

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2, Revelation and Inspiration Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2, Revelation and Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This document is a transcription of a lecture on Old Testament literature, focusing on revelation, inspiration, and canon. The lecture begins with administrative matters and a brief introduction to Hebrew. It explores the doctrines of revelation, differentiating between general and special revelation, and emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature and authority of scripture. Inspiration is discussed as the Holy Spirit guiding the writers of scripture without squelching their unique backgrounds and capabilities. The lecture further examines the canon of the Old and New Testaments, discussing the criteria used for determining which books were authoritative and acknowledging challenges to the texts, and finishes with brief descriptions of the types of literature found within the Old Testament.

**2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips_OTLit_Sessi
on02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2, Revelation and Inspiration

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 2: Revelation, Inspiration, Canon.

Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 2

Overview:

This lecture excerpt focuses on introducing key concepts related to the nature and authority of the Old Testament (First Testament) scriptures: Revelation, Inspiration, and Canon. Dr. Phillips emphasizes the importance of understanding these concepts for interpreting and trusting the Bible. She uses a conversational style, incorporating student interaction and illustrative examples (like Rembrandt's painting) to make the abstract ideas more accessible.

I. Introduction and Course Logistics:

- **Icebreaker & Personal Connection:** Dr. Phillips begins with introductions and establishes a connection with students, showing a personal touch.
- **Course Details:** She reminds students of review sessions and the optional Big Bang lecture by her husband, an astrophysicist, framing it as a way to see how science and faith can integrate.
- **Psalms 100:** The class will be learning to sing Psalm 100:5 in Hebrew, highlighting the importance of specific Hebrew words. She provides a literal translation and pronunciation guide: *"ki tov Adonai, le'olam hasdo, ve'ador, vador, emunato"* which translates to "good is the Lord...to eternity is his hesed...unto generation and generation, his faithfulness." "Hesed" is explained as "everlastingly loyal covenant love" a concept that is difficult to translate into one English word.

II. Revelation:

- **Definition:** Revelation is defined as "divine self-disclosure, which teaches otherwise inaccessible truth about God and it draws forth a response." A different phrasing is "divine communicative action," emphasizing the active nature of God's word.
- **Importance of Understanding Scripture's Nature:** Dr. Phillips poses critical questions:

- "Why is it imperative for you and me to have a sound understanding of the nature and authority of scripture?" She argues it's essential if we believe God has chosen to speak to us.
- "As you think of scripture, what troubles you?" This encourages critical engagement and acknowledges potential difficulties in accepting scriptural claims.
- **Presuppositions:** The lecture establishes foundational presuppositions:
 - A divine, personal God has chosen to communicate intentionally because creation has a need.
 - Words are adequate (though not perfect) to communicate truth, referencing the Logos doctrine.
- **Logos Doctrine:** Connects God's creation through speech (Genesis 1) to the idea that words can represent both natural and supernatural phenomena. She explains Logos as meaning "logic, correspondence, reason". She then segues into a fascinating example using the fact that "4.6%" of the universe is "baryonic matter" while the rest is "dark matter and dark energy" which we can't measure. She asks if this gives a "basis for thinking there is a remarkably complex, wonderful, rich, supernatural realm out there?"
- **God's Initiative:** Emphasizes that God initiates revelation: "humans do not, by their own wisdom, come to know God."
- **General vs. Special Revelation: General (Natural) Revelation:** God's power and attributes are revealed through creation (Psalm 19, Romans 1). Examples from Psalm 19 include "The heavens declare the glory of God," and that revelation calls forth a response such as "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Romans 1:20 says that God's qualities are "clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." Romans 2 references conscience as proof that we know right and wrong.
- **Limitations of General Revelation:** Drawing on the Rembrandt painting example, Phillips explains that general revelation cannot reveal God's motives, will, or intentions.
- **Special Revelation:** Verbal statements of propositional truth revealing God's character, will, the meaning of human existence, and the nature of the spiritual realm. Includes both the word of God in scripture and in the person of Jesus

Christ. The Old Testament looks forward to Christ and the New Testament looks back and interprets the "Christ event."

