

# **The Revelation of God**

## **Reading the Bible with Purpose series – week 1**

**by Chris Famisaran**

Well, again, good morning, everybody. Today is the start of another new series, Reading.the.Bible.With.Purpose. And specifically, we're going to talk about the revelation of God, the revealing of God through Scripture. I think I've said this before, but one of the things that I love about scripture, in a sense, I believe in one way, it is God's love letter to us, God's way of communicating to us.

So many of us know Queen Elizabeth II passed away several years ago on September 8 at the age of 96. However, even though she was one of Britain's longest reigning monarchs, she still had something to say. And unfortunately, we're not going to be able to hear about it until 2085. Now, as I look about that, I think about that I may not be around at that point because if that is the case, I'll definitely be over 100 years old. So chances are, you know, however, in several years ago, she wrote a letter and she left it with instructions to the people of Sydney, Australia. And it's sealed in a vault with specific instructions not to be open until 2085. Now, the Queen wrote this letter in November of 1986 on one of her 16 visits to Australia. And she wrote, she addressed the letter to the just and honorable Lord Mayor of Sydney, Australia, with these very specific instructions on a suitable day to be selected by you of Sydney. Sorry, selected by you in the year of 2085 A.D. would you please open this envelope and convey to the citizens of Sydney my message to them. So then she signs this mysterious message Elizabeth R. Now, the secret letter that Queen Elizabeth left with the people of Sydney was written to honor in the restoration of the Queen Victoria building, a building that was first constructed in Sydney. In 1898 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, her great-grandmother. And the Queen also chose to celebrate the restoration, which was completed in 1986, with her secret letter. And so this letter is found in a very restricted part of the building inside a glass

case. And even the Queen's staff has no idea what she wrote. Only the Queen is aware of the contents of the letter. And at some point in 2085, Sydney's future mayor will be privy and I'm assuming, her, with the rest of Sidney. Now, you know, I'm a curious person. I'm very curious. What, what did she write? Did she read? Did she leave a note of encouragement? Or did she reveal some secret that maybe right now, today, if it was let out, might not look good, Right? We don't know, was it something minuscule? Or did it have relevance for us? For them? We don't know. Time will tell.

And I often wonder about people, especially in the Old Testament. You know, Daniel comes to mind. Isaiah, all of these people, even though they spoke for God, there are some things that they said that they never got to experience, to see the fruit of what they were talking about come to fruition. Especially, you know, with Daniel. Many have already heard, either directly from God, or maybe they were just a commoner, trusting in what the prophets and the religious leaders were saying, hoping and praying that it might be true. Many waited and did not get to experience what the Old Testament promised, that Jesus, the son of God, would come in human flesh. According to the Oxford Languages, the fancy dictionary of the Internet, it says the word reveal means to make, or that previously unknown or secret information known to others.

Now, **God reveals himself to humanity through two primary means, the words, words and actions.** Okay. When you look at scripture, God obviously reveals God's self, talking to people such as Moses or even Abraham, and of course the prophets, maybe also through dreams, through visions, or he could be inspiring them. And yet we also know that if you read through scripture, you see that the acts of God are a way of also revealing who God is. Okay, now, does the Bible reveal everything that God has done? No. In fact, even in the Gospel of John, it's recorded that not everything that Jesus did was actually even recorded because there's just too much good stuff that Jesus did. Amen.

So I want to go to a passage today. I want to go to the Book of John, chapter 11 through 18. And we've talked about it a little bit. Okay? But it's a good reminder. So let's go to the Book of John, chapter one. Okay. John 1. Okay. "In

the beginning was the Word,” okay? The lagos. “And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him, all things were made. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. And in him was life. And that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” I love this passage, the very, very profound passage. What does this reveal about God? More specifically, what does it reveal about Jesus?

Now, you notice when you, when you read the Word, the word. Word literally is capitalized. The W is capitalized, signifying that it is referring to somebody, somebody very important. And we know that to be Jesus. Right? So in the beginning was the Word. When was Jesus? From the very beginning, not just in the beginning. And The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus was with God the Father. Jesus is God. He was with God in the beginning and through him what was made all things. Jesus is at the beginning. Jesus is also the Creator, just as Jesus is the Creator. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. In him was life. And that life was the light of all mankind. Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In Jesus, what do we have? We have life. And Jesus is the light. I love light. Especially, you know, when you're in a crowded room and it's dark and you're walking around. You know, when I was a kid, I would just love to throw my Legos out, and sometimes my mom and dad would walk in and in the darkness they would step on the Legos. They didn't appreciate that. I thought it was funny until I stepped on them. And it wasn't funny anymore. Or when I was 13. At that age, my body was stretching and expanding and I thought, you know, the path that I would normally take was fine until my shin hit the coffee table rather abruptly in the darkness. Did that feel great? No, it didn't. Light. Light is important because it helps us to see the path. It reveals things. Have you ever put the light on in your kitchen or someplace in the house? And you. And you see a little mouse or a little cockroach. Right. The light reveals the light helps to see us to the hazards that are ahead. And Jesus came into this world to shed light, to reveal.

