Discussion Leader Notes

Lesson 5 Revelation and Inspiration

Have you ever wondered exactly how God gets a message from heaven into a human mind, and then into a book? This week, we pull back the curtain on how God communicates through the process of revelation and inspiration. We will explore how the Holy Spirit inspires a human writer, why some messages were spoken while others were written, and why prophets sometimes used bizarre dramatizations to get people's attention.

Opening Poll:

What do you find most amazing about how the Bible was put together?
A. That God used flawed humans to write it.
B. That the message survived for thousands of years.
C. That it contains so many different literary styles.
D. That it all points perfectly to Jesus.
E. That it still speaks directly to my life today.

Opening Engagement Story - Have you ever played the "telephone game" where a message gets whispered around a circle and comes out completely distorted at the end? Human communication is fragile. But when God decides to send a message to a dying world, He uses an unfailing divine delivery system to ensure His truth reaches us safely and accurately.

Day 1: Revelation and Inspiration

God has an intentional, secure chain of delivery to ensure humanity receives the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Poll:

If you had to deliver an incredibly important message to someone far away, what method would you trust the most?
A. A written letter sent by certified mail.
B. A direct phone call.
C. Sending a trusted friend to deliver it in person.
D. An encrypted digital message.
E. A public broadcast for everyone to hear.

Opening Illustration - Think of a certified mail delivery. There is a clear chain of custody to ensure the package reaches the exact right person without being tampered with. God's prophetic message delivery chain works the same way.

Set the Scene - Exiled on the island of Patmos, John reveals the exact chain of custody God used to deliver His message to the church.

Read the Text - "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw" (Revelation 1:1-2, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God the Father is the originator of the message.

- The message is given to Jesus Christ, who sends it via His angel.
- The angel signifies it to John, who bears witness to the church.

Guided Discussion

- Why do you think God goes to such extraordinary lengths across the universe to deliver His messages to us? (Allow discussion)
- How does understanding this "chain of custody" increase your trust in the Bible? (Ask follow-up)
- What does it mean to "bear witness" to the testimony of Jesus today? (Invite multiple responses)
- How can we ensure we are faithful recipients of this divine message? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight This sequence—from God, to Jesus, to the angel, to the prophet, and finally to us—is a classic example of the revelation-inspiration process. God is incredibly intentional about making sure humanity receives the "testimony of Jesus Christ".

Christ Connection Jesus is the great trustee of divine revelation, holding the message of salvation secure and ensuring it safely reaches our hearts.

Life Response Take a moment today to thank God for protecting His truth across the ages so that it could safely reach your hands.

Encouragement Bridge Because God Himself guarantees the delivery of His Word, you can trust its promises with your whole heart.

Day 2: General and Special Revelation

While nature reveals God's immense power and creativity, we desperately need the Written Word to understand His plan of salvation.

Poll:
Where do you feel closest to God?
A. Walking outside in nature.
B. Sitting quietly in a church building.
C. Reading my Bible early in the morning.
D. Fellowshipping with other believers.
E. Serving others in my community.

Opening Illustration - A walk through the forest or a look through a telescope leaves us in awe of a brilliant Creator. But a sunset cannot tell you that Jesus died on a cross for your sins.

Set the Scene - The author of Hebrews begins his letter by clarifying exactly how God has spoken to humanity to reveal His saving grace.

Read the Text - "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

- God has spoken at various times and in various ways.
- In the past, He spoke through the prophets.
- In these last days, He has spoken through His Son.

Guided Discussion

- What can "General Revelation" (nature) teach us about God, and what are its limits? (Allow discussion)
- Why do we so desperately need "Special Revelation" (the Bible) to understand our purpose and destiny? (Ask follow-up)
- How does Jesus serve as the ultimate, perfect revelation of God the Father? (Invite multiple responses)
- In what ways can we better listen to the Son's voice in our daily lives? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Nature surely points to the reality of the Creator's power and love, but it also displays the consequences of the Fall. It is through the Bible that we learn who God is, see His relentless love, and discover His guidance for how we are to live.

Christ Connection Christ came and died in our place, fulfilling the promises of Scripture and translating the Father's heart to us perfectly.

Life Response Spend time outside today appreciating God's creation, but pair it with reading a chapter of the Gospels to see His saving grace.

Encouragement Bridge The God who hung the stars in the sky is the same God who inspired the Scriptures so you could find your way home to Him.

Day 3: The Process of Inspiration

The Holy Spirit does not mechanically dictate words, but inspires holy men of God, imbuing their minds with divine truth.

