

An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics

Sermon Notes from a 5 Part Series

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Introduction

This set includes sermon notes from five messages delivered some years ago regarding the subject of Biblical Hermeneutics (interpretation). It is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to set out a series of introductory principles, and to analyze a number of prevalent errors that affect contemporary Christianity.

Blessings,

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I. Introduction

A. Hermeneutics 101

1. A **Greek** word: from...

- a. "hermeneuein" - to **interpret**
- b. "hermeneutikos" - one skilled in interpretation

2. **Hermeneutics** - the **study** of **Interpretation**

3. A study of the **greatest importance** - the **foundational** study

- a. Why? Before we can make a single statement about doctrine or practice from the Word, we must know **HOW** to understand its teachings

b. **Minor error** in method = false teaching of **grand proportions**

- i. Rob the Xtn of **comfort** and **instruction** of biblical **truth**
- ii. Plunge others into **darkness** of damnable **heresy** and fatal **sin**

*2Pet. 3:15-16 [Peter says] [O]ur beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you; ...[And in his letters] are some things which are **hard to understand**, which the uneducated and unstable **twist to their own destruction, as they do also the other scriptures.***

c. This study **not** merely **academic** - **Moral Issue**

*James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you be teachers, knowing that we shall receive the **stricter judgment.***

*Deut. 18:20 [T]he prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak...even that prophet shall **die.***

4. Our **Goal** - A Vital One

- a. To **understand** the rules of interpretation
- b. To see them as **derived** from Scripture itself (not seeking an artificially imposed set of laws)
- c. To gain **practical experience** in discerning correct and incorrect interpretive practice

B. A **Preceding Question** Presents Itself

*John 18:37-38 So Pilate said to [Jesus], 'Are you a king then?' And Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. I was born for this purpose, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.' So Pilate said to him, '**What is truth?**'*

1. **Reason**

- a. **Think!** Use our minds and all the powers of the mind
 - i. Many **great** and **weighty questions**: Of life's meaning, etc.
 - ii. Ponder, Weigh, Evaluate
 - iii. Arrive at Truth

b. The great **philosophical tradition**

- i. Ancient **Greece**: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- ii. Modern **Europe**: Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard

c. **Problem** - **Great Contradiction**

- i. Freewill vs. Fatalism

- ii. Stoic vs. Epicurean
- iii. Materialist vs. Immaterialist (Platonic vs. Aristotelian)

d. **No way to judge** which is true!

1Cor. 3:20 ... 'The Lord knows the **thoughts** of the **wise**, that they are **vain**.'

1Cor. 1:21 ...the **world** by [its] **wisdom did not know God**....

2. Mysticism

a. **Reason** is not the answer, it is the **problem**!

i. **Thinking blocks** true enlightenment; **Truth experienced**, not discovered

ii. **Stop** thinking! **Clear** your mind! Achieve **emptiness**!

iii. Harmony/**Oneness** with the universe = **Understanding**

b. The great **Eastern and Native** traditions

i. Zen/Meditation

ii. Altered states of consciousness (hallucinogenic drugs)

c. **Problem - Truth** turns out to be **subjective experience**, not propositional

i. How do you **know** when you've **reached** it?

ii. What about the **different schools** and gurus, each proclaiming his own path as THE way? (Same as Philosophy, thought removed)

3. Science

a. **Facts! Proofs!**

i. Observations -> Hypothesis -> Careful, controlled testing

ii. Theory -> Publication -> Review -> Replication

iii. Result: Limited conclusions based on available evidence

b. The Great Men of Science

i. Newton to Einstein; Mendel to Feynman

c. **Problem - Limited** to what is **observable** and **testable**

i. Where is God? What pleases him? Do men have souls? What is their condition after death? What is right and wrong?

d. **Problem 2** - Always **theory**, never absolute truth

"Humans may crave absolute certainty; they may aspire to it; they may pretend ... to have attained it. But the history of science...teaches that the *most* we can hope for is successive improvement in our understanding, learning from our mistakes,...but with the proviso that *absolute certainty will always evade us. We will always be mired in error.*" Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World*, p. 28

4. Occult

a. The **mysterious powers** of the universe give us answers

i. Science looking in all the wrong places

ii. Truth there for those who believe - the forces and powers of the universe will reveal it to us, if we follow the ancient methods

b. The **Black Arts** - Necromancers and witches; seers and psychics; tarot, ouija, horoscope (found in every culture)

c. **Problem**: Which method is true?

i. One practitioner denounces another as fraudulent

ii. Historic Failure - only the most credulous

Is. 47:13-14 Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; **they shall not deliver themselves** from the power of the flame...

5. Tradition

a. That which has been **believed of old**, stood the **test of time**

i. The **wisdom** of our **elders**, and our fathers

ii. Brings **stability** and **order**

b. **Problem** - Which **tradition** will you choose? (1950's, 1850's, 1350's; Europe, Africa) and, **What guarantee** that it is right?

i. **Human sacrifice** (Aztec)

ii. **Ancestor worship** and Ritual **suicide** for honor (Japan)

iii. **Burying the living** with the dead (Egypt)

iv. Burning men's wives at their husbands' funerals (Indian, Norse)

c. History...can teach us nothing....

C. How then do we **know Truth**?

1. **What** is the **truth**? **God** is the **truth**.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, 'I am ... the **truth**'

2. **Where** do we **learn** of Who **God** is? In His **revelation** of **Himself**.

Eph. 1:17 [praying] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ... may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: so that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe

3. **Where** has God **revealed Himself**?

a. In **Creation**?

Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhood; so that they are without excuse...

i. His **Unity**? **Trinity**? **Mercy**? **Omniscience**? **Omnipresence**?

ii. That there **is a God**, Yes. That He is **powerful**, Yes.

iii. That **man** is in **sin**? That the Lord of Heaven has **provided** his only begotten **Son**? That there is a **certain** and final **judgment**?

b. In **Conscience**?

Rom. 2:15 Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another...

- i. Is not **conscience** often **confused**?
 - (a). Does it **reveal** the way in which God is to be **worshipped**?
 - (b). Does it **reveal** the true **work** of God, to **believe** on Him whom He has sent?
 - (c). Does it **reveal** to you that which is **true** of God and that which is a **lie** invented by man?
- ii. A **bare look** at the **law**, **Yes**. A **basic system** of morality that largely corresponds to God's nature, **Yes**. More, No!

c. His **Word!**

*John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy **word** is **truth**.*

II. The **First Rule** of **Biblical Hermeneutics** - **Sola Scriptura**

A. **Scripture Only**

1. **Definition** - "Scripture alone reveals to us doctrine and duty, truth and law, what we must believe and what we must do. Scripture alone is instructive (in these things). Scripture alone is authoritative (in these things)."
2. This is the **example** set forth in the Bible
 - a. By what **standard** were the **prophets** of old **judged**?
*Is. 8:20 To the **law** and to the **testimony**: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*
 - b. To what **source** did **Jesus** direct men to **learn** about **Him**?
*John 5:39 Search the **scriptures**...these are they which testify of me.*
 - c. From what **source** did **Jesus teach** of Himself?
*Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the **scriptures** the things concerning himself.*
 - d. Of what did **Jesus give** them **understanding**?
*Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the **scriptures***
 - e. From what **source** did **Paul preach** his Gospel?
*Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the **scriptures***
 - f. From what **source** did the **disciples judge** Paul's teaching?
*Acts 17:11 [The Bereans] ...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the **scriptures** daily, to see whether the things [that Paul preached] were true.*
 - g. **What** is able to make you **wise** unto **salvation**?
*2Tim. 3:15 ...the holy **scriptures**...*
 - h. From **where** do we **receive hope**?
*Rom. 15:4 ...that through patience and comfort of the **scriptures**...*

j. **Why** do men make **errors** about **God**?

