

Lesson 1 - How We Got The Bible - Introduction and Revelation

September 14, 2022

Well good evening. I hope you are ready to get started? Let me introduce myself. My name is B.J. Chapman. My wife's name is Brenda and we have 4 children, who each have a spouse and two children, so you do the math...

I'm very excited to be given the opportunity to teach this class called,
How We Got The Bible.

Brenda and I have been members at First Baptist for about a year now, but for the previous 40 years, I pastored churches in Missouri, Texas and Mississippi.

Now, James, our Education Pastor, mentioned in the announcements about the class, that I'm an author, and some of you have asked about that. Yes, I wrote a book, (singular). I told someone the other day that I've only written one because I discovered it's a lot of work.

Anyway, the Title is. **The First Two Thousand Years**, and the Subtitle is,
An Unapologetic Examination of Genesis Chapters 1-11.

It's not a part of this study, but if you're interested, you can order it from Amazon

<https://www.amazon.com/FIRST-TWO-THOUSAND-YEARS/dp/1624197701>,

Barnes and Nobel or from the publisher Xulon Press. Amazon would probably be the best price. You can also find it on www.bookfinder.com. Also, there is a couple of other books out there with similar titles, so be sure you order the right one. ☺

I have considered publishing this study, but there are several other related books on the market already, so I haven't pursued it - yet. However, I am so committed to the importance of this material, that it has been one of the first things I've taught in all the churches I've pastored during the last four decades. Why? Well for several reasons.

First of all, at one time or another, we have probably all, asked questions like:

How did we get the Bible?

Who decided what books should be included in the Bible?"

How do we know it's accurate?

Is there one correct translation?

I believe it's important for every Christian to know the answers to those questions. You need to know for your own benefit. And you need to know for the benefit of those who will inevitably ask you or for those who think that the Bible is just a human book and who will challenge you about it. **I Peter 3:15** *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."* Now of course that's talking about the hope we have in Christ, but where do we learn about Christ? From the Bible. As Christians, we have a responsibility to know the answers. We have been commissioned by Christ to be prepared to offer answers to the questions that people have about eternal life and about spiritual things, and by our lives, our service, and our answers will often create in them a thirst for those things.

Now this is going to be a doctrinal or theological study. And another reason I'm committed to teaching this material, is because we live in an age when many professing Christians, seem to have an aversion to theology, or doctrine. And that's unfortunate. Of course the word "theology", simply means the study of God. The Greek word translated "God" in the New Testament is "*Theos*", "*ology*" comes from "*logos*", which means "word", and in this context has reference to speaking, teaching, theory, science, etc..., hence the "**study of**".

The word “*Doctrine*” is similar although less specific, but it is often used interchangeably in Scripture and in Christian circles. Doctrine just means “*teaching*”, and when we use it in Church, it usually refers to the teachings of the Bible, unless it is attached to some qualifying noun such as “Baptist”. Sometimes we talk about “Baptist doctrine” which refers to doctrine that is a particular distinctive of what Baptists believe, such as Baptism that is subsequent to salvation and by immersion, among other things. In the past when meeting with pastor search committees, I would usually be asked something like, “BJ, do you believe in Baptist doctrine?” And my standard answer was, “Yes, as long as it’s in the Bible”. That’s usually stopped them for a moment. But that’s key.

Denominational doctrine is fine as long as it finds its source and support in scripture. That’s why a central theme of the protestant reformation was “*sola scriptura*”, “scripture alone”. Because the world in the beginning of the 16th century was ruled and dominated by Roman Catholicism, and much of Catholic theology came from sources other than the Bible. (That’s a whole other study, so we’re not going to get into all that right now), but when the reformers discovered the supremacy and sufficiency of scripture, and began preaching it as the only source of truth, the world as they knew it was turned upside down.

Now you might ask, “**Why would anyone have an aversion to theology?**” And the answer is the same reason some people, in spite of the overwhelming evidence, refuse to acknowledge that there is a God. Because if you acknowledge that God exists, and especially if you acknowledge that God has spoken to us in the Bible, then you must do something with that knowledge. You either have to deny it, or you have to acknowledge it. And if you acknowledge it, then you have to obey it, or reject it. And the consequence of rejecting it is both temporal and eternal. So many just try to ignore it all together, thinking they can be neutral. But you can’t be neutral about the truth, because to ignore it, is to make a decision not to pursue it, and so in essence, a rejection of truth.

