

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 5, Revelation and the Bible Story, Texts 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 5, Revelation and the Bible Story, Texts, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Peterson's lecture explores the concept of divine revelation within the biblical narrative.** He asserts that God actively makes himself known to humanity through creation, historical events, and ultimately through his Son, Jesus Christ. The lecture highlights specific Old Testament examples like the Exodus, where God demonstrated his power and covenant faithfulness. **Moving to the New Testament, the discussion covers Jesus' teachings on revelation as a sovereign act of the Trinity, accessible through faith.** The passage from Hebrews contrasts God's communication through prophets with his ultimate revelation in Jesus. **Finally, the lecture examines James's perspective on revelation as the "word of truth" that brings new birth and guides believers towards righteous living.**

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 5 – 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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on05.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 5, Revelation and the Bible Story, Texts**

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Revelation and Scripture, Session 5**

##### **Executive Summary:**

Session 5 of Dr. Peterson's lectures on Revelation and Holy Scripture focuses on how God reveals himself throughout the biblical narrative, examining both general and special revelation in selected Old and New Testament texts. The session emphasizes God's initiative in revealing himself, the impact of the fall on our reception of revelation, the Trinitarian nature of special revelation, and the importance of responding to God's Word with faith and obedience. Key passages explored include Exodus 7-15 (the Exodus), Matthew 11:25-27 (Jesus' teaching on revelation), Hebrews 1:1-2 (comparison of Old and New Testament revelation), and James 1:18-25 (the word of truth).

##### **Main Themes and Important Ideas:**

##### **1. God is the Revealing God:**

- God actively takes the initiative to make himself known to humanity. As Peterson states, "Amazingly, God is easy to get to know, for he takes the initiative and reveals himself to us. In fact, he is the revealing God who delights in making himself known."
- This revelation occurs both generally (through creation and human conscience) and specifically (through miracles, inspired Scripture, and ultimately through Jesus Christ). "He reveals himself to all people, both outside and inside of them. He makes himself known outside of us in the world he has made...He also reveals himself by caring for and guiding events in the world. In addition, he makes himself known to every human being, writing his law on our hearts and giving each of us a conscience."
- Jesus Christ is presented as the ultimate and perfect revealer of God: "Best of all, God himself becomes a human being to make himself known as never before. Who could reveal God better than God? And who could reveal God to humans better than a human? The Son of God becomes a human while continuing to be God. He's the perfect revealer of God. Jesus makes God known in Word and deed."

## 2. God's Revelation in the Biblical Story:

- God's self-revelation begins in creation, particularly in the Garden of Eden, where his attributes were evident and he communicated directly with Adam and Eve. "God reveals his power, wisdom, beauty, and more in the world and in the beautiful garden that he makes. He manifests his holiness and justice within Adam and Eve's hearts, and they obey their Maker. God reveals his generosity and faithfulness in Providence..."
- The Fall significantly impacted God's revelation. The relational aspect was broken ("The fall breaks that relationship, illustrated by our first parents hiding themselves from God's presence"), and the unified revelation became fragmented due to the effects of sin on human understanding ("...as a result of the broken relationship, God's unified revelation now appears fragmented...such revelation now appears disjointed to their cloudy vision.").
- Redemption in Christ begins the restoration of the unity of God's revelation, leading to a deeper appreciation of God's handiwork and a greater understanding of his providence and word. "In Christ, we enter into a personal relationship with God and recover some of the revelation's original unity...In our future resurrection and life on the new earth, our appreciation for God's unified revelation will be fully restored."

## 3. Special Revelation in Selected Texts:

- **Exodus 7-15 (The Exodus):** This historical event is a significant act of special revelation where God demonstrates his power, sovereignty, and covenant-keeping love. "The Bible teaches that God's revelation comes in historical events, such as the Exodus...Specifically, these historical events display God's power, his possession of the world, and his covenant-keeping love."
- God reveals himself as Yahweh, the covenant Lord, who judges his enemies (Egypt and its false gods) and delivers his people (Israel). "In the Exodus, God judges his enemies and delivers his people. In the Exodus, God also communicates who he is: Yahweh, the covenant Lord. He loves, protects, and remains faithful to his covenant people."
- The Exodus demonstrates the interplay between God's deeds and his word. While the events themselves are a powerful revelation, they require interpretation through God's word to fully understand their meaning. "Notice how God reveals himself in the Exodus, and notice how word and deed go together. The deed is a

mighty revelation, but it must be interpreted for us by the words." The song of Moses (Exodus 15) serves as an example of this interpretation.

