

God Will Only Reveal What We Are Able to Handle:

Five Case Studies on the Revelation of God

I. Subjects

- A. Moses: The Glory of God
- B. Mary: The Carrier of the Messenger
- C. Paul: The Plan of God
- D. Elijah: The Voice of God
- E. Jonah: The Purposes of God

II. What Is the Revelation of God?

A. Revelation: God's disclosure of things about Himself to man (*Jeremiah 33:3*).

B. What are some things that God has revealed to man about Himself?

- i. His majesty (*Deuteronomy 33:26; Job 31:23; 2 Peter 1:16*)
- ii. His power (*Job 26:12; Jeremiah 10:12; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 6:14 1 Peter 1:5*)
- iii. His love for his creation (*Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8*)
- iii. His plan for salvation (*Isaiah 49:6; Ephesians 3:7-11*)
- iv. His impending return (*Revelation 22:7,12,20*)

C. How does God reveal Himself and His characteristics?

- i. Prophecy (*1 Peter 1:10; 2 Peter 1:19-21*)
- ii. Nature (*Romans 1:19,20; Exodus 3:1-17*)
- iii. His Word (*1 Samuel 3:21; John 5:39*)
- iv. Dreams/Visions (*Genesis 15:1-6; Job 33:14-18; Daniel 2:19; Acts 18:9*)
- v. Personal Interaction (*Genesis 15:12,13; Genesis Numbers 22:31-33; 1 Samuel 3:10-14*)

III. Case Studies

A. Moses: The Glory of God

i. What is the glory of God? Glory is what God possesses in his own right, a visible ***extension of his nature***, a "concrete" form of his divine presence.¹ (*Psalms 19:1-6; Exodus 24:17; Exodus 29:43; Exodus 40:34-38; Isaiah 6:1-3; Ezekiel 9:3,4*)

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, "[Presence of God, The](#)," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1751.

- ii.** Moses was very close to God (Exodus 24:1,2;15-18; Exodus 33:7-11; Deuteronomy 34:10)
- iii.** Moses was so close to God that his appearance was not the same when he came back among his peers (*Deuteronomy 34:34,35*)
- iv.** Moses saw the Lord (*Exodus 24:10; Numbers 12:8; is there a contradiction with John 1:18; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; 1 John 4:12?*)
- iv.** God did disclose to Moses what Moses needed to know (*Exodus 33:12-17*)
 - a.** Moses wanted information about how they would get to Canaan and how he would manage the people (*Verse 12*)
 - b.** Moses wanted to know how could he be favored by God and yet given such a difficult mission (*Verse 12b*)
 - c.** Moses wanted to know the “ways” of God and for God to spare the people (*Verse 13*)
 - d.** God lets Moses know that he would go with them (*Verse 14*)
 - e.** Moses recognized that God’s presence was totally necessary and it distinguished Israel from all other nations (*Verse 15,16*)
 - f.** God granted Moses’ request (*Verse 17*)
 - g.** Moses asked for ONE thing that God was not willing to grant (*Verses 18-23*)
 - h.** God refused to reveal His face to Moses because Moses still had work to do (*Verse 20; Verse 23*)

Conclusion: Moses could not fathom seeing the fullness of God’s glory. He was not ready.

There's Something About Mary

I. What do we know about Mary?

A. Mary was in the lineage of Jesus, on Nathan's side of the family and satisfied the biological requirement of the perpetual King to sit on David's throne (*Matthew 1:6; Luke 1:32,33*)

B. Mary was a teenager, engaged to Joseph, possibly 12 or 13 years old and a virgin when God gave her the revelation (*Luke 1:27*)

C. Mary was a part of God's Plan (*Matthew 1:1,2; 6,7; 12; 16,17*)

D. What was the revelation of God to Mary (*Luke 1:28-36*)

i. Mary was considered favored by the Lord (*Luke 1:28*)

ii. Mary was perplexed (troubled) at the statement (*Luke 1:29-30*)

iii. It was revealed by the angel that Mary would be the vehicle by which the Messiah would enter the world (*Luke 1:31-33*)

a. When (*Verse 31*)- this would happen immediately/very soon

b. How (*Verses 34,35*)- the Holy Spirit would **come upon** and the power of the Most High would **Overshadow** [see also Psalm 91:1]

c. Confirmed faith (*Verse 36,37*)- Elizabeth was barren and was now pregnant so He is ABLE)

II. How Was the Message Delivered?

A. The angel Gabriel delivered the message

B. Are there other places where angels have delivered God's revelation?

Lot (*Genesis 19:12,13*); Joshua (*Joshua 5:13-16*); Balaam (*Numbers 22:27-36*); Job (*Job 33:23-26*); Daniel (*Daniel 8:16; Daniel 9:20-22*); John the Baptist's father (*Luke 1:8-16; 19*); Galatians (*Galatians 3:19,20*)

