

## Has Revelation From God Ended?

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From the beginning of man, prophets of God have made known heaven's will. Adam, Noah, Abraham are just a few of the chosen. From the days of Moses to the days of Malachi, special prophets were entrusted to present the oracles of God to Israel (Romans 3:2). After a silence of four hundred years, God continued His revelatory process for almost one hundred years. He entrusted the holy apostles and prophets to complete His revelation for the benefit of all men. This revelation was once for all delivered in writing so it could be understood by succeeding generations. Though they were fallible men, they were guided by the Holy Spirit in making these vital truths known. Being so guided, they produced an inerrant revelation. This infallible guide ceased in the first century. Since then, mankind has had no further revelation from God.

In contrast, the Moslems, the Mormons, the Methodists and a host of other religious leaders act as though the miraculous gift of revelation continues. They claim that they too, besides the chosen few of the first century, have received new revelations, either as a supplement or as an illumination to the inspired writings of the holy apostles and prophets.

It is my task to show that God's revelatory and illuminative process was completed in the first century, and that additional writings to the New Testament are simply the works of human origin.

### PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS

God has revealed his will. Though the Holy Spirit made many things known unto the prophets of old, the fullness of salvation was not revealed until the days of the apostles (Ephesians 3:3-5; 1 Peter 1:10-12). Notice how the inspired writers, Peter and Paul, connect the New Testament with those things to which the Holy Spirit had, for centuries, pointed. This demonstrates one reason why the gospel is called a "mystery," not because it baffles or eludes the understanding, but because it is a scheme which was formerly unknown but now revealed. The very word "reveal" means, to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up, to make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown. God made manifest His plan of redemption.

God has revealed *all* his will. From Noah to John the Baptist, God was revealing line by line. However, by the end of first century, He had revealed the totality of His plan. The mission of the Holy Spirit to the Twelve was to guide them into *all* the truth (John 16:7-13), not *some* of the truth or *most* of the truth, but *all the truth*. Near the end of the first century, Jude boldly declared that "... the faith ... was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). "Once for all" comes from the idea of quite all, the

whole, and, in the plural, all, all things. Before the first century, this could not be said, because God had not yet made all things known. Jude's "once for all" is equal to Paul's "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:13). Years before the writing of the book of Jude, Paul made it clear that, at that very time, their knowledge of spiritual things was not yet full. He draws a contrast between their present knowledge and the knowledge to come. He wrote, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). Notice how he compares the "now" with what was to take place. The American Standard Verse gives Paul's bold claim in the following words: "then shall I know fully." This time of knowing fully came to past in the first century after "all the truth" was "once for all delivered unto the saints."

God's revelation *can be understood*. Paul speaks of the efficiency of God's revelation (Ephesians 3:1-5). He made it clear that mankind could understand what he had written. It is understandable to the extent that we can become Christians, live godly, worship in spirit and truth, serve heaven faithfully, and avoid all false doctrine in each area of our spiritual endeavor (Ephesians 4:13-14). The miraculous offices in the first century served to prevent error from permeating the body of Christ. Paul predicted that "the unity of the faith" and "the knowledge" would help believers from being "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). One would have to understand what Paul wrote in order to avoid this error. Some may pondered: If this is true, then why couldn't the Eunuch understand what was written? Why did he need some "man to guide" him (Acts 8:30-31)? At the time of the Eunuch's conversion, the New Testament was not written. There was no inspired record that had fully revealed the truth or had clarified what God had yet made fully known (Ephesians 3:5). The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Ephesians 3:1-6 teaches that 1) God entrusted the apostle Paul with a special stewardship to the Gentiles, 2) this stewardship included making known His will to all men, 3) Paul delivered in writing all those things that had been revealed, 4) readers could gain an equal understanding with Paul of what he had revealed, 5) in other ages, God purposely avoided revealing the totality of His scheme of redemption, 6) in the days of Paul, God had fully revealed His scheme unto a chosen few, designated as "holy apostles and prophets," and 7) the Holy Spirit was the agent that made these things known unto the chosen.

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS PREDICTED A TIME WHEN GOD'S REVELATION WOULD CEASE**

God's prophets of old predicted a time when godly parents would be ashamed if their son claimed the office of prophet (Zechariah 13:1-6). Such a claim was precocious and arrogant because, according to Zechariah, God would "... cause the prophets ... to pass out of the land." Since He had no new message, He would not need a prophet. Therefore, sons who claimed to be God's specially guided messenger embarrassed themselves and their godly parents with these preposterous falsehoods.