Matt. 22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the **scriptures**...

3. This is the **explicit claim** of **Scripture** itself

2Tim. 3:16-17 All **scripture** God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: in order that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

a. Main point **not** inspiration

b. **Point:** Inspired Scripture is **comprehensive** in its instructional nature

- i. Doctrine/Correction - What we must **believe** concerning God
- ii. Reproof/Instruction in righteousness - What God **requires** of man

c. **Point:** Inspired Scripture is **sufficient** in its content (**triple** emphasis)

i. What does '**complete**' mean?

- (1) If something is **complete**, do you need **more**?
- (2) **Complete** = **every** thing **necessary**
- (3) Puzzle minus one piece? NO
- (4) Skeleton minus one bone? NO

ii. '**Thoroughly** equipped' not **partially (wilderness guide)**

iii. '**Every** good work' not **some**

d. **Questions:**

- i. Is there a good work **missing** from Scripture?
- ii. Is there a sin we must **beware** of which he has not warned us?
- iii. Is there something God has **forgotten** to tell us regarding what pleases Him?
- iv. Is there something that you would like to **add** to what He has said?
- v. Is He not **holy** enough for you?

B. Application!

Is. 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...'

Is. 46:5 To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike?

Job 40:8-14 Would you indeed annul my judgment? Would you condemn me, that you may be justified? Do you have an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like his? Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Disperse the rage of your wrath: look on everyone who is proud, and humble him. Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; bind their faces in hidden darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you.

1. Is **anyone** here **God**?

- a. If you are, then **reveal** to us now the **truth**
- b. **Command** us what we ought to **do** to **please** you

- c. **Save** our **souls** from death and hell
- d. **Teach us** of these new **commands** that are not in the Word!
- e. **Instruct us** in these new doctrines which we must know to serve you

2. Is **anyone** here **God**?

- a. Then why do we **blaspheme** Him by **adding** to his word such as we see fit.
- b. Why do we **offend** him and become a **stench** in His nostrils by teaching that he requires that which he has **never** commanded.

Matt. 15:9 But in vain do [you] worship [God], teaching for doctrines the **commandments of men**.

3. How **dare** a man/woman **presume** to **teach** in God's name that which God has not **spoken**.

How **dare** a man/woman **presume** to **require** in God's name that which God has not **commanded**.

- a. A **monstrous** crime. An **infamous** blasphemy. A **treasonous** attack upon His royal throne.
- b. A **high-handed transgression** of the very first of all the commandments: "*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*"
 - i. We make ourselves **equal** to God.
 - ii. We call **our** desires and dislikes His.
 - iii. We **cloud** His revelation with **our** preferences, as if they were His commands.
 - iv. We **darken** His counsel with what seems **good to us**, as if He ought to take **counsel** from our **spirits**.

4. If **God** is **God**...

- a. If He **alone** is **all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful; most holy, most righteous; the only wise God**...
- b. Then **we** can learn **only** from **Him** that which is **true**; That which **pleases** Him. And this, He has **revealed** to us in His **Word**.
- c. The **first** of **ALL** rules: **Sola Scriptura! Scripture Alone! BEWARE** if you would **challenge** it!

Rev. 22:18-19 *For I testify to every person that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life...*

I. Introduction

A. Introduction

1. Israel's Greatest Sin - Idolatry

a. Outright departure

Jer. 32:34-35 [T]hey set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech...

b. **Alteration** of the worship of the true God to **fit their own conceptions** about what God ought to be like

i. From **Aaron's** molten **calf**...to...**leaven** of the **Scribes** and the **Pharisees**

ii. 'We worship the Lord' they would say; **but**, their **Lord** was like a "**wax nose**" (Calvin)

2. Not just Israel's problem

a. All **mankind** are **born idolaters**; no exception to the rule of depravity

i. One man is **strict**; hard and **without mercy**. His God is a God of **rules** and **laws**. Keep them and live. Fail them and die. He is full of **pride** and arrogant **self-justification**.

ii. Another is a **lover** of **pleasure**; **immersed** in the things of the **world**. His God has **no rules** and no judgments. **Anything goes** and all will be well in the end.

iii. Legalist and Libertine; Fatalist and Freewillier; Atheist and Polytheist - **All spring from one root:**

Acts 7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

3. Only **one way** to **know** the **true God** = **revelation** of **Himself** in His **word**

a. Must **put away** all **preconceptions**, because...

b. One thing is certain - **God is different from you**

i. So, we must be **fully** and **completely satisfied** in His revelation of Himself, and...

ii. We must by no means **corrupt** that **revelation** to fit Him to what **we think** He **ought** to be like

4. **Warning:**

a. **Do not make** a God in **your own image**, and after your own **likeness**

b. **Do not rejoice** in this **work** of your own **hands**

c. Or else: "Depart from me you workers of iniquity, I never knew you...."

B. Overview

1. Back at this **same** doctrine: **Sola Scriptura**

2. Now, **Brass tacks**; an **explicit** understanding; "What we **mean**, and what we **don't mean**"

II. Sola Scriptura (Part II)

A. **Definitions** - **What** do we **mean** by this phrase, "**Scripture Alone**"?

1. **Ask audience** for answer...

2. We summarized: "Scripture **alone** reveals **doctrine** and **duty**, truth and law, belief and obligation"

3. Historic Church: **Westminster Shorter Catechism** (1648)

Q.3 *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to **believe** concerning God, and what **duty** God requires of man.

4. We have a **skeleton** - we need some **flesh** and **muscle**

B. Q. "Is **all possible knowledge** contained in Scripture?" A. "No"

1. Amidst the great stories of God's **dealings** with his ancient people Israel; their **apostasies**, their **victories**, their **kings** and **priests**, you will **not** find...

- a. **Capital** of Pennsylvania
- b. **Dates** of the reign of **Henry VI** of England
- c. Identity of the **first European** to cross the Atlantic
- d. Neither **Magna Carta**, nor the **UN Charter**

2. Sandwiched between the **warnings** and **pleadings** of Jeremiah, and the **messianic promises** of Isaiah, between Ezekiel's new **temple** and Daniel's 10 **kings**, you will **not** find...

- a. **Chemical formula** for table **salt**
- b. **Description** of the **circulatory** system
- c. **Formula** for the **area** of a **triangle**
- d. The **actions** of **antibodies** on **antigens**
- e. The proper **method** to administer **CPR**
- e. Not even, the lowly **multiplication table**

3. Distributed through the pages of the NT, along with **Paul's** profound expositions of the **Gospel** and **true Xtn holiness**; and **John's** heavenly **revelations** of the age to come, and the **necessity** of **love**, you will **not** find...

- a. Practical information on how to **tan** leather
- b. Miss Manners rules on setting a **tea service**; and what **colors** to wear in each **season** so as not to offend the fashionable sensibilities of the 1950's woman
- c. Neither a **textbook** on **harmony** and **rhythm** in Classical music; nor the proper **principles** of **light** and **color** distribution in Classicist painting

4. In fact, virtually **all** of...

- a. the world's **historical** facts;
- b. the great **scientific** principles and discoveries;
- c. the time-honored **customs** and traditions;
- d. the achievements of art, music, and other aesthetic pursuits;
- e. In short - virtually the **whole accumulated body** of **knowledge** that belongs to **mankind**....is **strikingly absent** from the hallowed pages of Holy Scripture.

