

REVELATION IS PROGRESSIVE

This is an important concept when it comes to interpreting the Bible. It means is that within the Bible, there is progress from incomplete to complete revelation.

If you had only the book of Genesis, it would still be the word of God but it would not be the **complete** word of God. All the writings of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) are inspired, inerrant and God's word, but they are still not the complete word of God.

The progression in the Bible is not a progression from wrong to right, or from error to truth: it is progress from incomplete to complete. The writer of Hebrews put it this way:

Hebrews 1:1-2: God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son . . .

"The Law" or the Old Testament reveals God's character, but it contains many things relevant to Israel which are not applicable to us today. What Jesus said, did, and accomplished by His death and resurrection superseded the law, but did not annul it. He said:

Matthew 5:17-18: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished."

Pay attention to the progress within the Bible. Don't force New Testament ideas into Old Testament passages. An idea the original readers could not have understood is an idea God did not put in the passage. Abraham never heard of the law of Moses. Isaiah didn't have and didn't understand the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The church began in Acts 2 with the coming of the Holy Spirit. There was no church in the Old Testament, so don't read church concepts into passages addressing Israel. The New Testament reveals that Israel has been "set aside" until "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11). Then "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26)—revelation never known to anyone until it was revealed to Paul.