



Basics

OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

A TEACHING PRIMER FOR THE CHURCH

CREATED FOR USE AT SOMA COMMUNITY CHURCH
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LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

— Charles C. Ryrie —

The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.

— Hebrews 4:12 —

For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of Soul and of Spirit, of Joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the

I. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Defined: The Bible is God's inspired Word, delivered supernaturally to men, so that we might know of his redemptive plan and the means by which we might be saved.

- The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books.
- The Bible was written over a period of roughly 1500 years (1446 BC - 95 AD).
- The Bible was compiled by approximately forty different authors from various professions: kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, prophets, statesmen, scholars, poets, and priests.
- The Bible was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- Despite these difficulties, Scripture remains a "homogeneous, uninterrupted, harmonious, and orderly account of the whole history of God's dealings with man" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* 1.29).

The Arrangement of Scripture

- Scripture is arranged topically, not chronologically.
- Scripture is divided into two testaments: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT

Dates Compiled	From the Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings (1446-1406 BC) to Malachi's prophecy (437-417 BC).
Time Period Covered	From creation (ca. 6,000 - 10,000 BC) to Malachi's Prophecy (437-417 BC). A specific focus is given beginning with the call of Abram in 2091 BC.

The Content of the Old Testament

- The Old Testament records God's redemptive plan as he would work through the nation of Israel to fulfill his initial promises to mankind: 1) to provide a Messiah who would nullify the effects of sin (Genesis 3:15); 2) to give the nation of Israel a land (Genesis 12:1); 3) to make them into a great people (Genesis 12:2); 4) and to bring about God's blessing given to all mankind (Genesis 12:2)
- The Old Testament is primarily a theological work and is only secondarily a historical work. Scripture is not concerned to "reconstruct the history of Israel—to say nothing of the Gentile nations—but is a description of God's work in the world particularly channeled as it was through Israel" (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 28). This however does not mean that the Scriptures are not historically reliable.

Era's of the Old Testament

Pre-Patriarchal Period	Creation (10,000-6,000 BC) — 2200
Patriarchal Period	2,200 BC — 1800 BC
Egyptian Sojourn	1876 BC — 1446 BC
Wilderness Sojourn	1446 BC — 1406 BC
Conquest	1406 BC — 1350 BC
Judges	1350 BC — 1080 BC
Premonarchial	1080 BC — 1050 BC
United Monarchy	1050 BC — 931 BC
Divided Monarchy -Israel and Judah -Judah Alone	931 BC — 586 BC 931 BC — 722 BC 722 BC — 586 BC
Babylonian Exile	586 BC — 538 BC
Return and Restoration	538 BC — 330 BC

Purpose of the Old Testament

- To demonstrate the reality of human depravity and our need for a savior (Romans 3:20) Mankind cannot atone for sin through observance to the Mosaic Law.
- To reveal the coming Messiah/Redeemer who would be fulfilled in the person of Christ.
- To show the perfect purity of the Messiah as a sacrifice for sins (1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

THE SHAPE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Pentateuch: The first five books of the Old Testament—the “Torah,” or Pentateuch”— were compiled by Moses sometime around 1400 BC.

1. Genesis (1446-1406) — Records the early history of the universe, human race, sin, the nation of Israel, and God's promise of blessing and redemption.
2. Exodus (1445) — Explains how God redeemed the nation of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and established his covenant with them at Sinai.
3. Leviticus (1444) — Instructs the nation of Israel how she must live and worship as God's chosen people in response to his holiness.
4. Numbers (1405) — Chronicles Israel's failure to obey the Lord and enter the Promise Land by faith and to tell of God's judgments through the wilderness wanderings.

5. Deuteronomy (1405) — Provides a restatement of the Law by Moses after the wilderness wanderings prior to Israel's entrance into the Promised land.

The Historical Book: The Historical books were written between 1400-450 BC and describe God's dealings with His chosen people, Israel, the Hebrew nation.

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Joshua | 5. 2 Samuel | 9. 2 Chronicles |
| 2. Judges | 6. 1 Kings | 10. Ezra |
| 3. Ruth | 7. 2 Kings | 11. Nehemiah |
| 4. 1 Samuel | 8. 1 Chronicles | 12. Esther |

Poetic and Wisdom Writings: These describe in poetic language God's greatness and his dealings with men.

