

MASTER THE CONTENT

OF SCRIPTURE



DISCIPLESHIP 1

Revelation

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Book Introduction

In a world overwhelmed by noise, uncertainty, and spiritual confusion, clarity is more essential than ever. This workbook draws inspiration from R.C. Sproul's classic volume, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, and follows its structure as a foundation for guiding believers back to biblical conviction. Designed as a discipleship tool for individuals, small groups, or churches, each chapter explores a foundational doctrine—from divine revelation and the authority of Scripture to the role of the prophets and the meaning of God's Law. With engaging illustrations, sound theology, and reflection questions, this resource equips believers not only to understand the truth but to live it. Whether you're just beginning to study Scripture or have been teaching for years, this guide will help you master the content—and be mastered by it.

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Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 1

Divine Revelation

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Romans 1:20, Psalm 19:1, Hebrews 1:1–2, 2 Timothy 3:15–16, John 10:35

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Good morning everyone. Today, we begin our discipleship journey with one of the most important truths of the Christian faith: **Divine Revelation**—how God makes Himself known to us.

Let me tell you a short story from your workbook:

‘Emily found a locked diary in her grandmother’s attic. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t open it. It didn’t matter how curious she was—until someone with the key came, its secrets stayed hidden.’

This story reminds us that we cannot know God unless He unlocks the door Himself. And praise God—He has.”

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads: “This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

How has God revealed Himself to humanity, and why is divine revelation essential for knowing Him truly?”

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is divine revelation, and why do we need it?

"Divine revelation means God taking the initiative to make Himself known. We are not climbing up to Him—He is stooping down to us.

Romans 1:20 says, *'For the invisible things of Him... are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.'*

Just like we can't know someone's thoughts unless they speak, we cannot know God unless He chooses to reveal Himself."

Ask the Class:

"What would happen if God had remained silent?"

2. What are the two types of divine revelation?

"God reveals Himself in two main ways:

1. **General Revelation** (through creation and conscience – see Psalm 19:1, Romans 2:14–15)
2. **Special Revelation** (through Scripture and ultimately through Jesus – Hebrews 1:1–2)

Think of general revelation as a painting of God's glory. Special revelation is the artist stepping out and saying, 'I made this.'"

Ask the Class:

"How has creation shown you something about God? Have you ever sensed His reality through conscience or nature?"

Unlocking the Scripture

3. What are the limits of general revelation?

"Creation declares God's power, but it does not preach the Gospel.

It leaves people 'without excuse' (Romans 1:20), but it cannot tell us how to be saved.

2 Timothy 3:15 tells us the Scriptures 'are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'

Looking at the stars may tell you that God is glorious, but only the Bible tells you how to be reconciled to Him."

Pause and Emphasize:

"Let's never mistake a whisper for the full conversation."

4. Why must Scripture be our final authority in matters of faith?

"Scripture is not just helpful—it is authoritative. It is '*God-breathed*' (2 Timothy 3:16) and '*cannot be broken*' (John 10:35).

It's our spiritual GPS—accurate, fixed, and infallible. When culture or emotions say one thing, Scripture remains our guide."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think many Christians today struggle with the authority of Scripture?"

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

Unlocking the Scripture

"God is not hiding. He has spoken—through creation, through His Word, and most clearly through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Divine revelation is not a luxury—it's our lifeline. Without it, we are lost. With it, we are found and formed in truth."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. Why can't we know God apart from His revelation?
 2. What are the dangers of relying solely on general revelation?
 3. How does special revelation provide clarity that general revelation cannot?
 4. Why must Christians hold to the authority and sufficiency of Scripture?
 5. In what ways does Christ Himself fulfill and embody divine revelation?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Romans 1:20
 2. Psalm 19:1
 3. Romans 2:14–15
 4. Hebrews 1:1–2
 5. 2 Timothy 3:15–16
 6. John 10:35
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Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 2

Paradox, Mystery, and Contradiction

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: 1 Tim. 3:16, Deuteronomy 29:29, Isaiah 1:18, 2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 11:33

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome back, everyone! In our last lesson, we explored how God reveals Himself. Today, we explore what happens when what we read in Scripture seems to stretch or confuse our understanding.