C. Were there issues that had to be resolved (*Matthew 1:18-20*)?

III. What was Mary's Response to this Profound Revelation?

A. Mary was ready to execute the plan (*Luke 1:38*)

B. Compare with Zacharias' response (*Luke 1:18-20*)

IV. Why did God reveal so much to someone so young and so inexperienced?

- A. *God* showed favor to Mary
- B. *God* chose her
- C. *God* made the decision to give her the entire revelation
- D. *God* knew that she would comply
- E. *God* needed her to fully understand what was about to happen

Paul: The Mystery of Christ Revealed Unto Men

I. What do we know about Paul?

- A. Saul (Paul) was a witness to the stoning of Stephen (**Acts 7:57**)
- B. Saul (Paul) was a persecutor of the church (**Acts 8:3; Acts 9:1,2; 1 Timothy 1:12-14; Galatians 1:13**)
- C. Saul (Paul) was pressed into service by Jesus (**Acts 9:1-7**)
- D. His name is Saul of Tarsus but he a was also called Paul (**Acts 13:9**)
- E. Paul was an accomplished and religious man (**Philippians 3:1-6; Acts 22:3**)
- F. Paul wrote 13 of the 27 New Testament books
- G. Paul was called into service from the womb (**Galatians 1:15**)

II. God Gave Paul a Two-Fold Revelation

A. Damascus: Saul Outside of God's Will

- i. It is possible that the revelation comes at a time when we are OUTSIDE the will of God (**Acts 9:3,4; 8,9**)
- ii. It is possible that others will be a part of God's plan for OUR lives (**Acts 9:10-15**)
- iii. It is possible that we must be humbled before we can be put into service for God (**Acts 9:17-20**)

God revealed to Paul that he would no longer work to satisfy his own desires but would now work for God!

B. Paul the Apostle: Preacher to the Gentiles

- i. Apostle literally means one who was sent
- ii. Paul never took advantage of his position in the kingdom (**1 Corinthians 15:7-10; 2 Cor 12:11; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:9**)
- iii. Paul received a revelation from God concerning the Gospel (**Ephesians 3:6**)
[See also Isaiah 11:10,11; 49:5,6]

- a. Paul knew WHO he supposed to preach to (**Acts 22:21; Ephesians 3:8**)
- b. Paul received something that even the angels were not privy to (**1 Peter 1:10-12; Ephesians 3:1-11**)
 - 1. Revelation is given by the grace of God (**Ephesians 3:2**)
 - 2. God's revelation is a mystery until He reveals it to us (**Deuteronomy 29:29, Ephesians 3:3**)
 - 3. The revelation is intended to give us a greater insight to share with God's people (**Ephesians 3:4**)
 - 4. The revelation is specific for God's purpose in the season in which it is revealed (**Ephesians 3:5**) The revelation to Paul was his mission from God (**Ephesians 3:7,8**)
 - 5. God had kept his plan to include the Gentiles hidden (**Deuteronomy 34:6; Colossians 3:3 [God knows how to hide things!]; (Ephesians 3:9)**)
 - 6. God had a reason for hiding the plan of salvation (**Ephesians 3:9,10**)

III. How Was it Delivered?

- A. Paul received revelation directly from God (**Acts 22:17,18**)
- B. In light of the prestige of God's revelation, God used a thorn in Paul's side to keep him humble (**2 Corinthians 12:5-10**)

IV. Why did God use Paul in this *particular* way?

- A. Paul's knowledge of the Law made him an excellent apologist for grace
- B. Paul's life was already mapped out before he was born (like all of us)
- C. Paul was not afraid to be a martyr for the Lord [**Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6; Romans 1:16**]

Elijah: Hearing the Voice of God

I. What do we know about Elijah?

- A. Elijah was the *prototype* of John the Baptist (**2 Kings 1:8; Luke 1:17**)
- B. Elijah was a Northern Kingdom Prophet (See **1 Kings 17**)
- C. Elijah prophesied under King Ahab
- D. Elijah brought a young man back to life (**1 Kings 17:21-23**)
- E. Elijah never died (**2 Kings 2:9-13**)