5. Why?

- a. Obtaining **advanced degree** in **military history** of **Latin America** - "*The eyes of [his] understanding being enlightened; that [he] may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Eph 1:18)*"?
- b. Mastering the **manners** of a **gentleman** or **lady** as set forth in the etiquette books - found their hearts "*establish[ed] unblamable in holiness before God even*

our Father (1Th 3:13)"

c. When Paul said, "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more (1Th 4:1)", was he **referring to instructions** about the **correct color** to wear in each season, and the **forbidding of sideburns and layered haircuts**?

d. Has any child of God, for **writing music** with contemporary **harmonies**; or **failing** to follow **Itten's theory** of the **seasonal palette** in **dress colors**, found themselves **convicted of sin**, and "enduring **chastening**" from God, and thus "*partaking of his holiness...and yielding the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb 12)*"?

e. **Reason**: By **definition**, **immaterial** to the **great purposes** of the word of God.

- i. Not **found** there, because not **needed** there.
- ii. **No part** of the **revelation** of God or our **service** to him.
- iii. Will **not** make "the man of God complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

6. What is the **Content** of this **Scripture** (on which we solely rely)?

a. **Spiritual Truth**:

- i. Is there a **God**? **Who** or what is **He**? What is His **moral character**?
- ii. What is **man**? How did he **come** into **being**? What is his **moral condition**?
- iii. Why is there **hate** and **evil** in the world? Why does man seek to **hurt** and **kill** and **destroy**? Where did this thing **come from**?
- iv. What is the **relationship** between **God** and this **Evil**? Between **God** and **Man**?
- v. Is there **meaning** or **purpose** in **life**? Is there a **future**? Is there **justice**? Is there any **hope** for **man's condition**? Has God left us to **perish** in this state of **sin** and **misery**?

b. **Moral Law**

- i. Does God **care** how we **live**? If so, How ought man to live in order to **please God**?
- ii. Is there such a thing as **sin**? How is **sin** to be **avoided**? What is true **freedom** and **liberty**?
- iii. Is there a way of **life** that will **destroy** a man? Are there **consequences** to our **actions**? What way will tend towards **life** and **happiness**? Will God **judge sin**?
- iv. Why do those who live **wickedly prosper**, while those who follow these **righteous** paths **suffer**?
- v. How ought I to **behave** in my **relationships**: towards my **wife/husband**, **children**, **employer** or **employees**, to those I meet on the **street**?
- vi. What is the purpose of **prosperity**? Of **poverty**? How can I live in **contentedness** in **either** condition? What **obligation** do I have towards my **fellow human** being? Fellow **Christian**?

C. Q. "What knowledge, then, is contained in Scripture?"

1. A. "All that is necessary for us to know of **who** God is, and **how** to **live fully** unto Him"

2. Return to 2Tim3:16-17

2Tim. 3:16-17 All scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for [re]proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: in order that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

3. **Didaskalia**

a. "Doctrines," or "teaching"

b. 21 uses in NT; 19 by Paul; 15 in Pastoral Epistles

c. What is the **content** of this **teaching**? **Book of Romans** as **summary**

i. 1-3(3): Man's **moral condition**; **inability** to be saved by righteous works

ii. 4-5(2): **Justification** by **faith**

iii. 6-8.5(2.5): **Nature** and **method** of **sanctification**

iv. 8.5-11(3.5): God's **sovereign predestination** and **foreordination** of all things; its implications

v. 12-15(4): Broad **principles** of **Christian living** (in the world at large; in the church; towards the civil authorities), **summarized** in this **one**, **blessedly simple thing**

Rom. 13:8 ...[L]ove one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law.

4. **Elengchos**

a. **Proof, evidence, verification**

b. "Evidence or proof normally based on an argument or discussion, as to the truth or reality of something."

c. **Paul's practice of preaching** the Gospel

Acts 17:1-3 [In Thessalonica]...Paul, as his manner was, went in to [the synagogue], and reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, [CONTENT] that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Acts 18:1,4 Paul...came to Corinth....and reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks

Acts 18:18,19 And Paul...came to Ephesus, ...[and] reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 24:24-25 [Before Felix]...Paul...reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come

d. **Paul did not merely proclaim**

i. He disputed, he reasoned, he debated, he dialogued - **but (CRUCIAL POINT)** his **evidence**, his **proof**, the basis for his assertions, was the **Word of God** itself

5. **Epanorthosin**

a. **Correcting faults**, restoration to an **upright state** of one who has fallen

b. Read **Galatians**; Read 1st **Corinthians**; Read **Colossians**; **Paul** before **Peter**; **Nathan** before **David**

c. Men fall into **sin** and **error** - They are **corrected** by what? By these great

truths, by the **Scriptures** themselves, by the **Gospel** and its **applications** and **implications**; by the **Law** and its **interpretations**

6. **Paideian**

- a. "The **whole training** and **education** of **children** (which relates to the cultivation of the mind and the morals, and employs for this purpose commands, admonitions, reproofs, and punishments"
- b. We are God's children: thus, for us, he has given his word for **Instruction** (to form right habits of behavior); **Discipline** (train in accordance with proper rules of conduct); **Punishment** (for the purpose of changing behavior)
- c. **Exemplified** by the **NT** in fulfillment of Jesus commandment: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

7. **Common statement:** "The **Bible** has the **answer?**" **No!**

- a. This a **falsehood**. **Very many things** to which the Bible does **not** have the **answer**.
- b. Correction: "The Bible has the **questions**, *and*, the **answers** to those questions!"
- c. In **permissive society**, tempting to say - **Everything** is a **moral issue**. **Wrong**. We **must not** come to the Bible **demanding** an **answer**; for the very answer may be that the **question** we are **asking** is **irrelevant** to the truth of who God is and our necessary obedience to Him.
- d. This **approach** - of **determining** an issues' **morality apart** from the **Bible**, then **demanding** an **answer** - leads to **Scripture twisting**, **Phariseeism**; and **heresy** and **bondage**
- e. Furthermore: even when an issue is **determined** to be **moral**, we must **accept** the **nature** of God's **answer** - a **general principle** perhaps. To do otherwise, **same result**.

8. The **Bible** sets the **questions**; the **answers**; and even the **priority** of the **questions**

- a. That is, even the **legitimate instruction** of the Bible is given an **order** and **priority**
 - i. **Failure to recognize** the **biblical priority** of true **biblical issues** = **necessarily produce** an **unbalanced** and **aberrant** Xty (this is the beginning of almost every damnable heresy and sectarian split - not an error, but an **imbalance** in priority)
- b. **Failure to recognize** that the **Bible** sets the **questions/answers**) = **Downward spiral** into **endless Pharisaical casuistry**

III. **Actual Questions:**

- A. Are **buttons** on clothing lawful, or a **sign** of **pride** to be avoided by the use of hooks and eyes?
- B. Must **socks** be **darker** than **slacks**? Or are **slacks** themselves a sign of **conformity** to the world's **fashions**, to be avoided by the use of church-approved pants?
- C. May a **girl** wear **more** than **one** set of **ear-rings**, or is this **proof** of a **self-acceptance problem**? Or is wearing **ear-rings** at all a **mark** of **immodesty** and **sinful adornment** worn to ensnare men to lust?
- D. Must we only drive **black automobiles**? Or are **automobiles** themselves **unlawful**?
- E. Is living in the **city** **sinful**, and a sign of **worldliness**? Or is not rather living in the **country** an **abandonment** of **evangelistic responsibilities**?

F. Is **cleanliness** not merely “**next to godliness**”, but a **part** of it, and one of the most **important evidences of godly living**? Or is not **cleanliness** an obsession with the **outward**, to be avoided for the sake of **spiritual gain**?

G. Must pants which have **belt loops** be worn with **belts**? Or is it perhaps that **belts** themselves are a **sign of pride**, so we must wear pants that do **not require** belts?

H. Shall we **breast-feed on demand**? Or is not such a course merely **coddling** the **sinful self-interest** of the little **viper**, and **schedule-feeding** the **only godly** course?

J. Is **music in 7/8 time demonic** and **contrary** to God’s **creation order**? Or is it not true that the very **learning and playing of musical instruments** is itself a sign of **sensuality, vanity** and **pursuit of the world**?