- **Matthew 11:25-27 (Jesus' Teaching):** Jesus highlights the Trinitarian character of revelation and God's sovereign choice in revealing himself.
- God the Father is the author of revelation, choosing to reveal truth to the "little children" (those who are humble and receptive) rather than the "wise and understanding" (those who rely on their own intellect). "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."
- The Son is central to revelation, as no one knows the Father except through the Son, and the Son reveals the Father to whomever he chooses. "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."
- The Holy Spirit also participates in revelation, as indicated in the parallel account in Luke where Jesus rejoices in the Holy Spirit. "All of this points to the Trinitarian character of Revelation."
- Revelation is personal, conveying knowledge of the Father and the Son, and it is sovereignly given, beyond human acquisition through reason alone. "Hidden from the wise and understanding means to be beyond human ability or reason. Humans cannot acquire Revelation on their own."
- **Hebrews 1:1-2 (Old and New Testament Revelation):** This passage contrasts and compares God's revelation in the Old Testament through the prophets with his ultimate revelation in the New Testament through his Son.
- Both Testaments reveal the speaking God ("In both Testaments, God is the speaking God. He reveals himself to Old Testament people and to those who encounter Jesus and his Apostles.").
- Key distinctions include timing ("long ago" vs. "in these last days"), audience ("our forefathers" vs. "us"), mediators (prophets vs. the Son), and manner (various ways vs. supremely through the Son - "Son revelation"). "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son..."

- The coming of Christ marks the "last days," the period between his two comings.
- **James 1:18-25 (The Word of Truth):** James describes revelation as the "word of truth" and its transformative power.
- God, of his own will, brings about new birth through the word of truth. "Of his own will, God brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."
- The word functions as God's agent for new creation and the shaping of believers. "The word functions as God's seed to bring the new birth...and it is God's agent by which he shapes believers..."
- James uses "word" and "law" somewhat interchangeably, referring to the Old Testament, ethical teachings, and the new covenant promises in Jesus. "James treats word and law synonymously...which begins by emphasizing the importance of doing the word and ends with a blessing on those who do the law. The word law is also the perfect law of freedom..."
- Believers are called to be quick to hear, slow to speak and anger, to put away sin, receive the word with meekness, and, importantly, to be doers of the word, not just hearers. "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...receive with meekness the implanted word that can save your souls. But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...But the one who looks into the perfect law...and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."
- Obedience to God's authoritative word is essential throughout the Christian life. "At each step of the journey, God's people are to submit their thinking and lives to God's authoritative word."

#### Quotes:

- "Amazingly, God is easy to get to know, for he takes the initiative and reveals himself to us. In fact, he is the revealing God who delights in making himself known."
- "Best of all, God himself becomes a human being to make himself known as never before. Who could reveal God better than God? And who could reveal God to humans better than a human? The Son of God becomes a human while continuing to be God."

- "The fall breaks that relationship, illustrated by our first parents hiding themselves from God's presence."
- "By this, you shall know I am the Lord. Behold, with the staff that is in my hand, I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn to blood." (Exodus 7:17)
- "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children." (Matthew 11:25)
- "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Matthew 11:27)
- "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- "Of his own will, God brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1:18)
- "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22)

**Further Considerations (from the lecture's progression):**

- The next session will delve deeper into knowing God through his revelation, the meaning and necessity of revelation, and general revelation.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson's Session 5 provides a comprehensive overview of God's self-revelation as presented in key biblical texts. It highlights God's proactive nature in making himself known, the disruptive impact of sin on our ability to perceive this revelation, and the central role of Jesus Christ as the ultimate revealer. The session underscores the importance of humility, faith, and obedience in receiving and responding to God's Word, emphasizing that true understanding comes not through human wisdom alone but through God's gracious initiative and the work of the Trinity. The exploration of specific passages demonstrates the diverse ways God has revealed himself throughout history, culminating in the perfect revelation in his Son and the ongoing impact of his "word of truth" in the lives of believers.

