

Foundations of Truth

Week One – The Scriptures

February 2, 2022

Class objective: To provide a **basic** foundation of biblical doctrine for disciples who desire to make disciples.

NOT class objectives: To argue the finer points or secondary issues; to move into advanced theological discussions; to teach comparative religions.

Week One: The Scriptures

Week Two: God the Father

Week Three: God the Son

Week Four: God the Holy Spirit

Week Five: The Church

Demystifying Key Terms

- **Doctrine.** The word *doctrine* simply means *teaching*. So, biblical doctrine is merely a reference to what the Bible teaches.
- **Theology.** The word *theology* is derived from two Greek words: *theos* and *logia*. *Theos* means *God*. *Logia* means teaching or words. So, theology is the study of what can be learned about God.

Two Primary Approaches to Theology

- **Systematic Theology.** The attempt to put biblical (Christian) doctrine into logical order. This approach begins with a particular topic of theology and then systematically compiles.
- **Biblical Theology.** The attempt to study the truth about God as it is taught within the specific context of a particular passage of Scripture.

When done correctly, these two approaches complement one another and work interdependently. During this study, we will be using both approaches.

Book Recommendations

- *Basic Christianity* by John Stott
- *The Walk* by Stephen Smallman
- *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* by Wayne Grudem
- *Growing in Christ* by NavPress (Navigators)

Session One – The Bible

Revelation – Inspiration – Canonization – Illumination - Preservation

Revelation – God has made Himself known

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God” but the things revealed belong unto us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.” - Deuteronomy 29:29

Revelation is the unveiling of something previously hidden so that it may be seen for what it is.

General Revelation

General (or Natural) Revelation is that knowledge of God which is derived from the light of natural things. It is accessible to all men and is addressed to all men.

1. Creation-Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 40:12, 26; Psalm 8:1
2. Conscience-Romans 2:15

Special Revelation

Special Revelation is direct, divine intervention in the affairs of this world through which God makes Himself known.

1. In times past, God has revealed Himself through:
 - dreams (Genesis 37:5-10)
 - visions (Daniel 8:1)
 - audible voices (I Samuel 3)
 - animals (Numbers 22:28)
 - angels (Luke 1:26-37)
2. The centerpiece of God's special revelation is the Bible.
 - Psalm 138:2

Inspiration

II Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

Inspiration is the mysterious way in which the Holy Spirit moved the human writers of the Bible in such a way that they recorded the very words and sense of God, though maintaining their individual literary style.

- A. **Confluent Inspiration**-Scripture is the product of two agents, human and divine. Acts 4:25, 13:35; II Peter 1:20, 21
- B. **Verbal Inspiration**-the very **words** of Scripture are God's words. More than concepts and thoughts, but the actual words are inspired. Ps. 12:6
- C. **Plenary Inspiration**-extending to all parts alike, the entire Bible is inspired and every part of the Bible is equally inspired. II Timothy 3:16a
- D. **Inerrant Inspiration**-the Bible was written down correctly in every detail. Hebrews 6:18b; Titus 1:2c; Numbers 23:19; John 10:35
- E. **Infallible Inspiration**-without error in its teaching. Psalm 119:160; John 17:17

Canonization

Canonization refers to the process by which books, letters and other writings were accepted as Holy Scripture, or the Word of God. The word '**canon**' comes from the Greek word '*kanon*,' meaning 'a rule,' and conveys the idea of a measure- a test, a critical standard, or a defined limit.

- A. When referencing Scripture, **the word 'canon' means:**
 1. The rules or standards by which each book of the Bible was determined to be a sacred writing.
 2. The name used for the collection of books determined to be sacred writings – the canon of scripture.
- B. **The standards, or tests of canonicity:**

The process of canonization involved the "interplay of subjective and objective factors, overruled by divine providence." – D. Ewert, From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations.

 1. **The Writer**
 - a. Old Testament – Was the writer a prophet of God?

- b. New Testament- Was the writer an apostle or one who worked under the authority of an apostle?
- 2. **The Contents**
-Is the content consistent with the rest of scripture?
- 3. **Acceptance**
-Has there been 'historical acceptance' of this book among believers? (This was especially necessary for the NT.)
- 4. **Inspiration and Authority**
-Are the contents authoritative and powerful? Have they stood the test of time and scrutiny of God's people?

