

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13, Special Revelation in NT, Incarnation Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13, Special Revelation in NT, Incarnation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's session 13 on Revelation and Scripture examines **special revelation within the New Testament**, specifically focusing on the **incarnation of Jesus Christ** as presented by **Paul** and the **letter to the Hebrews**. The lecture explores how **Christ reveals God's attributes**, such as **love** demonstrated in his death for sinners, **righteousness** through propitiation, and **wisdom** in God's redemptive plan. Peterson emphasizes that the **incarnate Son** is the ultimate **revealer** of the invisible God, superior to Old Testament prophets and angels, and his death displays divine **power** by defeating the devil and freeing believers from the fear of death. Ultimately, this session highlights the profound significance of the incarnation as a key aspect of God's special revelation.

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Revelation & Scripture).



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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13, Special Revelation in NT, Incarnation

Briefing Document: Special Revelation in the New Testament (Peterson, Session 13)

Topic: Special Revelation in the New Testament, focusing on the Incarnation as presented in the writings of Paul and the letter to the Hebrews.

Executive Summary:

This session by Dr. Peterson explores how the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, as depicted in the writings of Paul and the letter to the Hebrews, constitutes the ultimate form of special revelation. It reveals God's attributes – particularly His love, righteousness (justice), and wisdom – in unprecedented ways. Furthermore, the Incarnation demonstrates God's power through Christ's defeat of the devil and deliverance of believers from the fear of death. The lecture emphasizes the superiority of New Testament revelation through the Son compared to Old Testament revelation through prophets and angels.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Incarnation as the Image and Revealer of God:

- Paul, in Colossians 1:15, describes the Son as "the image of the invisible God." This signifies that Jesus is the visible representation of the otherwise unseen God.
- **Quote:** "He is the icon, the image of God, the invisible one. He's the image of the invisible God." (p. 1)
- **Quote:** "If one would want to know God, if one would want to learn about God, one should look into the face of the incarnate Son of God, because he is the very visible representation of the invisible God." (p. 1)
- The writer of Hebrews echoes this, presenting Jesus as "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3).
- **Explanation:** The "radiance" illustrates the Son as the shining forth of God's glory, revealing the invisible Father. The "exact imprint" (apostasis - essential nature) signifies the Son's deity and perfect representation of God's being.
- **Quote:** "Jesus is thus the revealer. Again, the incarnation reveals God as never before. As a matter of fact, the beautiful images of him as the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. Actually, they each show three

tell three truths, but the major truth of both of them in the context is Jesus is the great revealer of God." (p. 9)

- This revelation through the Incarnation is superior to the Old Testament revelation through prophets and angels (Hebrews 1:1-2).

2. Revelation of God's Love through the Incarnation and the Cross:

- Romans 5:6-8 is highlighted as a key passage revealing God's love demonstrated through Christ's death for the ungodly.
- **Quote:** "But God chose his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This is remarkable." (p. 4)
- The assurance of salvation is linked to God's love revealed in His Word, His Spirit, and His work in believers' lives (Romans 5:1-5). Suffering, rightly responded to, produces endurance, character, and hope, all rooted in God's love poured out through the Holy Spirit.
- 1 John 4:9-10 further emphasizes God's initiative in love by sending His Son as propitiation for our sins.

3. Revelation of God's Righteousness (Justice) through the Cross:

- Romans 3:21-26 is central to understanding how the cross reveals God's saving righteousness and His justice.
- The concept of propitiation is explained, emphasizing that Christ's death satisfied God's justice for past sins (passed over in forbearance through the sacrificial system) and present sins, allowing God to be "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).
- **Quote:** "The cross of Christ, not only is the greatest revelation of the love of God, but it is also the greatest revelation of the justice of God because the cross of Christ enabled God to maintain his own moral integrity, his justice, and to justly save anyone who believes in Jesus." (p. 6)
- Redemption is also mentioned as another picture of the atonement, involving bondage, a ransom price (Christ's death), and resultant freedom.