Let me start with the story in your book:

A young boy once received a beautiful telescope. But when he looked through it, everything was blurry. His father adjusted the lens and said, 'You're using both lenses, but they're not aligned.'

That's exactly what happens when we encounter **paradox and mystery** in theology. If we don't understand how the lenses work, we'll see confusion where there's actually profound truth."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads:

"This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

How can we affirm both the mystery and clarity of divine truth without falling into contradiction or confusion?"

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Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is the difference between a paradox and a contradiction?

"A paradox is an apparent contradiction that reveals deeper harmony upon closer examination. A contradiction, by contrast, is a logical impossibility.

For example: saying Jesus is both fully God and fully man is a paradox—two truths in harmony. Saying He is both created and uncreated? That's a contradiction.

1 Timothy 3:16 says, '*Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.*' Mystery, yes—but not nonsense."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think our culture struggles with paradox? Do we confuse it with contradiction?"

2. Why must we expect mystery in theology?

"God is infinite—we are not. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, '*The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us.*'

Mystery isn't a flaw in theology—it's a window into the vastness of God.

Just like a child may not understand electricity but still flips the switch, we trust what's revealed even when we can't grasp it fully."

Ask the Class:

"Can you think of a doctrine that you trust but don't fully understand?"

Unlocking the Scripture

3. Does mystery excuse irrationality in Christian belief?

"Not at all! Christianity isn't irrational—it's **supra-rational**. It doesn't go against reason but goes beyond it.

Isaiah 1:18 invites us, *'Come now, and let us reason together.'*

The Trinity, for instance, is mysterious—but not illogical. It's not 'one God is three gods.' It's one God in three persons."

Ask the Class:

"How would you explain the difference between mystery and myth?"

4. How should we approach apparent contradictions in Scripture?

"We approach them with humility and context.

2 Timothy 2:15 calls us to *'rightly divide the word of truth.'* Many 'contradictions' vanish when we interpret Scripture faithfully.

For example, Paul and James on faith and works—they aren't contradicting. Paul talks about the **root** of faith, James about its **fruit**.

Romans 11:33 sums it up: *'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'*"

Ask the Class:

"Have you ever wrestled with a Scripture that felt contradictory? What helped you resolve it?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

"Christianity welcomes deep thought, not blind faith. But it also acknowledges our limits.

Paradox and mystery aren't signs of error—they're signs that we're dealing with divine truth.

We reject contradictions, but we embrace mystery as worshippers. Our minds bow—not in defeat—but in reverence."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. What is the difference between mystery and contradiction in theology?
 2. Why is it dangerous to reject all mystery in our understanding of God?
 3. How can we defend the doctrine of the Trinity as mysterious yet not contradictory?
 4. What role does humility play in interpreting difficult passages of Scripture?
 5. How can paradox strengthen, rather than weaken, our faith?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. 1 Timothy 3:16
2. Deuteronomy 29:29
3. Isaiah 1:18
4. 2 Timothy 2:15
5. Romans 11:33

Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 3

Immediate and Mediated General Revelation

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20, Romans 2:15

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome back, church family! Today we're continuing our journey into the doctrine of Revelation—specifically, **General Revelation** and its two forms: immediate and mediated.

Let me start with a story from the chapter:

A grandfather taught his grandson two skills—how to carve statues from wood, and how to spot a fire from a single spark in the dark.

One was external—a finished sculpture. The other was internal—a sense, a reaction to heat and danger.

That's a beautiful picture of how God reveals Himself: externally through **creation** and internally through **conscience**."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads: "This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

How does God reveal Himself through creation and conscience, and what responsibility does this revelation place on humanity?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is general revelation, and how is it experienced?

"General revelation refers to the knowledge of God available to all people, at all times, through the created world and human conscience.

Psalms 19:1 says, *'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.'*

A sunrise won't quote John 3:16—but it shouts that a glorious Creator exists."

Ask the Class:

"Can you recall a time in nature where you sensed God's majesty without a single word being spoken?"

2. What is immediate general revelation?

"This is God revealing Himself **internally**, through conscience and moral awareness.

Romans 2:15 says that the work of the law is *'written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.'*

Even those who have never seen a Bible know instinctively that murder is wrong and kindness is good. Why? Because God's moral fingerprint is on every human heart."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think moral awareness exists across every culture, even without shared religion?"

