

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 2/8/2006

"You and Your Beliefs"--Bibliology, part 1 [\[1\]](#)

Does it matter what a person believes? There's lots of rhetoric these days about a individual's beliefs being a personal and private matter. "I have my beliefs, you have yours, and it's okay that we differ."

In some subjects that thinking may be appropriate: which ball team is better than another—that's subjective (until they play each other!); which is better for you, butter or margarine (that's subjective, until scientific studies are run to give objective data comparing the health effects, etc); which is a better political party; and on and on. To allow for difference of opinion is fine—but even then, it's one thing to allow for difference of opinion, but we don't naively conclude that ALL opinions are legitimate ones. They are tested, even debated.

And then we come to the most important subject of all, the subject of eternity. And all the sudden popular opinion says that ALL beliefs are acceptable. As long as you believe something about God, you're okay (and if you don't want to believe in God, that too is okay) because a person's "religious" beliefs are a personal thing.

I disagree. What you say you believe must be tested. A belief that is valid will stand careful scrutiny and examination.

In this series we are investigating and seeking to articulate what we believe about a series of subjects...

Present Series--"You and Your Beliefs"

Q: What do you believe about...

1. The Doctrine of God: Theology Proper
2. The Doctrine of the Scriptures: Bibliology
3. The Doctrine of Jesus Christ: Christology
4. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Pneumatology
5. The Doctrine of Man: Anthropology
6. The Doctrine of Sin: Harmartiology
7. The Doctrine of Salvation: Soteriology
8. The Doctrine of the Church: Ecclesiology
9. The Doctrine of Angels: Angelology
10. The Doctrine of Last Things: Eschatology

Where do you look in the Bible to find out what you should believe about these topics? There is no one place! God did not give us a book in the Bible where He listed what we should believe per se. This is known as "Systematic Theology."

Definition: "Theology is the science of God, or more fully, thought and speech which issue from a knowledge of God." (Bruce Milne, 11)

Systematic theology is the attempt to arrange systematically what we believe about God and God's truth.

Review "Theological Pyramid" from last week...

Tonight: The Doctrine of the Scriptures

Christianity is established upon the truth that God exists. But we would know nothing about this God if He did not do something. What's that? *Reveal Himself.*

Q: How has God revealed Himself to Mankind? There are two basic types of divine revelation...

1. General Revelation

Ps 19:1-3 "The heavens declare the glory of God..."

Rom 1:19-20 "...For the invisible things of Him from the creation...are clearly seen."

In General Revelation, God reveals His character through His work, namely through nature (Ps 8:3; 19:1), history, and conscience (Rom 2:15).

Problem: People cannot comprehend the message of General Revelation.

Why not? Because of sin. Sin has tainted our ability to draw the correct conclusions about General Revelation.

E.g.--An unsaved man looks at the Grand Canyon ...and does NOT worship the true God. He concludes, "There's what a little bit of water and a whole lot of time can do!" The person with a biblical world view comes to a very different conclusion, "There's what a little bit of time and a whole bunch of water can do...when God sends a flood as He did in Noah's day."

General revelation isn't bad, just insufficient. That's why we needed a second kind of revelation...

2. Special Revelation

Q: What did God do in special revelation?

A: God communicated to man through acts and words so we could know Him properly. The climax of God's special revelation came when?

Jn 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word..."

Jn 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh..."

Jn 1:18 "No man has seen God...the Son has declared Him."

Q: Where can you look to find God's special revelation today?

A: God has given us a permanent, written record of it. The Scriptures!

Ps 19:7-11 "The Law of the LORD is perfect..."

Ps 119 *176 benefits of God's Revelation from A to Z!!

The Doctrine of the Scriptures

Allow me to pose some key questions. How do we know the Bible is true? Can we prove the Bible is God's Word? Where did we get the Bible? Why does the Bible have two testaments? Is there a irreconcilable conflict between Science and the Bible? Why are there so many translations? Are they all the Word of God? What about the apocryphal books?

When we answer these questions, we're addressing Bibliology, the Doctrine of the Scriptures.

Discuss: How do you know the Bible is true and is indeed the Word of God?

Let's address that question together...

"I know the Bible is the Word of God because..."

A. External Witnesses to the Bible's Validity

Here are four external witnesses...

1. Archaeology

Discuss: What are some examples of archaeological finds that support the Bible? Many! Read the journal *Biblical Archaeology*: The Dead Sea scrolls, the discovery of Caiaphas's tomb, etc.

2. Science

I encourage you to read the materials provided by *Answers in Genesis*. It is possible to be a "Christian scientist" and not leave your Christianity at the door of the laboratory! There are biblical answers for many of the so-called contradictions between science and the Bible, and Ken Ham and his team at AIG offer good resources to help.

Augustine said: "If we cannot reconcile a contradiction (as between a teaching of the Bible and a piece of secular evidence) we are to suspend judgment, not doubting either the Scripture, or the results of human observation and

reasoning, but believing that it is possible, given sufficient knowledge and understanding, to reconcile the apparent contradiction."

3. *Fulfilled Prophecy*

Discuss: Give some examples...

4. *Personal Experience*

Key: One of the greatest evidences to the authority of the Bible is that it does what it claims to do. It CHANGES LIVES! "*It changed my life!*"

Luther once said, "Talk about defending the Bible? You might as well talk about defending a lion. Let it loose. It will defend itself."

Q: What does the Bible say about itself? That's internal witness...

B. Internal Witnesses to the Bible's Validity

The question again, *how do we know the Bible is God's Word?* Here are four internal witnesses...

1. *The Witness of God's Word*

I know the Bible is the Word of God because it *claims to be such*. See 2 Pet 1:19-21

2. *The Witness of the Prophets*

The phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," appears over 2,000 times in the OT.

Heb 1:1 "God...spoke in time past by the prophets..."

Ps 119:89 "Forever thy Word is settled."

3. *The Witness of Jesus Christ*

Jesus testified that God's Word was and is true...

John 10:35 "and the scripture cannot be broken."

Matt 5:17-18 "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets..." (=OT)

Jn 17:17 "...Thy Word is true."

4. *The Witness of the Apostles*

II Tim 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed..."

Challenge: Since this book is unique, how should we respond to it?

First of all, we ought to thank God for His Written Revelation! We are a blessed people to have His Word.

But what specifically should we do with it? We must not view it merely as an academic textbook. We must take heed to the exhortation in Joshua 1:8: "This book...meditate in it day and night...do accordingly..."

Next Week:

Q: What specifically do we believe about the Bible? We'll examine some key terms relating to the Doctrine of the Scriptures.

The Bible is...

1. Inspired
2. Inerrant
3. Infallible
4. Authoritative
5. Sufficient

We'll also explore some other related issues:

1. Illumination of Scripture
2. Interpretation of Scripture
3. The Canonization of Scripture
4. Preservation of the Scriptures (Modern Translations)

[\[1\]](#) These unedited notes were prepared for use in a Wednesday evening, discussion-oriented Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church in Wheelersburg, Ohio. Although the notes are in draft form, I trust the seed thoughts contained will be used by our gracious God for your edification. –Pastor Brad Brandt