

He showed them future things through visions, communicated His will through trances and dreams. He showed His people what to do in difficult cases of decision, through the high priest's use of Urim and Thummim; and communicated His judgment by means of the lot. He performed miraculous acts for them through chosen persons, so that His people might know that He was dynamically active and ready to intervene in the ordinary course of nature to demonstrate His creative, destructive, and remedial power, and to confirm His Word through His messengers. He spoke audibly to chosen persons, in order to communicate a knowledge of His will. He spoke many times in and through His prophets, and disclosed many things concerning His nature, His works, and His will. He disclosed Himself preeminently in His Son, in whom all the fullness of God dwells in bodily form. And He continues to communicate with human beings through the Scripture themselves.

b. Consideration of the theological aspects of special revelation

J. I. Packer, in *God Speaks to Man: Revelation and the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965) recapitulates his position as follows:

What is revelation? From one standpoint, it is God's act, from another His gift.... As God's act, revelation is the personal self-disclosure whereby He brings us actively and experimentally to know Him as our own God and Saviour. As God's gift, revelation is the knowledge about Himself which He gives us as a means to this end....

How does God reveal what has to be revealed in order that we may know Him? By verbal communication from Himself. Without this, revelation in the full and saving sense cannot take place at all. For no public historical happening as such (an exodus, a conquest, a captivity, a crucifixion, an empty tomb), can reveal God apart from an accompanying word from God to explain it, or a prior promise which it is seen to confirm or fulfill. Revelation in its basic form is thus of necessity propositional; God reveals Himself by telling us about Himself, and what He is doing in His world. The statement in Hebrews 1:1, that in Old Testament days God spoke "in divers manners," reminds us of the remarkable variety of means whereby, according to the record, God's communications were on occasion given.... But in every case the disclosures introduced, or conveyed, or confirmed, by these means were propositional in substance and verbal in form.

Why does God reveal Himself to us? Because... He who made us rational beings wants, in His love, to have us as His friends; and He addresses His words to us -- statements, commands, promises -- as a means of sharing His thoughts with us, and so of making that personal self-disclosure which friendship presupposes, and without which it cannot exist.
(pp. 55-56)