Unlocking the Scripture

3. What is mediated general revelation?

"This refers to God revealing Himself **externally** through nature, order, beauty, and design.

Romans 1:20 says, *'The invisible things of him... are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.'*

Whether it's a mountain range, the complexity of DNA, or the rhythm of the planets—it all points to a wise and powerful Creator."

Pause and Emphasize:

"No painting creates itself. No poem writes itself. No galaxy arranges itself. God is clearly seen."

4. Why is general revelation sufficient for accountability but not for salvation?

"General revelation is enough to show us that God exists and that He is powerful—but it cannot tell us the Gospel.

Romans 1:20 says general revelation leaves humanity 'without excuse.'

But only **special revelation**—Scripture and Christ—can tell us how to be saved."

Ask the Class:

"Why is it dangerous to say people can come to saving faith just by 'finding God in nature'?"

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

Unlocking the Scripture

"God is not a distant deity hiding in the shadows. Through the stars in the sky and the stirrings of our conscience, He is always speaking.

But while this general revelation testifies to God's existence and power, it does not preach the cross.

It prepares the heart—but it cannot purify it. Only Jesus saves—and only special revelation makes that truth known."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. What distinguishes immediate from mediated general revelation?
2. Why is general revelation insufficient for salvation?
3. How does Romans 1 challenge the idea that atheism is a neutral position?
4. In what ways does creation point to God's attributes?
5. How can understanding general revelation help us in evangelism and apologetics?

Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Psalm 19:1
2. Romans 2:15
3. Romans 1:20

Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 4

Special Revelation and the Bible

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Hebrews 1:1–2, 2 Timothy 3:16, John 17:17, 2 Peter 1:3, Deuteronomy 4:2, John 1:1–14, John 14:9

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome back, church family. In our last lesson, we looked at how God reveals Himself through creation and conscience. Today, we move from the general to the **specific**—from whispers in the sky to the clear voice of the Gospel.

The story from this chapter says it well:

A hiker lost in a forest sees the stars and knows he's not alone—but when a helicopter hovers overhead and a voice says, *'We see you. Help is coming,'*—that's **special revelation**.

That's what God has done in Scripture and in Christ."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads:

"This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

What is special revelation, and how does the Bible serve as God's definitive and authoritative disclosure of Himself?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is special revelation and how does it differ from general revelation?

"Special revelation is God's direct communication—through miracles, prophecy, Scripture, and ultimately Jesus Christ.

While general revelation tells us that God exists, special revelation tells us who He is and how He saves.

Hebrews 1:1–2 declares, *'God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.'*"

Ask the Class:

"Can you think of a time when God's Word spoke directly into your situation—clearly and personally?"

2. Why is the Bible the supreme form of special revelation today?

"The Bible is not just a record of revelation—it **is** revelation.

2 Timothy 3:16 calls it *'God-breathed.'* John 17:17 says, *'Thy word is truth.'*

It reveals God's character, His promises, His plan of redemption, and the person and work of Jesus Christ."

Ask the Class:

"Why is it dangerous to treat the Bible as just one voice among many in our spiritual lives?"

Unlocking the Scripture

3. Is special revelation still ongoing today?

"In Reformed theology, we affirm that **special revelation ceased** with the closing of the biblical canon.

Deuteronomy 4:2 warns: *'Ye shall not add unto the word...neither shall ye diminish ought from it.'*

God still speaks—but He speaks **through His Word**, not new revelations equal to Scripture."

Ask the Class:

"How do we respond to someone who says, 'God gave me a new word that's just as valid as the Bible'?"

4. How does special revelation ultimately point to Christ?

"John 1:1–14 makes it plain—Jesus is the **Living Word**.

John 14:9: *'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'*

If general revelation gives us a glimpse, and Scripture gives us God's voice, Christ gives us **God in the flesh**.

Every page of the Bible either points to, prepares for, or proclaims Jesus."

Ask the Class:

"What happens to our view of Scripture when we disconnect it from the person of Christ?"

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Unlocking the Scripture

Teacher Summarizes:

"Special revelation is the rescue signal of heaven. While creation shouts that God is glorious, Scripture **speaks**—about our sin, about His grace, about the cross, and the empty tomb.

