



Instructor: Pastor Andrew

Class Summary: This lesson focuses upon the progressive revelation of God's truth throughout Scripture by focusing specifically upon major themes of Scripture.

Session 1: 7:00-7:30pm

Introduction to Progressive Revelation

1. Biblical Concept

- Hebrews 1:1-4
- Ephesians 3:1-11
- Colossians 1:24-27
- Daniel 9:1-3; 9:20-27
- Daniel 6:10 - John 4:19-26
- Job 19:25-27 - John 11:22-26 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2. Practical goals for leaders at Grace and in the home.

- Help keep your bible study consistent and faithful to the "whole council of God's will."
- Help you develop a deeper appreciation for the meta-narrative of Scripture.

3. Terms / Definitions

- Progressive revelation
- The progress of revelation
- Cumulative revelation

Roy B. Zuck elaborates on progressive revelation in a discussion on the unity of scripture by proposing four truths about the divine nature of the Bible:

- 1) The Bible does not contradict itself.
- 2) The Bible's obscure and secondary passages are to be interpreted in light of clear and primary passages.
- 3) The Bible often interprets itself.

"Fourth, accepting the unity of the Bible also means that we should acknowledge what is called the progress of revelation. This does not mean that biblical revelation progressed in an evolutionary sense. Instead it means that in later Scriptures God added to what He had given in earlier portions. This is not to suggest that what was recorded in earlier portions of the Bible was imperfect and that the later revelations were perfect. Nor does it suggest that earlier portions were in error and the later portions were truthful. Instead it means that what may have been given as partial information was then added to later so that the revelation is more complete. What Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and others prophesied about the end

times is expanded in the Book of Revelation. What is said about death in the Old Testament is then elaborated in the New Testament. The Trinity in the Old Testament is presented in fuller statements in the New Testament. Recognizing this progress of revelation means that the interpreter will be careful not to read back into the Old Testament from the New. Progressive revelation does not mean that the Old Testament is less inspired than the New nor that the Old Testament is less clear than the New.”

Campbell, D. K. (1991). *Foreword*. In C. Buebeck Sr. (Ed.), *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth* (p. 73). David C. Cook.

“...God did not give us all the information at one time. Instead, He dripped it out over 1500 years, using different writers and languages. Most scholars call this process “progressive revelation” because God gave His revelation progressively during that time. [Insert his preference for “cumulative revelation”]...As we study the Bible we cannot escape the fact that new information is added and that it is based on the older information that came before it. It gives new details, new insights. It explains previous information in a way that we may not have expected. It shows that some things do change with time. But new revelation never overwrites or changes the revelation that came before it, and it never causes the previous revelation to mean something that it never originally meant. Every passage has only a single meaning that never changes. No matter how much detail was added later, the newer information builds on the older without changing its truth or meaning in any way.”

-Daniel Goepfrich, *Hermeneutics for Everyone* pgs. 137-138

“An orthodox doctrine that evangelicals have long held is the belief in progressive revelation; God did not reveal all truth about Himself at one time but revealed Himself “piecemeal,” portion by portion to different people throughout history (cf. Heb. 1:1). Biblical theology traces that progress of revelation, noting the revelation concerning Himself that God has given in a particular era or through a particular writer. Hence, God’s self-disclosure was not as advanced to Noah and Abraham as it was to Isaiah. An earlier book of the New Testament, such as James, reflects a more primitive view of the church than books written later, such as the pastoral epistles”

Enns, P. (2014). *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (J. Vincent & A. Sholes, Eds.; Revised and Expanded, p. 24). Moody Publishers.

Progressive revelation is the recognition that God’s message to man was not given in one single act but was unfolded in a series of successive acts and through the minds and hands of many men of varying backgrounds

Ryrie, C. C. (1995). *Dispensationalism* (Rev. and expanded., p. 36). Moody Publishers.

“Scripture unfolds over time as more truth about God and His plan are revealed.”

-Pastor Andrew, 2024

Session 2: 7:40-8:30pm

Its relationship to Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology

1. Its relationship to Hermeneutics: *The science and art of Bible interpretation.*

- A. **Observation:** Helps us ask good questions in the text by noting where the author/character/teaching is situated in the biblical story.

Example: Patriarchal narratives, Job 19:25-27, Daniel 9

- B. **Interpretation:** Keeps us faithful to the author's intended meaning.

Example: Gospel message to Abraham, Nineveh, 1st century Jews, Believers today.

- C. **Action:** Protects the application and implementation of a specific truth into our lives.

Example: (-) Genesis 1:26 The Creation Mandate > Dominion Theology

Example: (+) Galatians 3:1-5 Sanctification comes from life in the Spirit not in adherence to the Law of Moses.

2. Its relationship to Biblical Theology: *Biblical Theology is the study and compilation of God's truth as it developed within specific eras of time or authors of Scripture."*

- A. Helps allow the Bible to instruct us without the influence or traditions of men.

