

# BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINE

## Lesson 1

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE (BIBLIOLOGY)

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The doctrine of the Bible is the foundation for all other doctrines. Without the Bible we wouldn't have an authoritative and objective source of information to understand anything about God, His future plans, and His present will for mankind. In this lesson we will survey some important terms that relate to studying Bible doctrines. We will also examine how the books of the Bible are arranged and discuss some key questions related to the subject of the Bible.

- I. **Systematic Theology:** Systematic Theology seeks to combine all scriptural truth on any one doctrine and synthesize it into comprehensive statements. It looks at all the Biblical texts which address a certain doctrine and summarizes their contents. We all do this naturally. Everything you know about any Biblical doctrine is "your systematic theology" on that doctrine. Systematic theology is valuable because it helps us express what we believe and allows us to check what we have learned with what we are presently learning. If a contradiction is found, we can then investigate further.
  
- II. **Biblical Theology:**
  - A. **Historical Biblical Theology:** There are several definitions floating around for "biblical theology." They basically fall into two camps i.e., Historical and Exegetical. The Historical definition is the tracing of theology as it was revealed through history. It is theology looked at in a linear or cumulative fashion instead of a comprehensive manner. It traces different doctrines progressively as they grow and develop chronologically through the books of the Bible. Usually it is focused on the person and work of Christ.
  
  - B. **Exegetical:** Doing exegetical Biblical theology is when we extract doctrine from any given text of Scripture, it is not linear or cumulative, but seeks to discover the doctrine in any isolated text. So we might say that the theology found within any text of Scripture is its biblical theology. When we look at these individual bits of theology in a chronological fashion, we have "historical biblical theology" and when we look at all the individual bits together at one time from the whole Bible, we have systematic theology.
  
  - C. **Revelation**
    1. **Natural revelation** is how God has chosen to reveal Himself naturally through creation. Creation, our conscience, and God's law written in our hearts all bear witness that God exists and all reveal to us some of God's character and nature. Natural revelation is more subjective. Natural revelation is sufficient to condemn the unbeliever to hell but not enough to save him.

2. **Special revelation** is how God communicates to us by supernatural means. The Scriptures, visions, dreams, theophanies, and direct verbal dialogue with God are types of special revelation. Special revelation is more objective. It is not only able to condemn men to hell but also able to save them from sin through faith in Christ.
- D. **Inspiration** is a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. God has chosen to use human authors, their experiences, mind, and will to communicate His perfect truth. Inspiration is the process by which the Holy Spirit uses men to communicate divine revelation. Inspiration accepts the fact that both men and God were the authors of Scripture. The authors of Scripture were able to write the Word of God because of inspiration.
- E. **Illumination** is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer to help them understand the spiritual truth of God's Word. The Scriptures teach that unsaved men cannot understand God's Word because God's Word is spiritual truth and they are spiritually dead (1 Cor. 2:14). Scripture can only be spiritually discerned with the help of the Holy Spirit. This process or phenomena is called illumination. The Holy Spirit turns on the light of God's Word so we can understand it.
- F. **Inerrancy** claims that God's Word was given without error. The Scriptures were originally given with no mistakes and were the perfect Word of God. We know that small minor errors have crept into the Scriptures because those who have copied the Scriptures were not inspired. But these discrepancies constitute less than 2%, most of which are easy to fix, and none of them affect any doctrine of the Bible. So for all intents and purposes, we can say that the Bible is the Word of God and is without error and is our infallible rule of faith and practice.
- G. **Canon:** The word canon means rule or measuring rod. The canon is Scripture are the 66 books of the Bible, recognized by the church to be the inspired Word of God. These inspired books together comprise the Biblical canon.
- H. **Hermeneutics:** Hermeneutics is the science and art of biblical interpretation. Hermeneutics defines those criteria by which the Word of God can be objectively interpreted. Hermeneutics tries to determine what God and the human authors meant by what they wrote.
- I. **Exegesis vs. eisegesis:** Exegesis is the process of applying hermeneutics. Exegesis tries to determine what the passage is saying. Exegesis tries to get the meaning out of God's Word. Eisegesis imports meaning into the Word of God which God did not intend. Exegesis is 100% objective, eisegesis is 100% subjective.

- J. **Verbal plenary inspiration:** Verbal means the Bible was communicated in understandable language and that every word is inspired. Plenary means that the Bible is completely and fully inspired in every part and in every extent.
- K. **Paraphrases, translations, and transliterations:** A **paraphrase** is a loose translation of the Bible. It is not an attempt to match the original Greek or Hebrew with word for word accuracy but is an attempt to convey the general idea and focuses on readability. A **translation** is when the Bible is copied or written into another language in any form. A **transliteration** is when the sound of the original languages is communicated using the letters of another language, (e.g. the Bible does this with personal names).