K. Should a woman’s **headcovering** be made of **lace**; or a plain **cloth**; or will a **hat** suffice? What should be done to a woman who **refuses** to wear a covering chosen by the **church**?

L. Is choosing **colors** which **enhance** your skin tone, and a **hairstyle** which complements your **face**, a **fundamental** part of “**standing alone**” for God in the face of a **degenerate culture**? Or is not **wearing patterned or colored** clothing itself a sign of **worldliness**, so that women ought to wear only **one, dark** colored dress, **approved** by the **elders** of the church?

M. Is men’s **beard-wearing** a sign of **rebellion**, a mark of a **desire** to affiliate with **radical, god-hating** elements of society? Or, is not **clean-shavenness effeminacy**, and a mark of a desire to **escape** God’s **order**, and the **way** in which he **created** men?

N. Could multiply this list **forever!**

1. **Each** of these an **actual position** set forth by a major **denominations**, or **ministries, or groups of professing Xtns**; either today, or in the annals of history.

2. Each of these considered an **important moral issue** worthy of **intense discussion** and study; and a matter over which to **condemn** others who fail to see the **vital** importance of the **pet** question.

3. **End of this road - Failure to recognize** one’s own **pathetic position!**

a. A **devastating abandonment** of **biblical priorities**

b. A **soul-corrupting earthly-mindedness**; an **obsession** with **outward minutiae** to rival the **greatest scribe**; and the **resulting elevation** of one’s own **commandments** to the place of, and over. **God’s**

c. Men stand outside **picking** in the **trash**, when if they raise their **eyes** they would see a **great field of diamonds! Truths so precious, so holy, so God-honoring**, that men have **spilt** their **blood** for them! The true **path of life!** The true **way of holiness**

d. How can we **offend** God by preferring such **trifles** to His finest **gifts**? How can we mock **Him** by **portraying** Him as so **low** and **vain** as to care whether one wears **socks** darker than one’s **slacks**?

e. A **battle** for **souls** rages! Men **perish** for lack of **knowledge!** We **joust** with **windmills**, while the **Saracen** takes the **city!** We **offer** the **drowning** man **water** and the **starving** man **fine clothes!**

4. Only **one escape** from the **Alcatraz** of **sensuality...**

a. ...One **way** off the **trash heap** of **earthly-mindedness**

b. ...One **path** through the **maze** of **self-righteousness**

c. ...One **end** to the legalist’s **vain crusade**

d. **Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone**

i. The **Bible** - The **Questions**

ii. The **Bible** - The **Answers**

iii. The **Bible** - The **Priorities**

iv. The **Bible**, and the **Bible ONLY!**

I. The **Rationality** of **God**

Is. 1:18 Come now, and let us **reason together**, says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

A. "Our God is a **Rational** God"

1. **Rational = Sane**

- a. Not a **madman**; Not **confused**, **capricious**, or "**out of control**"
- b. Not **random**, **erratic**, or **eccentric** in His actions
- c. Not **inconsistent**, **contradictory**, or **changeable** ("wishy-washy")

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the **Father** of lights, with whom there is **no variableness**, neither **shadow of turning**.

- d. Big **surprise** to **Pagans**!

2. **Rational = Thinking**

- a. God **thinks**!

"But they know not the **thoughts** of the **LORD** (*Mic. 4:12*)"

- b. Thoughts are **perfect** (by definition)

What He thinks, is what **ought** to be **thought**!

- c. Thoughts are **eternal**

- i. **Different** from us
- ii. Doesn't **consider**, **mull over**, **evaluate**
- iii. **Outside** of **time**
- iv. Therefore, **completed** and **unchanging**

- d. Thoughts are **limitless**; and **profound**

Psa. 40:5 **Many**, O LORD my God, are thy **thoughts** which are toward us: they **cannot** be **reckoned** up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are **more** than can be **numbered**.

Is. 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts...For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Psa. 92:5 O LORD, ...thy **thoughts** are **very deep**.

- e. Thoughts are **always accomplished**

i. We may think about something, then not do it; Desire, but be unable to fulfill...but...

ii. *Is. 14:24* The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, **Surely** as I have **thought**, **so shall it come to pass**

- f. Thus, in Scripture, God's **Thoughts** =

- i. His **Purposes** (which shall stand *Is. 14:24*)
- ii. His **Counsel** (which cannot be resisted)
- iii. His **Word** (which always accomplishes what He pleases *Is. 55:11*)

- g. Thoughts are **orderly**, **purposeful**, **deliberate**

- i. **Creation**
- ii. **Redemption**
- iii. **Providence**

3. **Rational = Governed by Reason**

a. **Not** as **outside force** to which he must **comply**

i. We say, "**God is Holy**"

(1) Do we mean God is **subject** to outside **laws** of conduct which he must **obey**, or be found a **transgressor**? Is there a **Law greater than God**?

(2) **No! Holiness -> Nature of God -> This is Who He is**

(3) "Moral Law" = the outward expression of God's nature as it applies to the determination of right and wrong in given circumstances in human life

ii. We say, "**God is Rational**"

Rationality -> Nature of God -> This is Who He is

b. And, It is **because** God is **Perfectly Rational** that we can say...

i. He **never contradicts** Himself

ii. He **never changes** in his ideas or purposes

iii. He is **never random** in His actions and will

c. **Because** God is a **rational** being, He can be **known**...

i. **Not** merely something to be **experienced**

ii. Can be **known** with the **Mind**

d. **Limitation** to **knowledge**? Of course

i. **God** is **inexhaustible, Infinite, Incomprehensible** (WCC)

ii. What does **incomprehensible** mean?

(1) **Not** that he is **irrational** in His nature and being

(2) Rather, He is incomprehensible to us - we cannot fully fathom Him - because He is **infinite** and we are **finite**

iii. God Himself **knows** Himself; knows Himself **fully**; and could **exhaustively** describe Himself to Himself in purposeful language
1Cor. 2:10-11 ...the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man within him? Even so the things of God no man knows, except the Spirit of God.

iv. God's **language** to **Himself** beyond anything we could ever comprehend yet God understands!

Rom. 8:26 ...the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

v. **Calculus** and High School **flunky**

e. **Not** a mere **metaphysical exercise**...

B. How would a **rational** God **reveal** Himself? In a Rational way!

1. In the **Incarnation**

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1Cor. 1:24 ...**Christ** ...the **wisdom** of God

a. The Son of God - His preeminent and perfect revelation of Himself, is called the divine "Word" and the divine "Wisdom"

2. In **Redemption**

a. He **enlightens** the **mind**

Eph. 1:16ff I Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of **wisdom** and **revelation** in the **knowledge** of him: The eyes of your **understanding** being **enlightened**; that ye may **know** what is the hope of his calling, etc.

b. **Mind** of man created in the **image** of God - in "knowledge"

c. Too much material: the **emphasis** on the **Word** in **salvation**; on **teaching** of **doctrine**; on the **nature** and **purpose** of **truth**

3. In **Supernatural Revelation**

a. **Visions**, etc

i. **Difficult** to understand, Yes.

ii. But, all **representative**; they have a **meaning**; stand for **something**; meaning can be **described**, **talked** about, **taught**

C. If **God** wrote a **book**, it would be a **rational** book

1. God has chosen to **communicate** his **revelation** to us through **Word**
God Himself is the **author** of **language**; of **communication**

2. The **rational** God uses **language** in a **rational** way

a. **Words** -> **sentences** -> **paragraphs**-> **books** -> One big book

b. **Words** -> tell **stories** -> make **promises** -> refute **errors**

c. **Words** -> give **histories** -. make **parables** -> record **prophecies**

d. **Words** -> complex **arguments** -> simple **commands**

i. **Closely reasoned** and very **difficult** to **follow**

ii. Requiring much **mature study** and **thought**

iii. As **advanced** as the most complicated **legal** brief

iv. Or, **Plain** as **day**; even a **simpleton** could grasp

3. **Conclusion**:

a. To **understand** the words God has used

b. To **know** what He is communicating to us

c. To **learn** the truths He has revealed...

d. We **must** approach His words in a **rational** way

II. **Irrational Uses** of God's **Word**

A. The **Bible** as a **Lot**

1. **Lot?** Device to obtain **random** result (coin toss; dice throw)

2. **Religious use** of the Lot? Random device used, in an understanding of the **sovereignty** of God, to produce God's **result**

Prov. 16:33 The **lot** is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the **LORD**.