## **4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 5, Revelation and the Bible Story, Texts**

### **Study Guide: Revelation in the Bible Story and Selected Texts**

#### **Quiz:**

1. Describe the two primary ways God reveals himself to humanity according to the lecture.
2. How did the Fall impact God's revelation to Adam and Eve? Explain the two noteworthy consequences discussed.
3. According to Matthew 11:25-27, who is involved in the act of revelation, and to whom is revelation granted?
4. In what ways did God reveal himself through the historical event of the Exodus, as highlighted in the lecture? Provide at least two examples.
5. What is the fundamental underlying similarity between Old Testament and New Testament revelation, as stated in the discussion of Hebrews 1:1-2?
6. Identify and briefly describe two of the four distinctions the writer of Hebrews makes between Old and New Testament revelation.
7. How does James describe "the word" in James 1:18-25, and what are some of its key functions?
8. Explain the relationship between hearing and doing the word as emphasized in James 1:22-25. What analogy does James use to illustrate this point?
9. According to the lecture, why was it necessary for Moses and the people to sing a song after the Exodus event?
10. What does Jesus teach in Matthew 11:25-27 about humanity's ability to acquire revelation on their own?

#### **Answer Key:**

1. God reveals himself through general revelation, which is evident to all people through creation and conscience, and through special revelation, which is given to particular people in particular places and times, often through miracles, Scripture, and ultimately through Jesus Christ.



2. First, God's original relational revelation with Adam and Eve was broken, causing them to hide from God. Second, God's unified revelation, which they once perceived clearly, became fragmented and disjointed due to the effects of sin on their minds.
3. God the Father is the author and revealer. The Son reveals the Father, and the Holy Spirit is also involved in revelation. Revelation is sovereignly granted by the Father and the Son, often to those who are like "little children" in humility and faith.
4. Through the Exodus, God revealed his power over the Egyptians and their false gods by sending plagues. He also revealed himself as the Redeemer and covenant Lord (Yahweh) who loves, protects, and remains faithful to his people by delivering them from slavery.
5. The fundamental underlying similarity between Old and New Testament revelation is that in both Testaments, God is the speaking God who actively reveals himself to humanity.
6. Two distinctions are timing, where the Old Testament revelation occurred "long ago" and the New Testament revelation occurs "in these last days" with the coming of Christ, and mediators, where God spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament and through his Son in the New Testament.
7. James describes "the word" as the word of truth, the implanted word, and the perfect law (or law of liberty). Its functions include bringing about new birth, shaping believers, serving as a guide for life, and being the basis for blessing.
8. James emphasizes that believers should not only be hearers of the word but also doers. He uses the analogy of a person who looks in a mirror and forgets what they look like, illustrating that merely hearing without acting is self-deception.
9. The mighty deed of the Exodus was a revelation of God's power and deliverance, but the words of the song were necessary to interpret the event and communicate the truth that Yahweh is the only true and living God, unlike the gods of Egypt.
10. Jesus teaches that humans cannot acquire revelation on their own through their wisdom or understanding. Instead, revelation is sovereignly given by God the Father and the Son, requiring humility and faith to receive it.

**Essay Format Questions:**

1. Discuss the concept of God as the "revealing God" as presented in the lecture. How does he reveal himself through both general and special revelation, and why is this initiative significant?
2. Analyze the impact of the Fall on God's revelation and humanity's ability to perceive it. How does the lecture suggest that this fragmentation is overcome in Christ?
3. Compare and contrast Old Testament and New Testament revelation based on the distinctions outlined in Hebrews 1:1-2. What does this comparison reveal about God's unfolding plan of salvation?
4. Explore the significance of historical events, such as the Exodus, as a form of special revelation. How do both the events themselves and the subsequent interpretation (e.g., the song of Moses) contribute to understanding God's character and actions?
5. Examine James's understanding of "the word" in James 1:18-25. How does he connect the word to truth, new birth, and the practical living out of the Christian faith?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **General Revelation:** God's self-disclosure that is universally accessible to all people through creation, nature, human reason, and conscience.
- **Special Revelation:** God's self-disclosure to specific people at particular times and places, often through supernatural means such as miracles, prophetic words, and ultimately through Jesus Christ and Scripture.
- **Incarnation:** The act by which God the Son took on human flesh and became Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human.
- **Providence:** God's active involvement in and governance of the world and its events.
- **Redemption:** The act by which God saves humanity from sin and its consequences through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- **Trinitarian:** Relating to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which teaches that God is one being existing in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- **Propositional Revelation:** The aspect of God's revelation that consists of specific truths and doctrines communicated through words and language.
- **Personal Revelation:** The aspect of God's revelation that involves a direct encounter and relationship with God.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and humanity, establishing a relationship with specific terms and promises.
- **Sovereignty (of God):** God's ultimate authority and control over all things according to his will and purpose.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 5, Revelation and the Bible Story, Texts, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: Understanding God's Revelation

