

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation and Scripture, Session 10, Old Testament Special Revelation, New Testament Varieties of Special Revelation**

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Revelation and Holy Scripture. This is session 10, Old Testament Special Revelation, New Testament Varieties of Special Revelation.

We continue our study of special revelation in the Old Testament, looking at various kinds.

We have considered theophanies, visions, and dreams, and now we're working with the Urim and Thummim, which apparently nobody knows exactly what it is. They were a means by which the high priest, when wearing the ephod, a kind of linen waistcoat or jacket, and the breastplate of judgment, learned the will of God concerning the nation of Israel in cases in which the will of God was not clear. Again, that's from my mentor, Robert J. Dunsweiler.

Exodus 28, 30, and in the breastplate of judgment, this is the instructions as far as the high priest's garb is concerned, and in the breastpiece of judgment, you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord. Thus, Aaron shall regularly bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord. Numbers 27, 21, Joshua, the son of Nun, is standing before Eleazar, the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord.

At his word, they shall go out, and at his word, they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel, with him the whole congregation. Again, it's inquiring of the Lord in cases where there is some uncertainty to begin with. First Samuel 28 6, Saul wants information from God and unfortunately consults the witch of Endor, but in that context, we read that when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.

Then Saul said to his servants, seek out a woman who's a medium for me, and so forth. Very sad case. Ezra 2:63, the governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim.

I can barely say it. Nehemiah 7:65, yikes. The governor is the same; it's the same thing as we just read in Ezra.

The casting of lots is a means for God to announce his decision between two alternatives or to assign tasks. So, in Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement, we read 8 to 10, and Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats. One lot for the Lord, the other lot for Azazel.

And Adam shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and shall use it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel. We see lots also in First Chronicles, I should say, 24.

The divisions of the sons of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And on it goes, they divided them by lot, verse 6, verse 5, all alike, for there were sacred officers and officers of God among both the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Ithamar.

And on it goes, the lot was used to assign tasks. Esther, verse 7 of chapter 3, in the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast poor. That is, they cast lots before Haman day after day.

And they cast it month after month until the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. One more, Proverbs 16, 33, speaks of God's sovereignty even in this realm. The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is made by the Lord.

We will see when we move to the New Testament special revelation the successor for Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, was chosen by lot. Miracles are supernatural acts of God that reveal his character and will. Consider Deuteronomy 4:32 and the following.

For ask now, Moses says, of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of the heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of? Did any people ever hear the voice of a God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard and still live? Or has any God ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord is God. There is no other besides him. Miracles tend to cluster in five critical periods in biblical history.

The exodus and conquest of the promised land, the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, the exile, especially associated with Daniel, Christ and the prophets' ministries, sorry, Christ and his apostles' ministries, and the fifth is the second coming. So, the exodus and conquest, Elijah and Elisha's time, the exile with Daniel, Christ and his apostles' episodes, and the second coming. Audible speech makes God known to his people, both to the nation of Israel. Famously in Exodus 19, while Moses went up to God, the

Lord called to him out of the mountains, saying, thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the people of Israel, you yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.

Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all the peoples. For all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

So, Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. God's audible speech comes to the nation of Israel, as in that case, and to individuals. Here's a charming example, and that is to the boy Samuel.

Samuel. Now, the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli, and the word of the Lord was rare in those days. There was no frequent vision.

At the time of Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, Eli was lying down in his own place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel and said, Here I am.

And he ran to Eli and said, Here I am. You've called me. But Eli said I did not call you.

Lie down again. So, he went and lay down. The Lord called Samuel again.

And Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, Here I am for you called me. But he said I did not call my son. Lie down again.

Now, Samuel did not yet know the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he rose, went to Eli, and said, Here I am for you called me.

Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore, Eli said to Samuel, Go lie down. If he calls you, you shall say, Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood calling at the same time, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel said, speak, for your servant hears.

Then the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I'm about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. On that day, I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from beginning to end. And I declare to him that I'm about to punish his house forever for the iniquity that he knew because his sons were blaspheming God.

And he did not reach, did not, did not restrain them. Therefore, I swear by that to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by the sacrifice or offering together. Samuel lay in mourning.

Then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision. But Eli called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son, he said, Here I am.

Eli said, What was it the Lord told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more. Also, if you hold, hide anything from me of all that he told you.

So, Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.

Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. So God's audible speech sometimes comes to the nation as a whole and sometimes to an individual Israelite, in this case, to the boy Samuel in that remarkable episode. The prophetic declaration is a common means of God speaking forth to his people.

