



The Essentials: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine
Class #1 – The Bible

I. **The Impact of the Bible**

- a. Let's look at what people in the past have said about the Bible:
- i. Napoleon – *“The Bible is no mere book, but a living creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it.”*
 - ii. Patrick Henry – *“The Bible is a book worth more than all the other books that were ever printed.”*
 - iii. George Washington – *“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”*
 - iv. James M. Boice – *“Can any of us experience anything in life of greater personal advantage to our souls than possession of the Holy Scriptures?”*
 - v. George MacDonald – *“The Bible is to me the most precious thing in the world just because it tells me the story of Jesus.”*
 - vi. Immanuel Kant – *“The Bible is an inexhaustible fountain of all truths. The existence of the Bible is the greatest blessing which humanity ever experienced.”*
 - vii. A.W. Tozer – *“The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts.”*

II. **Descriptions of the Bible**

- a. Let's look at a few ways the Bible describes itself to us (each description gives us a greater understanding of the value, power, nature, and work of the Bible):
- i. The Bible is described as a Hammer – *“Is not My word like a fire? Says the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.’”* Cf. **Jeremiah 23:29**
 - ii. The Bible is described as a Light – *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* Cf. **Psalm 119:105**
 - iii. The Bible is described as a Sword – *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* Cf. **Ephesians 6:17**
 - iv. The Bible is described as Milk – *“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”* Cf. **1 Peter 2:2**
 - v. The Bible is described as Seed – *“Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”* Cf. **1 Peter 1:23**
 - vi. The Bible is described as Water – *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”* Cf. **Ephesians 5:25-26**
 - vii. The Bible is described as Truth – *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”* Cf. **John 17:17**

III. Jesus' View of the Bible

- a. Let's look at some of the things Jesus declared and taught about the Bible:
 - i. Because Jesus is God, everything He says is true, therefore, everything Jesus declared or taught about the *Bible is true*
 - ii. As we are going to see, the Lord Jesus had a **high view** of the Bible
- b. Jesus declared that the Bible is Inspired by God
 - i. **Matthew 22:43a** – *“How then does David in the Spirit call Him, ‘Lord,’ saying: The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”*
 - ii. Jesus declared that David was inspired by the Spirit of God to write Psalm 110, thus, Jesus affirmed the inspiration of the Bible
- c. Jesus declared that the Bible is Reliable
 - i. **Luke 24:44** – *“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”*
 - ii. Jesus declared that everything written about Him in the Scriptures would be fulfilled, thus, Jesus affirmed the reliability of the Bible
- d. Jesus declared that the Bible is Inerrant
 - i. **John 17:17** – *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*
 - ii. Jesus declared that the Scriptures are truth, thus, Jesus affirmed the inerrancy of the Bible (inerrant=without error)
- e. Jesus declared that the Bible is Historically Accurate
 - i. **Matthew 10:15** – *“Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.”*
 - ii. **Matthew 12:40** – *“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*
 - iii. **Matthew 24:37-38** – *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.”*
 - iv. Jesus made reference to the city of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jonah, Noah and the flood, and many more events and figures of the Old Testament
 - v. Thus, Jesus affirmed the historical accuracy of the Bible (No Myth)
- f. Jesus declared that the Bible is Scientifically Accurate
 - i. **Mark 13:19** – *“For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.”*
 - ii. **Matthew 19:4-5** – *“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”*
 - iii. Jesus made reference to the creation of the universe and the creation of Adam and Eve, thus, Jesus affirmed the scientific accuracy of the Bible
 - iv. Even on highly disputed topics like the origin of the universe and the origin of mankind, the Lord Jesus insisted on the accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible (The Bible does not contradict Science)
 - v. The Lord Jesus believed in **Genesis 1:1** – *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*
- g. Jesus declared that the Bible would be Completed by His Apostles

- i. **John 14:26** – *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”*
- ii. **John 16:13** – *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”*
- iii. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would remind, teach, and guide the Apostles into all truth, thus, Jesus promised the New Testament
- h. Jesus declared that the Bible is All About Him
 - i. **John 5:39** – *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”*
 - ii. Jesus declared that the Scriptures were all about Him (testified of Him), thus, Jesus affirmed the unifying theme of the Bible, Himself

