

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 10, NT Varieties of Special Revelation 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 10, NT Varieties of Special Revelation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's Session 10 on Revelation and Scripture explores **special revelation in both the Old and New Testaments**. The lecture examines **various forms of God's communication** in the Old Testament, such as theophanies, the Urim and Thummim, casting lots, miracles, audible speech, and prophetic declarations. It then transitions to the **varieties of special revelation in the New Testament**, noting the continuation of many Old Testament forms, with the **incarnation of Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture** as central. The session emphasizes that **revelation is diverse, personal, redemptive, gracious, historical, progressive, propositional, and calls for a response**.

2. 23 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 10 – 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 10, NT Varieties of Special Revelation

Briefing Document: Old Testament and New Testament Varieties of Special Revelation

Executive Summary:

This briefing document summarizes Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture (Session 10) on the varieties of special revelation in the Old and New Testaments. Peterson outlines and provides biblical examples for various means by which God communicated His will and character to humanity. He emphasizes the diversity of Old Testament special revelation and highlights that while the New Testament includes many of these forms, it uniquely centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ and the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing truth. The Urim and Thummim are noted as absent in the New Testament, likely fulfilled by Christ's high priestly role.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

I. Old Testament Special Revelation: Varieties

Peterson identifies and explains several forms of special revelation in the Old Testament:

- **Urim and Thummim:** This is described as a means for the high priest, wearing the ephod and breastplate of judgment, to discern God's will in unclear situations for the nation of Israel. Peterson acknowledges the uncertainty surrounding their exact nature, quoting his mentor, Robert J. Dunsweiler: "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." Examples are provided from Exodus 28 & 30, Numbers 27:21, 1 Samuel 28:6, Ezra 2:63, and Nehemiah 7:65. The inability of Saul to receive answers via the Urim highlights its role as a specific channel of divine communication.
- **Casting of Lots:** This method served for God to announce decisions between alternatives or assign tasks. Examples include the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:8-10), the division of Aaron's sons (1 Chronicles 24), Esther's situation with Haman (Esther 3:7), and the affirmation of God's sovereignty in this practice (Proverbs 16:33: "The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is made by the Lord.").

- **Miracles:** Defined as supernatural acts of God revealing His character and will. Peterson notes their clustering in five critical periods of biblical history: the Exodus and conquest, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, the exile (Daniel), Christ and the apostles, and the second coming. Deuteronomy 4:32-34 is cited as an example of the unique and powerful miracles God performed for Israel.
- **Audible Speech:** God making Himself known through direct verbal communication to the nation of Israel (Exodus 19:3-6) and to individuals like Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4-10). The detailed account of God calling Samuel illustrates this personal form of revelation.
- **Prophetic Declaration:** A common means of God speaking to His people. While the primary role was to convey God's word, it sometimes included foretelling the future, always based on what God revealed (Isaiah 1). Isaiah 9:6-7 is given as an example of a significant prophetic declaration about the coming Messiah. This form is largely verbal but can also include writing, as seen in Psalm 19:7-14 and the account of Jeremiah writing on a scroll at God's command (Jeremiah 36).

II. Characteristics of Old Testament Special Revelation:

Peterson summarizes key characteristics based on William A. Dryness's work:

- **Variety:** The Old Testament revelation encompasses diverse forms, including "personal encounters, the giving of information, an interpretation of events, and God's mighty works." (Quoting Dryness).
- **Personal:** Revelation is not solely verbal but involves God manifesting Himself. Peterson refutes the idea that revelation is *only* personal and not verbal, stating, "Revelation is both verbal and personal." It aims to lead people into a saving relationship.
- **Gracious:** God takes the initiative in revealing Himself (Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 3:1-6).
- **Historical:** God makes Himself known through historical events.
- **Linear:** These events progress from creation towards the new creation.
- **Progressive:** Revelation is gradual, building upon itself with clarifications and completions, not contradictions.
- **Propositional:** It includes inspired interpretations of God's acts through statements of truth in Scripture.

- **Calls for a Response:** Faith, repentance, obedience, etc., are necessary responses to God's revelation.

III. New Testament Varieties of Special Revelation:

Peterson states that New Testament revelation includes all the varieties from the Old Testament *except* the Urim and Thummim. The primary additions are:

- **Incarnation of Christ:** The central and chief form of New Testament revelation, which will be discussed in more detail in the next lecture.
- **Holy Scripture:** The inspired written word of God in the New Testament.
- **Witness of the Holy Spirit:** The Spirit's role in revealing and confirming truth.

