

Revelation: Putting a Face on God

General Revelation

- Creation (Romans 1:18-21; Psa. 19:1-6)
- Conscience (Romans 2:14-15)
Its Value:
Its Limitation:

Special Revelation

- Written Word of God – Bible (Psalms 119:105)
- Living Word of God – Jesus (John 1:14-18)
Its Value (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
Its Verification:
Prophecy - Resurrection - Consistency

Key Passage: Hebrews 1:1-2

¹In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son.

Cultural Replacements for Revelation

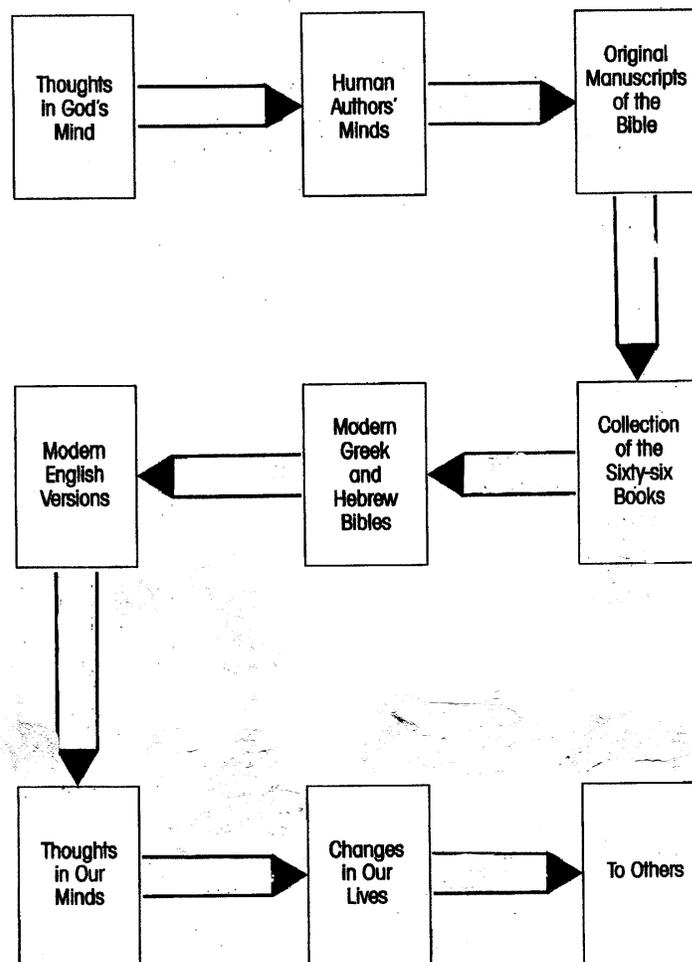
- Reason Based Ethics: Do what _____.
- Experience Based Ethics: Do what _____.
- Personal Based Ethics: Do your _____.
- Collective Opinion Based Ethics: Do what the _____ say.
- Authority Based Ethics: Do what _____ say.

ILL: “Apart from revelation we don’t know where we came from, where we are going, or how to live in between. When revelation is rejected we are set adrift on a sea of subjectivity.”

Glossary of Key Terms:

- Revelation
- Inspiration
- Canonization
- Textual Criticism (Reconstruction)
- Translation
- Illumination
- Application
- Instruction

Revelation: The Divine Design



Key Issues: Inspiration

Theories of Inspiration

- Natural - inspired like other great literature or music.
- Illumination - inspired like other great Christian writing.
- Dictation - writers were passive conduits for God's words.
- Partial - some inspired but not all.
- Conceptual - not the precise words, just the ideas.
- Neo-Orthodox - becomes the Word of God when experienced.
- Verbal Plenary - (see definition below)

Definition: Inspiration is God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.

Key Texts:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

2 Peter 1:20-21

²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:18

¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Key Issues: Canonicity

The word _____ means rule or measuring rod, it refers to the collection of books which passed a test of authenticity and authority.