We don't need a fresh revelation—we need fresh obedience to the revelation we already have."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. Why can general revelation never bring someone to saving faith?
 2. In what ways does the Bible surpass other forms of special revelation?
 3. How do we know special revelation has ceased?
 4. Why is the authority of Scripture foundational to the Christian life?
 5. How does Scripture help us know Christ more fully?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Hebrews 1:1–2
2. 2 Timothy 3:16
3. John 17:17
4. 2 Peter 1:3
5. Deuteronomy 4:2
6. John 1:1–14
7. John 14:9

Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 5: The Law of God

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Exodus 20, Romans 7:12, Galatians 3:24, Romans 3:20, Ephesians 2:8–9, John 14:15, Ezekiel 36:27, Psalm 119:97

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome back, everyone. Today we're taking a close look at something that modern culture resists but Scripture embraces: **The Law of God**.

The opening story from the chapter paints the picture well:

In a village where people kept getting lost, an old man repaired a fallen signpost—and just like that, people found their way again.

The Law of God is that signpost. It doesn't save us, but it shows us the right road—and points us to the Savior."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads:

"This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

What is the role of God's Law in the life of humanity, and how does it relate to grace, obedience, and salvation?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is the Law of God and why did He give it?

"The Law of God is His revealed will for how we are to live, most clearly seen in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).

Romans 7:12 says, *'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.'*

The Law reveals God's nature—it's not just about rules. To break the Law is to rebel against God's character."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think many people today view God's Law as a burden rather than a gift?"

2. What are the three uses of the Law in Reformed theology?

"Reformed theology teaches that the Law has three important uses:

- **Civil Use** – restrains evil in society
- **Pedagogical Use** – shows us our sin and drives us to Christ
- **Normative Use** – guides believers in holy living

Galatians 3:24 says, *'The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.'*

Think of the Law like a teacher, a fence, and a flashlight—all working to reveal, restrain, and guide."

Ask the Class:

"Which use of the Law do you think is most neglected in the church today?"

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3. Can the Law save us?

"No. The Law diagnoses the disease of sin, but it cannot cure it.

Romans 3:20 says, *'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.'*

Ephesians 2:8–9 reminds us that salvation is by grace, through faith—not by works."

Illustration:

"The Law is like a thermometer. It tells you you're sick—it doesn't provide the medicine."

Ask the Class:

"What dangers arise when we try to be saved by Law-keeping?"

4. What is the Law's role in the life of the believer?

"For believers, the Law becomes a path, not a prison. It guides our lives in gratitude.

John 14:15 – *'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'*

And Ezekiel 36:27 says God's Spirit empowers us to walk in His statutes.

Like an adopted child learning his new home's rules—not to earn love, but to reflect it."

Ask the Class:

"How can we encourage others to view obedience not as duty, but as delight?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

"God's Law is a signpost, a mirror, and a map. It can't save us, but it faithfully reveals the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, and the beauty of grace.

In a world that despises boundaries, the Law lovingly guides us. As Psalm 119:97 declares:

'O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.'"

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

- Why is it essential to distinguish between the Law's uses?
 - How does the Law point us to the Gospel?
 - Why can't the Law bring salvation?
 - What is the danger of rejecting the Law altogether?
 - How should a believer approach God's Law in daily life?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Exodus 20
 2. Romans 7:12
 3. Galatians 3:24
 4. Romans 3:20
 5. Ephesians 2:8–9
 6. John 14:15
 7. Ezekiel 36:27, Psalm 119:97
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Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 6: The Prophets of God

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 1:5–9, Hebrews 1:1–2, Deuteronomy 18:15, 18:20–22, Acts 3:22, John 1:14, Isaiah 53

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome, everyone! Today we're diving into the role of the **Prophets of God**—those fiery, faithful voices of truth in Scripture.

The chapter opens with a powerful image:

In a medieval village, the town crier didn't bring his own ideas. He spoke the king's message—whether the people liked it or not.

The prophets of the Bible were God's town criers. They didn't invent messages—they delivered the Word of the Lord."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads:

"This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

What was the role of the prophets in biblical history, and how did they serve as God's mouthpieces for revelation, warning, and hope?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. Who were the prophets, and what was their primary function?

"The prophets were chosen and appointed by God to proclaim His Word. They didn't freelance.

