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; Mendhel 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 Godhead; 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 Sanitize 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 Freewiller; 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. “Doctrine,” 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 woman 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 spilled 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 ("wissy-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 variability, 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 1:17ff 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
docctrine; 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 Uriah 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 Baptist; 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 Baptist; 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
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

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1. THE RAE SHE SEES; 2. BEAR RA! SIGN WAR BERN LIMIT NINE
3. RAT WIN WAR

4. TEN WILL RACE GULF; 5. ONE TORT; 6. ONE TOE
7. TOE OWL OIL
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15. ROE SUE RURAL SON [SHARP] PURE LACE AGRIFF CHASE ORIGINAL CANS

16. MAN MAN I. AROR 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.

II. 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 **reveler** 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
   Uninscripturated 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 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 deprivitv 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
      \textit{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; \textit{comparing spiritual things with spiritual}.

   B. Definition One
      “The ultimate \textit{rule} or \textit{standard} for the \textit{interpretation} of \textit{Scripture} is \textit{Scripture itself}.”
      a. The \textit{Scriptures} - all the inspired books - have only \textit{one actual author}: the Holy Spirit of God
      b. To understand any \textit{particular} part of His word, we must consider it in \textit{light} of all the other \textit{things} He has written.
      c. These \textit{other} things He has written are the \textit{final}, and the \textit{controlling} authority on the \textit{meaning} of His \textit{words}; \textit{nothing else} can serve this function.

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