

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 11, Special Revelation -- 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 11, Special Revelation -- Incarnation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture, "Special Revelation in the New Testament, Incarnation, John Introduction," explores the concept of Jesus Christ as God's ultimate special revelation to humanity. The lecture posits that while the New Testament contains various forms of special revelation, the incarnation of Jesus and Holy Scripture stand out. **Peterson argues that Jesus, as the incarnate Son of God, reveals God's character, words, and actions in an unprecedented and complete manner.** He examines passages from John's Gospel and 1 John to illustrate how the apostles directly experienced and witnessed Jesus as the divine Word made flesh, emphasizing the sensory confirmation of God's revelation through the God-man. **The lecture further highlights John the Baptist's role as a witness to Jesus, the "true light" coming into the world, and addresses the varied responses to this divine revelation, including rejection and belief.** Ultimately, Peterson establishes the incarnation as a profound and unique act of God's self-disclosure.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 11 – 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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on11.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 11, Special Revelation -- Incarnation

**Briefing Document: Special Revelation in the New Testament - The Incarnation (Based on Peterson, Session 11)**

#### **Main Themes:**

This session by Dr. Peterson focuses on the **incarnation of Jesus Christ as the pinnacle of God's special revelation in the New Testament**. It argues that while the New Testament contains various forms of special revelation similar to the Old Testament (though lacking the Urim and Thummim), the incarnation and Holy Scripture stand out. The lecture primarily delves into the introduction of John's Gospel (John 1:1-18) and related passages to highlight how Jesus, as the incarnate Son of God, uniquely reveals God to humanity.

#### **Key Ideas and Facts:**

- **The Incarnation as Supreme Revelation:** Dr. Peterson asserts that the incarnation is "God's fullest revelation to date" (referencing Hebrews 1:1-2). He emphasizes that while Jesus is rightly seen as Lord, Savior, and example, his role as the revealer of God is often neglected.
- **Jesus as the Revealer:** Jesus reveals God through his **character, words, and actions**.
- **Character:** Jesus' character perfectly reflects God's attributes: holy, just, generous, merciful, compassionate, faithful, truthful, powerful, sovereign, and wise. As Jesus himself said, "The one who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). He is the "image of the invisible God," (Colossians 1:15) and "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his nature" (Hebrews 1:3).
- **Words:** Jesus' words possess divine authority and power. The temple police acknowledged, "No man ever spoke like this!" (John 7:46). Jesus stated, "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). Rejecting Jesus' words is equated with rejecting biblical revelation (John 5:38-47).
- **Actions:** Jesus' miracles, including casting out demons (Matthew 12:28), demonstrating power over nature (Matthew 8:23-27), and acts of healing and compassion (Matthew 9:18-25, 14:14), testify to God's presence, power, justice, and compassion. These miracles also "anticipate the resurrection of the dead and

the new earth." His death and resurrection are his "greatest revelatory actions," disclosing God's wisdom, love, righteousness, and power.

- **1 John 1:1-4: Sensory Witness to the Incarnate Word:** The Apostle John emphasizes the direct, sensory experience he and other apostles had with the incarnate "word of life." They "have heard," "have seen with our eyes," "observed," and "have touched with our hands concerning the word of life" (1 John 1:1). This highlights the tangible reality of God becoming human.
- **Communication of Properties:** The text touches upon the theological concept of the "communication of properties," where attributes of Jesus' divine and human natures are ascribed to the one person. An example is the crucifixion of the "Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8), where a divine title is used in conjunction with a human action. This underscores the unity of Christ as one person with two natures.
- **John 1:1-18: The Word Made Flesh:** Dr. Peterson analyzes the prologue of John's Gospel, emphasizing:
  - The Son's pre-existence and divinity as the "Word" who "was with God and was God" (John 1:1).
  - The incarnation: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This is presented as a fundamental teaching that the eternal Son took on true humanity.
  - The permanent nature of the incarnation: Jesus is henceforth the God-man.
  - The concept of "dwelling" (John 1:14) having a double meaning, potentially alluding to the Old Testament tabernacle where God's glory was manifested. "We have seen his glory, glory of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14).
  - Jesus uniquely reveals the Father's glory, surpassing even the glory associated with Moses and Elijah (referencing the Transfiguration).
  - Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, in contrast to the law given through Moses (John 1:17). Peterson clarifies that "grace and truth" are a translation of the Hebrew "hesed v'emet," Old Testament concepts that are manifested abundantly in the person and work of Christ, eclipsing their previous revelation.
  - John the Baptist's role as a witness to Jesus, the light. He performed no signs but his testimony about Jesus was true. John the Baptist recognized Jesus' pre-eminence: "He who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me" (John 1:15), hinting at Jesus' pre-existence.