1. Job — Recounts the suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God.
2. Psalm — The songs of praise and instruction written to motivate the reader to worship God.
3. Proverbs — Written to provide the young and simple with the necessary knowledge and wisdom they need to live fearfully and successfully before God.
4. Ecclesiastes — A warning to young people of the vanity of life apart from God and to exhort them to fear and obey Him.
5. Song of Solomon — To extol the beauties of Romance when pursued within the confines of Scripture.

Major Prophets: A Prophet is one who is commissioned by God to deliver His message to men. These books are called "Major Prophets" because they are generally longer than the writings of the "Minor Prophets." They were written from approximately 750 BC to 550 BC and concern God's judgment upon the nations of Israel and Judah through the Assyrian and Babylonians.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Isaiah | 4. Jeremiah |
| 2. Lamentations | 5. Daniel |
| 3. Ezekiel | |

Minor Prophets: The last twelve books of the Old Testament were written from approximately 840 BC to 400 BC and cover a vast array of topics.

- | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|
| 1. Hosea | 3. Amos | 5. Jonah |
| 2. Joel | 4. Obadiah | 6. Micah |

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| 7. Nahum | 9. Zephaniah | 11. Zechariah |
| 8. Habakkuk | 10. Haggai | 12. Malachi |

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT

Dates Compiled	Probably as early as 45 AD into the late 90's AD
Time Period Covered	The Birth of Christ (4-6 AD) to the time of John's writing of Revelation in the late 90's AD.

The Content of the New Testament

- The New Testament records the initial fulfillment of God's promises made throughout the Old Testament of a coming messiah who would liberate men, not from the dominion of the Roman Empire, but from the dominion of sin. Christ is presented as the focus of the New Testament, the Son of God, and the only hope and Savior of men.
- The first five books found within the New Testament are historical in nature; the next twenty-one books are doctrinal in nature and are epistolary (letters written by the apostles to certain individuals or groups of individuals within the early church) in genre; the last and final book - Revelation - stands alone as the only prophetic/apocalyptic book of the New Testament.
- To summarize its content, the New Testament details: the life of Christ, the way of salvation, the beginning of Christianity, instruction for Christian living, and God's plan for the future.

The Purpose of the New Testament

- To further reveal the person of God the Father through the person and work of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3).
- To understand the Gospel of Jesus of Jesus and so to find forgiveness and redemption as sons through him (Galatians 4:4).

THE SHAPE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels

1. Matthew — The life of Christ, written especially for the Jews, revealing Jesus Christ as their long awaited Messiah
2. Mark — The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the obedient Servant of God. The book was written to the Roman world.

3. Luke — The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the perfect man, emphasizing His humanity. It was written by Luke the Greek physician, to an individual named Theophilus.
4. John — The life of Christ, revealing Jesus as the Son of God, stressing his deity. This book was written to all men.

The History of the Early Church

1. Acts — To describe the progress in the spread of the witness concerning Jesus from its origin in Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and on the ends of the earth (1:8). It could equally be called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit."

The Epistles

PAUL'S LETTERS

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Romans | 8. 1 Thessalonians |
| 2. 1 Corinthians | 9. 2 Thessalonians |
| 3. 2 Corinthians | 10. 1 Timothy |
| 4. Galatians | 11. 2 Timothy |
| 5. Ephesians | 12. Titus |
| 6. Philippians | 13. Philemon |
| 7. Colossians | |

GENERAL LETTERS

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. Hebrews | 4. 2 Peter |
| 2. James | 5. 1 John |
| 3. 1 Peter | 6. 2 John |

Prophecy

1. Revelation — Written by the Apostle John while in exile on the Island of Patmos. Revelation is written to encourage and exhort the churches facing stagnation, worldliness, false teaching, persecution, and judgment by revealing to them the culmination of the purpose of God in human history, with Christ at the center.

— OPTIONAL STOPPING POINT—

II. IS THE BIBLE REALLY THE WORD OF GOD

A. THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED

— Inspiration Defined —

Inspiration is therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writings by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given divine trustworthiness (B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 131).

