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**B0902 – January 11, 2009 – The Doctrine Of Revelation - Part 2**

We want to continue with Mt Sinai and the Law. We're getting into the doctrinal fallout of what happened at Sinai. We said the God we serve is a public speaker, He speaks in human language that men can understand and that has doctrinal consequences, namely the Doctrine of Revelation, that He indeed has spoken, the Doctrine of Inspiration, how He spoke, human involvement and so forth and the Doctrine of Canonicity, what He spoke, what actually is God's word. Last time we worked on the doctrine of revelation and we should remember that we ought to be grateful that He has spoken. We don't think of it much but we're fallen creatures, we're sinners and He didn't have to say a word to us, He could have just let the whole thing collapse. It wouldn't have been His fault, we are the one's who fell. He's not obligated to us at all, so the fact He did speak is solely due to His grace.

We want to go further into the features of revelation. If we look at revelation, not the book of Revelation, the act of revelation, what we have is God, who is omniscient, talking to man who has knowledge, but who is finite and limited. You have God able to speak to man because He made us in His image and the link is this thing called language. That's the link, and if we didn't have language we couldn't talk to God and He couldn't talk to us. He is the author of language, and the language that He has given us is so powerful that it's adequate not only for human to human communications but for Creator to creature communication. Language is an extremely powerful tool.

We're looking at five characteristics of this language. One of those characteristics we said is that it is Verbal. We emphasized that. Why bother with saying that? We say that for this reason: we live in what is called the New Age, and in the New Age we're getting an influx of oriental styles of thinking about religion, and its characteristic of oriental religions to reject

verbal revelation and substitute meditation, contemplation, mystical experience. If you study Buddhism, or Zen, or Hinduism, some of the Zen people come up with things like this saying: what is the sound of one hand clapping, and they'll try to keep these puzzles coming because what they want you to do after you've listened to enough of them is to agree that you can't know God through words, all that's left is contemplation, meditation which has deeply infected Christian circles. It's called contemplative spirituality or contemplative prayer which is basically an attempt to bring eastern religion together with Christianity and you sort of get this hybrid religion that's not Christianity because on one hand Christianity affirms that God speaks and eastern religion says he doesn't, so it's a contradiction of terms. But people are trying to bring in something from outside the word in order to be really spiritual, to feel spiritual, to have an experience that impresses something deep upon you. Somewhere along the way people got bored with God so they bring this extra stuff in. That's not what we're about, we're fighting that, that's no different than horoscopes, séances, occultic ritual, it's all bypassing the mind, it's trying to get around the word of God which is what we were made for.

The second thing we said about God's language is its Personal. That makes sense if we're made in God's image, He's personal therefore we're personal, then you can have one person speaking to another, but you can't have personality if your ultimate backdrop is an impersonal universe. If everything is just impersonal molecules you don't get personality out of that. By definition there's no one there, no speaker to speak. The Scriptures say you are personal, made in a Person's image. That ultimately what's behind the universe is a Person. Our ultimate environment is a Person not Chance, not Fate, but Person who speaks, who loves, who knows and the thing that ties us together is this very personal thing called language, that links the Personal Creator to us as personal creatures.

We also said that revelation is Intermittent, meaning that God reveals Himself from time to time in history but not necessarily all the time. This revelation is a public thing, it's given at certain times and then it's not given for a while, the human race is given a few centuries to think about what was said. And later on in another age God says some more things. Right now He hasn't spoken in history since the close of the NT canon, in spite of all the cults saying that they got their private word or something like that. God has

not spoken and will not speak again until just prior to the return of Christ, then the prophets break out, the line of the prophets come out again. What's inhibiting that right now, from the human side, is the orientation of the nation Israel, because one of the things Jesus said is you won't hear Me, and I won't talk to you, and I'm not coming back to this earth until you welcome Me as the King of kings. That was His last word, so what's blocking the return of Christ, in one sense, is the spiritual *status quo* of the nation Israel. My point here isn't to get off on all these topics so much as to say that it's not true that we have the right to go out and expect God to personally speak His own special revelation to us. What He has given us in this book and the Holy Spirit in our hearts is sufficient to know Him.

The fourth point, because we covered the first three last time, we want to get to number four and five, the fourth one is God's language is **Comprehensive**. That means that God speaks to every area of life. We want to go through some of the areas. Turn to Deuteronomy 12 because these are some of the details, we could through Numbers, through Leviticus, Exodus, there's a number of places you can do this just for fun but Deuteronomy is kind of neat because it's all together. Our circles are prone to sort of not looking at the Law because Christ fulfilled that, we're not under that. And I think we miss a lot by doing that. Paul says the OT was given for our instruction. We may not be under the Law but there are certainly wisdom principles in the Law and we're fools not to pay attention to it and take seriously what God said about various areas of life, be inquisitive, ask questions of this.