III. Inspiration:

- **Definition:** Inspiration is defined as "special act of the Holy Spirit" guiding writers of scripture. It serves to: 1) convey the thoughts that the Holy Spirit wants communicated; 2) bear a proper relationship to the rest of scripture; and 3) be infallible in thought, fact, doctrine, and judgment.
- **Role of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit enhances the writers' cultural backgrounds and capabilities, ensuring that scripture is both culturally relevant and transcendent. "The Holy Spirit doesn't squelch those writers of scripture. Instead, he enhances who they are in their cultural backgrounds with their particular capabilities."
- **Scripture's Testimony of Itself:** Phillips quotes Aristotle as saying "Benefit of the doubt is to be given to the document itself, not irrigated by the critic to him or herself in our culture." She points out that the Old Testament claims "thus saith the Lord."
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." Phillips clarifies that Paul is most likely talking about the First Testament, even in translation.
- **2 Peter 1:16-21:** Emphasizes eyewitness accounts but clarifies that prophecy "did not have its origin in the will of humankind. Men spoke from God as they were carried along by none other than the Holy Spirit."
- Affirmation by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and the promise of the Holy Spirit in John 14.
- Ephesians 2 equates the prophets (Old Testament) and apostles (New Testament) as foundational to the church.

IV. Authority:

- If scripture is revealed and inspired by God, it *must* be authoritative. She shares a metaphor from her pastor: "if God is the designer and you're the person that's been designed, then here we've got the owner's manual."

V. Canon:

- **Definition:** *Kanon* (Hebrew and Greek) originally meant a reed or measuring stick.
- **Function:** Canon serves as a measuring stick in two ways:
 1. Criteria for determining which books are authoritative (theological orthodoxy and historical accuracy).
 2. A standard for believers to measure their lives against.

VI. Characteristics of the Text:

- The text has been copied and translated, acknowledging the potential for human error.
- The text is composed of different sources from a span of time.
- There are different genres of literature within the text.
- Old Testament parallels offer cultural context.

VII. Conclusion:

- Dr. Phillips ends with a traditional Jewish greeting, "Shabbat Shalom," wishing the students rest and peace. She has raced through the last topics very quickly.

4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2, Revelation and Inspiration

Old Testament Literature: Revelation, Inspiration, and Canon Study Guide

Review Topics

- Revelation: General (Natural) and Special
- Inspiration: The Holy Spirit's role in guiding the writers of Scripture
- Canon: Criteria for determining authoritative books
- Authority of Scripture: As the rule of faith and practice

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. Briefly explain the difference between general and special revelation, providing one example of each from the lecture.
2. What is "hesed," and why is it difficult to translate into English?
3. According to the lecture, what is the primary purpose of Scripture?
4. Define "propositional truth" as discussed in the lecture.
5. What does "Tanakh" stand for, and what categories of writings does each part represent?
6. Summarize the lecturer's argument for why a sound understanding of the nature and authority of scripture is important.
7. How does the lecturer use the example of the painting to illustrate the concept of revelation?
8. Explain what the lecturer means by "divine communicative action."
9. According to the lecture, what role does the Holy Spirit play in the inspiration of Scripture?
10. What are the two parallel uses of the term "canon" in the context of biblical studies?

Quiz Answer Key

1. General revelation is God's self-disclosure through nature, revealing his power and attributes (e.g., Psalm 19). Special revelation is God's self-disclosure through

verbal statements of propositional truth, primarily through Scripture, revealing his character, will, and the nature of the spiritual realm (e.g., the Bible itself).

2. "Hesed" is a Hebrew word that means everlastingly loyal covenant love. It's hard to translate because English lacks a single word that encompasses the full meaning of loyal love within a covenant relationship.
3. According to the lecture, the primary purpose of Scripture is to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
4. Propositional truth refers to statements that have components of truth and falsehood. These statements express objective facts rather than emotions.
5. Tanakh stands for Torah (instruction), Nevi'im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings). These represent the main divisions of the Hebrew Bible.
6. A sound understanding of scripture is necessary because scripture is how God has chosen to communicate with us and it allows us to know Him better. Without it, scripture loses its authority.
7. The painting illustrates how we can infer certain qualities about the artist (skill, sense of beauty) simply by observing his work. Similarly, general revelation allows us to discern certain attributes of God through observing creation, but we need special revelation to know His character.
8. "Divine communicative action" communicates that the scriptures are not just words, but words about God's actions that have an active component.
9. The Holy Spirit guides the writers of Scripture to convey the thoughts that God wants communicated, ensuring coherence with the rest of Scripture, and guaranteeing infallibility in thought, fact, doctrine, and judgment.
10. The first is determining if a book is authoritative and should be considered canonical. The second is the canon as the standard by which we measure our beliefs and practices.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the importance of both general and special revelation in understanding God. How do they complement each other, and what are the limitations of relying solely on one or the other?
2. Explore the lecturer's argument for the inspiration of Scripture. How does the Holy Spirit work through the human authors, and what does this imply about the nature and authority of the Bible?
3. Analyze the criteria used to determine the canon of Scripture, focusing on theological orthodoxy and historical accuracy. Why are these criteria important, and what challenges arise in applying them?
4. Examine the lecturer's discussion of the authority of Scripture as "the owner's manual" for life. How should Christians approach and interpret the Bible, and what responsibilities do they have in submitting to its authority?
5. The lecture discusses the challenges of interpreting Scripture, particularly concerning its infallibility and potential for different interpretations. How can we approach these challenges in a way that is both faithful to the text and intellectually honest?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Revelation:** Divine self-disclosure, which teaches otherwise inaccessible truth about God and draws forth a response.
- **General Revelation:** God's communication of Himself through nature and creation, revealing His power and attributes.
- **Special Revelation:** God's communication of Himself through verbal statements of propositional truth, primarily through Scripture, revealing His character, will, and the nature of the spiritual realm.
- **Inspiration:** A special act of the Holy Spirit guiding the writers of Scripture to convey God's thoughts accurately and coherently.
- **Canon:** A collection of books recognized as authoritative Scripture, determined by criteria such as theological orthodoxy and historical accuracy.
- **Authority:** The power or right to give commands, take action, or make final decisions; in this context, the Bible's inherent power and right to guide faith and practice.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word that means everlastingly loyal covenant love.
- **Propositional Truth:** Statements that have components of truth and falsehood, expressing objective facts.
- **Tanakh:** An acronym referring to the Hebrew Bible, consisting of the Torah (instruction), Nevi'im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings).
- **Logos:** A Greek word meaning "word," but also encompassing concepts of logic, reason, and correspondence.

