

Fundamentals of the Faith

Lesson 1 – Why is it ALWAYS about the Bible with us?



A) Important Verses from the Bible about the Bible

Psalm 119:1-176 — cf. vs 105 "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*"

2 Timothy 3:16-17 — "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, fully equipped for every good work. All Scripture is inspired by God.*"

Hebrews 1:1 — "*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers by the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.*"

2 Peter 1:20 it says, "*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*"

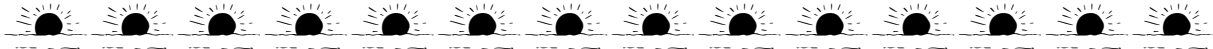
Romans 3:2 — "*First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*" (oracles = λόγιον = the words or utterances of God, the contents of the Mosaic law)

B) The Key Principle — *Sola Scriptura*

Simply put, *Sola Scriptura* means *Scripture Alone*. But what does that mean exactly? It was developed during the Protestant Reformation to protest against practices by the Church that were not in keeping with those of the Early Church as described in the Bible. This cry of protest for reform stands for the following ideas:

- 1) Scripture is the supreme authority over the church, and over every Christian.
- 2) Scripture is sufficient for faith and for practice — it has all we need to establish right from wrong doctrine, and right from wrong living. Thus, it is also sufficient for declaring the Gospel !
- 3) Scripture is clear. Everyone is capable of understanding the Bible. This does not mean we do not need the help of the Holy Spirit, nor of pastors and teachers, but everyone must have access to the text of God's Word in his/her own language so he/she can read it for him/herself.

Protestants believe that the Bible is fully true and that it is the ultimate authority for their lives individually and in the Church. In practice, this means that the Church will aim to make all its decisions and beliefs in light of what the Bible says.



C) Key Terms

Revelation — The act of revealing or communicating divine truth, i. e., something that is revealed by God to humans. The act of revealing is to make known. Revelation is when something that was hidden is made known by God Himself. Revelation comes from God and reveals something about God to man.

There are two types of revelation:

- a) **General** (or indirect) revelation — called 'general' or 'indirect' because it is available to everyone. Revelation which is available to all persons at all times, particularly through the physical universe, history, and the make up of human nature

Example: Creation

- b) **Special** (or direct) revelation — called 'direct' because it is revelation directly to an individual or a group. God's manifestation of Himself at particular times and places through particular events.

Example: the Exodus, Isaiah's vision, Christ Himself, the way God is revealed through a dream, a vision, a miracle, an experience, or through prophecy, and in particular, The Scriptures.

- c) The Scriptures are regarded as the result of *special revelation*.

Inspiration — *Biblical inspiration* is the doctrine that the human writers of the Bible were led by God with the result that their writings are the word of God. This implies that God is the source of what is recorded in the Scriptures. God the Holy Spirit, used human authors to write in the Bible what He revealed. Since God is the ultimate author of the Scriptures, the books of the Bible manifest and teach the truths of the faith accurately and without error.

Plenary Inspiration — the view that all of Scripture, not simply certain books or portions of books, is inspired, i.e., the act of the Holy Spirit upon the Biblical writers which ensured that what they wrote is the Word of God.

Inerrancy — the view that when all the facts are known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to ethics, or to the social, physical or life sciences

Illumination — *Biblical illumination* is the process by which the Holy Spirit helps a person to understand the truth of God's Word. Inspiration involves how God has revealed spiritual truth; illumination involves our understanding of spiritual truth and involves both the Scriptures and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Illumination involves



how the Spirit of God helps us understand the truth of God's Word. It is the work of the Holy Spirit giving understanding when the Scripture is heard or read.