### III. THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### A. Why the Books of the Old Testament Are out of Chronological Order

Often when reading or studying a book of the Bible one gets confused because the books don't seem to be in chronological order. Some books flow in chronological order but others do not, jumping around from one time period to another. The reason for this is that the books of the Bible are arranged topically, not chronologically. For instance, in the Old Testament there are the 5 books of the Law, 12 books of history, 5 books of poetry, 5 major prophets, and 12 minor prophets. Some books happen to fall into chronological order but others do not. It is helpful before studying any book to find out where it fits into the chronology of the Bible as a whole.

A good place to find introductory material before studying any book of the Bible is in books that are called "special introduction" books, like *Talk Through the Bible*, by Wilkinson and Boa. Also most study Bibles tell you what you need to know. My Favorite Study Bibles are NASB Study Bible, the MacArthur Study Bible NKJV, the Ryrie Study Bible, or the New Open Bible. You can also find good information in Bible dictionaries, Bible Encyclopedias, and in good commentaries.

#### B. Why the Bible Excludes Many Important Historical Events

One of the common mistakes people make when studying the Bible is approaching it like a history book. The Bible was not written to be a history book. It was written to be a "theology book" i.e., a book that tells us about God and His dealings with men. The Bible contains much history but many significant historical events are left out because God did not need them to communicate what He wanted men to know of Himself, His will for man, or His future plan for mankind.

For instance, one of the great battles in the Ancient Near East was the battle of Charchemesh. In that battle Babylon defeated Egypt and there was a change in

world power. Yet, the Bible only mentions it briefly in Jeremiah 46:2. On the other hand, there is the story of Ruth and Boaz. A seemingly insignificant love story between obscure people. Yet their romantic interlude is covered in the four chapters found in the book of Ruth. Their relationship was important because it explains the Messiah’s genealogy and explains where the Christ would eventually come from. The last two verses of the book read, “**and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David**” (Ruth 4:21-22). David’s line of course then produced the Messiah Jesus Christ. This is why the love story of Ruth and Boaz is found in the Bible.

C. **Old Testament Structure in the English Bible**

<b>Law, Pentateuch, Torah, or the five books of Moses</b>		<b>Twelve books of history or historical narrative</b>		<b>Twelve Minor Prophets</b>	
1	Genesis	1	Joshua	1	Hosea
2	Exodus	2	Judges	2	Joel
3	Leviticus	3	Ruth	3	Amos
4	Numbers	4	I Samuel	4	Obadiah
5	Deuteronomy	5	II Samuel	5	Jonah
<b>Five Poetical or Wisdom Books</b>		6	I Kings	6	Micah
1	Job	7	II Kings	7	Nahum
2	Psalms	8	I Chronicles	8	Habakkuk
3	Proverbs	9	II Chronicles	9	Zephaniah
4	Ecclesiastes	10	Ezra	10	Haggai
5	Song of Solomon	11	Nehemiah	11	Zechariah
<b>Five Major Prophets</b>		12	Esther	12	Malachi
1	Isaiah	3	Lamentations	5	Daniel
2	Jeremiah	4	Ezekiel		
<p><b><i>There are 39 books in the Old Testament divided topically by type or kind of book, not chronologically.</i></b> Some books of the same kind or type are in Chronological order, but the Old Testament as a whole is not a chronological collection of books.</p>					



## OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGICAL TIME CHART



					Psalms		Proverbs			
							Ecclesiastes			
							Song of Solomon			
Job	Leviticus	Deuteronomy	Ruth		I Chron.		II Chron.			Esther
↓	↓	↓	↓		↓		↓ ↓			↓
↓	↓	↓	↓		↓		↓ ↓			↓
<b>Genesis</b>	<b>Exodus Numbers</b>	<b>Joshua</b>	<b>Judges</b>	<b>I Sam.</b>	<b>II Sam.</b>	<b>I Kings</b>	<b>II Kings</b>	↔ <b>70 year captivity</b> ↔		<b>Ezra Neh.</b>
↓	↓	↓	↓			↓	↓ ↓			↓
5000 BC	1446	1445-1405	1405-1381	1373-1051	1051---1011	971-931		605 BC-----536		450 BC

SOME DATES ARE APPROXIMATIONS

★★★ It is important to understand that the Old Testament books in our English Bibles are set up topically not chronologically.

5 books of the **law**-----Genesis through Deuteronomy

12 **historical** books-----Joshua through Esther

5 **poetry** books-----Job through Song of Solomon

5 **major prophets**-----Isaiah through Daniel

12 **minor prophets**-----Hosea through Malachi

- ↓ ↓
- To Israel:**
- Hosea      Ezekiel
- Amos      Daniel
- Hag. Mal.
- Zech.
- ↓ ↓
- To Judah:**
- Habakkuk
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Joel
- Micah
- Zephaniah
- ↓ ↓
- About Assyria:**
- Jonah
- Nahum
- ↓ ↓
- About Edom:**
- Obadiah

### IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### A. How the Books of the New Testament Are Arranged

1. The New Testament, like the Old Testament, is also arranged topically and not chronologically. There are four gospels i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the “synoptic gospels” because they are similar in their description of the life and work of Christ. The structure of John’s gospel is different because his gospel is built around seven miracles of Jesus.
2. The book of Acts is unique because it leaves off where the gospel of Luke ends. It is often called the Acts of the Apostles but only Peter and Paul are main characters. It would better be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit since the Holy Spirit is seen working throughout the book to build the New Testament church.
3. Thirteen books of the New Testament were written by the Apostle Paul. They are called letters or epistles. They were written to churches or individuals. This is true for the book of Hebrews, whose author is unknown, and the letters of James, Peter, John and Jude.