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

1 PETER 1:19-21

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

- There is an emphatic denial that prophecy owes its origin to human initiative.
- There is an assertion that Scripture's source lies in God.
- It would be inexact to say that they (the writers of Scripture) recognize a human element in Scripture: they do not parcel Scripture out, assigning portions of it, or elements in it, respectively to God and man. In their view the whole of Scripture in all its parts and in all its elements, down to the last minutiae, in form of expression as well as in substance of teaching, is from God; but the whole of it has been given by God through the instrumentality of men." (B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 150).

B. THE BIBLE IS INERRANT

— Inerrancy Defined —

The words of the Bible in their historical, grammatical, literary, and moral setting in the original autographs of the Bible are wholly true in what they affirm, in every respect, whether these words concern doctrine, morality, history, or any of the sciences.

The New Testament Affirms the Inerrancy of the Old Testament

- Jesus ascribed absolute authority to the Old Testament (John 10:35; Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; Mark 7:6-13; Luke 16:29-31; John 17:17).
- Jesus recognized the inerrancy of the Old Testament by stressing its fulfilled prophecies as "musts."
- There are over 320 direct quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

The New Testament is presented as Inerrant

- Christ authorized the Apostles as authoritative witnesses to the truth that had been entrusted to them.
- The New Testament was subjected to the criticism of eyewitnesses of the historical accounts.
- The Apostles regarded the writings of the New Testament to be authoritative (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Must I Believe in Inerrancy? — Yes!

- Inerrancy is attached to the Character of God (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; Numbers 23:19).
- Inerrancy is the Historic position of the Christian Church.
- Inerrancy is foundational to other essential doctrines. Without the integrity of God's Word, the doctrines found therein are jeopardized. The doctrine of salvation has no divine authority apart from the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures.
- Caveats to Inerrancy
 - Inerrancy only applies to the original autographs of Scripture and does not mean that our modern copies, and especially our interpretations of Scripture are inerrant.
 - Inerrancy does not mean that Scripture tells us every fact that there is to know about a given subject.
 - Inerrancy has to do with truthfulness, not with the degree of precision with which events are reported.

C. THE BIBLE IS SUFFICIENT

— Sufficiency Defined —

"The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contains all the words God intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting him perfectly, and for obeying him perfectly" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 127).

2 PETER 1:3

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the very knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature."

What four things does God's Word promise to do? (Psalm 19:7-8)

Psalm 19:7a _____

Psalm 19:7b _____

Psalm 19:8a _____

Psalm 19:8b _____

III. ARE OUR BIBLE RELIABLE?

— *What factors contribute to the reliability of the Scriptures in our hands?* —

A. THE ABUNDANCE OF MANUSCRIPTS

The Number of Manuscripts

- Today there are in existence, in whole or in part, over 300 Hebrew manuscripts, 5,800 Greek manuscripts and more than 20,000 ancient manuscripts of the Old and New Testament written in various languages (not including the over 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate), and more than 30,000 Scriptural quotations in the early church fathers which help confirm the accuracy of Scripture. Even Revelation, the most poorly attested book, has been preserved in over 3,000 Greek manuscripts" (Paul Wenger, *In Defense of the Bible*, 133).

The Importance of the Manuscripts

- The sheer number of manuscripts provides a breadth of evidence that is useful in reconstructing a reliable and accurate depiction of the original autographs.
- If all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, the patristic quotations would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.

The Significance of the Number of Known Manuscripts

- Scriptural Manuscripts:
 - There are 124 manuscripts in existence originating within the first 300 years of the composition of the New Testament.
 - Total Scriptural manuscripts in existence:
 - > 6,100 manuscripts in the original languages
 - > 20,000 manuscripts in translated tongues
 - >30,000 Scriptural quotations from classic and patristic writings
- Classical Manuscripts: (Works like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Plato's *The Republic*...)
 - Within the first 300 years after composition, the average classical author has no literary remains at all.
 - The number of manuscripts of any particular classical work still averages less than twenty, and usually less than a dozen.