- Jesus, the incarnate Son, "has made him [the Father] known" (John 1:18), offering a deeper explanation and revelation of God than ever before.
- **Jesus as the Light of the World:** Building on John 1:6-9, Peterson discusses Jesus as "the true light" that "gives light to everyone" (John 1:9). He clarifies this is not primarily a philosophical statement about inherent human cognition but an incarnational historical statement about Jesus' earthly ministry and the revelation he brought. This light elicits both acceptance and rejection.
- **Rejection and Acceptance (John 1:10-13):** Despite being the creator who came into the world, "the world did not know him...He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him" (John 1:10-11). However, for those who "received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12), highlighting the role of God's sovereign grace.

#### Quotes:

- "The incarnation of the Son of God is God's fullest revelation to date, Hebrews 1:1 and 2, and we learn of it in Holy Scripture..." (p. 1)
- "'Christ's humanity was the means that conveyed the revelation of deity.'" (Millard Erickson, quoted on p. 2)
- "No one has ever seen God, the one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side. He has revealed him," (John 1:18, CSB, quoted on p. 1)
- "The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father," (John 14:9, quoted on p. 2)
- "'in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,' Hebrews 1:1 and 2." (quoted on p. 2)
- "'no man ever spoke like this,' John 7:46." (quoted on p. 2)
- "'the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life,' John 6:63." (quoted on p. 2)
- "'the anticipation of final glory can be seen especially in Jesus' powerful acts of healing and restoring creation,'" (Herman Bavinck, quoted on p. 3)
- "...which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands concerning the word of life." (1 John 1:1, quoted on p. 3)

- "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, quoted on p. 6)
- "No one has ever seen God, the only God who's at the Father's side, he has made him known." (John 1:18, quoted on p. 6)
- "The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17, quoted on p. 7)
- "He who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me." (John 1:15, quoted on p. 9)
- "Whoever has seen me has seen the father..." (John 14:9, quoted on p. 10)
- "The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world." (John 1:9, quoted on p. 12)
- "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." (John 1:10-11, quoted on p. 13)

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson's session provides a foundational understanding of the incarnation as the ultimate act of God's special revelation in the New Testament, particularly as introduced in the Gospel of John. He highlights Jesus Christ as the perfect revealer of God through his person, teachings, and actions, emphasizing the sensory witness of the apostles and the profound implications of the eternal Word becoming flesh. The session also touches on the complexities of Christ's two natures and the contrasting responses of humanity to this divine revelation.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 11, Special Revelation -- Incarnation

### Study Guide: Special Revelation in the New Testament - Incarnation and John's Introduction

#### Key Concepts:

- **Special Revelation:** God's specific communication of himself to particular people at particular times and places.
- **General Revelation:** God's revelation of himself through nature and human reason, available to all.
- **Incarnation:** The act by which the eternal Son of God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Revealer:** One who makes something known or visible; in this context, Jesus Christ revealing God.
- **God-Man:** The unique identity of Jesus Christ as both fully God and fully human in one person.
- **Communication of Properties (Communicatio Idiomatum):** The theological concept that the divine and human natures of Christ are so united that what is proper to one nature can be predicated of the person of Christ.
- **Witness:** One who has seen or experienced something and can testify to it; the apostles were witnesses to the incarnate Christ.
- **Fellowship:** Sharing in the life of God, a key aspect of salvation in 1 John.
- **The Word (Logos):** A title for Jesus in John's Gospel, emphasizing his role as God's self-expression and agent of creation.
- **The Light:** Another title for Jesus in John's Gospel, highlighting his role in bringing truth and dispelling darkness.
- **Grace and Truth (Hesed v'Emet):** Old Testament concepts signifying God's covenant love and faithfulness, manifested fully in Jesus Christ.
- **State of Humiliation:** The period of Christ's earthly life from his incarnation to his burial, marked by his submission to the Father.

- **State of Exaltation:** The period from Christ's resurrection to his second coming, marked by his glorification and reigning power.