Prov. 18:18 The **lot** causes contentions to cease, and decides between the **mighty**.

- a. **Division** of the land to the replacement of Judas
- b. Has, or had, some usage; Save this for later

3. Use of **Bible** itself as religious **lot**

- a. **Argument: Inspiration; Wisdom** of God
- b. **Piety**: Submit question to God by reverent use of Word as lot to decide question
- c. Best of **both** worlds: **Sovereign** choice, **Inspired** text

4. **Example**

- a. "Should I take a job that would require a move?"
2Sam. 12:11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

- b. **Context**: Judgment on **David** for the **matter** of Urriah the Hittite; **Nothing** to say about my **question**, unless I was intending to **flee** with another man's **wife** after having **murdered** him

5. **Condemnation**:

- a. **Practically**: you get "**nonsense**": Q. Who to marry? A. Leviticus, Don't eat dead things you find on the road
- b. Occultism: Bible not the I-Ching (a system of Chinese divination using symbols and an interpretive guide)
- c. **Contrary** to the **rational organization** and **purpose** of the Word
 - i. **Spirit** did not write a book for you to **randomly** answer questions, like those toy 8-balls
 - ii. To **read, understand, and apply!**

B. "God gave me this verse"

1. **Two Ways**:

- a. **Legitimate - Rightly** interpreted, **applicable**
- b. **Illegitimate** (and most **common**) way - **Grossly** out of **context**; **entirely** unrelated

2. **Examples**:

- a. "A man finds a satchel of money in the street. Ought he to turn it in to the police? This verse occurs to Him in prayer..."
John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
- b. "A woman hears that her child is ill, but has no information on his status. Near the hospital, she finds herself fastening by faith to the verse..."
John 4:51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.
- c. "A man is asked to provide a substantial loan to a Christian ministry. He finds Himself strangely attracted to this verse in prayer..."
John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

d. Recovering from an injury, a man wonders if he ought to get up and do some strenuous work, in spite of his doctor's orders. He hears this...

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes...

3. Misuse

- a. **John** the Baptizer; teaching on **authenticity** of Jesus' ministry
- b. Story - Jesus' healed a man's **son** from a distance; Miracle to **confirm messianic** office and **expose** Jewish **unbelief**. But **not** a **promise!**
- c. **John** the Baptizer; regarding the **conclusion** of his **ministry** due to the **coming** of Christ
- d. **Miracle** to prove Xst's **messianic** office and **stimulate** the faith of His disciples
- e. **Tragedy**: Each case has **relevant** doctrines, principles, and examples that **could** be brought to bear

4. Is **Spirit** of God rational in **writing** and **applying** His own **Word**?

a. Does the Word of God have **any** possible meaning? Any meaning at **all**?
Examples **defy** logic; Make interpretation **irrelevant**

b. Does the Spirit of God **use** words in **accordance** with His own **rational** nature?

5. Real-Life

- a. Go to **Doctor** for **foot**; Begins **reading** from text on **open heart surgery**; Or **says** "Moon in June is not in Tune"
- b. People with whom **language** does not follow the **normal rules** of **usage** and **meaning** - **Insane**; Mentally **disordered**
- c. **Old Folks Home**: Woman says, "Oh, what lovely flowers you are. May I eat them." **Dementia!**
- d. Why do we then **insult** the **Spirit** of God, by **attributing** to Him that which if we found it in any person, we would consider a **serious mental condition**?

C. Bible as a Source of **Encrypted Messages**

1. **Ancient - Kabala**

- a. System of **Mysticism** and **Magic** in **Medieval** Jews
- b. **Text** of Scripture Sacred; but not because of the **literal** meaning of its texts, or its divine message when **read**
- c. **Letters** themselves **sacred** - every jot and tittle - because they concealed a **secret code**
 - i. **Real** meaning **not** the **literal** teaching
 - ii. **Power** was in the **cryptic** codes hidden within the text; secret messages, numerology, etc.

2. **Modern - The Bible Code**

- a. Arrange **letters** of **Torah** in certain way, and hunt through like a **word search** (up, down, diagonal, backwards)
- b. Find **hidden words** with **cryptic sayings**
 - i. Properly **interpreted** - **foretell future** events
 - (1) Rabin/Assassin

- (2) World Nuclear War
- (3) JFK and the Pope
- (4) The gangs all here

ii. "Prove" the inspiration of the book

3. Introducing **Sharp DVD Consumer Warranty**, Paragraphs 1-5

4. Obvious **Problems**

a. **Irrational** use of revelation

i. Literal text exists as a **cipher** or **puzzle grid** from which we, by study, locate the **hidden** messages (of course **more important** and always **relevant to contemporary** events)

ii. Bible is reduced to a perverse religious cross between **Boggle** and **Where's Waldo**, with a little **Nostradamus** thrown in for seasoning

5. **Fact** of the Matter

a. The Bible is full of **perfectly clear messages**

b. Read in the **normal, rational** way, itself is full of **predictions** that verify its **inspiration**; more **prophecy** than most will ever **need!**

c. **Irresponsible occultic superstition** that deserves our **heartiest condemnation**

D. Conclusion

1. We worship a God who has **clearly** revealed His will and His Nature

2. He has given us a **great** and **valuable** Word to guide us

3. He opens our **minds** by the Spirit that we might **receive** the truth

4. Do you want to know **Who** God is and **What** he requires? There is no **shortcut!**

Study! Hard Work! Instruction! Commitment!

a. No **muscle** pill

b. **Open** this book. **Immerse** yourself in it. Treat it like God is **rational!**

*Rom. 12:2 Be ye transformed by the **renewing** of your **mind**, that ye may **find** what is that **good**, and **acceptable**, and **perfect**, **will** of God.*

*Psa. 119:97-100 O how **love** I thy law! it is my **meditation** all the day. Thou through thy **commandments** hast made me **wiser** than mine enemies: for they are **ever** with me. I have more **understanding** than all my **teachers**: for thy **testimonies** are my **meditation**. I **understand** more than the **ancients**, because I **keep** thy **precepts**.*

Shocking Prophecies Revealed in SHARP DVD Warranty

consumer limited warranty sharp electronics corporation warrants
 to the first consumer purchaser that this sharp brand product the prod
 uct when shipped in its original container will be free from defectiv
 e workmanship and materials and agrees that it will at its option eit
 her repair the defect or replace the defective product or part thereof
 with a new one or a manufactured equivalent at no charge to the purchaser
 for parts or labor for the period set forth below this warranty does n
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 warranties may be granted to purchasers by law all implied warranties
 including the warranties of merchantability and fitness for use are
 limited to the periods from the date of purchase set forth below some
 states do not allow limitation on how long an implied warranty lasts
 so the above limitation may not apply to you neither the sales person
 el of these dealers nor any other person is authorized to make any warrant
 ies other than those described herein or to extend the duration of any
 warranties beyond the time period described herein on behalf of shar