II. God Spoke Prophetically Through Elijah

- A. What is a prophet? Prophet is one of three offices highlighted in the OT. One who speaks from direct revelation from God via the prompting of the Holy Spirit (**2 Peter 1:21**).
 - 1. Three Hebrew **terms** used: “Seer” { *Ro`eh and Hozeh* } and “One who is called to speak” { *Navi* }
- B. What do prophets do? Prophets speak to kings and laymen to give revelation from God (**Jeremiah 1:5, Ezekiel 3:17**)
- C. Is the job of a prophet difficult?
 - 1. **Foretelling**: Future events (**Judges 4:6,7,9,14; 2 Samuel 7:1-4; Daniel 12:4; Revelation 22:1-5**)
 - 2. **Forth-telling**: Judgment, right-now word (**2 Samuel 12:1-7; 2 Kings 1:1-4; Isaiah 58:1; Jeremiah 1:7-10; Daniel 9:4,5**)

III. God Gave Elijah a Multiple Revelations

- A. No Rain in the Land (**1 Kings 17:1**)
- B. Where to go to Find Shelter (**1 Kings 17:2-4; 7-9; 14-16**)
- C. Mt. Carmel Rain was Coming (**1 Kings 18:1; 40-44**)
- D. Mt. Carmel with Jezebel’s Prophets: That God is the ONLY God of Israel (**1 Kings 18:23-25; 37-39**)

E. Mt. Horeb (Sinai): *That His mission was not finished (1 Kings 19:1-8; That it was time to get back to work (1 Kings 19:9-16)*

F. Jezebel's and Ahab's Death (*1 Kings 21:18,19; 23,24*)

G. The End of His Ministry (Elisha): (*1 Kings 19:16; 19; 2 Kings 2:9*)

IV. How Were the Revelations Delivered?

A. By Direct Revelation (*1 Kings 17:2,8; 18:1; 21:17; 21:28; 2 Kings 1:3*)

V. Why did God use Elijah in this particular way?

A. Elijah often felt abandoned by God (*1 Kings 18:22; 19:10*)

B. As a prophet, God could speak directly to him

C. Elijah was responsible for the spiritual welfare of Israel (*1 Kings 18:21,22; 30,31; 38,39*)

Jonah: Discerning the Purposes of God

I. What do We Know About Jonah?

- A. Jonah is from Gath-heper
- B. Jonah is the son of Amittai
- C. Jonah was a Northern Kingdom Prophet (***See 2 Kings 14:20-25***)
- D. Jonah prophesied under King Jeroboam (***2 Kings 14:23-25***)
- E. Jonah was ultimately a symbol that Jesus would use to predict his own burial and resurrection (***Matthew 12:40***)
- F. Jonah was used to describe God's grace in allowing for repentance (***Matthew 12:41***)

II. God Gave Jonah a Prophetic Assignment that He did not Want!

- A. God sent Jonah to Nineveh (***Jonah 1:2***)
- B. The revelation was that God was going to destroy Nineveh (***Jonah 3:1-4***)
- C. We must be obedient to the assignments that God gives us (***Jonah 1:3***)
 - a. Jonah's disobedience put the lives of others in danger (***Jonah 1:4,5,10***)
 - b. Jonah's disobedience would not stop the will of God from happening (***Jonah 1:12,17***)
 - c. In the midst of Jonah's disobedience, God still saved lives (***Jonah 1:5,8,9; 14***)
 - d. God is merciful EVEN in our disobedience (***Jonah 2:7-10***)

In the midst of his disobedience, God converted the sailors, drew Jonah back to Himself...and STILL delivered him to within 3 days walk of Nineveh...

III. God Had a PURPOSE for Jonah's Assignment

- B. What is the role of a prophet?

1. **Forth-telling:** Judgment, right-now word (**2 Samuel 12:1-7; 2 Kings 1:1-4; Isaiah 58:1; Jeremiah 1:7-10; Daniel 9:4,5**)
2. **Foretelling:** Future events (**Judges 4:6,7,9,14; 2 Samuel 7:1-4; Daniel 12:4; Revelation 22:1-5**)

B. What is the ultimate outcome of prophetic revelation?

1. *Salvation and Repentance* (**Ezekiel 18:29-32; Isaiah 1:18-10; Acts 3:19**)

NOTE: *The word repent is found roughly 64 times in Scripture – in the context of hearing from God and turning back to God)*

2. What purpose did God have for His revelation to Jonah? (**Jonah 3:5-10**)

God DID NOT want to destroy Nineveh, He wanted to save them!

IV. How Were the Revelations Delivered?

A. By Direct Revelation (**Jonah 1:1; Jonah 3:1**)

B. By Analogy (**Jonah 4:6,7**)

V. Why did God use Jonah in this *particular* way?

A. Jonah did not fully understand his role in what God was doing (**Jonah 4:1**)

B. Jonah did not truly understand the purpose of his ministry (**Jonah 4:3**)

C. Jonah needed to understand that God is sovereign (**Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:15,16**)