4. Revelation of God's Wisdom through the Incarnation and His Plan:

- Ephesians 1:7-10 illustrates the wisdom of God in His plan, set forth in Christ, to unite all things in Him. This plan, though a "mystery" now disclosed, was foreshadowed in the Old Testament prophetic writings (Romans 16:25-27).
- **Quote:** "...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven, and things on earth." (p. 7)
- God's wisdom is seen in including both Jews and Gentiles in the body of Christ and ultimately in the restoration of the fallen creation through Christ's death and resurrection.

5. Revelation of God's Power through the Incarnation and Christ's Work:

- Hebrews 2:14-15 highlights God's power revealed in the Incarnation, specifically through Christ taking on flesh and blood to destroy the devil and deliver those enslaved by the fear of death.
- **Quote:** "That through death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through the fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (p. 10)
- Christ's death not only propitiates God and redeems believers but also defeats their enemies, including the devil.
- The power of God is demonstrated in delivering believers from the fear of the punishment of death and the incapacitation that fear brings.

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson concludes that the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is the pinnacle of special revelation in the New Testament, revealing God's love, righteousness, wisdom, and power in profound and transformative ways. This revelation, particularly through the person and work of Christ, surpasses the special revelation of the Old Testament and provides believers with assurance, redemption, and victory over their spiritual enemies. The lecture sets the stage for the subsequent discussion on Holy Scripture as another crucial aspect of special revelation.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13, Special Revelation in NT, Incarnation

Study Guide: Special Revelation in the New Testament

Key Concepts

- **Incarnation:** The act by which the eternal Son of God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. This event is central to New Testament revelation.
- **Special Revelation:** God's communication of himself and his will to specific people through supernatural means. The incarnation is a primary form of special revelation in the New Testament.
- **Image of God:** A term applied to the Son of God (Colossians 1:15), indicating he perfectly represents and reveals the invisible God.
- **Love of God:** Demonstrated most profoundly in the incarnation and the death of Christ for sinners (Romans 5:6-8).
- **Righteousness of God:** Revealed in the gospel, particularly through the atoning death of Christ, which satisfies God's justice and provides justification for believers (Romans 3:21-26).
- **Wisdom of God:** Displayed in God's plan of salvation through Christ, a mystery revealed in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:7-10).
- **Assurance of Salvation:** God provides believers with assurance through his Word, his Spirit, and his work in their lives (Romans 5:1-5).
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing God's wrath through sacrifice. Christ's death is presented as the ultimate propitiation for sin (Romans 3:25).
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or delivering from bondage. Through Christ's death, believers are redeemed from sin and its consequences (Romans 3:24).
- **Reconciliation:** The restoration of a broken relationship. Christ's death reconciles humanity to God (Colossians 1:20).
- **Revealer:** Jesus Christ is presented as the ultimate revealer of God in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1-3).
- **Power of God:** Manifested in the incarnation through Christ's defeat of the devil and deliverance of believers from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).

- **Superiority of New Testament Revelation:** The revelation through the Son in the New Testament is superior to the revelation through prophets and angels in the Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1-2).
- **Offices of Christ:** The roles of Prophet, Priest, and King are all embodied in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1).

Quiz

1. According to Colossians 1:15, how is the Son of God described in relation to the invisible God? What does this imply about knowing God?
2. What are the three ways, according to the lecture, that God assures believers of their salvation as highlighted in Romans 5? Briefly describe one of these ways.
3. How does the death of Christ on the cross reveal both the love and the justice of God, as explained in the lecture referencing Romans 3:25-26 and Romans 5:6-8?
4. In Ephesians 1:7-10, what aspect of God's character is highlighted in relation to his plan in Christ? What is the ultimate goal of this plan?
5. According to the lecture, what is the main point being made in Hebrews 1 regarding the revelation of God in the New Testament compared to the Old Testament?
6. What are the two images used in Hebrews 1 to describe Jesus as the revealer of God? Briefly explain what one of these images conveys about Christ.
7. What is the meaning of the Greek word "apostasis" as used in Hebrews 1:3, and what does it signify about the Son of God?
8. According to Hebrews 2:14-15, why did the Son of God partake in flesh and blood? What two primary things did his death accomplish?
9. Besides propitiating God and reconciling people to God, towards whom else is the death of Christ directed, and what does it accomplish against them?
10. How does the lecture conclude regarding the means of special revelation found in the Old Testament and their presence in the New Testament, particularly focusing on the incarnation?

