

Lesson 2 Divine Revelation

Key Words (Vocabulary)

Magisterium: The teaching office or authority in the Church. The magisterium is exercised by the Pope and the bishops united with him. By Christ's command, all Christians are solemnly obliged to obey the teachings of the magisterium

Infallibility: The truth that the Catholic Church by the special help of the Holy Spirit, is kept free from any error in teaching and how we must believe (faith) and how we must live (morals). Only the Pope, or all the bishops united under Pope, can teach infallibly.

Aim

- Revelation: To define and understand by analogy the meaning of revelation.**
- Scripture and Tradition: To define and identify scripture and tradition as the source of revelation.**
- Inspiration: Old and New Testament**
- Magisterium: Pope and bishops, infallibility**

Explanation:

We know that by using our reasoning powers, we are able to know that God exists. But we also know that human reason alone cannot discover all that there is to know about our Creator. Moved by his great love for us, God has revealed himself to us first through the Jewish people of the Old Testament, and later in the life of Jesus handed on to us in the teachings of the Church. We call these truths which God has made known to us *divine revelation*.

History of Divine Revelation

God did not simply reveal himself to one person at one point of time; he made himself known bit by bit. The first people to know him were Adam and Eve. Later God formed a chosen people, called the Israelites or Jews, to be the special keepers of his revelation.

He began forming this community by choosing a man named Abraham, who lived almost 4000 years ago in the land of Mesopotamia. Almost two thousand years after Abraham, the time came for God to give us his greatest revelation, the gift of his only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus made his Twelve Apostles the official teachers in the Church and placed his revelation (gospel) in their safekeeping. After the Resurrection, the apostles taught the gospel to others both by preaching and by writing.

The Bible is the message of God put in writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

It is very important to remember that divine revelation reached its greatest point with the life of Christ and the preaching of his Twelve Apostles. The Lord's teachings, faithfully preached by these holy men, are summed up in a profession of faith that we call the *Apostles' Creed*. This Creed is a statement of our basic beliefs as Catholic Christians; in it are found the main mysteries of our faith. A *mystery* is a truth that is above our power to understand, but which we believe because God has said that it is so.

When the last surviving apostle died (Saint John, c. 100 AD) God's public revelation of himself to the world *came to an end*. All that God wanted man to know for salvation had been made known by Jesus and his Twelve Apostles, and, as Vatican II stated, "There is to be no further public revelation until Christ comes again"

The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible, also called Sacred Scripture, is the *inspired* Word of God; it is one of his greatest gifts to us. We usually think of the Bible as one book, but it is really a collection of seventy-three books, written by various men in different centuries. It is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. **Testament means covenant.**

Old Testament: Consists of a total of **46 books**. It is the story of Israel's struggle to be faithful to the Covenant and to understand God who had chosen them.

- **Pentateuch** – first five books of the bible, called the Torah by the Jews. Included in these books are the stories of creation and of the nation of Israel. It also includes the law given to the Israelites by God.
- **Historical Books** – These books tell the story of the Israelites from their entry into the Promised Land until the Exile.
- **Wisdom Books** – These books are Israelite reflections of faith and God's relationship with humanity.
- **Prophets** – The writings of the people who God inspired to counsel and confront people and kings.

New Testament Books: Through Jesus God made a new covenant with humanity. Based on the earlier covenant with Israel, this new covenant invites all humanity to become part of God's Chosen People through faith in Jesus.

- **Gospel account** – four portraits and collections of stories and sayings of Jesus.
- **Acts of the Apostles** – the story of the early Christian Church after the Ascension of Jesus; not a complete history of apostolic Christianity.
- **Letters** – Written by early Christians that show us the problems and concerns of the early Church. **Thirteen Pauline Epistles, Seven Catholic Epistles.**
- **Revelation (Apocalypse)** - Addressed to people experiencing persecution and questioning the truth of their faith. **Revelation** offers hope that God's deliverance will come as promised.

Magisterium: Latin word "**magister**" which means "**teacher**". Jesus established his Church and placed it in the hands of apostles and their successors (Mt 28:18-20). The successors of the apostles today are the Pope (who takes the place of Saint Peter's authority) and the Catholic bishops of the world. Their teaching authority is called the Magisterium or official teaching office of the Church. The Pope and the bishops are guided by the Holy Spirit in passing on the faith so that it makes no error in carrying out this assignment. This special gift of being able to teach without error on matters of faith and morals is called '**Infallibility**' and it comes from two Latin words, "**in**" and "**fallere**" which means "**cannot err**".