- There are three times as many manuscripts of the New Testament within two hundred years of its composition as there are of the average classical author's work within two thousand years of its composition.

B. THE PRACTICE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

— Textual Criticism Defined —

"Textual Criticism is the science and art that seeks to determine the most reliable reading of the original manuscript from the current existing autographs/manuscripts. The task of the text critic is to evaluate these autographs and identify variations within the text and to determine what is the best possible reading.

The Need for Text Criticism

- Until 1450 with the invention of Gutenberg's printing press, the Scriptures were copied by hands many times. This process was laborious, copying letter by letter, word by word. The copyist made many unintentional as well as intentional ("correcting") errors in the transmission process.

The Success of Text Criticism

- Based on a number of critical factors used to determine the original reading of a text, textual criticism has had astounding success. No matter what theory of textual criticism one adheres to, most, if not all, would agree that only 1-5% of the 20,000 - 30,000 variants substantially affect the meaning of the text. No major doctrines are affected. At least 95% of the variants have mostly to do with spelling errors, change in word order, or the use of a synonym in place of the original.
- A Confession of a Liberal Scholar
 - Bart Ehrman in an appendix to his popular book *Misquoting Jesus: "Essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament."*

C. CONCLUSION

On the basis of what has been said above, we can rest assured that the Scriptures that we hold in our hands, are accurate representations of the original autographs delivered by God to the writers of Scripture. This is clearly demonstrated through Scripture's own internal witness to its divine nature and the enormous amount of external evidence through the discovery of countless of manuscripts, including important finds like the Dead Sea Scrolls and others, and the practices developed to help us arrive at a reliable rendering of the originals.

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LESSON 2

HOW TO INTERPRET AND BENEFIT FROM THE BIBLE

— 2 Timothy 2:15 —

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

I. WHY BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS IMPORTANT

A. PROPER BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF SCRIPTURE

- Scripture is God's self-disclosure of himself to us (Hebrews 1:1)
- Scripture alone is the only rule we have for life, it is the only standard we have for behavior and obedience (1 Timothy 3:14-15; 3:16; Mark 7:6-8; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6-9).
- Scripture is our only Authority (2 Peter 1:20-21; John 17:17; Psalm 119:160).

B. PROPER BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER DOCTRINES

— BERNARD RAMM, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 2. —

"To determine the what God has said is a high and holy task. With fear and trembling each should be ever so careful of that which he has adopted as his method of biblical interpretation. *Upon the correct interpretation of the Bible rests our doctrine of salvation, of sanctification, of eschatology, and of Christian living. It is our solemn responsibility to know what God has said with reference to each of these. this can be done only if we have carefully, thoroughly and systematically formulated that system of biblical interpretation which will yield most readily the native meaning of the Bible*

C. PROPER BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID HERETICAL CONCLUSIONS

When we do not properly approach Scripture, taking note of all its intricacies, but rather approach it in a flippant or haphazard way, we are in danger of arriving upon heretical conclusions.

D. PROPER BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS COMMANDED IN SCRIPTURE

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

II. HOW TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH SCRIPTURE¹

A. HEAR THE BIBLE TAUGHT

Gospel proclamation is necessary for the Salvation of the Lost.

- Romans 10:17 "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ."

God blesses the faithful hearing and application of the Word.

- Luke 11:28 "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

❖ **What principles should Pastors practice in the preaching of God's Word?**

—Nehemiah 8:7-8—

B. READ THE BIBLE

REVELATION 1:3

"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

❖ **According to Paul what was the priority that Timothy, and all pastors for that matter, should direct their attention toward?**

— 1 Timothy 4:13—

If you do not have a daily reading plan, start with the Gospel of Mark or John. At the rate of two chapters each day, you will complete the New Testament in nineteen weeks!

C. STUDY THE BIBLE

When the apostle Paul left Thessalonica, he came to Berea and shared the Gospel with unbelieving Jews. What he found was that they "were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

¹ This Section is derived from the *Fundamentals of the Faith Curriculum* put out by Grace Community Church

❖ **How did the Bereans receive the Word of God?**

— Acts 17:11—

❖ **How should we search after wisdom or understanding?**

— Proverbs 2:4—

Bible Study is more than just reading the Bible; it involves careful observation, interpretation, and application. Reading gives you the overall picture, but study helps you think, learn, and apply what you read to your life."