C. **The Old Testament Canon**

- 1. The OT canon was formed progressively as the books were written down and received by the nation of Israel. This is evidenced by the immediate reception of the Law (Exodus 24:3), Joshua (Joshua 24:26,27), and Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2). The 'test of the prophet' was applied to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.
- 2. Christ gave His approval of the Old Testament's authenticity by His many references to the writings.
- 3. The Apocrypha – The 15 books of Jewish literature that were written during the intertestamental period. They have been regarded as having no verifiable claim to inspiration or legitimate authorship.

D. **The New Testament Canon**

- 1. The NT was written between the years 50 A.D. and 95 A.D.
- 2. The Scriptures were being circulated as early as 65 A.D. The NT canon was being compiled before 70 A.D. (The destruction of Jerusalem)
-Clement of Rome (c. 96 A.D.) quotes or cites Matthew, Luke, I Corinthians, Ephesians, I Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, and I John.
-The Epistle of Barnabas (c. 100 A.D.) quotes from Matthew and refers to it as Scripture.
-The Didache, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and other ancient writings quote from many NT books.
- 3. The Canon was informally compiled progressively by Christians, churches and councils during early circulation of the writings. The Canon was formally settled between 200 A.D. and 400 A.D.
 - a. Western (Latin) Christendom.
-By 200 A.D. 22 books were well accepted. Hebrews was the most difficult to settle.
 - b. Eastern (Greek-Egyptian) Christendom.
-The book of Revelation endured much scrutiny and resistance.

The first known list of 27 NT books was given by Athanasius in 367 A.D. This is the first known list, it does not mean the list was not compiled earlier.

III. **Illumination**

-The Holy Spirit-given understanding of revelation or revealed truth.
1 Corinthians 2:10-13; John 14:26; John 16:13; 1 John 2:20,21,27

IV. **Preservation**

-The work of God to preserve not only the meaning of scripture, but His very words. The

originals of any Scriptural texts are no longer available to us, but God has promised His people that they would forever have His Words.

A. Psalm 12:6, 7

B. II Timothy 3:15, 16

1. Timothy had the Scriptures, not reliable facsimiles.

2. Timothy did not possess the originals. In fact, the Old Testament Scriptures were between 450 to 1,500 years old, and were copies of copies.

Overview of the Bible

- Contains 66 books divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- The word *testament* means covenant or agreement.

Old Testament (39 books)

God's dealings with man from the creation until 400 years before the birth of Jesus.

The Books of the Law

5 books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Written by Moses around 1400 B.C. Creation, Fall, Beginning of Israel, the Exodus, the Law.

The Books of History

12 books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther

Written between 1400 and 450 B.C., these books describe God's dealings with Israel and 1,000 years of the nation's tumultuous history.

The Books of Poetry

5 books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon

Written throughout Israel's history and use poetry to convey God's character and His dealings with men.

The Books of the Prophets

17 books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

These books were written by the prophets (God's spokesmen) between 840 and 400 B.C. They detail the fall and captivity of Israel and Judah.

New Testament (27 books)

God's dealing with man after the coming of Jesus Christ

History

5 books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts

These books were written to detail the life of Jesus as the Christ, the Savior. The book of Acts is the history of the early church of Jesus Christ.

The Letters

21 books: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

The Letters were written to individuals, specific churches, or believers in general. The letters are instruction to the early Christians about the Christian life, proper doctrine, and proper church practices.

Prophecy

1 book: The Revelation

This book gives us a glimpse of the future and the culmination of all history in the events that surround the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Apologetics Fall 2021

Week One: Intro/Why Should We Trust the Bible?

“...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being **prepared** to make a **defense** to anyone who asks you for a **reason** for the **hope** that is in you; yet do it with **gentleness** and **respect**...” 1 Peter 3:15

What is apologetics?

- Not apologizing for being a Christian.
- From the Greek word *apologia* which means *defense*.
- Christian apologetics is the task of arguing for the truth of Christianity over against other worldviews.

What is a worldview?

A set of beliefs that answers key questions about the universe, life, and meaning.

What are examples of other worldviews?