Let's go back now to verse six. Okay. Verse six. It says, there was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify according to that light, so that through him all might what? Believe. Oh, I love it. This is the first instance of belief in the bi. In John. He himself was not the light pointing out, I am not Jesus. I'm not the Messiah. He only came as a witness to the light, the true light. We're again referring to Jesus. Jesus is the light that gives life to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and through the world was made through him. And yet the world didn't recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become what? Children of God. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

So as we continue to read on, we see that in the first chapter of John God sends a reminder that God is faithful and does not what, abandon us because he sends John. And those of you who are wondering, who is this John? John the Baptist, AKA Jesus, cousin. God sent people to share and help us to understand the Scriptures. He also sent the prophets to help understand who God is, to reveal who God is. And John as well, was sent, in a sense, as a prophet to be able to reveal and remind people that the Messiah was coming. Imagine, you know, we were talking earlier about Samuel, and there was a point where God's voice wasn't heard very much. And even in the Old Testament times too, there were times where God was very clear and direct. And sometimes there just was... It seemed like there was silence. Has there ever been a point in your life where you've experienced just darkness and maybe even just silence from God? You have to wonder, God, where are you? I need help. And eventually, though, thank the Lord, God sends light.

If you Continue Reading verses 10 through 11, you realize, though, that even the people that God, even Jesus came to save and redeem could not recognize that he was the light. They rejected the light for various reasons. Something that, truth be told, we're also all capable of. Maybe we do sometimes. Why would we want to do that? Maybe because something. What maybe scripture says does not align with how we want to live. Currently, we

don't want to change our life or is forcing us to confront things and that we don't want to confront and deal with. But yet if we don't do that, we're simply harming ourselves. Maybe because Scripture again doesn't want to align with how we want to live. Yet that which is good, the light, brings goodness. We're scared because we might have to make adaptations in our life. We're not ready to. Now, the hard what I want to talk about here.

Okay, what. The hard what I want to talk about is found in verse 14. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Think about that. Just marinate on that. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. What God comes down to earth. God, in a sense, could have stayed in heaven. Practical, nice and clean, no problem. And yet God's love drove conviction through God's heart to come into this world, to redeem us. Think about that. The Word became flesh. We call this the Incarnation. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Verse 15. John testified concerning him and cried out, this is the one I spoke about when I said he. He who comes after me has surpassed me because he is. He was before me. John already recognizes that. Yeah, not just my cousin, but he is God. He was before us from the. What. What was it in the beginning? From the very beginning, because he was the Word, he was with God and is God. Out of his fullness, we have received grace in place of grace already given out. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the one and only son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Now, despite having the best technology in our hands. Okay, some of you are looking at your phones, maybe a tablet, whatever. **The best way to communicate is what? Face to face.** Just yesterday, I was texting with a buddy of mine, he's in Pennsylvania, and a dear friend of mine, a former member of mine, he's the filmmaker in back east. And we were texting back and forth, and then just some of his texts just did not make sense. Like, dude, I know you're smart. You. What you're saying does not make sense. And then

afterwards, like five minutes later, I'm sorry, I was using Siri to, you know, text text you, and it didn't come out right. Okay, that. That makes more sense. But for five minutes, I was like, is he okay? Do I need to call his wife? And then one of my closest friends, my best. One of my best friends, he just randomly called me up. And it's something that I appreciate, you know? Isn't it great when just a dear friend or maybe a relative just calls just to say what's up? Don't forget to do that with your family. So he just calls me. And unfortunately, the lines were a little bit. A little scattered. And so we would be talking, and all of a sudden I just hear silence for like five seconds. And I just have to say, I'm sorry, man, I left five seconds, 10 seconds. What did you say? And after about three or four times, it gets ridiculous, right? It's just. Forget it. I'll call you later. So we agreed, just let's call and talk later. So we'll catch up again tomorrow night. Communication is best done face to face.

So even though we have texts, we can make phone calls, we have email, we have social media, you name it. You can meet people all over the world and talk to them and get to know them through a device, but the reality is there is no better way than to get to know someone face to face. You know, text, text does not communicate verbal expressions and body language. Now I can tell when my wife texts me if she is happy or if she's mad most of the time. And sometimes I can't. And you know, you, you miss things. And when you, when she gets home, I think we had a certain conversation and when she comes in and informs me of something else, it's like, oh, the conversation was not what I thought it was. We miss things when we don't directly communicate with one another.