D. MEMORIZE THE BIBLE

PSALM 119:9, 11

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By kept it according to Thy word... Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you."

❖ **How did God Command Israel to Remember his Word?**

—Deuteronomy 11:18a—

—Deuteronomy 11:19—

❖ **In What ways was Christ strengthened in the face fo the temptation of Satan?**

—Matthew 4:4, 7, 10—

E. MEDITATE ON THE BIBLE

—Meditation Defined—

Meditation is prayerful reflection on Scripture with a view toward understanding and application, giving prayerful though to God's Word with the goal of conforming your life to his will.

PSALM 1:1-3

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water

that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers."

❖ **How does meditation assist you in your spiritual pursuits?**

—Joshua 1:8—

❖ **Can God's Word affect your speech and actions? How?**

—Luke 6:45—

❖ **Besides being diligent in studying God's Word, what else should we do in order to understand it?**

—Psalm 119:73, 125—

III. THE METHODS OF PROPER INTERPRETATION

A. APPROACH THE TEXT PRAYERFULLY

No Christian should ever look down at the Word of God without first looking up to the very source of that Word to ask for guidance. To engage in Bible study without prayer is presumption, if not sacrilege.

How should we pray when coming to God's Word?

- Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

The importance of Christ's indwelling Spirit for our ability to comprehend his Word

- Ephesians 3:16-19 "That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

What are some practical things to do when approaching Scripture?

- 1 Peter 2:1-2 "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation."
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B. APPROACH THE TEXT OBSERVANTLY

What is Observation?

- Observation is essentially awareness of what is occurring within a certain passage. The more aware we are of the many facets of Scripture, the better we will be at interpreting Scripture

Ask: "What is taking place in the passage? What do I see?"

*Peering into mists of Gray
That shroud the surface of the bay,
Nothing I see except a veil
Of fog surrounding every sail.
Then suddenly against a cape
A vast and silent form takes shape,*

*Where nothing has appeared before
Who sees a truth must often gaze
Into a fog for many days;
It may seem very sure to him
Nothing is there but mist-clouds dim.
Then, suddenly, his eyes will see
A shape where nothing used to be.
Discoveries are missed each day
By men who turn too soon away.*

Clarence Edward Flynn

Things to Observe

- The Context of the Passage
- Any Key or Interesting Words
- Key Subjects (people, topics)
- Commands
- Warnings
- Repeated Words or Phrases
- Lists
- Comparisons and Contrasts
- Any Cultural Elements
- Any Quotations of other Passages of Scripture
- The Genre of the Passage

Maintain the Proper Order

- Observation must come before the meaning of the passage is determined.
- Heresy is often the result of placing one's conclusions too early in the interpretation process. This usually happens when someone does not observe a key or important element within the text.

Tips for Observation

- Don't forget to ask: "who?" "why?" "when?" "where?" and "how?" to every passage

C. APPROACH THE TEXT WITH AN AIM TOWARDS THE AUTHORIAL INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is the conclusion and culmination of all the questions and observations noted in the previous stage. Here we are to focus on determining the meaning that the author intended, not some meaning that would be foreign to the original intention. This also means that we must always take into consideration the cultural background and context behind the passage

Ask Interpretive Questions:

- What is the importance of:
 - 1) A given word?
 - 2) A given Phrase?
 - 3) Names and Titles?

- 4) Dates?
- 5) Others?

- What is the meaning of a particular word?
- Why did the writer say this as opposed to something else?
- What is the implication of this word, phrase, or name?

Keys to Remember

- As God's Word, Scripture is perfect and simple, even in the midst of its infinite complexities. This means that Scripture will not contradict itself. Test your conclusions and interpretations in the light of other passages of Scripture to ensure you have come to the right understanding of a given text.

D. APPROACH THE TEXT WITH AN AIM TOWARD APPLICATION

Application: What effects will this have (or is this supposed to have) on me?