Jeremiah 1:9 says, *'Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.'*

Their job wasn't to be popular—it was to be faithful. They warned, comforted, judged, and called God's people back to covenant obedience."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think prophets were often rejected by their own people?"

2. How did prophetic revelation differ from general and special revelation?

"Prophetic revelation was a subset of special revelation. Unlike general revelation (available to all through creation), the prophets received direct, specific messages from God—through visions, dreams, or verbal speech.

Hebrews 1:1 says, *'God...spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.'*

Their revelation was historical, redemptive, and authoritative."

Ask the Class:

"How does the unique nature of prophetic revelation show us God's desire to communicate with His people personally and clearly?"

3. Were prophets infallible in their message?

Unlocking the Scripture

"Yes—when speaking as God’s official messengers.

Deuteronomy 18:22 says, *‘When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord...if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken.’*

One failed prophecy meant the message didn’t come from God. True prophets had a 100% accuracy rate—no exceptions."

Ask the Class:

“What does this teach us about how seriously we should take modern claims of prophecy?”

4. How do the prophets point forward to Christ and the fulfillment of God’s plan?

"Deuteronomy 18:15 foretold a greater Prophet to come—and Acts 3:22 confirms that **Jesus is that Prophet**.

He didn’t just speak the Word—He **is** the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

The prophets gave glimpses, types, and shadows. Christ brought the fulfillment.

For example, Isaiah 53 paints the picture of the Suffering Servant—fulfilled in Jesus’ atoning death."

Ask the Class:

“Why is it important to see Jesus not only as Savior and King, but also as the final Prophet?”

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

Unlocking the Scripture

"The prophets weren't fortune-tellers—they were truth-tellers.

They called people to repentance, announced God's judgment, and offered hope in the coming Messiah.

Their words were preserved for us in Scripture, and their message finds its climax in Christ, the Prophet who is also Priest and King.

Hebrews 1:2 says, *'In these last days [God] has spoken unto us by His Son.'* That's the final Word—and the best one."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. What was the difference between a true prophet and a false prophet?
 2. Why was the accuracy of a prophet's message so important?
 3. How do the prophets serve as part of God's plan of redemption?
 4. In what way is Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of the prophetic office?
 5. How should we respond today to those who claim to speak prophetically?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Jeremiah 1:5–9
 2. Hebrews 1:1–2
 3. Deuteronomy 18:15, 18:20–22
 4. Acts 3:22
 5. John 1:14; Isaiah 53
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Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 7

The Canon of Scripture

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: 2 Timothy 3:16, John 10:27, Ephesians 2:20, Jude 3, Deuteronomy 4:2

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome, everyone! Today we come to an essential question for the church: **What books belong in the Bible—and why?**

The chapter begins with a helpful image:

Imagine a royal library full of scrolls, but only a select few are sealed behind glass—official decrees from the king. They aren't valuable because someone said so—they already carried authority.

The Canon of Scripture is the collection of books that God inspired, preserved, and recognized through His church. The issue isn't who made them Scripture—it's who recognized that they were."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads: "This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

What is the canon of Scripture, and how did the church recognize which books were divinely inspired and authoritative?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What does “canon” mean and why does it matter?

"The word *canon* means *rule* or *standard*. The Canon of Scripture refers to the authoritative list of books that constitute the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16 says, '*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.*'

If we don't know where God's Word ends, we don't know where false teaching begins. The canon defines the boundary of truth."

Ask the Class:

“Why is it dangerous to add or subtract from what God has declared to be His Word?”

2. How were the books of the Bible recognized as canonical?

"The early church didn't **decide** what was Scripture—they **recognized** it. They used criteria like:

1. Apostolic origin
2. Doctrinal consistency
3. Widespread usage
4. Self-authenticating power

John 10:27 says, '*My sheep hear my voice.*' The church heard God's voice in these books.

Just like a child recognizes a parent's voice, the church recognized the Shepherd's words."

Ask the Class: “What qualities or experiences helped *you* recognize the voice of God in Scripture?”

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3. What are the boundaries of the biblical canon?

"The Protestant canon contains **66 books**—39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament.

The Reformers rejected the Apocrypha because those writings lacked prophetic authority, introduced doctrinal errors, and were not accepted by Jesus or the apostles.