1. THE ROE SHE SEES; 2. BEAR RAT SIGN WAR BERN LIMIT NINE
3. RAT WIN WAR
-
4. TEN WILL RACE GULF; 5. ONE FORT; 6. ONE TOE
7. TOE OWL OIL OIL
8. HERD TEN TOE CEDE TO TOE; 9. MERCHANT STOOL EARN CANOE
10. NOT LONG 11. SON SCRIBE IRE
12. WARRANT PERSON OWL 13. LIED WAR 14. LIED HOT ART TRIED
-
15. ROE SUE RURAL SON [SHARP] PURE LACE AGREE CHASE ORIGINAL CANS
-
16. MAN MAN LABOR PIER PEAR IN MINE MIST WORKMANS TORT FIRST NAME OWEN

I. Introduction

A. Two Overarching Principles

1. Sola Scriptura:

- a. "Scripture alone reveals to us what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man"
- b. **Truth** and **Righteousness** revealed

2. The **Rationality** of **Scripture**:

- a. Because **God** is a **rational** God, He has **revealed** Himself in a **rational way**
- b. Because His **Word** is a **rational** word, it can **ONLY** be rightly **interpreted** when it is approached in **this way**
- c. **Irrational approaches**:
 - i. The Bible as a **religious lot**
 - ii. Verses **applied** based on **mystical** impressions
Psa. 81:10 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
 - iii. The Bible as a **grid for hidden messages** to be found using the techniques of **Kabala**
 - (1) **Book of Life**: search for names
 - (2) **Software** now available!

II. The **Work** of the **Spirit**

A. What is the **Work** of the Holy **Spirit**?

1. The **application** of the **benefits** of **Xst's redemption**

a. **Regeneration**:

*John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it wills...so is every one that is **born** of the **Spirit**.*

b. **Sanctification**:

*2Th. 2:13; 1Pet. 1:2 ...**sanctification** of the **Spirit**...*

c. **Intercession**:

*Rom. 8:26 ...the **Spirit** itself makes **intercession** for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

d. **Assurance**:

*Rom. 8:16 The **Spirit** itself bears **witness** with our **spirit**, that we are the children of God*

e. **Miraculous confirmation** of the **Gospel**:

*Rom. 15:19 Through mighty **signs** and **wonders**, by the **power** of the **Spirit** of God...I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

f. **Gifting** of the **Church**:

*1Cor. 12:4 Now there are diverse **gifts**, but the same **Spirit**.*

2. **Revelation**

B. **What** does the **Spirit** reveal?

1. He **reveals** the **truth** - He is **God**, and **cannot lie**

*John 16:13 ...when the **Spirit** of **truth** is come, he will **guide** you into **all truth***

2. "**All truth**" = **Every** truth that could be known? **No**

"**Who** God is" and "**What** duty God has required of man"

*2Tim. 3:16-17 All scripture is **God-breathed**, and is profitable for*

doctrine, for proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

C. What truth in **particular** does he **reveal**? He is the **revealer** of **Christ**

John 15:26 But when the **Comforter** is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the **Spirit of truth**, which proceeds from the Father, **he shall testify of me**

1. In **OT**

1Pet. 1:10-11 ...of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: Searching what, or what manner of time the **Spirit of Christ** which was **in them did signify**, when it **testified** beforehand the **sufferings** of Christ, and the **glory** that should follow.

2. In **NT**

John 16:12-15 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall **not speak of himself**; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. **He shall glorify me**: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.

3. **Canonical NT** is itself the **fulfillment** of this **passage**

D. **Where/How** does He **reveal**? In/by his **Word**...

Eph. 6:17 And take ...the **sword** of the **Spirit**, which is the **word** of **God**...

a. In **OT**

2Pet. 1:21 For the **prophecy** came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God **spoke** as they were moved by the **Holy Spirit**.

Acts 7:51-52 You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always **resist the Holy Spirit**: as your fathers did, so you do. For which of the **prophets** have your fathers **not persecuted**?

b. In **NT**

1Cor. 2:12-13 Now we have **received**, not the spirit of the world, but the **spirit** which is of **God**; that we might **know the things** that are freely **given** to us of **God**. Which things also we **speak**, not in the **words** which man's wisdom teaches, but which the **Holy Spirit teaches**...

Eph. 3:3ff How that by **revelation** he made known unto me the mystery...which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now **revealed** to his holy **apostles and prophets** by the **Spirit**; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...

E. **Conclusions**

a. **Spirit** of God has **revealed** the **truth** in His **Word - Verbal revelation**

b. This Word, the **revelation** of the Spirit, has been **collected** and **preserved** for our **benefit**, from Genesis (4000 years ago) to Revelation (1900 years ago)

III. Mysticism vs. Verbal Revelation

A. Basic Definition

1. **Mystic** - "A person who attains **insight** into **mysteries** which transcend ordinary human knowledge, especially by **immediate spiritual intuition**, and sometimes in a state of spiritual ecstasy."

eg. **Pagan** religions

2. When applied to Xty: "The **undermining** of the **sufficiency** and **authority** of God's **Word** through **emotion** and **subjective spiritual experiences**"

B. Outright abandonment of the **Word** under **religious pretenses**

1. Examples

a. Anabaptists

i. 16th century **Continental** Reformation

ii. "The **Living Spirit** over the **Dead Letter**"

iii. Mocked reformers as being "**dead-letter preachers**"

b. Quaker

i. **George Foxe**, founder

ii. 17th century **England**

iii. "**Inner Light**" - New inward revelation that **supersedes** and **replaces** the Word

c. Pietists

i. 18th century **Lutheran Germany**

ii. Stressed **immediate** experience of God; **unmediated** by the Word

2. Common **Cause: Reaction to Dead Orthodoxy**

a. Religious **Forms** w/o spiritual **life** : Spiritual **life** in religious **anarchy**

b. **Doctrine** w/o Spiritual **life** : Spiritual **Life** in doctrinal **anarchy**

c. **Word** w/o spiritual **life** : Spiritual **life apart** from the **Word**

3. **Argument** : **Spirit** vs. **Letter** (Oddly, **drawn** from **Bible!**)

*2Cor. 3:5-6 ...our sufficiency is of God; Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the **letter**, but of the **spirit**: for the **letter kills**, but the **spirit gives life**.*

4. "**Letter**" = **Mosaic Law** or, **Old Covenant**

a. **Context**: Paul's defense of his Gospel ministry; Corinthians conversion as proof of his ministry

2Cor. 3:5ff Our sufficiency is of God; who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

b. "**Letter**" refers to the **nature** of **Mosaic Law**, which came as a **command**

without providing the ability to fulfill; a “Dead Letter” - incapable of producing moral change

Rom. 8:3 ...what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...

c. “Letter Kills” = To minister a **command** without giving the power to **fulfill** is to minister **death**, for it can **only** bring **condemnation!**

Rom. 4:15 ...the law works wrath...

d. **Law** itself **promoted sin**, which brought **death**

Rom. 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound...