❖ Does Scripture command us to apply the word of God to our lives?

—James 1:22—

❖ What is the Purpose and aim of our application?

—Colossians 1:9-10—

The Necessity of Application

- Biblical interpretation that does not lead to application is dead interpretation. Furthermore, if faulty principles are used in the interpretation process, faulty application will be the result. However, while there is only one true meaning of the text of Scripture, there are many applications.

A Helpful Guide to Application — SPECS

Is there a

- S** in to Forsake?
- P**romise to Claim?
- E** sample to Follow
- C**ommand to Obey?

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LESSON 3

GOD

— Psalm 145:3—

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

I. GOD'S EXISTENCE

A. EVIDENCE OF HIS EXISTENCE

CAVEAT: Belief and faith in God are prerequisites to being justified before him.

- ▶ Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

❖ **In what two ways can God's existence be known?**

— Psalm 119:1-11

The Existence of God is Written upon Human Hearts

- Romans 1:18-20 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.** For (1) his invisible attributes, namely, his (2) eternal power and (3) divine nature, have been clearly perceived, since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

B. GOD EXISTS IN AND OF HIMSELF

— *This refers to the reality that God is self-existent and self-sufficient*

EXODUS 3:14

"God said to Moses, "I Am who I Am"

EPHESIANS 1:11

"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."

Implications of God's Self-Existence

- 1) God exists because he wills himself to exist. He is the source of his own existence.
- 2) God is answerable to no one.
- 3) God, apart from revealing himself to us, is unknowable.

— A. W. Pink —

"God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That he chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on his part, caused by nothing outside himself, determined by nothing but his own mere good pleasure.... God is no gainer even from our worship. He was in no need of that external glory of his grace which arises from his redeemed, for he is glorious enough in himself without that.

(Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, pp. 2-3)

God is the Author and Creator of All Things that are in Existence

- John 1:3 "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."
- Romans 11:36 "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

God is Self-Sufficient

- "God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy" (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 160).
- Acts 17:24-25 "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything."

C. GOD EXISTS ETERNALLY

PSALM 90:2

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

ISAIAH 44:6

"Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.'"

PSALM 102:24-27

"O my God, I say, 'take me not away in the midst of my days—you whose years endure throughout all generations!' Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end."

❖ Is God's character ever liable to change throughout eternity?

— Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 6:17-18; Hebrews 13:18—

❖ Why is God's eternity significant to us?

- 1) He can be trusted
- 2) He is inescapable

D. GOD EXISTS IN TRINITY

— The Importance of this Doctrine—

"Probably no doctrine of the Word of God is more far-reaching in its implications than that of the Trinity. Those who fail to see this and who minimize its importance usually embrace some heresy regarding the two persons—the Second and the Third."