Now another reason some have an aversion to theology, is because much of the “evangelical church” of the 21st century has adopted a doctrine of **Anti-theology**, which is both caused by and reacts against sound doctrine. The contemporary church has become to varying degrees, Man-centered rather than Christ-centered, Emotionally driven rather than Bible driven, and Entertainment rather than gospel focused.

Doctrine has become a dirty word. I’ve actually had church people tell me, “We don’t want to hear doctrine.”

I had one lady, a musician in the church where I served as interim pastor, a lady who had graduated from a local Christian College, who said to me, “I don’t want to hear theology. I had enough of that in college. I just want to praise the Lord.” Ok but how do you know you’re praising the Lord correctly?... You see, there is such a thing as unacceptable worship... (And I can’t spend time on that either. I’m trying desperately not to chase rabbits.) And of course the reason they reject theology is because right doctrine, correct teaching of Scripture, will expose those shallow and even unbiblical attitudes.

So why do we need theology? Because theology gives the framework; it builds the fences that you need to stay within, it provides the boundaries that keep us from wandering into error. Heresy, (false doctrine), is almost always a truth out of balance. It’s a truth that has gone too far and has broken through the fence. And the reason people get drawn into false teaching is often because they don’t know where the fence is. I’ll illustrate that in a minute, but first let me just real quickly identify for you, the divisions of what we call **Systematic Theology**, just so you know what we’re talking about, because it’s a lot more than you may realize.

Prolegomena – **What is that? Well “Pro” means first. And “lego” means to speak.** It is the first word, the opening remarks, and in theology, it is a reference primarily to philosophical arguments for the existence of God. Because, before we can do go anywhere else, we have to demonstrate that there is a God For instance, there is:

The Logical Evidence - Reason demands a Prime Mover, an Uncaused Cause. That is, the existence of the universe requires the existence of a creator who had no beginning, otherwise you're trapped in a maze of infinite regression...

The Cosmological Evidence - Cosmological evidence is the evidence that comes from an ordered universe. Or to state it another way, that there is order within the observable universe which suggests that it is the product of an intelligent mind.

The Teleological Evidence - The Teleological evidence is the evidence that there is not only an intelligent product, but that there is also an intelligent purpose behind everything that exists. Purpose is a word that the secular scientist or evolutionist can't stand, because according to them everything that exists is the result of chance.

Bibliology – What is the Bible? How Did We Get It? What are its distinctives?

Theology Proper – The Study of God as Revealed in Scripture (This is a very broad section.)

Angelology – The Study of Angels

Anthropology – Man, his created make up, his nature, his purpose, his sin.

Hamartiology – The Study of Sin and Its Effects on man and all Creation... “*Hamartano*” is an archery term that means, “To Miss the Mark”...

Christology – The Study of the Person of Christ, His identity, His nature, the cross.

Soteriology – “*Soterios*” means “*Salvation*.” The Work of Christ, what He accomplished on the cross. **Romans 8:30** “*And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, (that is to be declared righteous) and those whom he justified he also glorified.” What does that mean? Those and others are attributes of our salvation that Christ provided for us, and we need to understand them or we'll never be able to fully enjoy and employ our salvation as it is intended.*

Pneumatology – The Study of the Holy Spirit. The identity of the Spirit. The activity of the Spirit. The Ministry of the Spirit. Lots of mistakes are made with regard to the Holy Spirit. This is a critical study for believers.

Ecclesiology – The Study of the Church. What is the Church? How is it supposed to function?

Eschatology – The Study of Last Things.

So how do those studies keep us from wandering into error? Again, by establishing some barriers. For instance, when we study **Theology Proper**, we learn that there is one God who eternally exists in three individual and distinct Persons, who are co-equal and co-eternal. (Three persons, all are one God.) That's called the **Trinity**. And a right understanding of that doctrine keeps us from error.