Answer Key

1. Colossians 1:15 describes the Son as "the image of the invisible God." This implies that to know God, one should look to the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, as he is the visible representation of the invisible God.
2. The three ways God assures believers are through his Word, his Spirit, and his work in their lives. For example, God works in our lives by using suffering to produce endurance, character, and ultimately hope, demonstrating his ongoing care and plan (Romans 5:3-5).
3. The death of Christ reveals God's love as he died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-8). It reveals God's justice through propitiation (Romans 3:25-26), where Christ bore God's wrath, satisfying divine justice so that God could righteously justify those who believe.
4. The wisdom of God is highlighted in Ephesians 1:7-10 in relation to his plan in Christ. The ultimate goal of this plan is to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, in the fullness of time.
5. The main point in Hebrews 1 is the superiority of New Testament revelation through the Son to Old Testament revelation through prophets and angels. The Son is presented as the ultimate and greater mediator of God's revelation.
6. The two images are the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature. The radiance of God's glory conveys that the Son is the shining forth of the Father's glory, revealing the invisible God, just as a ray reveals the sun.
7. The Greek word "apostasis" in Hebrews 1:3 means essential nature, essence, or being. It signifies that the Son is the exact imprint of God's very nature, affirming his deity.
8. The Son of God partook in flesh and blood because the children (believers) share in it. His death accomplished the destruction of the one who has the power of death, the devil, and the deliverance of those who were subject to lifelong slavery through the fear of death.
9. The death of Christ is also directed towards our enemies, including the world, the flesh, the devil, death, and hell. It defeats these enemies, as seen in Hebrews 2:14 where Christ destroys the power of the devil through his death.

10. The lecture concludes that every means of special revelation found in the Old Testament, except the Urim and Thummim, are reproduced in the New Testament. It emphasizes that special revelation is most especially seen in the incarnation of the Son of God.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss how the incarnation of Jesus Christ, as presented in the provided text from Colossians 1, John 1 (referenced), and Hebrews 1, serves as the ultimate revelation of the invisible God and his attributes.
2. Analyze the interconnectedness of God's love and justice as revealed through the death of Christ, drawing specifically from the discussion of Romans 3:25-26 and Romans 5:6-8 in the provided material.
3. Explore the concept of God's wisdom as it is manifested in his plan of salvation through Christ, as discussed with reference to Ephesians 1:7-10 and the idea of a mystery revealed in the New Testament.
4. Examine the ways in which God provides assurance of salvation to believers, according to the lecture's interpretation of Romans 5:1-5, and discuss the relative importance of the Word, the Spirit, and God's work in their lives.
5. Compare and contrast the presentation of Jesus Christ as the revealer of God in the writings of Paul (Colossians and Romans) and the letter to the Hebrews, highlighting any unique emphases or perspectives in their understanding of the incarnation.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation. The term often refers to the reconciliation between God and humanity through Christ's sacrifice.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love freely offered to humanity, especially in the context of salvation.
- **Justification:** God's act of declaring a sinner righteous in his sight, not based on their own works, but on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them through faith.
- **Mystery (in Pauline Epistles):** A truth previously hidden but now revealed through the gospel of Jesus Christ, often referring to God's plan to include both Jews and Gentiles in the church.
- **Prophet:** One who speaks on behalf of God, conveying divine messages and insights. In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the ultimate prophet.
- **Priest:** One who mediates between God and humanity, offering sacrifices and interceding on behalf of the people. Jesus is the great high priest in the New Testament.
- **King:** A ruler or sovereign. Jesus is presented as the ultimate king, reigning over all.
- **Redemptive History:** The unfolding story of God's saving work in the world throughout history, culminating in Jesus Christ.
- **Thematic Statement:** A central idea or thesis that governs a larger section of writing, as seen in Paul's introduction to Romans (1:16-17).
- **Textus Classicus:** A classic or authoritative passage of scripture that is frequently cited in discussions of a particular doctrine, such as Romans 8:16 for the inner witness of the Spirit.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 13, Special Revelation in NT, Incarnation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Special Revelation in the New Testament

1. How does the New Testament, particularly through the lens of Paul and Hebrews, present the Incarnation as a form of special revelation?