Poll:

If you had to write down a complicated message for a friend, how would you prefer to do it?
A. Write it exactly word-for-word as dictated.
B. Listen to the main idea and use my own words.
C. Draw a picture or diagram to explain it.
D. Use a story or an analogy.
E. Have someone else write it while I explain.

Opening Illustration - God didn't treat the biblical writers like human typewriters. Instead, He breathed His truth into their minds and allowed them to express it through their own unique personalities and vocabularies.

Set the Scene - Peter explains to the early believers exactly how the prophecies of the Old Testament came to be recorded with such absolute authority.

Read the Text - "...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

1. Prophecy does not come from human will.
2. It was delivered by holy men of God.
3. They spoke as they were "moved" by the Holy Spirit.

Guided Discussion

1. Why is it important to understand that God inspires the person, not just the pen? (Allow discussion)
2. How does knowing that the writers used their own language and style change the way you read different books of the Bible? (Ask follow-up)
3. Why must we rely on the Holy Spirit to interpret the Scriptures correctly today? (Invite multiple responses)
4. How can we avoid the trap of twisting Scripture to fit our own private interpretations? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight God communicated His messages, but then the prophet conveyed the divine instruction using his or her own words. The Holy Spirit assisted these prophets in the reliable communication of objective truth, ensuring the message was not tampered with or distorted.

Christ Connection Just as Jesus, the Word made flesh, was a union of the divine and the human, the Written Word is a beautiful union of divine truth expressed in human language.

Life Response Before you open your Bible tomorrow, pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the text for your finite mind.

Encouragement Bridge God loves us enough to speak our language, bringing infinite, heavenly truths down to a level where we can understand and be saved.

Day 4: Oral Messages

Some of the greatest prophetic messages were never written down, proving that God's spoken word carries absolute divine authority.

Poll:

What type of communication usually impacts you the most?
A. A deeply moving written letter or book.
B. A powerful, passionate speech or sermon.
C. A one-on-one, heart-to-heart conversation.
D. A song with meaningful lyrics.
E. An action that speaks louder than words.

Opening Illustration - We often equate authority with a signature on a printed document. Yet, the greatest Prophet in the history of the world never penned a Gospel or an Epistle; He was primarily an oral communicator.

Set the Scene - Throughout biblical history, God used prophets like Elijah and John the Baptist to deliver oral messages. Jesus Himself taught with such profound oral authority that it astonished the crowds.

Read the Text - "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

1. Jesus delivered these sayings orally to the crowds.
2. The people were completely astonished by His teaching.
3. He spoke with inherent divine authority, unlike their traditional leaders.

Guided Discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to preach and teach orally rather than writing books of the Bible Himself? (Allow discussion)
2. How does this emphasize the power and authority of the spoken Word of God? (Ask follow-up)
3. What is the danger of ignoring the oral messages of the prophets simply because they aren't written in the biblical canon? (Invite multiple responses)
4. How can our spoken words be used today to powerfully share the grace of God? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Some of the most powerful prophets in Scripture never wrote a single book. The Gospel record mentions that Jesus only ever wrote in the dust with His finger. His messages were no less authoritative simply because He did not write them down.

Christ Connection Jesus didn't just carry the message; He was the message. His spoken words brought life, healing, and light into darkness.

Life Response Use your voice today to speak a word of life, encouragement, or biblical truth over someone in your family or workplace.

Encouragement Bridge The Word of God is alive and powerful, whether it is written on ancient parchment or spoken faithfully from the lips of a believer.

Day 5: Written Messages

God commanded His prophets to write things down to give permanence to the message so it could safely reach us today.

Poll:

Why do you typically write things down?
A. To remember an important appointment or task.
B. To process my own deep thoughts and emotions.
C. To leave a permanent record or instruction for someone else.
D. To communicate something carefully and precisely.
E. I rarely write things down; I rely on my memory.

Opening Illustration - Spoken words are incredibly powerful, but human memories are fragile. Over centuries, oral traditions can fade or become distorted, which is why God eventually said, "Write this down!".

Set the Scene - After a major victory against the Amalekites, God instructed Moses to document the event so future generations would never forget His deliverance.

Read the Text - "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven'" (Exodus 17:14, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

1. God specifically commands Moses to write.
2. The writing serves as a permanent "memorial" in a book.
3. The written record is to be shared with the next generation (Joshua).

Guided Discussion

1. Why is it so crucial for our faith that God ordered His messages to be permanently recorded? (Allow discussion)
2. How does the written Word protect us from the subtle deceptions of false teachings over time? (Ask follow-up)
3. What role did literary assistants or historical sources play in helping prophets compile these writings? (Invite multiple responses)
4. How should the permanence of the Bible impact the daily priority we give to reading it? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight Writing gives permanence to the spoken word, and that permanence allows the message of salvation to be transmitted safely through time. Because God commanded the prophets to write, you and I can hold the exact promises of God in our hands today.