Rom. 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death

5. Spirit = Gospel, or New Covenant

a. To **minister** the **Gospel** is to minister that **Word** by which men are “**born again**”; carries both the **command** and the **power**

1Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God

b. **Never Word** vs. **Spirit**, but ...

i. **Old** vs. **New** Covenant system

ii. **Word** that **brought death** vs. **Word** that **gave life**

iii. **Law** vs. **Gospel**

C. “Let your **conscience** be your **guide** “ - **Walt Disney Theology**

1. **Moralist/Humanistic Theory**

a. “**Conscience**” - the inward moral **compass** possessed by all men - must be “**sensitized**” to direct men to right and steer them from wrong

2. Amongst **unbelievers** - Doesn’t **work**

a. **Self-justifying moralists** honoring their conscience

b. **Immoral Libertines** who sear their conscience

3. **Root Problem** (even amongst the saved)

a. Conscience is **completely unable** to **accurately**, in and of itself, **determine** right and wrong

i. A man may do wrong, fully assured that he is in the right

ii. A man may do right, all the while convinced of his own guilt

b. **Conscience** must be informed by **truth**, or else it is **entirely irrelevant**, and even **misleading**

i. If **conscience** must be informed by **truth**, then conscience is entirely dependent on - the **revelation** of the **Word**

ii. **Conscience** apart from **truth** is as useful as a **measuring cup** with all the **lines erased**, or a **ruler** with no **subdivisions**

iii. **Try making a cake** or **building a house!**

c. Conscience may be misled and affected by many other things: **error**, **tradition**, **culture**, **upbringing**

i. This is like a **ruler** or **measuring cup** with the lines in the **wrong**

place (house/cake analogy again)

ii. **Conscience**, applied to **religious** matters, is like a very **sensitive** piece of **measuring** equipment which, if **miscalibrated**, will give you an entirely **false** reading that could be not only **erroneous** but **dangerous**

4. Conclusions

- a. **Conscience** a **good** thing to have? **Yes**.
- b. **Generally** speaking, Bible says we **should not go against** it.
- c. Don't **confuse** with **source** - only place to **accurately** learn right from wrong is the Word; **Word calibrates conscience, not vice versa**

D. Subjective Determination of Truth - "I don't have **peace** about it"

1. Examples

- a. Always happens when confronted with a clear **biblical teaching**
Response: "The Lord hasn't given him **peace** about that"
- b. Or confronted with obvious **implications** of **Bible** word
Response: "The way we **determine truth** is to **pray** - to **submit** it to God - and that about which the Lord gives us '**peace**' is that what we ought to believe and do."

2. Fundamental Error 1

- a. Subjects the **Word** of the Spirit (**objective** revelation) to the so-called **inner** work of the Spirit (subjective); and **feeling** over **Word**
- b. But, in both **OT** and **NT**, **prophecy** - a **verbal** revelation - was **subject** to the already **revealed** inscripturated word
1John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God...
1Th. 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophesyings. But test all things; hold fast to that which is good.
Is. 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

c. If **prophecy** had to be subject to the **written** word, how much more so your **inward** feelings!

3. Fundamental Error 2

- Makes **truth dependent** on **you**, when truth is completely **independent** of you and what you feel; it is dependent on **revelation**
- i. Truth is true whether you **like** it or not
 - ii. Whether you **feel good** about it or not
 - iii. Whether it **satisfies** your **standards**, or meets your requirements
 - iv. Whether you **believe** it or not

4. Fundamental Error 3

- a. **Real Argument:** If a doctrine or duty is **true**, the Holy Spirit would make you **feel** a certain way about it.
- b. **No such doctrine** in Scripture
 - i. **Cannot** stipulate the **internal operations** of the Spirit.
 - ii. Basic **Unbelief:** If the Spirit of God has **inscripturated** truth and duty, why do you demand that He make you **feel** a certain way about what He has already **said**, for you to believe or do it?

iii. **Faith** is to **believe** the **revelation** of God, the **bare Word** of God; and to believe it **apart from**, and even **against** what **seems** to be true, what **appears** to be true, its **likelihood** based on human analysis, and especially one's own **feelings**!

c. **Examples**

- i. Abraham/Covenant (no reason to believe **except God said**)
- ii. Abraham/Isaac sacrifice
- iii. Noah/Ark
- iv. Disciples/Crucifixion

d. **Problem**: Always **doctrines** we do not feel **good** about! Always **doctrines** against which the **flesh objects**. How to distinguish the **Spirit** from the **flesh**?

- i. Hell/Eternal punishment
- ii. Double predestination
- iii. God's sovereign providence over all things
- iv. **Greeks** understood, but thought the ideas "**foolish**" according to their sense of what God ought to be like
- v. **Jews** understood, but rejected the true Messiah for failing to perform what they considered to be the necessary **sign**

5. **Conclusion**

- a. Look for peace **apart** from God's Word, you will **never find peace** at all...
 - i. ...you will be **double-minded, unstable, blown about** by every wind of doctrine;
 - ii. ...you will be **confused, unsure**, and vacillating in every decision;
 - iii. ...you will be without **hope** and without **security**;
 - iv. ...you will be **unable** to **weather** the **storms** of this world, and **unable to comfort others** in their distress
- b. In short, as a Christian you will be perfectly **pathetic**
- c. But consider faith in God's word alone and apart from feelings...

Heb. 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise

Heb. 11:11 By faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Heb. 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and

he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead

Heb. 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Heb. 11:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians attempting to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

Heb. 11:32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

d. What is **true spirituality**?

i. Not believing in **feelings**...

ii. But believing in the **Word** against all **rational hope**

I. Introduction

A. Three Basic Principles

1. The **Nature of God's Revelation - Verbal**
 - a. The **Spirit of God** is the **Spirit of truth**, and the **revealer of truth**
 - b. He **reveals** this **truth** when He **speaks**, by and through His **word**
 - c. Primarily, His **word** is the **revelation of Xst**: His **person**, His **work**, and the **implications** of both
2. The **Rationality of God's Revelation**
 - a. Because **God** is a **rational** God, He has **revealed** Himself in a **rational** way
 - b. Because His **Word** is a **rational** word, it can **ONLY** be rightly **interpreted** when it is approached in **this** way
3. The **Sufficiency of God's Revelation - 'Sola Scriptura'**
 - a. "**Scripture alone** reveals to us what we are to **believe** concerning **God**, and what **duty God requires** of man"
 - b. **Truth** and **Righteousness** revealed

B. Problem: Bible teaches **many** things in many **different** hands!

1. Jehovah's Witness

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was [a] God.

2. Mormon

John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

1Cor. 15:29 Or else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise? Why then are they baptized for the dead?

3. Adventist

Ex. 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labour, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD your God...For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

4. Orthodox Jew

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Unless you are circumcised after the manner of Moses [and keep the law], you cannot be saved.

5. Arminian

2Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

6. 'Prosperity Gospel' Teacher

Deut. 11:26-28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God...

C. A Highly Disturbing Problem (to some)

1. **Order and Authority** - Two of God's **main** concerns
 - a. If there must be **doctrinal order** in the church...
 - b. If truth **absolute**, only **one** true truth, not many...
 - c. If **necessary** to know for **salvation** and spiritual life...
 - d. If **heresy** and **error** can be **damnable**...
2. **Inconceivable** that God would have leave us w/o **certainty!**
 - a. Must have some sort of **doctrinal authority**...
 - b. Must have something to tell us what the Scriptures **really** teach
 - c. Must have some way of **discerning** the right from the wrong

II. Tradition

A. Tradition and Scripture = Truth

1. **Two** lines of **revelation**:

- i. What the apostles **wrote** and **recorded** in the **Scripture**
- ii. What the apostles **established by practice**
 - (1) Locate recorded doctrines / practices of **post-apostolic** church
 - (2) Inference: this **must** represent the teachings and ordinances of the **apostles** themselves
 - (3) This **really** reliable, **rather** than a **debate** over **interpreting** Bible texts

2. **Bible Proof!**

1Cor. 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and **keep the traditions**, as I **delivered** them to you.

2Th. 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **withdraw yourselves** from every brother that walks **disorderly**, and not after the **tradition** which he received of us.

2Th. 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and **hold the traditions** which you have been **taught**, whether by **word**, or our **epistle**.