Interpretation — Correct *Biblical Interpretation* involves the study of spiritual truth and then being able to apply it, and to explain it to others. We call the process of interpretation *hermeneutics*. There are essential steps to practicing *biblical interpretation* correctly:

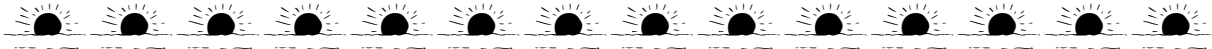
- 1) Identify the kind of literature the text is for insight into its meaning.
- 2) Consider the context of the passage for a better understanding of its meaning.
- 3) Read the text for its plain and obvious meaning.
- 4) Discern the writer's intentions when he wrote the text.
- 5) Look carefully at the language of the text for what it reveals about its meaning.
- 6) Notice the various theological themes in the text.
- 7) Always take a God-centered perspective for interpreting your text.

Hermeneutics — The word *hermeneutics* means the interpretation of language, whether written or spoken. In *Biblical Hermeneutics*, the principle of *Literal Interpretation of Scripture* is our aim. A biblical text is to be interpreted according to the "plain meaning" conveyed by its grammatical construction and its historical context.

Hermeneutics is the science of Biblical interpretation, according to its correct meaning, taking into account grammar, usage, cultural and historical context, etc.

There are key principles to correct *biblical hermeneutics*:

- 1) Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.
- 2) The texts of Scripture must be interpreted in context (both the immediate context & the broad context).
- 3) No text of Scripture (properly interpreted in its context) will contradict another text of Scripture. When contradictions seem to exist, it is the task of the interpreter to pursue the seeming contradiction until he/she is able to resolve it. He/she must never seek to do so by ignoring or denying any part of the truth that is revealed in Scripture.
- 4) We must derive theological doctrine from passages that deal with a particular doctrine explicitly. We must never use implicit teaching to contradict explicit teaching. We must never use implications from historical passages to contradict explicit teachings from doctrinal passages.
- 5) We may understand what a passage means only when we approach it from the author's perspective. A text cannot mean something today that it did not mean when it was written originally.



Exegesis — Exegesis refers to the critical explanation or interpretation of the Scriptures. Exegesis is the legitimate interpretation which “reads out of” the text what the original author meant to convey. It is the obtaining of the meaning of a passage by drawing the meaning out from rather than reading it into the text.

It takes into account

- a) **The Context of the text** — the historical situation, the writer and his audience, the topic addressed, etc. It also takes into account the immediate context (sentence, paragraph, chapter, book...) as well as the context of the passage within all of Scripture.
- b) **The Elements of the Original Language** — the grammar, parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc), figures of speech (idioms), verb tenses and forms, articles, pronouns, etc. It takes into account the plain meaning of the text in the original language.

Eisegesis — Eisegesis is the process of interpreting text in such a way as to introduce one's own presuppositions, agendas or biases. It is commonly referred to as *reading into the text*, such as a commentator "importing" or "drawing in" his/her own subjective interpretations into the text, unsupported by the text itself. Eisegesis is reading into the text what the interpreter wishes to find or thinks he finds there. It expresses the reader's own subjective ideas, not the meaning which is in the text. the obtaining of the meaning of a passage by reading meaning into rather than drawing it out from the text.

Canon — the collection of books deemed authoritative by the Church, which was established early on but articulated clearly at councils in the 300's AD

D) Questions for Discussion

- 1) Under the Old Covenant, and in the old days, how did God speak to His people? (Note that Hebrews 1:1 says, “...in many portions and in many ways.” — What does the author mean by “portions”? What does he mean by “ways”?) Can you think of specific stories about how God revealed Himself to the people?

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- 2) How has God spoken to us in these “*Last Days*”? What has changed about how God communicates with His people? Why have things changed?

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3) How does He speak to us today? How do you know? What are some examples of your idea in Scripture?

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4) Why does it matter that we affirm the key principle *Sola Scriptura*? What does it matter to our everyday lives?

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5) Why does it matter that we practice exegesis rather than eisegesis? Give some examples to support your thoughts.

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6) What is the role of the Holy Spirit in giving us the Scriptures? How did that happen? How does the Holy Spirit help us today? How do you know?

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7) What questions do you have about the interpretation of Scripture, or its inspiration, revelation, illumination, about hermeneutics, exegesis and/or eisegesis? Send your questions to Don this week by email at dmdoehla@gmail.com We will use your questions for our discussion next week.

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