### Quiz:

1. According to the lecture, what are the two primary forms of special revelation in the New Testament that stand out?
2. Explain Millard Erickson's insight regarding Christ's humanity and its role in revelation. How does John's writing in 1 John 1:1 support this?
3. Provide two examples from the Gospels where Jesus' words reveal God in a unique way. What was the impact of these words on those who heard them?
4. How do Jesus' miracles function as special revelation? Give one example and explain what aspect of God it reveals.
5. What is the significance of John 1:14 ("The Word became flesh") in relation to the concept of the incarnation as revelation?
6. Explain the theological concept of the "communication of properties" as illustrated by the crucifixion of the "Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8).
7. Why is Jesus considered the "perfect missionary" or "perfect agent" for revealing God to humanity?
8. In John 1, what are the different titles given to the Son (besides Son), and what does each title emphasize about his role as the revealer of God?
9. Contrast the understanding of "grace and truth" coming through Jesus Christ with the giving of the law through Moses, as explained in the lecture.
10. How does the rejection of Jesus by the world (John 1:10-11) paradoxically highlight his role as the revealer of God?

### Answer Key:

1. The two primary forms of special revelation in the New Testament are the incarnation of Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture. While the Old Testament had various forms, these two are emphasized in the New Testament.
2. Millard Erickson suggests that Christ's humanity served as the means through which his deity was revealed. John 1:1 supports this by describing the apostles' sensory experience of the "word of life" becoming flesh – they heard, saw, and touched him.

3. One example is in John 7:46, where the temple police admitted, "No man ever spoke like this," indicating the unique divine authority in Jesus' words. Another is Jesus' statement in John 6:63 that his words "are spirit and are life," revealing their divine power and life-giving nature.
4. Jesus' miracles testify to God's presence and power. For example, Matthew 8:23-27 describes Jesus calming a storm, revealing God's sovereign power over nature and his ability to bring order to chaos.
5. John 1:14 is a foundational statement for the incarnation, declaring that the eternal Word, who was with God and was God, took on human flesh and dwelt among humanity. This event is the ultimate revelation of God, making the invisible God visible.
6. The "communication of properties" means that attributes of both Christ's divine and human natures can be ascribed to his single person. The crucifixion of the "Lord of glory" illustrates this: "Lord of glory" is a divine title, yet crucifixion is a human experience, demonstrating the unity of his two natures in one person.
7. Jesus is the perfect missionary because he is both God and man. As God, he perfectly knows and embodies the Father; as man, he can perfectly communicate and contextualize the message to human beings, bridging the gap between the divine and the human.
8. Besides "Son," John calls Jesus "the Word" (emphasizing his role as God's expression and agent), and "the Light" (highlighting his role in bringing truth, understanding, and dispelling darkness). Both titles portray the Son incarnate as the revealer of God.
9. The lecture explains that while grace and truth were present as concepts in the Old Testament (*hesed v'emet*), they were manifested abundantly and definitively in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Compared to the revelation in Jesus, the Old Testament revelation of grace and truth was "negligible" or eclipsed.
10. The rejection of Jesus, despite his being the creator who entered his own creation, underscores the radical nature of God's revelation in the incarnation. It highlights the stark contrast between God's self-disclosure and humanity's fallen state and inability to recognize him, emphasizing the need for faith to perceive this special revelation.



**Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the significance of the incarnation as the "fullest revelation to date" (Hebrews 1:1-2) according to the lecture. Discuss how Jesus' person, words, and actions contribute to this understanding.
2. Explore the concept of Jesus as the "God-man" and how this unique identity enables him to be both the revealer and the revelation of God. Use specific examples from the lecture to support your argument.
3. Discuss the role of the apostles as eyewitnesses in proclaiming the incarnate Word (1 John 1:1-4). How does their sensory experience of Jesus contribute to the reliability and impact of the New Testament revelation?
4. Examine John's use of the titles "the Word" and "the Light" for Jesus in the opening chapter of his Gospel. How do these titles illuminate the nature and purpose of the incarnation as special revelation?
5. Evaluate the lecture's interpretation of John 1:17 in relation to the Old Testament concepts of "grace and truth." How does the coming of Jesus Christ represent a culmination and surpassing of God's revelation in the Old Testament?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Special Revelation:** God's specific and direct communication of himself to humanity through particular means, such as the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the inspired Word of Scripture.
- **General Revelation:** God's disclosure of himself that is universally accessible through creation, human reason, and conscience.
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the eternal second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ, while remaining fully divine.
- **God-Man:** A term used to describe the unique person of Jesus Christ, who possesses both fully divine and fully human natures perfectly united.
- **Communication of Properties (Communicatio Idiomatum):** A theological concept explaining how the attributes of Christ's divine and human natures can be appropriately predicated of his one person due to the hypostatic union.
- **Fellowship (Koinonia):** A Greek term referring to a close association, sharing, and participation; in a theological context, it often refers to the spiritual communion believers have with God and with one another.
- **The Word (Logos):** A Greek term used by John to refer to the eternal Son of God, emphasizing his role as the divine expression, agent of creation, and the means through which God reveals himself.
- **The Light (Phos):** A metaphor used by John to describe Jesus, highlighting his role in bringing spiritual illumination, truth, and life, and overcoming darkness and ignorance.
- **Grace (Charis):** God's unmerited favor, love, and kindness extended to humanity.
- **Truth (Aletheia):** Conformity with fact or reality; in a theological sense, it refers to God's own being, his Word, and the reality revealed in Jesus Christ.
- **State of Humiliation (Status Humiliationis):** The period of Christ's earthly life from his conception to his burial, during which he voluntarily humbled himself and veiled his divine glory.
- **State of Exaltation (Status Exaltationis):** The period from Christ's resurrection and ascension to his second coming, during which he exercises his full divine power and glory.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 11, Special Revelation -- Incarnation, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: The Incarnation as Special Revelation in the New Testament