- **Naturalism** – everything arises from natural properties and causes; supernatural and spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted
- **Secularism/secular humanism** – humans can live fulfilled, moral lives without God or religion. Religion should be separated from public life (i.e. – separation of church and state)
- **Marxism** – society’s issues stem from the disparity between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” Proposes an overthrow of capitalism and free markets by establishing a redistribution of wealth. Popularized socialism and communism.
- **Postmodernism** – absolute truth cannot be known. “Truth” is relative to our personal experiences.
- **New Spirituality** – at the core of reality is a higher consciousness, a force some people call ‘god.’ Encourages spiritual practices that are rooted more in personal experience than truth. “Become one with the universe.”
- **Islam** – a monotheistic religion developed by a 6th century nomad named Muhammad.

What are questions a worldview would seek to answer?

1. What is ultimate reality? After the dust settles, what is really real?
2. What is the nature of external reality (philosophy of this is called metaphysics)?
3. What is a human being? How did we get here? (related: to what or whom are we accountable?)
4. What is there (if anything) after life?
5. Epistemology – can we know and how can we know anything at all?
6. Morality – What is right and wrong (is there right and wrong, and what is the basis for ethics – ethics and apologetics are related, both are branches of Christian philosophy)?
7. Beauty, goodness, and truth – where do we get these concepts? What purpose do they serve?

Objective for our Study

To equip you with **basic, reasonable** answers to legitimate questions concerning the Bible, God, and the Christian Worldview.

Three quick reminders about faith:

- Faith requires faith. It will always be necessary to exercise faith. We do not have a certain type of proof concerning the creation of the universe or the validity of Scripture.
- Biblical faith is reasonable, not blind.
- Truth is given through revelation more than investigation. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher.

Series Overview

Session One: Why Should We Trust the Bible?

Session Two: Does Modern Science Disprove the Biblical Account of Creation?

Session Three: TBD

Session Four: How Could a Good God Allow So Much Pain in the World?

Session Five: Is it Reasonable to Believe in the Resurrection? Or, Is There *Really* Only One True Religion?

Session Six: How do we engage the hot-topic issues in our culture? (i.e. – CRT, human sexuality, etc)

Resources

Websites:

www.rightnowmedia.org

www.summit.org

www.answersingenesis.org

www.icr.org

www.probe.org

Books/Studies:

**Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis

**The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis

Miracles, C.S. Lewis

**The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh

McDowell

Truth Matters, Kostenberger, Bock & Chatraw

In Defense of the Faith, Dave Hunt

The Case for Christ, Lee Strobel

The Case for Faith, Lee Strobel

The Reason for God, Timothy Keller

Christian Apologetics, Norman Geisler

Legitimate Questions, Illuminate Resources

The Secret Battle of Ideas About God, Jeff Myers

Handbook of Christian Apologetics, Peter Kreeft &

Ronald K. Tacelli

Why Should We Trust the Bible?

The importance of this question:

2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

"The scriptures must be taken seriously because they claim to tell us the true story from the creation of the universe all the way to its re-creation...The content of the Bible lies at the very core of reality."
Mike Erre, *Why the Bible Matters*

Reasonable Evidence to Trust the Reliability of the Bible

Evidence 1: The Uniqueness of the Bible is Evidence to its Validity

The Bible expresses unique **continuity**:

- Written over a period of approximately 1,500 years;
- Written by more than 40 human authors;
- Written in different types of places (wilderness, dungeons, palace, prison, in exile on an island);
- Written during different moods (joy, sorrow, lament, certainty, doubt);
- Written on three different continents (Asia, Africa, Europe);
- Written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek);
- Written in a variety of literary styles (poetry, law, narrative, correspondence, biography, prophecy, parable);
- Written to address a variety of subjects.

Internal Test of Truth = Coherence (the quality of being logical and consistent)

- Despite the incredible and varied circumstances behind each part of the Bible, it is one book with one message (God redeeming people) and one main character (Jesus).

Keep in mind...