Deut 12:1, watch how it all begins and ask yourself, why does God start off with idolatry? Why is he so concerned with idolatrous places? "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. <sup>2</sup>"You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. <sup>3</sup>"You shall tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place." Why is the Lord so concerned that they utterly wipe out the idolatrous shrines in the land? What's the big deal? I'll give you another illustration: when the rules of evidence are given in Scripture to

control the judicial proceedings, one of the strangest verses that you read in the middle of the rules as to how a judge is to convene a court is he can't do it next to a grove of trees. What's the problem of having a court room next to a grove of trees? Because the grove of trees is the place where these pagans worshiped. So again the question: why are we concerned when we're talking about judicial proceedings? Are we worried about a grove of trees? Why, when we come out with these statutes and judgments are we concerned with altars, groves and so forth? Because in the big picture men come there to worship gods. Who created those gods? Men; and when men create their own gods, what are they ultimately doing? They're defining reality, that's their presupposition. They are saying, "I have eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and I can know good and evil like God Himself can know, and I can become the final arbiter, I will set up the total meaning for my life." Isn't it striking that when you go into the law codes, the first thing is cutting off any connection with paganism. What is the implication? If God does this, isn't the implication that you can't get just law on a pagan basis? This is precisely the argument that we're seeing here in Scripture.

Think of that and that line of logic against what you hear in our society today, that you can generate just law common to all kinds of beliefs, all you have to do is agree on a certain minimum set of behavior standards, which we then codify, and call that public law, and place people of different beliefs under that umbrella of law and say we all have the same common understanding of law. Something's wrong here. Either the secular mind today is right and the Bible is wrong, or if the Bible is right, then something is radically wrong with the way society is doing this. But one or the other of these things is out of line.

What we need to do when we look at passages like this is say, well Lord, what is the connection, why do You want us to be so hard-nosed about verse 2-3, why do You want all this eliminated? Why don't You want courts convened where there's religious contamination? What did we say was the nature of the law, going back, just to review a minute, we said what distinguished Mt. Sinai from pagan law? It was addressed to the heart. By whom? God. So when you deal with law you're dealing with what ought to be true, what *ought* to be true, its values and ethics and law all wrapped up together, and you can't have values, ethics and law without a source for them. And the Bible insists that the source for all of those values, ethics and law, is God. It's

got to be God, it can't be man; if it's going to be man, what do you do about Nuremberg? Pagan man doesn't have an answer. You can't get a conviction on that basis. We went through that.

So the Bible is very insistent that once you let go of the Creator-creature distinction you can't have just law.

Let's skim down further. Verses 6-12 deal with Worship. Notice an interesting observation in verse 12, "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you." Did you notice, "you will rejoice before the LORD," if you read the descriptions of worship in the book of Leviticus, it sounds like they had parties, they came, they feasted, they were serious but it was a time of rejoicing. It sounds like a church supper or something, actually you see that in the OT. It's a time of rejoicing, it's not just somber. As mighty as the God of the Scripture is, as powerful, particularly in the OT, as He appears, He calls His people to come before Him and enjoy themselves in His presence.

Notice a little clause in verse 12; do you notice something there that you might not expect to have seen in a pagan version of this law? For example, among the pagan nations, their ancient law codes had class distinctions, everyone was treated according to class, they were valued differently. But notice, verse 12, the "servants" that are mentioned there. They aren't exactly in the upper class, they're servants, they weren't purchased or anything, but are they to enjoy worshipping before the Lord? Is there anybody excluded in verse 12? Everybody has the right to come and rejoice before the Lord, there were no class distinctions. This is a tremendous and powerful unifier in that society. It's not just a small point. All men are made in the image of God, all men have equal value. God, by saying I want all classes, I want all strata to come before Me, when you come before Me is saying you are all equal. So this prevented class warfare that could have developed.

Notice in chapter 12, for example, verses 15, 16, and 17, what's the area of life described there? "However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the deer. [16] Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour

it out on the ground like water. [17] You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain, or new wine, or oil, or the first-born of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand.” Eating, **Diet**, food. Now we’ve gone from religion to diet. Verses 22-23, “Just as a gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you shall eat it; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it. [23] Only be sure not to eat the blood....” This was a spiritual issue on one hand, other nations like Egypt, blood was a delicacy, they drank it, it supposedly had life-giving characteristics. Not for the Israelites, drinking blood was associated with pagan religion, they were to be separate from that and that meant draining the animals of its blood, out of respect for the animal. Why is that respectful? Because the blood is the animal’s life. That animal’s life is being poured out on your behalf. You’re going to go on living because that animal died. Now, what does that look forward to? Obviously the cross of Christ. He poured out His life for your spiritual life. We could point out other things related to the value of animal life but we’ll reserve that for chapter 14.