IV. The Nature of the Bible

- a. Let’s look at the character and nature of the Bible:
 - i. By the words *character* and *nature*, we are speaking of the structure, essence, and makeup of the Bible
 - ii. In other words, we want to look at “**what**” the Bible is
- b. The Bible is Inspired by God
 - i. This simply means the Bible is the Word of God (God-Breathed)
 - ii. **2 Timothy 3:16** – *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”*
 - iii. **2 Peter 1:21** – *“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”*
 - iv. The doctrine of inspiration can be defined as follows: The supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit who, through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human writers, invested the very words of the original 66 books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God without error in all that they teach, affirm, imply, or entail
 - v. In other words, inspiration is the act by which the Holy Spirit superintended over the writers of the Scriptures so that the result of their writings was God’s Word
 - vi. The Spirit of God directed the writers so that what was written in the Scriptures was what He intended to say
 - vii. This can be illustrated in the following way: A man goes to a department store in a shopping mall, and because he is in a hurry to get to the 2nd floor he walks up the escalator. Now, although he is walking, the escalator is carrying him along and bringing him to the 2nd floor. In the same way, although the writers of Scripture penned the words according to their educational abilities and writing styles, the Holy Spirit was carrying them along, ensuring the accuracy of all they were writing.
 - viii. Now, we believe in two-types of inspiration:
 - ix. First, Plenary Inspiration – inspiration extends to the entirety of Scripture, that is, all Scripture is inspired by God Cf. **2 Timothy 3:16**
 - x. Second, Verbal Inspiration – inspiration extends to the very words of the Scripture, that is, every word in Scripture is inspired by God Cf. **1 Corinthians 2:13**
- c. The Bible is Inerrant
 - i. This simply means the Bible is without error in its original autographs
 - ii. **Psalms 19:7a** – *“The law of the Lord is perfect...”*

- iii. **Proverbs 30:5** – “*Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him*”
- iv. The doctrine of inerrancy can be defined as follows: The Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with truth
- v. In other words, when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach
- vi. The Bible is perfect in everything it teaches – whether it is doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or any other discipline of knowledge
- vii. The argument for the inerrancy of Scriptures is as follows:
- viii. First, God cannot err – “*It is impossible for God to lie*” Cf. **Hebrews 6:18**
- ix. Second, the Bible is the Word of God – “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” Cf. **2 Timothy 3:16**
- x. Third, therefore, the Bible cannot err – “*Your word is truth*” Cf. **John 17:17**
- d. The Bible is Authoritative
 - i. This simply means the Bible is the final authority on every issue
 - ii. Because the Bible is the word of God (inspired by God), it carries with it the divine authority of God
 - iii. Therefore, by rejecting the commands and teachings of the Bible, in reality, you are rejecting the commands and teachings of God
 - iv. In the Scriptures, we find the phrase (or its equivalent), “*Thus says the LORD,*” approximately 3,800 times
 - v. God has spoken through His word, thus, His word is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and is supreme over all human teachings Cf. **2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 15:3-6**
 - vi. Man, creed, traditions, church, etc. are all subject to the authority of the Scriptures
 - vii. Oswald Chambers – “*Beware of reasoning about God’s Word – obey it*”
- e. The Bible is Unified
 - i. This simply means the Bible is a unified whole with one unifying message – there are no contradictions or inconsistencies within its pages
 - ii. The Bible has one doctrinal system, one moral standard, one plan of salvation, and one program of the ages (perfect harmony)
 - iii. In spite of great diversity, the Bible demonstrates perfect unity – Let’s explore this a little further:
 - iv. The Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors over a period of approximately 1600 years
 - v. Many of these authors had different backgrounds, different educational levels, and different occupations
 - vi. Moses was a political leader, Joshua was a military leader, David was a shepherd, Solomon was a king, Amos was a herdsman, Daniel was a prime minister, Matthew was a tax-collector, Luke was a medical physician, Paul was a rabbi, Peter and John were fisherman, etc.
 - vii. Moreover, the Bible was not only written by a diversity of authors, but it was also written in a diversity of languages in a diversity of locations
 - viii. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and small portions of Aramaic on three different continents – Europe, Asia, and Africa
 - ix. Moses probably wrote in the desert, David composed many of his Psalms in the countryside, Solomon contemplated his Proverbs in the royal courts, John wrote the Revelation on the Island of Patmos, Paul wrote five of his letters from a Roman prison, etc.

