think that's important to keep in mind. Sometimes, there are those of us who think only of the Holy Spirit in terms of inspiration and then the Holy Spirit in terms of the charismatic gifts that are part of some of our backgrounds.

But the Holy Spirit's role is also extremely important in terms of shaping the canon. That's who does it. Zach? Would you explain why the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the canon? No, I think within the generation, I think one of the things that we deal with when we talk about canon is that especially New Testament canon, which is, of course, part of what you're asking, by the time you have the demise of the apostolic witness, in other words, those who were there, who saw, who were eyewitnesses to what Jesus does, that's the end of the canonical text.

Now, certainly, you have important things going on, and I wouldn't in any way deny for a moment that the councils, as they appeal to the wisdom from the Holy Spirit, are certainly being guided by that. But I wouldn't say it's the same kind of thing that you have when you've got the actual production of the text. But I see the force of your question, because if I'm going to talk about the Holy Spirit shaping the canon, I don't put that as late as the church councils.

I know some people do, but I think New Testament canon is actually pretty much affirmed by second century. I know that runs contrary to what a lot of people say. Some folks don't allow it to be recognized as canonical until the fourth century, with Athanasius' list of canonical books.

But I think we've got something earlier. Yeah, go ahead. Is that period of time that we're in? I mean, Luther, who certainly quotes from it, says it's canonical.

True, but interestingly enough, you've got Origen, who makes a fairly nice sweep in the third century and finds that the lists of texts that people recognize as canonical are pretty uniform. Then, you can back it up to the Muratorian canon as well, which is the second century. Now again, some people have trouble dating that thing, but by and large, it's a second-century text that lists for us the books that are part of the New Testament.

It's a naughty issue, but I'm trying to make a little bit of a distinction between what we have in terms of the close of the first century, the close of the written canon, certainly affirming the Holy Spirit's activity in preserving that canon, and the community's recognition of that canon. Now, how that works its way out in terms of how the councils work, I don't know. But I guess I'd like to make a bit of a distinction if that makes any sense to you.

We can pursue it further. Come to the open forum. We'll push it a little further.

Let me say a couple things about canon before we run out of time here. The word *kanon* is actually a Hebrew word, and a Greek word for that matter. And it's a word that is originally used to describe a reed, a papyrus reed.

Papyrus grows to be somewhere between 12 and 15 feet tall, so it becomes a very great thing that is a measuring stick. And so that is our kind of derived meaning from which we're going to get two parallel uses of the term canon in the context that we're talking about it. Something with which we measure, and the first idea of this is folks developed criteria for determining whether certain books were authoritative or not.

In other words, whether they were going to be canonical. And those criteria were the measuring things. So, the canon functions in that way, okay? We measure whether books are canonical.

The two basic ones with regard to the Old Testament, and as a matter of fact, the New Testament as well, are whether or not something is theologically orthodox. Is it teaching truths that fit with the rest of Scripture? For example, those of you who know the deuterocanonical texts or the apocryphal texts and have read them are aware that there's fascinating stuff in there. But, for example, if you read the book of

Tobit, which is one of those texts, there are some rather odd magical events going on.

There's probably a rather unorthodox approach to how you deal with dead bodies and what kind of merit that earns you. You know, those things don't exactly fit well with theological orthodoxy. Likewise, they have to be historically accurate.

Those two things are, generally speaking, the tests. There are several others, but those are the major ones. I've already mentioned the role of the Holy Spirit, which has gotten me in big trouble. Zach will think through a little more of that, and we can talk about it further.

The second thing is in terms of measuring, okay? So, the first measuring idea is that we're talking about measuring the texts themselves. Are they going to meet the criteria and, therefore, become considered canon? The second avenue of exploration is that that canon becomes a measuring stick for us. As we affirm the authority of that text, are we going to indeed live up to the practices and the beliefs that it sets forth for us? So, canon has those two kinds of applications.

Well, there are two more things we need to do, and we'll do them fast. Characteristics of the text as we have it, well, it's been copied and translated, and the minute you get something into people's hands, you know that we're humans, and we are fallible. The truths that God reveals are not fallible.

But when you're talking about a process of copying and a process of translation, and again, I'll post on Blackboard if I already haven't a quick article that may help you think through this a little bit, then we have to recognize that our own finiteness and our own fallibilities get involved in this process. We've got to recognize that. Second thing we want to note, and we're going to pick this up right away when we start doing Genesis, this text of the First Testament is composed of different sources.

Even the whole 39 books come from a span of, if we're going to assume Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, somewhere in the 1400s, probably right on through the 400s if we're talking Malachi in that general time frame, you know. And within those books, Moses himself is using sources. We need to acknowledge that, talk about it, and figure out how it works.

There are different genres, different kinds of literature, if you will. Torah does indeed mean instruction, but there's also narrative in there. The history books are history books.

They talk about events as they unfold in the light of God's covenant people. There's poetry, there's prophecy, and by the way, the prophecy includes lots of poetry. So, all kinds of different genres are going to be wound into this.

We need to recognize that. Finally, this is where Old Testament parallels come in. In the past, some folks have resisted reading Old Testament parallels.

Let me encourage you to absorb what's there and recognize that there's a cultural context within which these texts are arising. And Old Testament parallels is going to give you a little bit of a flavor of that wider cultural context. So will our father Abraham, Dr. Wilson's book, because that gives us the whole Jewish context and ongoing history of understanding this text within Judaism.

All right, it's ten past ten, and we've raced through this last stuff very quickly. One of the things that I will always wish you on Friday, and it's Friday today, I think, is Shabbat Shalom. That's a Jewish greeting, if you will.

Wishing you Sabbath, which means rest, peace, shalom. So, Shabbat Shalom.