Development is not Disagreement

- Many of the truths of Christianity are developed over time within the Biblical account – ie. the role of the Law

Diversity is not Disagreement

- The variations in the gospel accounts represent a diversity of perspective and background, which is precisely what you would expect from authentic, eyewitness accounts

The Bible is unique in its *Circulation*

A bestseller may sell several hundred thousand copies. A big-time hit will sell over a million copies. But the Bible has sold billions and billions of copies worldwide. It is estimated that over 100 million bibles are sold or given away each year worldwide.

“No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation.” (*The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Greenslade, CHB, 479)

As Josh McDowell states in *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, “The critic is right: ‘This doesn’t prove that the Bible is the Word of God.’ But it does demonstrate that the Bible is unique.”

Evidence 2: Fulfilled Prophecy is Evidence to the Bible’s Validity

The Bible includes hundreds of prophecies that have come true.

“The time (Daniel 9), city (Micah 5:2), and nature (Isaiah 7:14) of Christ’s birth were foretold in the Old Testament, as were dozens of other things about His life, death and resurrection (see Isaiah 53). Numerous other prophecies have been fulfilled, including the destruction of Edom (Obadiah 1), the curse on Babylon (Isaiah 13)...the return of Israel to the Land (Isaiah 11:11).” (General Introduction to the Bible, Geisler and Nix)

Dr. Peter Stoner, Professor Emeritus of Science at Westmont College, conducted a study on the prophecies fulfilled in the life of Christ. He concluded the mathematical probability of 8 major prophecies being fulfilled in one person to be 1 in 10^{17} . (Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969)

Evidence 3: Jesus Treated the Scriptures as True and Authoritative

Jesus is a historic figure. He is respected by the vast majority of people to be the most influential person who ever lived. He referenced the Scriptures as valid and authoritative.

- Matt 13:41-43 / Dan 13:3
- Matt 24:15 / Dan 9:27
- Mark 13:14 / Dan 9:27
- Matt 24:29 / Isa 13:10; Isa 34:4
- Mark 13:24-26 / Isa 13:10; Isa 34:4; Dan 7:13
- Matt 24:30 / Dan 7:13

Evidence 4: Archeology has Affirmed the Bible’s Validity

External Test of Truth – Correspondence (Does this correspond to the world in which we live?)

The Biblical account corresponds to the discoveries of archeology.

- The Hittites
- Jericho.

“It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.” (Nelson Glueck, author, professor, archeologist, born in Ohio!)

Evidence 5: Eyewitness Accounts Serve to Confirm the Bible’s Validity

The Bible is composed of one eyewitness account after another. Those who wrote the Scriptures, wrote them to their peers and contemporaries. Eyewitness account is strong evidence for the validity of an event. The variations within Scripture are exactly what you would expect to find among eyewitnesses.

Evidence 6: The Bible was Given Too soon to be Legend

The Gospels were written at the most forty to sixty years after Jesus’ death. Paul’s letters were written no later than 15-25 years after the death of Jesus. That means hundreds, if not thousands of people who had witnessed the life and death of Jesus were still alive and able to be accessed to validate the claims of the authors.

Mark 15:21 states that the man who carried Jesus’ cross was “the father of Alexander and Rufus.” There would be no reason to include those names unless the readers knew who they were and had access to them.

The Gospels include counterproductive material, if the author was attempting to promote a legend of a false religion. Mark 14 describes a key leader of the early church (Peter) denying and even calling down a curse on Jesus. It is not reasonable to believe that these unlearned fishermen could have concocted a legend of this nature.

The literary form of the Gospels is too detailed to be legend. Ancient fiction was nothing like the “reality show” fiction that we currently have. *Beowulf* and *The Iliad* do not include details like the Scriptures provide. For instance, Mark 4 tells us that Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the stern of the ship. John 21 tells us that Peter was a hundred yards out in the water when he saw Jesus on the beach. They also caught 153 fish.

Evidence 7: There was an Absence of Motive to Fabricate the Scriptures

Think about the lives most biblical authors lived. They were persecuted. They were poor. They traveled from town to town. Most of the New Testament writers were imprisoned or killed because of their claims. They had no reasonable motive to die for something they knew to be a lie. The only reasonable compelling argument is that they died for what they believed was true.