- x. Yet, in spite of all this diversity, the Bible shows perfect unity – from Genesis to Revelation the Bible has one central theme, “*Jesus*,” and one central message, “*Salvation from sin through Jesus Christ*” Cf. **Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Hebrews 10:7**
- f. The Bible is Indestructible
 - i. This simply means the Bible is permanent and enduring – it is not going anywhere
 - ii. **Psalm 119:89** – “*Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.*”
 - iii. **Matthew 24:35** – “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*”
 - iv. Think about this for a moment, only a small percentage of books last for more than 25 years, a much smaller percentage last for 100 years, and only a very smaller percentage last for 1,000 years
 - v. Yet, the Bible as a whole (Old and New Testament) has survived for over two-thousand years
 - vi. In spite of fierce persecution, opposition, suppression, harassment, hostility, and resistance the Bible is still standing strong
 - vii. Kings, emperors, dictators, and governments have all tried to wipe out the existence of the Bible, but it just keeps living on and changing lives
 - viii. The Bible has been banned, burned, and banished, but in spite of it all, it stands as the world’s all-time bestseller, the most widely distributed book in the world, and the most translated book in the world
 - ix. Ravi Zacharias – “*The Bible seems to have a sense of humor as it rises up to outlive its pallbearers*”
 - x. **Isaiah 40:8** – “*...the word of our God stands forever*”
- g. The Bible is Sacred
 - i. This simply means the Bible is set apart from all other books – it is holy, sacred, and blessed (in a class of its own)
 - ii. Since the beginning, the Scriptures were considered sacred and holy by the people of God
 - iii. **Psalm 138:2b** – “*...for you have magnified Your word above all Your name.*”
 - iv. **2 Timothy 3:15a** – “*And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures...*”
 - v. Because the Scriptures are holy and sacred, we must always maintain a deep reverence and respect for the word of God – “*...but on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.*” Cf. **Isaiah 66:2b**
- h. The Bible requires Illumination
 - i. This simply means the Bible cannot be properly understood outside the help of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. Because the Bible is divinely inspired, and in an entirely different dimension from other literature, it is necessary that man receives God-given help to understand His word
 - iii. **2 Corinthians 2:11** – “*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God*”
 - iv. Since only God knows the things of God, it is essential that the Spirit of God instructs the believers in the Word Cf. **John 14:26, 16:13**
 - v. My prayer for all of us is that not only would the Holy Spirit illuminate our minds to understand the word of God, but that He would also touch our hearts to long for the word and bend our wills to submit to the word

V. **The Blessings of the Bible**

- a. Let's look at a few ways the Bible will be a blessing to your life:
- i. The Bible will reveal to you the plan of salvation – ***“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”*** Cf. **Romans 10:9**
 - ii. The Bible will keep you from sin – ***“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin again You”*** Cf. **Psalm 119:11**
 - iii. The Bible will bring guidance to your life – ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”*** Cf. **Psalm 119:105**
 - iv. The Bible will bring comfort to your life – ***“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”*** Cf. **Romans 15:4**
 - v. The Bible will bring joy to your heart – ***“The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart...”*** Cf. **Psalm 19:8a**
 - vi. The Bible will bring growth to your Christian walk – ***“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”*** Cf. **1 Peter 2:2**
 - vii. The Bible will always point you to Jesus – ***“You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”*** Cf. **John 5:39**
- b. The longer you read the Bible the more you will like it, it will grow sweeter and sweeter, and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the Spirit of Christ!