**1. How does God reveal Himself to humanity?** God reveals Himself in multiple ways. He makes Himself known through the created world (general revelation), demonstrating His power, wisdom, and beauty. He also reveals Himself through His care and guidance of world events and by writing His law on human hearts, giving a conscience to every person. More specifically, God reveals Himself through miracles, the inspiration of Scripture by prophets, and supremely through His Son, Jesus Christ, who perfectly reveals God in both His words and deeds.

**2. What was the nature of God's revelation before and after the Fall of humanity?** Before the Fall, God's revelation to Adam and Eve was relational and unified. They directly knew, loved, and obeyed Him through various means, including verbal communication and His presence in the Garden. After the Fall, this relationship was broken, causing God's revelation to appear fragmented to humanity due to the effects of sin on their minds. While God continues to reveal Himself through various avenues, humanity's perception of this revelation became disjointed. However, in Christ, believers begin to recover the original unity of God's revelation through a personal relationship with Him.

**3. What is the difference between general and special revelation, and what examples of special revelation are highlighted in the provided text?** General revelation is God's self-disclosure available to all people everywhere through creation and conscience. Special revelation, on the other hand, is God making Himself known to particular people at specific times and places. The text highlights several examples of special revelation, including the historical events of the plagues and the Exodus, where God displayed His power as a warrior and Redeemer. God's speaking through the prophets in the Old Testament and through His incarnate Son and the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles in the New Testament are also forms of special revelation, culminating in the Scriptures.

**4. How does the Exodus event serve as a significant example of God's self-revelation?**

The Exodus is presented as a major historical event through which God reveals Himself. In delivering the Israelites from Egyptian oppression, God demonstrates His power over nations, leaders, false gods, and even nature (like the Red Sea). He reveals His identity as Yahweh, the covenant Lord who loves, protects, and remains faithful to His people. The plagues and the parting of the Red Sea showcase His justice in judging His enemies and His mercy in redeeming His chosen people. The songs of Moses and Miriam further interpret these events, highlighting God's glorious power, holiness, and role as a warrior and Redeemer.

**5. What does Jesus teach us about God's revelation in Matthew 11:25-27?** In Matthew 11:25-27, Jesus emphasizes the Trinitarian nature of revelation, giving thanks to the Father for sovereignly revealing truth to the humble ("little children") while hiding it from the "wise and understanding." He highlights His own crucial role as the Son, stating that no one truly knows the Father except through Him, and He is the one who chooses to reveal the Father to others. This passage underscores that divine revelation is not attained through human intellect or effort alone but is a gracious gift from God received through faith.

**6. How does the book of Hebrews compare and contrast Old Testament and New Testament revelation?** Hebrews 1:1-2 highlights both the continuity and the progress of God's revelation. The underlying similarity is that in both Testaments, God is the speaking God who reveals Himself. However, there are distinctions in timing ("long ago" vs. "in these last days"), audience (forefathers vs. "us"), mediators (prophets vs. His Son), and manner (at many times and in many ways vs. supremely through the Son). The coming of Jesus marks the "last days" and represents the ultimate and superior form of God's revelation.

**7. According to James 1:18-25, what is the "word of truth," and how should believers respond to it?** In James, the "word of truth" (also referred to as the implanted word, the word, the perfect law, and the law of freedom) is the means by which God brings about new birth and shapes believers. It is associated with truth and is an instrument of life in contrast to sin which leads to death. Believers are called to be quick to hear this word, slow to speak and anger, and to put away sin to receive it with meekness. Importantly, James emphasizes being "doers of the word and not hearers only," illustrating the futility of merely hearing without acting on its teachings. Those who persevere in doing the word will be blessed.

**8. What is the significance of recognizing God as the "revealing God"?** Recognizing God as the "revealing God" is fundamental because it highlights His initiative and desire to make Himself known to humanity. Unlike a distant or unknowable deity, the God of the Bible actively engages with His creation and seeks to establish a relationship with people. This understanding underscores that any knowledge we have of God is a result of His gracious self-disclosure, whether through the wonders of the natural world, the convictions of our conscience, or the specific revelations found in Scripture and ultimately in Jesus Christ.