5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 2, Revelation and Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Revelation, Inspiration, and Canon

- **What is revelation, and why is it important to understand?**
- Revelation is defined as divine self-disclosure, teaching otherwise inaccessible truth about God, which in turn draws forth a response. It is essential because it's through revelation that we can access knowledge about God, His character, will, and the spiritual realm that we could not otherwise know. Understanding revelation provides a basis for trusting scripture as an authoritative source of truth.
- **What is the difference between general and special revelation?**
- General revelation (or natural revelation) refers to God's self-disclosure through creation, revealing His power and attributes that are visible to all. Examples of general revelation are seen in Psalm 19 and Romans 1, where creation itself declares God's glory and eternal power. Special revelation is primarily a verbal statement of propositional truth regarding God's character, the meaning of human existence, and the nature of the spiritual realm, most clearly understood through scripture and the person of Jesus Christ. While general revelation shows God's existence and some attributes, special revelation provides deeper insights into His character, will, and plan for salvation.
- **What are some presuppositions to keep in mind when studying scripture?**
- When approaching scripture, it's helpful to presuppose that a divine being (God) has intentionally chosen to communicate with humanity in a personal and accessible manner. This communication is necessary because humans are needy and require truth to guide their choices and participate in God's kingdom. Also, words, though not perfect, are fully adequate to communicate divine truth, building on the concept of the Logos Doctrine, where God speaks the created order into existence.
- **What is inspiration, and how does it relate to the writers of scripture?**
- Inspiration is the special act of the Holy Spirit guiding the writers of scripture so that their words would convey the thoughts that the Holy Spirit wants communicated, bear a proper relationship to the rest of the scriptures, and

should be infallible in thought, fact, doctrine, and judgment. The Holy Spirit enhances the writers' cultural backgrounds and capabilities rather than suppressing them, ensuring that the scriptures are both culturally relevant and transcendent.

- **How does the Bible describe its own authority and truthfulness?**
- The Bible describes itself as "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16), indicating that all scripture originates from God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. 2 Peter 1:21 emphasizes that prophecy did not originate from human will but from individuals carried along by the Holy Spirit. Jesus affirmed the importance and truthfulness of the Old Testament in the Sermon on the Mount. These self-referential claims establish the Bible as an authoritative source of truth.
- **What is the canon of scripture, and what criteria were used to determine which books belonged?**
- The canon of scripture refers to the collection of books recognized as authoritative and inspired by God. The term "canon" originally meant a measuring reed, reflecting its function as a standard for measuring theological orthodoxy and historical accuracy. The primary criteria for determining canonicity included theological orthodoxy (alignment with established doctrines) and historical accuracy.
- **What factors influence our understanding and interpretation of scripture?**
- Our understanding of scripture can be influenced by several factors, including the fact that the text has been copied and translated over time, and that our own finiteness and fallibilities get involved in this process. The text of the First Testament is composed of different sources, and there are different genres (narrative, history, poetry, and prophecy). We need to also recognize that there is a cultural context within which these texts are arising.
- **Why is it important to submit to the authority of scripture in our lives?**
- If the scriptures are accepted as God's revealed and inspired word, then it is fundamentally important to acknowledge their authority in shaping our lives. If God is seen as the designer, then the scriptures serve as the owner's manual, providing guidance on how to function according to His design. Submitting to this authority allows scripture to serve as the rule of faith and practice, guiding beliefs and behaviors.