Christ Connection The entire written canon of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, was carefully preserved for one primary purpose: to lead us to faith in Jesus Christ.

Life Response Start a spiritual journal this week, writing down one promise from Scripture each day as a personal memorial of God's faithfulness.

Encouragement Bridge God didn't leave your salvation up to guesswork or fragile human memory; He secured His promises for you in writing.

Day 6: Drama, Symbols, Parables

When people become spiritually numb to words, God uses striking visual dramatizations as a final act of mercy to wake them up.

Poll:
What is the most effective way for you to learn a difficult concept?
A. Reading a detailed explanation.
B. Listening to an expert speak about it.
C. Seeing a visual diagram or illustration.
D. Watching someone act it out or demonstrate it.
E. Trying it hands-on myself.

Opening Illustration - Imagine a respected community leader suddenly building a toy fort in the street and staring at it for over a year. It sounds bizarre, but God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to do exactly that to get the attention of a rebellious nation.

Set the Scene - The people of Judah had become completely deaf to standard preaching. To break through their spiritual blindness, God commanded Ezekiel to physically act out the impending siege of Jerusalem.

Read the Text - "You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it..." (Ezekiel 4:1-2, NKJV). (Ask someone to read.)

What Do You Notice?

5. God tells Ezekiel to use a physical object (a clay tablet).
6. He is told to portray a specific city (Jerusalem).
7. He acts out a dramatic scene of a siege and conflict.

Guided Discussion

8. Why would God resort to using bizarre physical drama instead of just sending another spoken warning? (Allow discussion)
9. How do the dramatic actions of the prophets demonstrate the desperate, relentless mercy of God? (Ask follow-up)
10. What kind of "wake-up calls" does God sometimes use today when we become spiritually complacent? (Invite multiple responses)
11. How do Jesus' parables function similarly to these Old Testament dramatizations? (Allow discussion)

Discovery Insight The dramatic experiences of the prophets were supposed to be shocking. At a time when standard warnings were openly rejected, this was the last act of divine mercy to dramatically alert the people to their true condition and lead them to genuine repentance.

Christ Connection Jesus frequently used physical drama and parables—like washing the disciples' feet or cursing a fig tree—to break through human pride and reveal the humble heart of God.

Life Response Ask God today if there is an area of your life where you have become spiritually numb, and invite Him to wake you up before disaster strikes.

Encouragement Bridge God loves you too much to let you comfortably walk away from Him; He will use whatever means necessary to capture your attention and save your soul.

Day 7 Summary

The multiform process of revelation and inspiration—whether spoken, written, or acted out—exists for one ultimate goal: to point us to the living Word, Jesus Christ.

Poll:

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's study on Revelation and Inspiration?
A. That God uses a secure chain of delivery to protect His message.
B. That the Holy Spirit inspires the person, not just the pen.
C. That the spoken words of Jesus carry ultimate divine authority.
D. That God commanded the prophets to write so the truth would survive.
E. That God uses creative, dramatic ways to wake us up in mercy.

5 Weekly Takeaways

12. While nature reveals God's immense power, we need the Special Revelation of the Written Word to understand His redemptive love.
13. Inspiration is a process where the Holy Spirit imbues the prophet's mind with divine thoughts, which they express in human language.
14. Jesus, the greatest Prophet, was primarily an oral communicator whose spoken words carried absolute divine authority.
15. God commanded prophets to write down His messages to give them permanence and protect the truth from distortion over time.
16. When people became spiritually deaf, God mercifully used striking visual dramatizations and symbols to lead them to repentance.

Final Reflection Question: How will you respond today to the inspired Word of God that has been so carefully preserved and delivered to your hands? (Pause for responses.)

Closing Appeal The Bible is not just a collection of ancient documents; it is the living, breathing Word of God! From speaking through the breathtaking beauty of nature to inspiring flawed human writers, God has gone to incredible lengths to make sure you hear His voice. He refused to let the message of salvation fade into history. Let us not ignore the incredible gift of the Scriptures. Read them, trust them, and most importantly, let them lead you straight into the arms of Jesus Christ.

Closing Prayer Father in Heaven, thank You for the miracle of revelation and inspiration. Thank You for not leaving us in the dark, but speaking to us through nature, through the prophets, and most clearly through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to trust the Written Word. Send Your Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds so we can understand Your truth and apply it to our lives. Wake us up from our spiritual slumber, and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. In His holy name we pray, Amen.