Example: Martin Luther, Paul vs. Peter (Gal. 2:11-14)

- B. Limits our thinking and bible study within the boundaries of God's revealed plan and purposes.

Example: Daniel 9:1-6; 20-27, Acts 1:6-8

C. Allows the believer to situate themselves properly in the program of God.

Example: Acts 18:24-28, Romans 6:14

- Results in what is sometimes called: _____
_____. Example: Paul (Phil. 3:1-11)
- (-) Does NOT mean that the New Testament is _____ important than other Scripture.
- (-) Does NOT mean that New Testament truth is _____ than Old Testament Scripture.
- (-) Does NOT mean that the New Testament _____ the Old Testament. (It can provide additional information and or clarity.)
- (+) Does mean that it contains _____ truth directly correlating to the present church age in which we live.
- (+) Does mean that it contains _____ truth not revealed in the Old Testament.

D. Recognizes and allows for natural changes/stages in the Bible without contradiction.

Example: Matthew 10:5-7 vs. 28:18-20, The Book of Hebrews!

E. Enables you to be discerning about what you hear from others.

Example: Acts 17:11-12

Session 3: 8:40-9:30pm

Progressive Revelation and Biblical Themes: *Learning to think biblically...*

Definition: *A consistently recurring concept or truth that is developed throughout the Bible from beginning to end.*

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| • The theme of God's glory | (Decrees, Providence, Splendor, Revelation) |
| • The theme of creation | (Authority, Sovereignty, Ownership, Re-creation) |
| • The theme of kingdom | (Government, Kings, Rule, Subjects) |
| • The theme of redemption | (Sin, Savior, Grace, Faith) |
| • The theme of judgement | (Personal, National, Eschatological) |
| • The theme of worship | (God's presence, Fellowship, Obedience, Sacrifice) |
| • The theme of covenants | (Promises, Blessings/Curses, Prophecy) |
| • The theme of law | (Instruction, Ethics, Societal Structure, Holiness) |
| • Etc... | |

Example Theme: The Kingdom of God

Enjoy the scriptural development of this theme through the following major sections of the Bible.

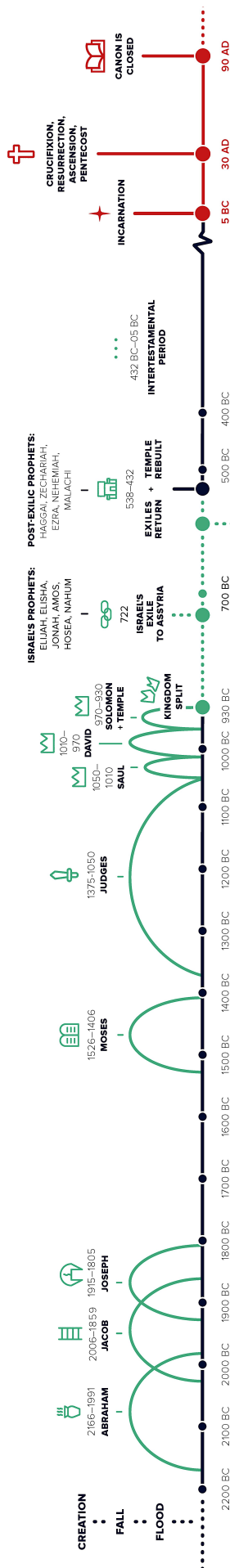
Pre-Law (Genesis - Exodus 20)

The Age of Law (Exodus 20 - Gospels)

The Church Age (Acts - Rapture)

Millennial Kingdom (1000 year reign of Christ: Revelation 20 + various O.T. Scriptures)

Eternal State (Revelation 21-22)



*Each of these dates are approximate and debatable. We are relying on the range of dates as they are recorded in the NIV Zondervan Study Bible and the ESV Study Bible.
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Small Group Exercise: tracing a theme through Scripture

Your theme: _____

Work with your group to note the development of your theme in each section below.

Pre-Law Age (Genesis - Exodus 20)



The Age of Law (Exodus 20 - Gospels)



Church Age (Acts - Rapture)



Millennial Kingdom (1000 year reign of Christ: Rev 20 + many others)



Eternal State (Revelation 21-22)

For Further Study

Books

1. Cone, Christopher *Prolegomena: on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*
2. Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Dispensationalism*. Rev. and expanded. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995.
3. Feinberg, John S., ed. *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments : Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.* Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988.
4. Ryrie, Charles C. *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Dubuque, IA: ECS Ministries, 2005.
5. Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999.
6. Ryrie, Charles. *Ryrie's Practical Guide to Communicating Bible Doctrine*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005.
7. Enns, Paul. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Edited by Jim Vincent and Allan Sholes. Revised and Expanded. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.
8. (Reformed/Covenantal) Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
9. Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum. *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
10. McClain, Alva J. *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974.

Articles

1. Progressive Illumination (Daniel 12:4) https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Daniel_by_Andy_Woods58_Daniel_12_4/20180408_58_daniel_12_4_transcript.html?x=x