Peterson then provides New Testament examples for the shared forms of revelation:

- **Theophanies:** Paul's encounter with the glorified Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6) is cited: "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? ... He said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."
- **Visions:** Peter's vision of the sheet with various animals (Acts 10:9-16) demonstrates God's revelation for extending the gospel to the Gentiles.
- **Casting of Lots:** The selection of Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:23-26) is given as an example, though Peterson cautions that this is not necessarily a normative practice for today.
- **Dreams:** The angel's appearance to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:20-21) reveals the divine conception of Jesus. "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:** Jesus healing the man blind from birth (John 9:1-7) illustrates how miracles reveal Jesus' identity and the works of God (John 20:30-31).
- **Audible Speech:** The voice from heaven during Jesus' ministry (John 12:27-29) is presented, noting the crowd's varied interpretations, highlighting their spiritual blindness. "Then a voice from heaven came and said, I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there and heard it said it had thundered. Others said an angel has spoken to him."

- **Prophetic Declaration:** Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-26), interpreting Joel's prophecy and proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, is a key example. The farewell discourses of Jesus in John's Gospel (John 14:25-26, 15:26, 16:13-15) are highlighted as foretelling the giving of the New Testament and the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing truth. Jesus states, "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." (John 14:26).

IV. Focus on Christ:

Peterson concludes by reiterating that New Testament revelation uniquely "centers on the person and work of Christ," which will be the focus of the subsequent lecture.

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's session provides a comprehensive overview of the diverse ways God revealed Himself in both the Old and New Testaments. While the Old Testament displays a variety of methods, the New Testament builds upon this foundation, with Jesus Christ as the central and ultimate revelation of God, further elucidated by the Holy Spirit and recorded in Holy Scripture. The absence of the Urim and Thummim in the New Testament suggests a fulfillment in Christ's role as the perfect High Priest.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 10, NT Varieties of Special Revelation

Study Guide: Old Testament and New Testament Special Revelation

Quiz:

1. Describe the Urim and Thummim. According to the text, what was their function and who used them?
2. Explain the purpose of casting lots in the Old Testament, providing at least one example from the text. What does Proverbs 16:33 suggest about this practice?
3. According to the text, what are miracles and during which five critical periods in biblical history do they tend to cluster?
4. Describe two instances of God's audible speech in the Old Testament, noting to whom God spoke in each example.
5. What was the primary role of a prophet in the Old Testament, and what additional function did they sometimes serve? Provide an example of a prophetic declaration from Isaiah.
6. Identify and briefly describe two characteristics of Old Testament special revelation as outlined in the text by William A. Dryness and Dr. Peterson.
7. What is the chief form of special revelation in the New Testament that is not explicitly detailed in this session, but mentioned as the focus of the next lecture? What Old Testament form of special revelation is absent in the New Testament?
8. Describe the theophany experienced by Paul on the road to Damascus as recounted in Acts 9. What was the significance of this event?
9. Explain the context and significance of the casting of lots in Acts 1. What was the purpose of this action by the apostles?
10. According to John 14-16, what role does the Holy Spirit play in New Testament revelation, particularly concerning the teachings of Jesus?

Answer Key:

1. The Urim and Thummim were a means by which the high priest, wearing the ephod and breastplate of judgment, learned God's will for the nation of Israel in

unclear situations. Nobody knows exactly what they were, but they were consulted by the high priest, such as Eleazar for Joshua.

2. Casting lots was a means for God to announce his decision between two alternatives or to assign tasks, as seen in the selection of goats for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus and the division of Aaron's descendants in 1 Chronicles. Proverbs 16:33 suggests that while the lot is cast by humans, every decision ultimately comes from the Lord.
3. Miracles are supernatural acts of God that reveal his character and will. They tend to cluster in five critical periods: the exodus and conquest, the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, the exile (especially with Daniel), Christ and his apostles' ministries, and the second coming.
4. One instance of God's audible speech was to Moses from Mount Sinai in Exodus 19, addressing the entire nation of Israel and establishing the covenant. Another example is God's call to the boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 3, revealing his impending judgment on Eli's house.
5. The prophet's main role was to declare God's word to the people. Sometimes, prophets also foretold the future, always speaking only what God had given them to say. Isaiah 9:6-7 is an example of a prophetic declaration foretelling the birth and reign of the Messiah.
6. Two characteristics of Old Testament special revelation are its variety, encompassing personal encounters, information, interpretation of events, and mighty works, and that it is personal, as God manifests himself to lead people into a saving relationship with him.
7. The chief form of special revelation in the New Testament that will be covered in the next lecture is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Urim and Thummim, a method of seeking God's will in the Old Testament, is absent in the New Testament.
8. On the road to Damascus, Saul (Paul) experienced a theophany of the glorified Christ, a light from heaven and a voice identifying himself as Jesus, whom Saul was persecuting. This event was revolutionary, leading to Paul's conversion and his role as an apostle.
9. In Acts 1, after Jesus' ascension, the apostles used the casting of lots to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot. This was done after prayer, asking God to show which of the two candidates he had chosen to take the office of apostleship.