4. The last book of the Bible is called the book of *Revelation* or the *Apocalypse of John*. The word apocalypse means *revealing* and hence the title *Revelation*. The book of *Revelation* is the only book in the New Testament that is considered a book of prophecy since it is almost entirely prophetic. The book of *Revelation* records the revealing of Christ at His second coming and the events leading up to the second coming.

**B. New Testament Books Arranged by Kind**

<b>Four Gospels</b>		<b>Thirteen letters by Paul</b>		7	Colossians
1	Matthew	1	Romans	8	I Thessalonians
2	Mark	2	I Corinthians	9	II Thessalonians
3	Luke	3	II Corinthians	10	I Timothy
4	John	4	Galatians	11	II Timothy
<b>Luke's Historical Narrative of the early church</b>		5	Ephesians	12	Titus
1	Acts	6	Philippians	13	Philemon
<b>One Letter with an Unknown Author</b>		<b>Two Letters by Peter</b>		<b>Three Letters by John</b>	
1	Hebrews	1	I Peter	1	I John
<b>One Letter by James</b>		2	II Peter	2	II John
1	James	<b>One Letter by Jude</b>		3	III John
<b><i>There are 27 books in the New Testament divided topically by type of book not chronology</i></b>		1	Jude	<b>One Book of Prophecy by John</b>	
				1	Revelation

**V. ERRORS CONCERNING BIBLIOLOGY**

- A. **Continuing Revelation** (God spoke to me, told me . . . , said to me . . . , gave to me a Word, gave me a revelation, gave me a vision, told me to disobey His Word, gave me a prophecy, etc.) (See Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19)

- B. **Neo-Orthodox views.** Some deny the miracles of the Bible. Others claim that the Bible is the work of men compiled by many authors over the centuries. Still others contend that the Bible contains God's Word but isn't God's Word until you have an experience or encounter with it (existentialism). The word "Neo-orthodox" means new orthodoxy. A good rule of thumb to remember is, "If it's new it isn't orthodox." **(See Gal. 1:6-9)**
- C. **Elitist Illumination.** Some false teachers or sects claim, "I (or we) am/are the only one/s who can interpret the Scriptures correctly." They claim, "You need me to tell you what the Bible means by what it says." These people are deceivers and should be avoided. **(See I Cor. 2:6-16; I John 2:27)**
- D. **Denial of Inerrancy, infallibility, or inspiration of the Bible i.e. saying the Bible has mistakes or is not God's Word.** This is erroneous because it makes God and the writers of Scripture out to be liars. The Scriptures claim that the Bible is God's perfect eternal truth. **(See Psa. 119:160; Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 3:14-17; II Pet. 1:20)**
- E. **Poor Hermeneutics (Bible Study Practices).** A perfect translation of the Bible will not help anyone understand the Bible if they practice poor methods of studying the Bible. Poor Bible study techniques undermine and distort what the Bible says. **(See Gal. 1:6-7; II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:14-18)**
- F. **Elevating a certain translation over and against the original languages.** A translation is only as good as it represents the original documents in their original language. The original languages always have priority and final say in what the text means.
- G. **Claiming that other religious writings, both ancient or modern, should be added to the Bible.** This is one of the signs of a cult. Cults often claim to have writings that are inspired like the Bible. If pressed, they usually claim their writings are more inspired and if there is any conflict with what the Bible says their new writings are to be preferred. Inspiration is an absolute quality. Something is either inspired or not but there are no degrees of inspiration.
- H. **Saying that "all truth is God's truth."** This is an error because it puts what men "say is true" on an equal plane with the inspired and infallible Word of God. There is a great qualitative difference between what men think is scientific truth and the inspired revelation of God. When we elevate the fallible opinions of men to the same place as Scripture, we undermine biblical authority.
- I. **Saying the Old Testament no longer applies.** This is an error because the Scriptures explicitly declare that all of God's Word is profitable and applicable to Christians today. **(See Mt. 5:17-19; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-11; II Tim. 3:16-17)**
- J. **Knowing the Bible but not applying it.** Some have studied the Bible, gone to church, gone to many Bible studies, read the Bible and memorized verses, yet they don't do what the Scriptures say. This is a great error for we will be judged according to our knowledge and what we did with it. Thomas Watson said, "**Knowledge without application is but a torch to light men to hell.**" **(See Lk. 12:47-48; II Pet. 2:20-22)**