**1. What are the primary forms of special revelation in the New Testament, according to the source?** The New Testament contains various forms of special revelation similar to the Old Testament, with the notable exception of the Urim and Thummim associated with the high priest. However, two forms stand out: the incarnation of Jesus Christ and Holy Scripture. The incarnation is particularly highlighted as a sometimes neglected yet crucial aspect of God's special revelation.

**2. Beyond being Lord, Savior, and an example, what significant role does Jesus fulfill in the Gospels?** A key, often overlooked role of Jesus in the Gospels is that of the revealer of God. Through his person, words, deeds, and entire ministry, Jesus reveals God in a way never seen before. His incarnation represents God's fullest revelation to humanity to that point, making the invisible God visible.

**3. How does the incarnation uniquely qualify Jesus to be both the revealer and the revelation of God?** As the God-man, Jesus possesses both divine and human natures in one person. His humanity served as the means by which his deity and thus the nature of God could be conveyed and experienced by humanity in a sensory way. The apostles themselves heard his words, saw his actions, and even touched him, providing firsthand witness to God's revelation in human form.

**4. In what ways do Jesus' character, words, and actions reveal God, as emphasized in the text?** Jesus' character reveals God's attributes such as holiness, justice, generosity, mercy, compassion, faithfulness, truthfulness, power, sovereignty, and wisdom in a tangible way. His words, declared to be "spirit and life," reveal God with unparalleled power and authority. His actions, particularly his miracles, demonstrate God's presence, power, justice, and compassion, anticipating the future resurrection and new earth. Even his death and resurrection are profound revelatory acts, disclosing God's wisdom, love, righteousness, and power.

**5. What is the significance of John's sensory description of encountering the "Word of Life" in 1 John 1:1-4?** John's emphasis on hearing, seeing, looking upon, and touching the "Word of Life" (Jesus) underscores the reality and tangibility of the incarnation as a form of revelation. This sensory experience of the apostles served as the foundation for their proclamation of the eternal life, bringing others into fellowship with God. The seemingly paradoxical idea of touching the divine "Word of Life" highlights the unique unity of Christ's divine and human natures.

**6. How does the Gospel of John further illustrate the incarnation as revelation, particularly through the metaphors of "Word" and "Light"?** John's Gospel introduces Jesus as the "Word" (Logos) from the beginning, highlighting his eternal nature and role as God's agent in creation. Later, Jesus is presented as the "Light" coming into the world, a metaphor for revelation and understanding. The incarnation, described as "the Word became flesh," is central to John's portrayal of Jesus as the one who makes God known, full of grace and truth. Even the rejection Jesus faced underscores the decisive nature of this revelation.

**7. What is the meaning of the statement "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" in John 1:17 in light of the Old Testament?** This statement does not imply that grace and truth were absent in the Old Testament. Rather, it signifies that the grace and truth of God were manifested abundantly and in their fullness through the person and work of Jesus Christ, eclipsing the revelation of grace and truth in the Old Testament, much like the glory of the new covenant surpasses the glory of the old. The concepts of grace and truth (Greek *charis* and *aletheia*) are rooted in the Old Testament Hebrew *hesed* and *emet*, signifying God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

**8. How does Jesus' statement "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9) encapsulate the idea of the incarnation as revelation?** This profound statement by Jesus directly asserts that he perfectly reveals the Father. By seeing Jesus—his character, hearing his words, and witnessing his actions—one is essentially seeing the Father because Jesus is God incarnate. This highlights the central theme that the incarnation is the ultimate and clearest revelation of God to humanity, making the invisible God knowable through the visible person of his Son.