Ephesians 2:20 says the church is *'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.'* The canon rests on their testimony."

Ask the Class:

"Why do you think it's important that Scripture has an apostolic and prophetic foundation?"

4. Is the canon closed or still open to new revelation?

"The canon is **closed**. With the death of the apostles, no new authoritative revelation is being given.

Jude 3 refers to *'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.'*

Deuteronomy 4:2 commands: *'Ye shall not add unto the word...neither shall ye diminish ought from it.'*

We don't need new scrolls—we need renewed obedience."

Ask the Class:

"How would you respond to someone who says, 'God is still giving new Scriptures today?'"

Unlocking the Scripture

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

"The Canon of Scripture is not a human construction—it is God's gift to His people.

It was not manufactured by men, but recognized through the Spirit's leading. Its boundaries are firm, its authority final.

While tradition may be helpful, only Scripture is binding. As believers, we don't need new words—we need deeper submission to the Word already spoken."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. What does the word "canon" mean in relation to Scripture?
 2. How did the early church recognize which books were Scripture?
 3. Why did the Reformers reject the Apocrypha?
 4. What dangers arise from adding to or subtracting from the canon?
 5. How should the finality of the canon affect our approach to Scripture today?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. 2 Timothy 3:16
 2. John 10:27
 3. Ephesians 2:20
 4. Jude 3
 5. Deuteronomy 4:2
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Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 8

Interpreting the Bible

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: Psalm 119:130, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Corinthians 2:12–14, Psalm 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:33

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome, church family! Today we take a crucial step in our discipleship journey: learning how to **interpret the Bible** correctly.

The chapter begins with a helpful story:

A man hikes a well-known trail but keeps getting lost. Why? He's using the wrong map.

Many people are spiritually lost today—not because the Bible is unclear, but because they are using the wrong approach to interpret it.

God's Word is not a puzzle to solve, but a message to understand. So how do we do that faithfully?"

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads: "This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

How should believers interpret the Bible faithfully so that its meaning is rightly understood, and its authority rightly applied?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What does it mean to interpret the Bible literally?

"To interpret the Bible *literally* means to take it as it was intended—not to read everything woodenly, but to take it according to its **literary genre** and **original context**.

Psalms 119:130 says, '*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*'

When Jesus said, '*I am the door,*' He didn't mean He had hinges. He meant He is the way to salvation."

Ask the Class:

"Why is it dangerous to read poetic or symbolic passages as if they are literal history?"

2. Why is context essential to sound interpretation?

"Context is king. Every verse lives inside a paragraph, which lives inside a chapter, which lives inside a book.

2 Timothy 2:15 urges us to '*rightly divide the word of truth.*'

Taking Scripture out of context leads to false doctrine and spiritual confusion.

For example, Psalm 14:1 says, '*There is no God.*' But read the full sentence: '*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*' Big difference!"

Ask the Class: "Have you ever heard a verse misquoted or twisted? What effect did it have?"

Unlocking the Scripture

3. How does the Holy Spirit help in interpretation?

"The Holy Spirit doesn't give *new meanings*, but He helps us understand the **original meaning**.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, *'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...they are spiritually discerned.'*

The Spirit opens our eyes to see what's already written—like turning on a flashlight in a dark room."

Ask the Class:

"Why is it important to pray before reading or teaching the Bible?"

4. Can Scripture ever have more than one meaning?

"No—every passage has **one true meaning**, intended by the Holy Spirit and the human author. It may have **many applications**, but not multiple meanings.

1 Corinthians 14:33 reminds us, *'God is not the author of confusion.'*

If a verse means something different to every person, then it means nothing at all. Our job is not to invent meaning, but to discover it."

Ask the Class:

"Why is the idea that 'Scripture means whatever it means to you' a dangerous approach?"

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Unlocking the Scripture

Teacher Summarizes:

"God's Word is a clear, trustworthy message—but it requires care, humility, and faithfulness to interpret it rightly.

We must seek to understand what God has said, not twist it into what we want to hear.