What are some of the errors relating to the trinity? Well there are some who teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are really three different Gods. And so you have the heresy of **polytheism**, the belief that there are many gods. Mormonism teaches that there are a multitude of gods and that the goal of every Mormon man is to become a god.

There is what we call **modalism** that teaches that there are **not** really three distinct persons in the Godhead, but that the one god just wears different hats. I wear many hats. I'm a brother, and a husband, a father, a teacher. And how I come across often depends on who I'm talking to and what the relationship is. Sometimes I speak as a father, sometimes I speak as a husband, tonight I'm speaking as a teacher, a theologian, but I'm just one

person. Modalists teach that sometimes God just **appears** as the Father, sometimes as the Son, (such as in the incarnation), and sometimes as the Holy Spirit, (such as in Acts chapter 2), but that He is not only one God, but also **just one person**. United Pentecostals believe that. The popular televangelist T.D. Jakes, is a modalist, and so denies the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Now you might think that explanation sounds good, and maybe that's how you have understood the trinity, but it is totally antithetical to what the Bible teaches. And **Theology Proper** establishes that boundary.

One of the things, I hope you'll come out of this class with beside knowing how we got the Bible, is a thorough conviction that the Bible is indeed The Very Word of God. And there are a lot of ways we know that. For instance, the Bible consists of 66 books, written by at least forty different **Human** authors, from many different walks of life, (Some were priests, shepherds, political leaders, farmers, uneducated fishermen, scholars). They wrote over a period of 1500 years, in 3 different languages, from three different continents, on a variety of subjects, (Religious, philosophical, scientific, legal, historical, biographical.) There's poetry, prose, and prophecy. You'll find writing about finance, marriage, farming, animal husbandry, business, child rearing, and all kinds of other topics). Most of the authors never met, and in many cases had never read what the others had written. And yet when you bring those 66 books together, they don't make 66 books. They make **One Book**, with a common theme, the redemption of humanity, and the Glory of God. There are no contradictions. There are no mistakes. Nothing needs to be added, or taken away. As a matter of fact the Bible itself warns against that very thing.

Revelation 22:18-19 *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

Now someone might say, "Well that's just talking about adding to or taking away from the Book of Revelation". But there's a reason that verse is located where it is, at the very end of the very last book of the Bible. And don't forget that the book of Revelation was indeed the last book of the Bible written, near the end of the Apostle John's life, the last apostle left alive, around 96 AD. It is the capstone of pre-recorded history, and so any change to the book of Revelation would constitute a change to the Bible.

The Bible is so amazing. In the Bible, there are threads, (metaphorically speaking), that run all through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. You pull it up here and it wrinkles way down there. And if we had time I could show you fact after fact, historically, scientifically, geographically, miraculously and more, that demonstrate the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible.

How is that possible?

It is possible because the Bible was not **just** written by men. **2Timothy 3:16-17** *"All Scripture is **given by inspiration of God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" *"Pasa Graphe Theopneustos"* Literally, *"All scripture is **God breathed**"* The apostle Paul says there that the Bible, is the product of the very breath of God.

Now you may say, "But I thought you said it was written by human authors". I did, and that's the beauty of this. **2Peter 1:20-21** *"knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but holy men of God, **spoke as they were (moved)** Literally, **carried along by the Holy Spirit.**"* That's one of my favorite phrases in the Bible. *"**holy men of God, spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,**"* and I'll elaborate on that more in the coming lessons.

So how does that work? Let's find out.

BIBLIOLOGY: How We Got the Bible

The process as I understand it required six steps: And these steps represent a progression of communicating TRUTH, (That's what the scripture is.), from God to man. As a matter of fact, the illustration I like to use is of a stairway. At the top of the stairway is God. At the bottom is man. In between are six steps, which are as follows.

God

1. Revelation

2. Inspiration

3. Preservation

4. Canonization

5. Translation

6. Illumination

Man

Now don't worry about those words, because while they may be a mystery to you right now, as we go through this study, they will be defined, explained and illustrated, and by the time you reach the end of this study, you will understand them very well.

I. REVELATION:

Now that word, "Revelation" is not used here to mean the book by that title. We're talking about an action, an activity of God. God Revealed. The word "Revelation", from the Greek, "*apokalupsis*", means to unveil. If you were to visit a park when the shroud, is removed from a statue, we would say that statue has been **unveiled**. Revelation then is an unveiling. It is God's unveiling of himself to man, God revealing himself to humanity.