Evidence 8: Early Quotes by Church Fathers Affirm the Bible’s Validity

- Justin Martyr (b. 103) – 330
- Irenaeus (2nd Century) – 1,819
- Clement of Alexandria, aka Titus Flavius Clemens (c.150 - c. 215) – 2,406
- Origen (185-254) – 17, 992
- Tertullian (160-225) – 7,258
- Hippolytus (170-235) – 1,378
- Eusebius (269-339) – 5,176

Between these early church leaders, there are 36,289 quotations of the New Testament.

Evidence 9: The Incredible Number of Manuscripts are Evidence to the Bible’s Validity

There are by far more ancient manuscripts of the Bible than any other writing of antiquity.

Iliad – by Homer: written 800 BC, earliest copies 400 BC, number of copies 643

Plato: written 400 BC, earliest copies AD 900, number of copies 7

New Testament: written AD 50-100, earliest copies AD 114-325, number of copies approx. 5,700



EXPERIENCE PSALM 100

BELIEF STATEMENTS & APPLICATION QUESTIONS

100:1 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth!

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The LORD's praise is not to be kept silent

The LORD is to be praised by all the earth

APPLICATION QUESTION

Who receives my loudest praise?

100:2 Serve the LORD with gladness! Come before Him with joyful singing!

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The LORD is approachable

The LORD wants us to come to Him with joy

Serving the LORD is accompanied with gladness

100:3 Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The LORD has made Himself known to us

The LORD is God

The LORD is the Creator; we are the created

The LORD is our Shepherd and takes care of us

100:4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name!

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The LORD's gates are open to thankful people

The LORD's courtyard is filled with worshiping people

The LORD is the source of every good thing

The LORD's name is worthy of blessing

JOURNALING & PRAYER

BELIEF STATEMENT:

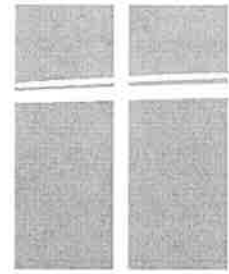
The LORD's praise is not to be kept silent

LORD, I praise You with my lips and my life! From the deepest places of my heart, I give you praise. There is no one like you. Your power is greater. Your love is greater. Your name is greater. Use my mouth to declare boldly Your worth to everyone around me.

APPLICATION QUESTION: *Who receives my loudest praise?*

Father, examine my heart. Show me where I am robbing or neglecting You of praise. Reveal to me where I am praising the created instead of the Creator. Refine praise within me to go to You, the only One worthy of praise. Forgive me for seeking my own praise. I want my boast to be in Christ and Christ alone. Help me to see You clearly. Purify my heart so that my lips will shout forth a purified praise.

EXPERIENCE THE WORD



BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. ASK
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to be your Teacher (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27) as you spend time in God's Word
2. KEEP FOCUSED
 - Keep "Belief Statements" concise and focused on the verse/context at hand.
 - Example: Joshua 1:1, "After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant.
 - Belief Statement: The LORD speaks.
3. REMAIN TRUE
 - Keep it as literal to the Word as possible. In your belief statement, use the same "name" used in the Word (Lord, God, LORD God, Holy Spirit, Spirit, Jesus, Christ, etc).
4. LOOK UP
 - Look for God the Father/Son/Spirit first.
 - Who He is, His ways, what He loves, what He hates, how He responds/moves, what He commands, etc.
5. LOOK AROUND
 - After first "looking for God" in the passage, expand the "Belief Statements" to other areas such as man, flesh, heaven, hell, angels, Satan, etc.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Let the Holy Spirit continue to lead you by forming of Application Questions from specific belief statements. He is not only the Teacher of what to believe, but also the Teacher of how to live it out.
2. Choose several of your belief statements and form an application question(s).
 - Belief Statement = The LORD speaks.
 - Application Question = Am I listening? To whose voice am I listening?

JOURNALING & PRAYER

1. Begin your journaling by choosing 1-3 of your Belief Statements. Journal each of them through expounding upon the validity, worth and effects of the Belief Statement. Use this for your basis of prayer. This will open up thanksgiving, praise, adoration, and so much more! There is now confidence in prayer because you are praying what God says is true!
2. Now move to the Application Question formed for that Belief Statement. Let the Holy Spirit lead you to a heart-examination. This will give way to confession, intercession, surrender, obedience, ...and wherever the Holy Spirit leads!