3. **Verse explanation**

- a. **Paradosis** - "That which is **handed down** or **given over**"
 - i. 10 times Jewish traditions; 3 times Xtn

b. **Bible not yet completed**

- i. Verbal **instruction** yet to be **inscripturated**
- ii. But, not **different** or **supplementary**

c. **Examples**

- i. 1Cor11 - Traditions = **worship** practices
- ii. 2Thess3:6 - explained by 7-14 (**behavior**)
- iii. 2Thess2:15 - **Word** and **epistle correspond**

4. **Problems:**

- a. No **certainty** that the identified tradition is a **reliable** one?
 - i. Ever play "**Pass it along**"
"Aunt Millie served beets for supper" = "Eight million swerving bats form stripes"

- ii. **More** liable to **corruption** than **written texts**; No **standard** against which to **compare**
- iii. Yet pointed to as the **authority** by which the church **practice** ought to be **regulated**, apostolic **doctrine determined**

b. **Striking fact of history**

Unscripturated traditions almost **always** turn out to be **hostile** to **actual Bible doctrine**

c. **Only** reliable **source** of apostolic practice and institution?

- i. The **Scripture** itself (SS)
- ii. Anything else is at best **hearsay**, at worst, **fabrication**
- iii. **Bible** = the **only test**

III. Tradition **interprets** Scripture

A. **Definition**

"The ultimate **rule** or **standard** for the **interpretation** of **Scripture** is the **historical tradition** of **interpretation** within the **Church**, esp. that of the **early church fathers**"

B. **Examples**

1. **High Church**

- a. **RCC Priestly Oath** - Scripture interpreted according to **unanimous consent** of the **Fathers**
- b. **Anglican/Episcopalians** - **Catholic consent** of the **Fathers** (general agreement)
- c. **Eastern Orthodox** - **Infallibility** of **ecumenical church councils**

2. "Some admit the supreme authority of Scripture as the only standard of faith, and deny any proper authority in religious matters to the fathers, or to the teaching of the early church; but still they are fond of talking about the fathers in such a way as seems to imply that they do ascribe them authority, or something like it, after all. They talk much of the importance and necessity of studying the Fathers, and investigating the doctrines of the early church; and of the great assistance thus furnished in ascertaining the meaning of scripture, and the truth of doctrine...Men sometimes talk as if they had a vague notion of the early fathers having had some inferior species of inspiration, -some peculiar divine guidance differing from that of the apostles and evangelists in degree rather than kind, -and somehow entitling their views and statements to more respect than those of ordinary men." Cunningham, *Historical Theology* V.1, pp. 174-5

3. **Additional Arguments:**

- a. **Closer** in **time**
- b. **Spoke** the **original languages**
- c. **Direct lineage** from the **apostles**, and the **apostles' disciples**; thus knew **original interpretations**, how the **apostles themselves explained** the **meaning** of their **works!**

C. **Contradictions** to this **Method**

1. **Impractical**

- a. **Unanimous consent non-existent**
- b. **Catholic consent** barely more existent
- c. To **create** it, must **misinterpret** and **twist**

2. Statistically Invalid

- a. Too **few authors**, over too **much time**, from too **wide** an **area**, to provide anything like an **authoritative** testimony
Cf. Determining meaning of **Reformation** writers by **sampling** modern **evangelicals** (Pelagian; Baptists; Self-Esteem/Image)
- b. 100-200: A **few** anonymous docs; **6** true authors, who wrote **little**; docs **corrupted**; mostly **repeat** Scripture
- c. >250 for **volume**; still a **handful** of authors

3. Theologically Unsound

- a. **Justin Martyr** (160AD)
 - i. **Free-will**; **Platonic** philosophy
 - ii. **Celibacy** and **Sacrament** exalted
 - iii. **Christianity** of respectable **pagans**
- b. **Irenaeus** (200AD)
 - i. **Pelagian** view of will
 - ii. Exalted **Mary**
 - iii. Professes to communicate oral tradition which clearly and explicitly
 - iv. contradicts Scripture
- c. **Clemens Alexandrinus** (200AD)
 - i. **Neo-platonic** philosophy
 - ii. **Pelagian**
 - iii. **Allegorizing** interpretation of Scripture
 - iv. Fundamental corruption of the doctrine of the **atonement** and **salvation**
 - v. **Mystical asceticism**
- d. **Origen** (225AD)
 - i. **Neo-Platonic**
 - ii. Denied **vicarious** atonement
 - iii. **Pelagian**; **Ascetic**
 - iv. Denied God's **omnipotence**
 - v. Castrated himself
- e. **Tertullian** (225AD)
 - i. **Pelagian**
 - ii. Justification by **works**
 - iii. **Merit** of good works
 - iv. **Prayers** for the dead
 - v. **Morose** and **ascetic** morality
 - vi. Became a **Montanist**
- f. **Cyprian** (250AD)
 - i. Post-conversion sins remitted by **works**
 - ii. Baptismal **regeneration**/justification
 - iii. **Authoritarian** view of ecclesiastical power
- g. **Not one accurate** and **full** statement of...
 - i. ...the Biblical **gospel**

- ii. ...the **depravity** and **inability** of man
- iii. ...the true nature of **sanctification**, the **law**, and Xtn **liberty**
- iv. ...the **proper method** method of **interpreting** Scripture

4. **No Surprise! See Bible Prophecy**

Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also men shall arise of your own selves, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

- a. **Post-NT a time of authoritative instruction?**
- b. **NO!** A time of **moral and doctrinal decline**

D. **Example: Lawfulness of Divorce/Remarriage**

1. **State** of the **Question**

- a. Modern **libertine** view: **Any** cause
- b. **Fundamentalist** view: **No** cause
- c. **Reformation** view(called both libertine/oppressive): **Some** causes

2. **Fundamentalist argument** - the **church fathers**

- a. Eg., Wenham
- b. Basic idea: Church **fathers** would be **most likely** to provide an **apostolic interpretation** of the **verses** in question, or, espouse a **view** we could safely **regard** as the **apostolic** one

3. **Historical Response**

a. **Lack of early sources**

60-225AD: **Justin Martyr**

- (1) Says the twice married are sinners; Apocryphal book **Shepherd of Hermas**
- (2) Cites the Matthew verse and offers the fundamentalist view

b. **Later sources**

- i. **Tertullian**: Condemns all second marriages; Exalts celibacy as highest; Sex = sin
- ii. These doctrines typical of all subsequent writers
- iii. At least **one dissenter: Ambrosiaster**

c. **Analysis:**

- i. A **handful** of **sources** (even amongst later writers)
- ii. Most **hundreds** of **years removed** from the apostles
- iii. Deeply **tainted** by **Neo-Platonism** and **asceticism**
- iv. Deeply **erroneous** views of **fundamental** doctrine
- v. Almost **never** an actual **exegesis** - just **assertion** that such and so is the view of the church...

4. **Deeper Question: "Ought we to be looking here at all?"**
An **abandonment** of **Sola Scriptura**

IV. Scripture interprets Scripture

A. Text

*1Cor. 2:11-13 For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God no man knows, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. And we also speak these things, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.***

B. Definition One

"The ultimate **rule** or **standard** for the **interpretation** of **Scripture** is **Scripture itself.**"

- a. The **Scriptures** - all the inspired books - have only **one actual author**: the **Holy Spirit of God**
- b. To understand any **particular** part of His word, we must consider it in **light of all** the other **things** He has **written**.
- c. These **other** things He has written are the **final**, and the **controlling** authority on the **meaning** of His **words**; **nothing else** can serve this function.

C. Closing Application

1. If not **this tradition**, how little any **other tradition**
2. If not **these teachers**, how little the **modern** teachers who are equally and profoundly in error about **fundamental Bible doctrine**
3. What happens when you **follow** a **blind guide**?
 - a. **Many blind guides; Many pits!**
 - b. Next time you hear "what the early fathers taught", the **bamboozle alert** ought to come on!
 - c. **Realize** that you are dealing with a person who has **abandoned** the most **basic tenant** of biblical interpretation.
 - d. They will fool you with their "**learnedness**"; but learn that they are actually **ignorant, deluded**, and possibly very **wicked**.