Now I alluded to this earlier and we'll talk about it again later. But let me point out here, that apart from God sovereignly revealing Himself to man, no one would ever know God. Man by his own will and volition could never discover God or know God. It is only by divine revelation that we are able to know that there is a God, or to have a relationship with God, or know anything about God. So how does God do that? How does God reveal himself to man? Well, there are two kinds of revelation.

A. General Revelation. First, God revealed himself by what theologians call General Revelation, and General revelation comes to us in two ways.

1. Through Creation. Romans 1:20. *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."* The Bible tells us that God unveiled Himself first by creation, the things which He has made. In other words as we look at the earth and all the beauty and life and variety that is in it, as we look at the sky and space and all of the order and wonder of it, as we look inwardly at ourselves at the incredible machine we call the human body, we cannot help but see the hand of God. That by the way is part of Prolegomena, evidence of the existence of God outside of the Bible. God by the very splendor and magnificence and order and detail and perfection of his creation has revealed himself to man. Again, we could spend this entire semester, just talking about the evidence for the existence of God that is observable in the creation alone. But not only does God reveal his existence through creation, but also-

2. Through Conscience. Romans 2:14-15 *"Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, **their consciences** also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."*

What is the conscience? The conscience is the vague remnant of God's moral nature that is left in man after that fall. God created man in His image, and part of that image was a moral nature, but in the fall, when Adam sinned in the Garden, man lost that perfect image and his moral nature was distorted. The conscience is what's left of that. How do we know? Even uncivilized people, all over the world, including those untouched by the Word of God, or the knowledge of God, have laws, (though distorted) concerning moral issues that resemble the commandments found in the Bible. Talk about proof of God's existence. Where did they come from? They came from God. Even in people who have never heard the gospel there is a sense of right and wrong, which is God's laws written on their hearts.

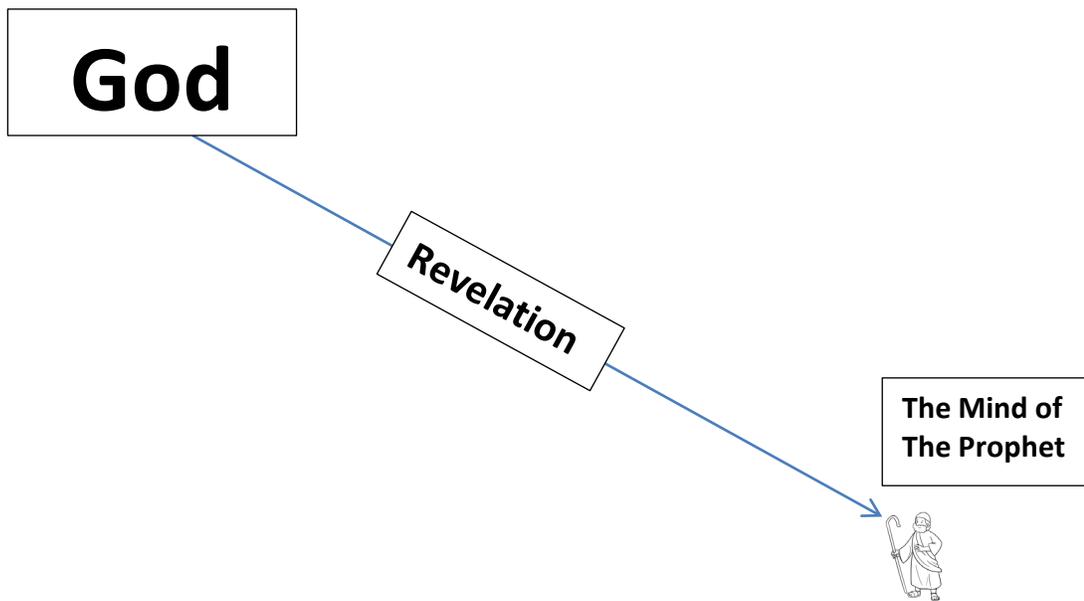
Both of these, (Creation and Conscience), constitute **General Revelation**, and they are very important. The 18th century Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant said, "Two things fill me with constantly increasing admiration and awe the longer and more earnestly I reflect on them: the starry heavens without, (That's creation.), and the moral law within, (That's conscience)."