Lesson 4

God's Plan of Salvation

Key Words (Vocabulary)

Salvation History: The events in human history that have been especially connected with the salvation of mankind. It began with the creation of man and reached its greatest point with the life of Christ.

Covenant: In the Old Testament a covenant is the agreement made between God and the people of Israel (Jews). In the New Testament, the new and everlasting covenant was made between God and men by Jesus Christ.

Prefigurement: A person, place or event that happens before another event to which it is similar in some way.

Aim

- **Salvation History: To explain how God prepared the world for the coming of his Son.**
- **Covenant: To identify the meaning of covenant.**
- **Abraham and Isaac: To understand why Abraham is our father in faith and to review the story of Issac**
- **Jacob and Joseph: To identify the role of Israel and the way God cared for his people through Joseph.**

Explanation:

The beautiful story of how God prepared the world for the coming of Jesus Christ and of how Jesus accomplishes this plan for the redemption or salvation of the human race is called salvation history. Jesus was to restore what had been lost through original sin.

God Calls Abraham

God chose a man named Abram, who lived in the land of Mesopotamia. He made a covenant (agreement or promise) with him, promising to make Abram the father of many descendants, who would become a great nation. God also told him that this nation would live in a wonderful place called the Promised Land (Gen 12:2-3). Abram agreed to the covenant and to show his new mission in life **God gave him the new name of Abraham, which means “father of many people”**.

Abraham - A Model of Faith:

Abraham believed that the Lord would give him many children even though he and his wife were very old; he obeyed when God called him; and gave up his own land, home and people out of faith in God.

Isaac Continues the Covenant

Abraham had a son named Issac. Isaac was loved dearly by his elderly parents. One day God wanted to test Abraham's faith. He commanded him to sacrifice his only beloved son as an act of worship (Gen 22:2). Knowing that man must love and serve God more than his family, Abraham took Isaac up a mountain and prepared to sacrifice him as God had commanded. Just as the knife was about to plunge into Issac an angel

stopped Abraham and revealed to him that it was a test. God rewarded Abraham's love for him by promising to continue his covenant through Issac. After his father's death, **Issac become the second patriarch or leader of God's chosen people.**

The sacrifice of his only son that Abraham was willing to make was a prefigurement of God's love for mankind. **In this case, the prefigurement was the sacrifice that God the Father was to make of allowing Jesus, his only Son, to be sacrificed on the cross for our sins.**

The Covenant Continues with Jacob

Isaac married a girl named Rebekah and they had twin boys, Esau and Jacob. God chose Jacob as the one with whom he would keep the covenant he had made with Abraham (Gen 28:13-15). **God gave Jacob a new name, Israel, which means "the man who strives with God".** Jacob had twelve sons who became the fathers of the twelve tribes or families that made up the chosen people. **Jacob became the third patriarch of God's people.**

The story of Joseph

Among the many sons of Jacob, there was one who was especially dear to him – **Joseph**. The other sons were envious at this and they grew angry with their brother, They began to plan among themselves how they could get rid of Joseph once and for all. One day, when they were out in the fields watching their sheep, they sold poor Joseph to a band of wandering slave traders who were on their way to Egypt. They told Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. Jacob was heartbroken. If only he knew that they had sold their brother for some pieces of silver. **In this, Joseph prefigures Jesus as he reminds us of Jesus who was sold by one of his friends for thirty pieces of silver.**

When Joseph arrived in Egypt, he was bought by an important ruling family because he was handsome and very intelligent. So he became a trusted servant of the Pharaoh and was given important positions in the royal court – he even became second in command in all of Egypt.

In the meantime, the land of the chosen people was in a time of famine so the sons of Jacob travelled to Egypt in search of food. Imagine their surprise to find Joseph in command. Instead of having them killed or thrown in prison because of what they had done to him, Joseph embraced each one and gave them all the food they needed. He invited his family to move to Egypt, which they did. Joseph gave them all nice homes and loved them with all his heart. **In this, Joseph again prefigures Jesus. Joseph forgave those who had wronged him and gave them everything they needed for a happy life. This reminds us of Christ, who forgives all of our sins and gives us every grace and blessing we need to live good Christian lives.**