10. According to John 14-16, the Holy Spirit, as the Helper, will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name to teach the disciples all things and bring to their remembrance everything Jesus had said. The Spirit of truth will guide them into all truth, speaking what he hears and declaring things to come, glorifying Jesus by revealing what belongs to him.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Compare and contrast the various forms of special revelation present in the Old Testament, illustrating your points with specific examples from the provided text.
2. Discuss the significance of miracles and audible speech as forms of special revelation in both the Old and New Testaments, analyzing their role in revealing God's character and will.
3. Analyze the characteristics of Old Testament special revelation as described in the text, and consider how these characteristics lay the foundation for New Testament revelation.
4. Examine the role of prophetic declaration, including both verbal and written forms, as a means of God communicating with his people in the Old and New Testaments.
5. Discuss the continuation and modification of Old Testament forms of special revelation in the New Testament, considering why certain forms are retained while others, like the Urim and Thummim, are not.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humanity.
- **Urim and Thummim:** An enigmatic means used by the Old Testament high priest to discern God's will.
- **Casting of Lots:** A method used in the Old Testament and early New Testament to make decisions or assignments, believed to reveal God's choice.
- **Miracle:** A supernatural act of God that reveals his power, character, and will.
- **Audible Speech:** Direct verbal communication from God to individuals or groups.
- **Prophetic Declaration:** A message from God delivered through a prophet, often including foretelling the future but primarily conveying God's word to his people.
- **Special Revelation:** God's communication of himself and his will through specific, supernatural means.
- **General Revelation:** God's revelation of himself through nature and human reason.
- **Incarnation:** The embodiment of God in human flesh as Jesus Christ.
- **Atonement:** The work of Christ in his life and death to reconcile humanity to God.
- **Normative:** Establishing a standard or pattern of behavior or practice.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 10, NT Varieties of Special Revelation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Old Testament Special Revelation

What are some of the key ways God revealed Himself in the Old Testament? The Old Testament records various means by which God communicated His will and character. These include theophanies (visible manifestations of God), visions, dreams, the Urim and Thummim (a still-debated method involving the high priest's garments for discerning God's will in unclear situations), the casting of lots (allowing God to make decisions or assign tasks), miracles (supernatural acts demonstrating God's power and purpose), audible speech (God directly speaking to individuals or the nation), and prophetic declarations (God's word spoken through prophets, sometimes foretelling the future and often written down).

What was the purpose of the Urim and Thummim? The Urim and Thummim were associated with the high priest's ephod and breastplate of judgment. When the will of God was unclear for the nation of Israel, the high priest would use them to inquire of the Lord. While their exact nature is unknown, they served as a means for discerning God's judgment or decision in specific circumstances. This practice seems to have faded after the Old Testament period.

How was the casting of lots used as a form of special revelation in the Old Testament? The casting of lots was employed to allow God to reveal His choice between two options or to assign specific responsibilities. Examples include determining which goat was for the Lord and which for Azazel on the Day of Atonement, the division of the priests' duties, and even in secular matters like Haman's plot against the Jews. Proverbs 16:33 highlights God's sovereignty even in this seemingly random act, stating that "every decision is made by the Lord."

What significance did miracles hold in the Old Testament? Miracles were supernatural acts performed by God that served to reveal His character, power, and will. They often occurred during critical periods in Israel's history, such as the Exodus and conquest, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and the exile associated with Daniel. Deuteronomy 4 emphasizes that these extraordinary events were intended to show Israel that the Lord is God and that there is no other besides Him.

How did God use audible speech to communicate in the Old Testament? God communicated directly through audible speech both to the nation of Israel as a whole (e.g., at Mount Sinai) and to individuals (e.g., the calling of Samuel). These instances of divine speech provided direct guidance, established covenants, and revealed God's plans and judgments. The story of Samuel illustrates a personal encounter where God audibly called a young boy into prophetic service.

What was the role of prophetic declaration in Old Testament special revelation?

Prophets played a crucial role in communicating God's word to His people. Their primary function was to declare what God had spoken, which often involved rebuking sin, calling for repentance, and explaining God's will in specific situations. Additionally, prophets sometimes foretold future events, always speaking under divine inspiration. This prophetic communication was largely verbal but could also include written forms, as seen in the ministries of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

What are some key characteristics of Old Testament special revelation? Old Testament special revelation is characterized by its variety of forms, its personal nature (God manifests Himself to individuals), its redemptive and covenantal purpose (aiming to establish and maintain a relationship), its graciousness (God initiates the revelation), its historical grounding (revealed through events in time), its linear and progressive nature (unfolding gradually), its propositional content (including inspired interpretations of God's actions as statements of truth), and its demand for a response (faith, obedience, etc.).

New Testament Varieties of Special Revelation

How does New Testament special revelation build upon the Old Testament, and what are some of its distinct features? New Testament revelation includes many of the same forms as the Old Testament (theophanies, visions, dreams, casting of lots, miracles, audible speech, and prophetic declaration, including scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit), with the notable exception of the Urim and Thummim, as Christ fulfills the high priestly role. However, the central feature of New Testament revelation is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God's ultimate self-revelation occurs in the person and work of Jesus. The New Testament also emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing truth and empowering believers.