Consider Isaiah chapter one when the word of the Lord comes to Isaiah as well as foretelling the future. The prophet's main role was to tell the word to the people of God. But sometimes, the prophets foretold the future again, always only saying what God gave them to say.

We see this beautifully in Isaiah 9, verses six and seven. For us, a child is born to us, a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. He shall be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, Prince of Peace of the increase of his government and of peace.

There will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. Now, the prophetic declaration is largely verbal.

Sometimes it includes writing. We see this in Psalm 19, verses seven to 14, which is good because we read Psalm 19, one to six. Now, we read the section that speaks about the word of the Lord.

We saw God's revelation in creation; the heavens declared the glory of God, and so forth. And now we see the Lord's word of the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them, as your servant warned in keeping them, there is great reward.

We see writing in Jeremiah's case amidst great opposition, Jeremiah 36. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord. Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations from the day I spoke to you from the days of Josiah until today.

It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them so that every one may turn from his evil way and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. And Jeremiah employs a secretary named Baruch. And the king was angry and burned the scrolls.

In the same chapter of Jeremiah 36:27 to 30, we read, now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, has burned. And concerning Jehoiakim, king of Judah, you shall say, thus says the Lord, you have burned this scroll, saying, why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and will cut off from it man and beast? Therefore, the Lord says that Jehoiakim, king of Judah, shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out into the heat of the day and the frost by night.

Whoo! Thus, we end our summary with some detail of the different varieties of God's special revelation in the Old Testament. Theophanies, visions and dreams, Urim and Thummim, casting of lots, miracles, audible speech, and prophetic declarations, most of it audible. Verbal, some of it written.

Characteristics of Old Testament special revelation. The first characteristic of that revelation is its variety. Quote: the complex of Old Testament revelation includes personal encounters, the giving of information, an interpretation of events, and God's mighty works.

Close quote. William A. Dryness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, IVP, 1980, page 37. Revelation is personal.

We saw, even in our introduction, the critical claim that revelation is personal and not verbal. And that's simply a fallacy. Revelation is both verbal and personal.

If God wants to, he can reveal himself in words, and that's exactly what he chose to do. Revelation is personal. God manifests himself to lead people into a saving relationship with him.

That is, revelation is primarily redemptive and covenantal in purpose. Genesis 17:7, Exodus 20, verses 2 and 6. Revelation is gracious. God takes the initiative to make himself known.

Genesis 12:1 to 3, God appears to Abraham and gives him the terms of the covenant. The same in Genesis 15:1, and in Exodus 3:1 through 6, as we have seen. Biblical revelation is historical, for God makes himself known in historical events.

It is linear, for these events begin with creation and move toward the new heaven and the new earth. It is progressive, for God reveals himself not all at once but gradually over time. Revelation thus builds upon itself.

Each subsequent revelation complements and supplements the preceding revelation. No contradictions are involved, but only clarifications and completions. Revelation is propositional.

It includes the inspired interpretation of God's acts. This interpretation comes through statements of truth and scripture. Revelation calls for a response. Faith, repentance, confession, obedience, missionary endeavors, prayer, and worship are but a few examples.

This is an Old Testament revelation in summary. New Testament revelation has different varieties as well, the chief of which is the incarnation of our Lord and holy scripture. New Testament revelation includes all the varieties noted from the Old Testament, except for the Urim and Thummim, as we might expect since Jesus has fulfilled the role of the high priest, Hebrews 4:14 through 5:10. These consist of theophanies, visions, dreams, casting of lots, miracles, audible speech, and prophetic declaration, including scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

In addition, New Testament revelation centers on the person and work of Christ. I think it is important for us to see an example of each of these types of revelation. Theophanies.

This is what happens to Paul on the road to Damascus. He sees a theophany of the glorified Christ, but Saul, Acts 9:1, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the way, men or

women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now, as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly, a light from heaven shone around him, and falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? These are shocking words.

He knows it is God, but he doesn't identify more than that. He said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. More revolutionary words were never spoken.

But rise and enter the city, and you'll be told what you are to do. That's a theophany, a New Testament theophany. God reveals himself in the New Testament, similarly to the Old, in the Old, in visions.

Acts 10, 9 to 16, is a vision that Peter saw. This is how God engineers Peter's going to Cornelius's house and sharing the gospel with Gentiles. The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

And he became hungry and wanted something to eat. But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air, and there came a voice, saying, Lord, I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

The voice came again a second time. What God has made clean, do not call common. This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Of course, this is a trance or a vision that Peter saw that the Lord used to show him he should not hesitate to take the gospel to the house of Cornelius so he and his friends could learn about the Lord Jesus—casting of lots. We already referred to this.