However, there is a limitation to General Revelation. What is that? Within the context of God's purpose, (which is #1 to fully glorify Himself, and #2 to redeem sinful humanity), general revelation is insufficient. For instance, we **can** by observing the things that are made, understand that there is a God, but we cannot know His identity or know Him personally. We can't know about His attributes, like Holiness, and Sovereignty and Grace. We **can** by following the dictates of conscience, know that God has some demands or standards, but we cannot hope to relate to Him, or please Him, if we don't know all What He requires, His laws.

It was necessary then for God to reveal himself in some complete way. Now care must be taken here, not to misunderstand. To say it was necessary for God to reveal himself in some complete way **does not** mean that general revelation fails to do what God designed it to do. God intended for his creation to constitute in man an awareness that there is a God, a creator. That's why Paul said in **Roman's 1:20** that man is without excuse. *"For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."* Nobody has an excuse for not believing in God. God intended for conscience to create in humanity an awareness that God has certain requirements. And through both of these, God intended to create in people a desire to know Him. And General Revelation, Creation and Conscience, **perfectly** accomplishes that purpose **and** prepares the way for the second kind of revelation.

B. Special Revelation. The second way in which God revealed Himself, we call Special Revelation. In **Hebrews 1:1-2** the Bible says *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."* The point of emphasis that I want you to see in this verse is *"God...spoke...and ...has spoken."* This is **Special Revelation**. God revealed himself not through mediators like creation and conscience, **but in WORDS directly to man**. And that's important. Today, there are churches that have for the most part quit using the Bible, quit preaching the Bible, and instead they have all kinds of substitutes. Dramatic presentations, interpretive dance, acrobats, comedians, excessive music. Many who claim to be Christians no longer read the Bible, they just watch movies and TV shows about the bible. But God revealed himself in WORDS.

Definition: "Special Revelation is the communication of Divine truth from God to the mind of the prophet."



The Bible is itself the product of this kind of revelation.

How? What was the process or the instrument that God used to communicate divine truth to the mind of the prophet, or as often in the New Testament, the apostle? Sometimes it was given through visions.

Genesis 15:1 *“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”*

2Chronicles 32:32 *“Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his good deeds, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.”*

Acts 16:9-10 *“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”*

Sometimes divine truth was communicated through dreams. **Numbers 12:6** *“And he said, ‘Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream.’”*

Daniel 7:1 *“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.”*

Sometimes God spoke audibly or appeared to the prophet and spoke face to face.

1Samuel 3:21 *“And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.”*

Sometimes God appeared as “*The Angel of the Lord*”. **2Kings 1:3** *“But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, ‘Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?’”*

So who is the “*The Angel of the Lord*” that instructed the prophet Elijah with the Word of God? Well we’re not going to take the time tonight to explore it, but most conservative scholars believe, the angel of the Lord was none other than a pre-incarnate appearance of the second person of the God-head. The Son, The Lord Jesus

Christ, Who is of course God. And this is not an isolated appearance. The Angel of the Lord appears around 50 times in the Old Testament.

More often, or perhaps better, most often, Revelation was given simply by God causing the prophet to know the Word of God. That is God sovereignly and supernaturally, placing divine truth into the mind of the prophet. In the Old Testament, it often appears preceded by a phrase like “The Word of the Lord came to...”

1Samuel 15:10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel:

2 Samuel 7:4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan,

2 Samuel 24:11 And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer,

1Kings 6:11 Now the word of the LORD came to Solomon,

1Kings 13:20 And as they sat at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet

1Kings 18:1 After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah,

Isaiah 8:4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah:

Jeremiah 29:30 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah:

Ezekiel 1:3 the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel

Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah

Zechariah 7:1 In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah

How is it delineated in the New Testament?

Ephesians 3:3-5 *“how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”*

Galatians 1:12 *“For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Acts 11:28 *“And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).”*

1Corinthians 2:10-13 *“these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.”*

That's Special Revelation.