In chapter 13 we get into the controls on testing a person who claims special revelation phenomena for truth or falsity, the Tests of a Prophet, there are empirical tests for prophetic claims. Someone asked a question on Wednesday about Amos. How did these guys know Amos was a real prophet? Well they had tests for these guys in the Law. Empirical tests. What happened to a false prophet? If a guy got up and taught false doctrine in Israel what happened? He got killed, a capital offense. Obviously the courts had to be given rules of evidence, so chapter 13 and 18 give you the rules that the courts used to determine whether a prophet was true or false. If we tried that on some of the cults today it’d be rather interesting.

In chapter 14 look at the detailed codes, in verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, more on diet, the clean and the unclean animals. Why are all these here? Because God, when He speaks His revelation speaks to all areas of life, so he speaks to eating. We’ve shown there was a nutritional application of these. It wasn’t just spiritual, the spiritual was first, it keep them separated from the other nations, you couldn’t just go sit down and have a meal together, but secondarily there were medical benefits to these. You don’t eat scavenger birds for example. Why? Because scavenger birds eat dead animals and that’s a source of disease.

Then we could go on and look at some other things, you'll notice in 14:21, a minor point, the Mosaic Law exercised humane consideration of **Animal Rights**. Remember back with Noah, when a carnivorous diet was first introduced to the human race legally and lawfully, and people today believe in vegetarianism, it's healthier and this and that, Hinduism has always believed in vegetarianism, that's why the cows run all over the streets in India. The point is that there is a certain reluctance on the part of the pagan mind to eat meat, always has been, and God says eat it. That means you have to kill animals to eat. Why is that? Because apparently after the Flood the food value was depleted so we had to get protein from somewhere. The animal kingdom was given to man. But something else was going on with that because God was setting mankind up for something else, He was setting up the form, the categories of human thought so we understand that we get our nourishment from death, that we live because something dies. We're not designed to mindlessly gorge ourselves. We're supposed to think. And that's a thought form God brought in after the Flood so when Christ came the categories would be there for us to grasp the significance of the cross. One of the reasons why modern people who are against meat eating have a real problem, some of them haven't thought this through yet, but the problem with it is that it's essential denying my sinfulness, it's saying I will sustain myself without death, I will not eat, I will not permit animals to give their lives for me. That shields them from what Christ said in John 6, you shall eat, not only of My body but also of My blood. They say I will not eat, I don't need to eat, I don't need Christ, I'm self-sufficient. Notice here in the OT you could eat the body and the flesh, but not the blood. In the NT, eat my flesh, drink my blood. We need physical and spiritual life, Jesus Christ provides both. We're not saying the elements turn into His literal blood and literal body, He said my words are spirit and life. But the eating of animals sets up the thought forms that prepare us to understand that we are only saved by the death of someone for us, it's humiliating to realize that we caused that. Maybe we are squeamish about killing animals, but we are causing it, we caused the problem; that was not the way it was originally from creation. So in one sense it is uncomfortable, it's abnormal.

But even in these passages there's consideration for animals. Notice verse 21, "You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for you are a holy people to the LORD your God...." Notice cleanliness and

public health went with holiness, the two were tied together. "...You shall not boil a kid in the mother's milk." That's a strange provision. What's that talking about? It's just sensitivity; the mother's milk is the kid's sustenance, don't boil the kid in the substance which gives it life. Animals are not to be treated as nothing, God made that. He made them with a specific form and function to reflect His glory. So you don't kill them thoughtlessly. There's something profound about the killing of an animal and it needs to be done humanely, thoughtfully. We mentioned back in the Ten Commandments, what do you find about the Sabbath legislation? Was it just man getting a rest? It was also addressed to the animals, the animals got a day off just like the people got a day off. You rested your horses, you rested your oxen; there was a consideration for those animals that worked for you.

Notice in verses 24-26 are rules about Money Exchange. Verse 24, "And if the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe," your tithe was your animal, and you're so far from Jerusalem you just can't take it that far, "since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, <sup>25</sup>then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. <sup>26</sup>And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household." so we deal with the issue of money exchange and money transactions. What was being violated in Jesus' day in the Temple Compound? It's one of the most famous events in His life, one of the most violent events of His life? The meek and mild Jesus took a whip and went in and faced the mafia, basically, they were running the temple operations, and He threw over the money table, coins went all over the place. Talk about a one-man riot? The guy went in there and tore the place apart basically. And He did so because of the flagrant violations of the law, they were charging high exchange rates, these people were getting rich. The law said you don't do that.