Micah indicates that the time of the miraculous among the people of God would be limited to the number of days that Israel was in the wilderness (Micah 7:15). This forty years lasted from the beginning of the church (33 AD) until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

### **WHEN THE LAST APOSTLES DIED, THE MANNER OF RECEIVING SPIRITUAL GIFTS CEASED; THUS, GOD'S REVELATION CEASED**

Another logical method that leads us to the undeniable conclusion that all miracles, even revelation, ceased in the first century is the manner of receiving spiritual gifts. With only two exceptions, miraculously gifted Christians received their miraculous powers only by the laying on of the hands of an apostle (Acts 8:14-22; 19:1-6; 2 Timothy 1:6; Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 9:2; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 3:3-5; ). Today, we have no living apostle; therefore, today, we have no spiritual gifts.

The Lord's chosen apostles and the household of Cornelius were the only ones to receive the Holy Spirit directly from heaven (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15). The wording of Acts 11:15 indicate that both were extraordinary events.

### **PAUL PREDICTED A TIME WHEN GOD'S REVELATION WOULD CEASE**

Paul clearly predicts a time when the miraculous endowment of 1) prophecies and 2) tongues and 3) knowledge which permeated the church in the first century would no longer abide on this earth (1 Corinthians 13:8).

He further predicted the cessation of miraculous offices which revealed the heavenly message (Ephesians 4:7-11). He also predicted that the Bible which took their place would be sufficient and efficient in the life of the Christian (Ephesians 4:13-14). Therefore, revelation has ceased. (See the recorded lecture for deeper study on Ephesians 4.)

### **SOME MAINTAIN THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED MORE REVELATION**

Two of the more known books of revelation from God are the Koran and the Book of Mormon. The Koran was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic so he could provide the Arabs with a holy book in their own language, comparable to the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. The word "Koran" means "recitation"; and the followers of Islam, Muslims, believe that God revealed the contents of the Koran to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel in order that the Prophet could recite it to the Arabs.

The basic premise of the Book of Mormon teaches that Jesus came to the Americas. It also teaches that, decades before Christ was crucified, the disciples were called "Christians." It flatly contradicts the Bible concerning the location of the birth of our Lord, saying He was born in Jerusalem. This is an enormous blunder, perpetrated by a fraud. Remember, the Book of Mormon had never been heard of before Joseph Smith presented it to the world. This accused, and obviously guilty, plagiarist wrote the Book of Mormon, asserting that he had received his so-called revelation from an angel.

As you can see, both the Moslem religion and the Mormon religion have at least two things in common. They both teach a gospel that is different than that which was taught by the Lord's inspired apostles, and they both claimed to have been given by an angel. Paul addresses both of these concepts. He warned the Galatians against new gospels that were delivered by either angels or apostles.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).

Moslems and Mormons are not the only ones to claim new revelation. Pentecostal groups teach that they too receive new disclosures from God. You see them on TV claiming, "The Lord spoke to me last night." He didn't! He won't! He hasn't! Also, in the preface, the *Methodist Discipline* boldly exclaims that their discipline is "a revelation of the Holy Spirit." Here is their claim in context: "The DISCIPLINE became a record of the successive stages of spiritual insight . . . under the grace of Christ . . . therefore . . . the DISCIPLINE would be administered, not merely as a legal document, but as a revelation of the Holy Spirit."

All of these modern religions (founded centuries after the Lord established His authorized religion, Matthew 16:16-18) want us to believe that they were guided directly by the Holy Spirit to teach *opposing* doctrines. Yet, in the first century, inspired men taught the same thing (Acts 2:42). How can these so-called inspired men of today teach incompatible, contradictory doctrines? Obviously, the religious conflict is not from the Holy Spirit but from the frauds that impose their vices upon an unsuspecting populous.

In 1996, Mac Deaver publicly taught that one benefit of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is illumination of biblical passages. Thus, he claims a special insight. Be assured that some who believe in the personal indwelling reject this newfound benefit.

## CONCLUSION

To rely upon newfound illumination of revelation inserts uncertainty into our lives, especially if that new discovery has no more evidence for its authorship than one's personal testimony of it being from God.

How much more reliable is the once for all delivered faith! "The faith" has been passed from the time of the bloodshed of its penmen to today. It has been faithfully verified by the Holy Spirit, and it has been faithfully preserved by those that love its Author. When citizens of life seek righteousness, they can find it, but only in the Book. When they seek guidance, they reap a map of delight by studying its precepts. When they seek solace, they reap this deep-seated assurance from the Book of Books—The Holy Bible.