With sound interpretation, guided by context and illuminated by the Spirit, we can know truth and walk in it. The Bible speaks—our job is to listen rightly."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

1. What does it really mean to interpret the Bible literally?
 2. Why is literary and historical context important in interpretation?
 3. How does the Holy Spirit assist (but not override) interpretation?
 4. What's the difference between one meaning and many applications?
 5. How can Scripture interpret Scripture in difficult passages?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. Psalm 119:130
2. 2 Timothy 2:15
3. 1 Corinthians 2:12–14
4. Psalm 14:1
5. 1 Corinthians 14:33

Unlocking the Scripture

Chapter 9

Private Interpretation

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Scripture Focus: 2 Peter 1:20, Philippians 4:13, Acts 17:11, Proverbs 11:14, 2 Timothy 2:15

Opening (5 minutes)

Teacher Says:

"Welcome back, everyone! Today we're closing out this section on revelation and interpretation by tackling a critical issue: **Private Interpretation**—when people treat the Bible like a blank canvas for personal imagination.

The chapter opens with a familiar game:

In a classroom, a whispered message passes from student to student, and by the end, it's totally distorted.

The teacher says, 'This is why interpretation matters.'

That's exactly what happens when we interpret Scripture on our own terms instead of God's."

Overarching Question (2 minutes)

Teacher Reads:

"This chapter attempts to answer the following question:

What does the Bible mean by rejecting 'private interpretation,' and how should Christians interpret Scripture with faithfulness and humility?"

Unlocking the Scripture

Major Teaching Points (30 minutes)

1. What is “private interpretation,” and why is it a problem?

"Private interpretation refers to interpreting Scripture apart from its **intended meaning**, often shaped by personal agendas, emotions, or cultural biases.

2 Peter 1:20 warns, *‘No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.’*

A classic example is Philippians 4:13—*‘I can do all things through Christ.’*

It’s often twisted into a motivational slogan for success, but in context, Paul is talking about enduring hardship."

Ask the Class:

“Why is it tempting to interpret verses in ways that serve our personal desires?”

2. Does this mean individuals can’t read or study the Bible on their own?

"Absolutely not! The **priesthood of all believers** means every Christian should read the Bible.

But we must not read it in **isolation** from sound doctrine or the historic faith.

Acts 17:11 says the Bereans *‘searched the scriptures daily’*—but they also **received the word** with readiness.

Like using a flashlight in a cave, personal study is essential—but we also need a trustworthy map."

Ask the Class:

Unlocking the Scripture

“How can we balance personal study with wise counsel and accountability?”

3. How should we guard against personal misinterpretation?

"We guard against error by:

1. Using sound hermeneutics
2. Studying in community
3. Submitting to Scripture, not reshaping it

Proverbs 11:14 says, *‘In the multitude of counselors there is safety.’*

Even great chefs follow recipes—we don’t get to rewrite the ingredients when it comes to God’s Word."

Ask the Class:

“Who are some faithful teachers or resources you trust when interpreting Scripture?”

4. Why must interpretation be anchored in authorial intent?

"We must seek what the **Holy Spirit intended** through the human author—not what the passage *means to me*.

2 Timothy 2:15 commands us to *‘rightly divide the word of truth.’*

Imagine a judge rewriting the law instead of interpreting it. That’s what happens when we distort Scripture—we undermine justice and truth."

Ask the Class: “Why is authorial intent a safeguard against false teaching?”

Unlocking the Scripture

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Teacher Summarizes:

"Private interpretation isn't about personal devotion—it's about **private distortion**.

God's Word isn't ours to reinvent. It is ours to receive, study, and obey.

The right to read Scripture comes with the responsibility to interpret it faithfully.

As heirs of the Reformation, we honor the Bible not only by reading it—but by reading it rightly."

Discussion Questions (10–15 minutes)

Ask and discuss these five questions:

4. What does "private interpretation" mean according to 2 Peter 1:20?
 5. Why is personal Bible reading still essential despite this warning?
 6. How can believers protect themselves from misinterpretation?
 7. Why is it important to consider church history and sound doctrine when interpreting Scripture?
 8. How does authorial intent guide faithful interpretation?
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Scripture References (for teacher preparation and student memory)

1. 2 Peter 1:20
 2. Philippians 4:13
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Unlocking the Scripture

3. Acts 17:11
4. Proverbs 11:14
5. 2 Timothy 2:15

Let me know if you'd like to continue to the next volume or if you'd like me to package these lessons for print or digital download. I'm here to serve!