Notice in chapter 15, we just want to skim through because this may be new to some of you, you've never had a chance to read through the law, and I urge you to do this, if you haven't done it. I can only sample things quickly to kind of give you a flavor. Deut 15:1-2, "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts. [2] And this is the manner of remission: every



creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the LORD's remission has been proclaimed." Now we have rules about **Loans**. The Scriptures have considerable economic rules, and one of the rules was that you could have an outstanding loan for only six years. That created some economic problems, because if someone came to you for a loan and they were only two years away from the year of remission, you've got a little problem, you want to give a guy a loan that in no way can be paid back?

Can anyone see why that is in the Mosaic Law Code? Do you see any meaning why God interfered, as it were, with the issue of debts? When we are in debt, Proverbs says we are a slave to the lender. Is any form of slavery revelatory? Is God's picture of salvation that of an abject slave? From where had the Jews been delivered? From Egypt, from slavery, and He doesn't want His society to be filled with economic slaves. This was a law, that had it been followed, which it wasn't, but had this rule been followed the indebtedness levels of Israel would have been phenomenally low. And with a society that is low in debt and high in reserves it's tremendously resilient. Here you have checks and balances on loans, checks and balances on interest, there God reached into the pocket book and said not only am I going to tell you what to eat, I'm going to tell you how to lend your money. There's a debate whether these were charitable loans or business loans, etc. but the big point is just notice the areas, His revelation is comprehensive, He speaks to every area.

One other thing I want to skim over is in Deut 19:2-10. This is a particular set of rules that were given to the people for the people's courts, the elder courts, and it had to deal with the issue of murder, and in this case it had to deal with how to separate Manslaughter, accidental murder, from murder, because murder was a capital offense. In verse 2, "you shall set aside three cities for yourself in the midst of your land, which the LORD your God gives you to possess. <sup>3</sup>You shall prepare the roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land, which the LORD your God will give you as a possession, so that any manslayer may flee there." These were called the refuge cities, a place these manslaughterers could live their life without fear of revenge. Notice "roads" in verse 3, there's got to be access to these cities, so they had to get their engineers out and build a road system to at least these three cities. Verse 4, "Now this is the case of the manslayer who may flee there and life: when he kills his friend unintentionally, not hating him

previously—<sup>5</sup>as when a man goes into the forest with his friend to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down the tree and the iron head slips off the handle and strikes his friend so that he dies—he may flee to one of these cities and live. <sup>6</sup>lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer in the heat of his anger, and overtake him, because the way is long, and take his life, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated him previously.” We can get into all kinds of things here but notice in verse 6 the phrase “overtake him because the way is long,” relate that observation back to verse 3 and the preparation of highways and roads. They divide the area into three parts so that a city of refuge would be reasonably close by; they made everything kind of equal distance to these three cities. That was the idea to provide for manslaughter, a safety for a manslaughter situation. Just to contrast what we just read, here’s a section from the Code of Hammurabi, a foreign law code: “If [the victim] had died because of his blow, he shall swear [that it was not deliberate injury], and if it was a member of the aristocracy, he shall pay one-half mina of silver. If it was a member of the commonality, he shall pay one-third mina of silver.” In other words, the low class was worth less. There you have in the pagan law code, embedded in the very code, a class distinction when it comes to justice. What’s that going to breed over time? When you go to the Scripture codes you can’t find that. Everyone is made in the image of God, no matter their station in life.

If you go on to chapter 20, there are Rules of Engagement given to the army in combat. Deut. 20:10-15 is war with far off cities, verse 10 “When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. <sup>11</sup>And it shall come about, if it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then it shall be that all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. <sup>12</sup>However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. <sup>13</sup>When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword. <sup>14</sup>Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty, for yourself; and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the LORD your God has given you.”

Notice how carefully verses 16-18 change the rules of engagement for military operations. In vv 10-15 when you deal with far off cities there’s an offer of peace, grace was offered. But there is no grace offered in verses 16-18. Why? These are the cities in Israeli territory. This is getting into an issue

we'll face in the Conquest and Settlement under Joshua, a real bone of contention, the concept of holy war. Verse 16, "Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. <sup>17</sup>But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, <sup>18</sup>in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God." That kind of warfare is called holy war, which we will get into; it's one of the most controversial sections in all the Bible. Why did God obliterate certain people; that's coming up in the next event we study.