The New Testament highlights the Incarnation as the ultimate form of special revelation. Colossians 1:15 describes Jesus as "the image of the invisible God," indicating that to know God, one must look to the incarnate Son. Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the visible representation of the invisible God, revealing God's attributes by taking on true humanity. The book of Hebrews further supports this by presenting Jesus as the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature (Hebrews 1:3), underscoring that the Son is the preeminent revealer of God, superior to the Old Testament prophets and even angels.

2. In what ways does the Incarnation reveal God's love, according to the provided text?

The Incarnation is presented as the ultimate demonstration of God's love. Romans 5:6-8 declares that Christ died for the ungodly while they were still sinners, showcasing a profound and unconditional love. This act is highlighted as surpassing any human willingness to sacrifice. Furthermore, 1 John 4 emphasizes that true love is not our love for God, but God's love for us, expressed through the sending of His Son as a propitiation for our sins. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is thus the paramount revelation of God's love for humanity.

3. How does the death of Christ demonstrate God's righteousness and justice, as explained in the text?

The text argues that the cross of Christ not only reveals God's love but also His righteousness and justice. Romans 3:25-26 presents Christ as a propitiation, through which God's justice is satisfied. Because God had previously passed over sins in His forbearance through the Old Testament sacrificial system (essentially issuing "IOUs" to Himself), the death of Christ served to settle these accounts, demonstrating God's justice. By bearing God's wrath, Christ enabled God to remain just while also justifying those who have faith in Jesus, upholding His moral integrity and standard of salvation.

4. How does the Incarnation and the work of Christ reveal God's wisdom, according to Ephesians 1 and other passages?

The Incarnation and the subsequent work of Christ are depicted as the supreme manifestation of God's wisdom in fulfilling His eternal plan. Ephesians 1:7-10 speaks of God lavishing His grace upon us in "all wisdom and insight," making known the mystery of His will to unite all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth. This plan, though kept secret for long ages but hinted at in prophetic writings (Romans 16), was fully disclosed through Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. It encompasses not only the salvation of individuals and the church but also the eventual restoration of the entire creation.

5. What are the three ways God assures believers of their salvation, as outlined in the discussion of Romans 5?

According to the text's interpretation of Romans 5, God assures believers of their salvation in three primary ways: (1) through His promises in His Word to keep those He saves, (2) by giving His Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and provide an internal witness, and (3) by working in their lives, evidenced through the transformative process of suffering producing endurance, character, and hope, as well as through conviction of sin and leading in righteousness. While all three are important, the Word of God is emphasized as paramount due to its objective nature.

6. How does the book of Hebrews present Jesus as a superior revealer compared to the Old Testament means of revelation?

Hebrews 1 contrasts the Old Testament revelation through prophets and angels with the New Testament revelation through the Son. The author argues for the Son's superiority, stating that God, after speaking through prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus is portrayed as the mediator of a better covenant and a more excellent revelation. Images such as "the radiance of the glory of God" and "the exact imprint of his nature" underscore Jesus' unique ability to reveal God as never before.

7. What does the text mean by Jesus being the "radiance of the glory of God" and the "exact imprint of his nature" in Hebrews 1?

These two descriptions in Hebrews 1:3 both serve to highlight Jesus as the great revealer of God. The "radiance of the glory of God" is likened to a ray emanating from the sun, revealing the sun itself. This illustrates Jesus as God revealed in the flesh, possessing deity while also being distinct from the Father. The "exact imprint of his nature" (Greek: *charaktēr* or *hypostasis*) refers to something like a coin struck from a die, perfectly reflecting the image of the die. This signifies the equality of the Son with the Father in terms of essential being or nature (*hypostasis*). Both metaphors emphasize that Jesus perfectly reveals the invisible God.

8. According to Hebrews 2:14-15, what was the purpose of Jesus partaking in flesh and blood (the Incarnation), and what power of God is revealed through this act?

The primary purpose of Jesus' Incarnation, His partaking in flesh and blood, was twofold: to destroy the one who has the power of death, the devil, and to deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. This act of God reveals His mighty power in vanquishing the evil one and freeing His people from the fear of death and its enslaving grip. By becoming human and dying, Christ defeated the devil and the ultimate consequence of sin, offering believers freedom from the fear of judgment and eternal separation from God.