Tests of Canonicity:

1. _____ of the writer.
2. _____ of the book.
3. _____ and _____ of the churches.

Old Testament Canon

- Luke 11:51 (Abel-Genesis to Zacharias-2 Chronicles)
- all 39 books by time of Josephus 95AD and Jamnia 70-100AD

New Testament Canon

- 2 Pet. 3:16; 1 Tim. 5:18
- all 27 books by the Council of Carthage 397AD

Non-Canonical Apocrypha (12 books attached to the Old Testament)

- not accepted by Jews or Jesus on a par with the Old Testament.
- included by Jerome in the Latin Vulgate (400AD) but noted as secondary.
- Council of Trent (1548) Roman Catholic Church declared as canonical.

Note: No distinctive Catholic doctrines, with the exception of purgatory (mentioned indirectly in four verses in 2 Maccabees) are based on the Apocrypha.

Key Issues: Interpretation

The basic principle of interpretation is to interpret _____ and in the _____ sense intended by the author. This is like the _____ interpretation of the US Constitution.

Recommended reading:

Howard G. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Moody, 1993).

Key Issues: Accuracy and Reliability of our Bible

What is the data for the New Testament?

There are approximately 20,000 lines in the New Testament. Remember, there are 24,000 copies of the New Testament. Wouldn't you expect, with that many more copies than any other document of antiquity, more lines in question with one another? How many lines in question are there among the 24,000 documents of the 2nd century (New Testament)? The answer is an astounding 40! It is a distortion rate of 0.2 percent, which is 25 times purer than the next reliable book of antiquity. Moreover, in every case without exception, the differences among the manuscripts are spelling, capitalization, and in even rarer cases, punctuation.

In **The Iliad**, you were never told, "this may not be the way **The Iliad** was written, but we've got copies, discrepancies and textural corruption and this is our best guess." The truth is, among the earliest copies, there are such significant differences (whole episodes) in the storylines that literally a person who writes it today must choose among the various storylines the one they are going to decide to write.

What about the Old Testament?

Until 1947 the Old Testament was considered to be no more reliable than other books of antiquity. There was no scholarly basis to believe that the documents were essentially the same as those which were originally written - until the spring of 1947, when a young shepherd boy named Mohammed was out looking for a lost goat just on the west bank of the Dead Sea about eight miles south of Jericho. He came to a crevice in the rock. Not wanting to take the effort to crawl down in it to see if his goat was there, he took a large stone and threw it into the crevice. He heard the sound of shattering pottery. He climbed down into the crevice and discovered what is considered to be the most significant and remarkable find of antiquity. Down there were a number of huge clay pots which had been sealed perfectly. They had been untouched. In those pots were thousands - 40,000 fragments of literature from antiquity. One of them, the most complete, was a manuscript of the book of Isaiah. It was on a leather scroll that was 24 feet long and 10 inches high. The materials were sold to a Jewish scholar from the Hebrew University there in Jerusalem. With great interest it was shared with the literary world. The previously oldest manuscript of the book of Isaiah which existed prior to these scrolls, which have now been called the Dead Sea Scrolls, was from 900 A.D. Paleographers have dated the Dead Sea Scrolls at between 100 B.C. and 200 B.C. The scroll for Isaiah was dated at 125 B.C.

This forms a wonderful opportunity to compare textural corruption over what amounts to 1,025 years. Scholars immediately went to work to compare these two books to see what differences there might be between them. Take one chapter for an example - Isaiah 53. This chapter has 166 words. Comparing the two manuscripts, 1,025 years apart, there are 17 letters that are different. Ten of the letters are spelling, simply because over time, words change their spelling. Four of the letters are stylistic - punctuation and things of this kind. Three of the letters create the word "light," which was added in verse 11. So what you essentially have is that, over a period of more than a millennium, the addition of one word, "light" in verse 11, makes no change in the meaning of the verse whatsoever.

Key Implications:

- If you were Satan, _____ would you attack the Bible?
- If you were Satan, _____ would you attack the Bible?