I think we've seen enough to get the basic idea, there are all kinds of health rules and everything, the law was comprehensive.

Finally, the fifth point of the doctrine of revelation we deal with the fact it is Prophetic. And what we mean by that is two things. For one these men spoke of things that were beyond man's perception. There are simply things the Bible speaks to that man could not know anything about unless God told us. You can contemplate your navel for a hundred lifetimes and you'll never find this stuff out. If He didn't speak through prophets we wouldn't have the slightest. And so you have the prophet. And that's the second thing, the prophets in Scripture form an unbroken line. Here's Moses, he's the main author of the law, humanly speaking, and after him would come the prophet Joshua and so on. This went on for 14 centuries, one guy after another, lives overlapping and so forth, it was a checks and balances system. These prophets in their ministry, they kept going back to Torah, the Law, the first five books of the OT. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, all these guys that you read about and have these funny names, all those men are men who go back to the Law, they're not adding new laws, they're not legislators. They are like prosecuting attorneys who are prosecuting the nation based on their Mosaic legislation. If you can see your OT that way it makes sense to you, these men aren't saying something new for the most part, they're just calling the nation back to the Law, come back and obey or you're going to get creamed by your Father, you're in a Father-Son relationship. That's the idea of the prophets' role to call them back to faithfulness to God their Father.

Here's a quote from a Jewish scholar, and Dr. Kaufmann makes an interesting observation that if you study prophecy as given in the nation of Israel for the Jews, and then contrast prophets found in Gentile nations or people who claim to be prophets, you see there's a difference. Here's the difference: "What makes the history of Israelite prophecy *sui generis* is the succession of the apostles of God that come to the people through the ages. Such a line," and this sentence is important, "Such a line of apostle-prophets is unknown in paganism." In pagan cultures you'll have a prophet here and a prophet there; you do not have a long line of prophets. Like Islam, the whole thing hinges on the word of one guy, Mohammed, I had a vision. Heck, if I followed every guy that had a vision I'd be all over the board. Or take the Mormons, Joseph Smith and his gold plates. Am I really going to follow one guy's word, one guy's experience? In the Bible there is a succession of prophets' lives so one prophet can check out another prophet, does that line up with the word of God given previously or not? That is ONLY true in Jewish Israel.

We as Christians need to be sharp on this, this is a major point for our side, as Bible-believing Christians we can calmly point out, it doesn't make any difference if you believe in God or not, you've got to deal with history, and there was a people called Israel, and that people called Israel made covenants with their God, or God made covenants with them, show me where that's true elsewhere. And they had a line of prophets; how many years was this line of prophets? The OT was written down by an unbroken line of prophets, fifteen centuries from Moses to Malachi. And then you have the break till you get down to John the Baptist and the line is revived, Christ and the apostles speak. But that's fifteen centuries. The challenge to the non-Christian is show me another case of that. It's very simple; show me one other case in history where you have fifteen centuries of prophets basically confirming the same thing. That's something objective we can point out to our non-Christian friends.

Alright, in summary when you think of the Doctrine of Revelation, God's speech, God's language, the Scriptures what you want to think of is Mt Sinai. Don't think abstract, you want to have this image because it keeps you orthodox. Can God speak to man? The answer is embedded in the fabric of space and time, it happened at Mt Sinai such that you could have recorded the sound waves of God's voice. That's what we mean with the word of God,

He who made us communicates with us. He does that Verbally, it's not an impression, its actual words that can be understood and have meaning. It's Personal, obviously because He's a person and you're a person it's addressed to you, and it's more than do's and don'ts, it's more than just an external law code, it penetrates the heart, that's the real issue, we read it every Sunday, Heb 4:12, The word of God is living and active...judging the thoughts and intentions of the heart." There has to be a heart response to Him, no one's neutral in this, we all respond positive or negatively to His word. Third it's Intermittent, He's not talking all the time, when He does you better listen, when He doesn't you better remember what He said, that's why the Bible is so important. That's why history is important. Fourth, what we looked at this morning is the fact God's word is Comprehensive, no detail of life is left unturned and that logically follows out of the fact He is Creator. He made all the details of life so when He goes to speak He addresses those details. And finally revelation is Prophetic, He has a line of prophets.

I want to reserve a full hour for two subsidiary doctrines, the doctrine of inspiration and canonicity that come out of this Mt Sinai event. Those basically fall out of and depend upon revelation, so we develop the doctrine of inspiration, how we got the Bible, who God used, how He did it and then something else called canonicity which deals with the boundaries of that revelation, what has God said and this gets into conflict with Roman Catholicism, Islam, Mormonism, other cults that in some way add or distort the revelation.

[Back To The Top](#)

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