And here we see that the incarnation Jesus becoming flesh and blood. **Jesus being on earth in flesh and blood is God's best way of revealing himself in a way we can understand.** God meets us halfway. God accommodates our lack of understanding, right? So when the Word became, when the word that is Jesus becomes flesh, God is meeting us halfway and we can have a much better understanding of who God is. Put simply, we want to understand God. Look no further than Jesus. Throughout Jesus life, if you read the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, he exemplified, he showed or shared all of the,

the attributes, the characteristics of who God is, such as being humble, okay, Being loving, graceful, forgiving, peaceful, courageous, strong, empathetic, compassionate, serving others, obedience, faithfulness, being hopeful, being wise, being curious, being prayerful, being dependable, diligent, led with strength and authority, and was self controlled. Throughout Jesus's life here on earth, he gave us practical examples of how we can live and how we should treat one another. As you reflect the stories in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you can see that he taught all of these principles to the disciples and anyone who else who wanted to follow him. Treat others how you should be treated or want to be treated, to respect and love one another, to be humble, to be kind and compassionate again, how to pray as he does in Matthew 6, how to deal with difficult people, and also perhaps, where should your priorities be?

So, in short, **the Bible reveals who God is**. The Bible is the revelation of God, not the book specifically at the end of the Bible, but the Bible is the revelation, the revealing of who God is. And as I said in the beginning, it is God's love letter to us. Verse 18. Let's go back to verse 18. It says no one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son who is himself God and in closest relationship with the Father has made him known through Jesus. We have a lens to see who God truly is.

Let's take it another step forward. Okay, when you read Scripture, what is it telling you about Jesus? What does it reveal about Jesus or reveal God as whole, what lessons can you take from it? What stands out to you? What impresses upon your heart and your mind? How can you apply it to your life? To read the Gospels and the Bible as a whole means we don't just read it to know it, but to be shaped by it, to allow the Holy Spirit to shape and mold us to be changed. And is this something that just happens overnight? No, believe me, it takes a lifetime of changing and molding. Sometimes you take 10 steps, and sometimes you find yourself 30 steps backwards. You keep growing. And that's why it's important as well to have fellow believers to help you walk along that journey, to share their life experience or somebody to lean on, to go together through life.

You know, the older I get, unfortunately, the more dependent I am. These glasses, that was revealed in a way yesterday as well. I was driving, I thought, I don't need my glasses, and I almost missed my exit. I don't like wearing these things because, you know, I want to be free. But thank God, at least I have the ability to have glasses. Okay, I can. I can read ingredients. Sometimes I might have to lift them up to bring them close. When I'm watching tv, at least I have these. And I can see. I can see the little ants on the ground. I can see a lot of things. Without them, I would miss a lot of the details. And as you read through Scripture, much the same way, if you don't read the Gospel through the lens of Jesus, oh, that can be a scary place. There's a lot of books that appear very scary. You know, for instance, Revelation, it seems like it's a scary book, but unless you read it through the lens of Jesus, you're going to have a scary viewpoint. But through Jesus, there is hope. So as you read scripture, read it through the lens of how does this apply to Jesus?

So this week I want you to reflect **as you read the Bible. Are you growing closer to Jesus?** Can you know the Bible but still not know who Jesus is? Absolutely. Can you still read the Bible and not be changed by the Bible? Absolutely. The Scriptures point us to Jesus. And as we pray and as we seek God's wisdom and guidance to help also change and mold us, scripture should help us to be able to grow closer to Jesus. We want to be influenced by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, to be a faithful disciple. You know, I look back to even, even the people that Jesus, who, those who opposed Jesus, they had been reading the scriptures all of their life and they still vehemently opposed him. We have the ability to download an app such as the Bible app, or I think it's your version where you can either read it, you can listen to it, reflect on it. And they got all kinds of versions on there, some with dramatic effect. Right? That's my personal favorite. And I think the truth of if I can't. If I could sum this up, folks, if it's important to you, you will make time for it. Okay? If it's important to you, you will make time for it. And so I want to encourage you continue to read, see what God has revealed, and as you do so as well, ask God, reveal. How can I also reach out to the person that I'm praying for? You still praying for your friend? We're doing 40 days of prayer. What is God telling

you? Maybe even. Maybe something that you could share with your friend or your loved one. Regardless, remember, keep praying for them. How is God shaping and molding me? And one of the best ways to be shaped and molded is through the words Jesus

Challenge this week. We talked a little bit already about it. **When you're reading the Bible this week, ask yourself, how does this relate to Jesus? What lessons can I take from this passage and go and apply it to your life?** Can we do that? Amen. So go with courage, my friends. I'm interested to hear from you what Jesus wants to teach you this week. Let me know. I'd love to hear from you.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, Lord, you are our loving and great God, and through the scriptures, Lord, you reveal yourself to us. Thank you, Lord, for coming into this world to become flesh and blood, Lord, and yet still keeping your divinity. Lord, you took a risk. And yet in doing so, you also helped us to better understand who you are. Thank you for the many examples that you leave us with in scripture. Help us not to take those examples for granted, Lord. Help us to pop that Bible open or the app or whatever it is to either read or to listen. Lord, shape, mold and influence us. Be the disciples that you have called us to be as we read with purpose, Lord, and intent. We truly want to be able to make a difference for you either here in Downey and wherever we go. This is our prayer in Jesus name. Everybody said Amen.

Grace and peace, everyone. See you next week.