We see it in Acts 1:23 and the following. They said they should replace Judas. Let another take his office, the Old Testament said.

So, 20, verse 21, one of the men who had accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when Jesus was taken up from us. One of these must become with us a witness to his resurrection. They put forward to Joseph Barsabbas, who was also called Justice and Matthias.

And they prayed and said, you, Lord, you know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place. And they cast lots for them, and a

lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the 11 apostles. This was a means that they used to determine the Lord's will.

It is not that we're not commanded to follow that means, and it is not normative, as some other episodes in Acts and things happen in the book of Acts. They really happened and God used them and worked, but it doesn't mean everything in there is normative for us. Dreams.

Joseph was so perplexed. Mary is pregnant, his betrothed. He knows Mary, or at least he thought he did.

How in the world? He did not get her pregnant. Ah, Matthew 1:19 now 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

When his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit, and her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the dream saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will be her son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Miracles. John 9:1 through 7. As he passed by, Jesus saw a man blind from birth, and his disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents? He was born blind. Jesus answered that it is not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

We must work on the works of the man who sent it to me while it is day. The night is coming when no one can work. As long as I'm in the world, I'm the light of the world.

Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, go wash in the pool of Siloam, which means sent. So, he went and washed and came back seeing.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were asking if this was not the man who used to sit and beg. Some said it was he. Others said no, but he's like him. He kept saying, I am the man.

That strikes me as so funny. Here is a miracle that reveals the identity of Jesus. In John chapter 20, Jesus says, John says many other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.



But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is Christ, the son of God and that by believing, you may have eternal life in his name. John 20:30 and 31. Audible speech.

We have a fascinating reference to this in John chapter 12. John's doctrine of sin in this fourth gospel is primarily depicted as unbelief in light of the tremendous words and deeds of Jesus. My goodness, in chapter seven, the temple police are sent out to arrest Jesus.

They come back empty-handed and the Jewish leaders are mad. What is your problem? Why don't you have them? They said, never has any man spoken like this man. Are you part of the rabble yourselves? Oh, my word, what is your problem? They're just, they're so against him.

And likewise, his miracles are so impressive. In chapter 11, Jesus raises Lazarus for the dead. In chapter 12, the Jewish authorities put out the death warrant for Lazarus because they can't stand it.

He is a walking, living apologetic of the fact that Jesus is the son of God who raises the dead, gasp, unacceptable. We can't have that. We see audible speech and it's sort of a humorous reference in chapter 12:27 through 29.

Now is my soul trouble, Jesus said. And what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose, I've come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice from heaven came and said, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. I mean, God speaks from heaven. Surely, people will believe that, right? No.

The crowd that stood there and heard it said it had thundered. Others said an angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered This voice has come for your sake, not mine.

Now is the judgment on this world. Now is the ruler of this world cast out. And I, when I'm lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

This is the most concentrated section of pictures of Jesus' atonement in the book of John, the gospel of John. But God, when he speaks from heaven, they can't understand it. They think an angel spoke or maybe it was thunder.

They are perverse and dead in their sins, needing the Holy Spirit to quicken them. Oh, we find prophetic declaration all right in Acts chapter two with Peter's amazing Pentecost sermon, Acts 2:14 through 26. I'll just do a little bit of it.

It's so wonderful. But Peter, standing with the 11, lifted up his voice and addressed them, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these people are not drunk. As you suppose, they had spoken in other languages as the Holy Spirit enabled them and the pilgrims from across the Roman empire. They all heard the wonderful deeds of God rehearsed in their own language.

These people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it's only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And he quotes the notion of God pouring out his spirit on all flesh and so forth.

And Peter then confesses the death and especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The prophetic declaration includes scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit. We find fascinating references to this in the farewell discourses of the gospel of John, where it seems like Jesus is foretelling the giving of the New Testament.

John 14:25 and 26. These things I've spoken to you while I'm still with you, Jesus says to his disciples, but the helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. In 15, toward the end, 26 we read, but when the helper comes who I will send to you from the father, the spirit of truth who proceeds from the father, he will bear witness about me.

And you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning. And then 16, we find this as well. I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

John 16:13, when the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth for you will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak. And he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

All that the father is mine. Therefore, I said that he would take what is mine and declare it to you. In addition, New Testament revelation centers on the person and work of Christ.

In our next lecture, before we go through to scripture, we will deal with the special revelation of God in the New Testament, in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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