Lewis Sperry Chafer

God is One: There is only one God

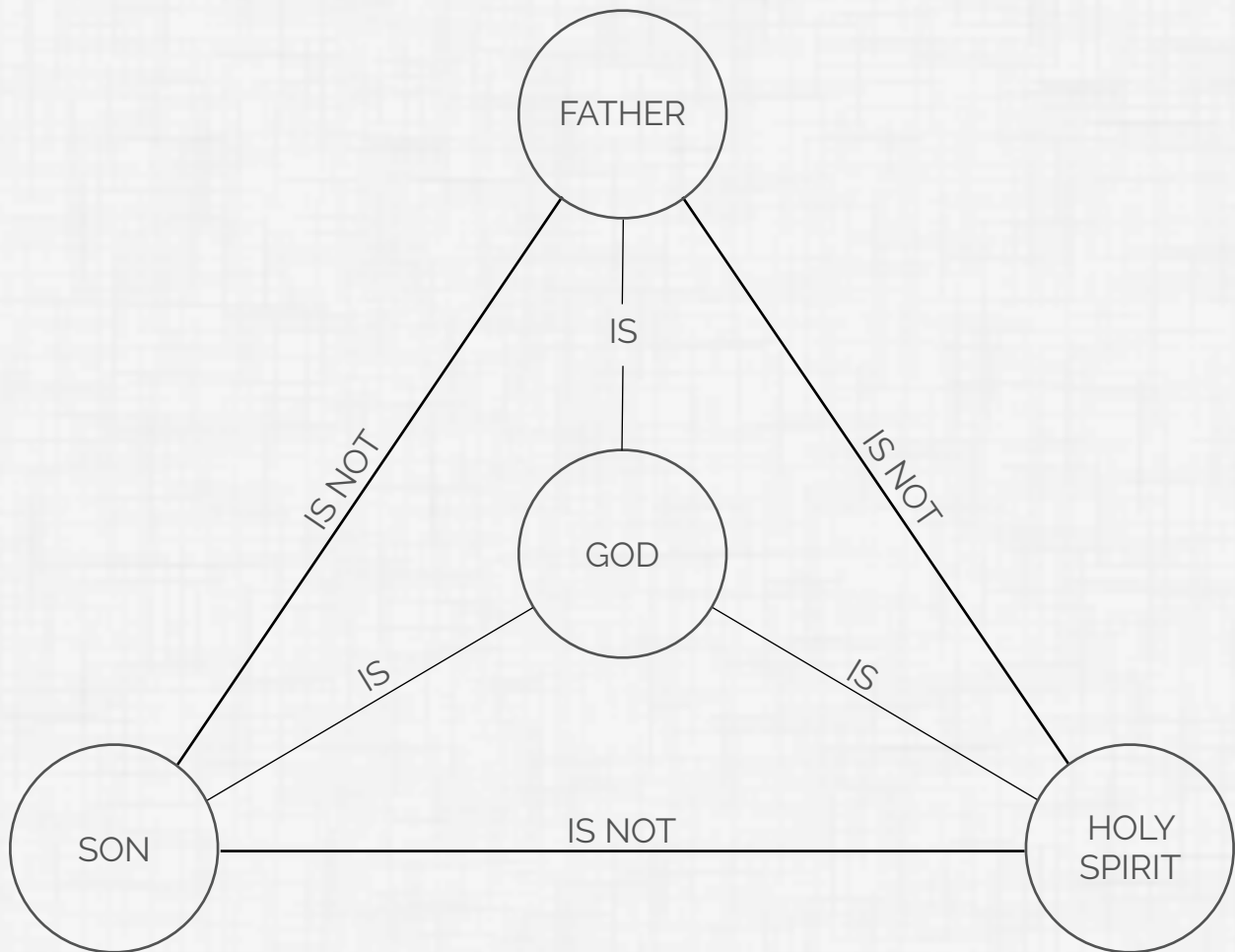
- Deuteronomy 6:4 "Here, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."
- James 2:19 "Your believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder!"

God Exists in Three Persons

- Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"
- Isaiah 48:12, 16 "Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am the Last... Come near Me, hear this: I have spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent me."
- Matthew 3:16 "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
- Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Each of the Three Persons within the Trinity are Coequal and Coeternal

- GOD THE FATHER IS GOD: Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 8:6, 15:23; Ephesians 4:6
- GOD THE SON IS GOD: John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3; etc.
- GOD THE SPIRIT IS GOD: Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; etc.



II. GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

A. SOVEREIGNTY / OMNIPOTENCE

Significance of God's Sovereignty

- The Sovereignty of God is the most fundamental attribute of God and is itself that attribute which enables his other attributes.
 - Some might say that God's love is his foundational attribute, however, if God were not sovereign than there could be competing influences and powers that could thwart his love.
- God's sovereignty ensure, by necessity, the fact that he is all-knowing, all-powerful, and absolutely free.

Evidence.

- 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all."
- Isaiah 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 things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purposes."

Implications of God's Sovereignty

- God's sovereignty guarantees his ultimate and final victory over the forces of evil and Satan.
- God's Sovereignty results in his declarative will.

B. HOLINESS

The holiness of God indicates that he is in every way separate and unaffected by sin. As such, he seeks his own honor and is completely pure and perfect.

♣To what degrees God holy?

—Exodus 15:11—

—James 1:13—

❖ **What is a proper response to Christ's Holiness?**

—Leviticus 19:2—

—Matthew 5:48—

C. RIGHTEOUSNESS / JUSTICE

Meaning

- "Within the original languages, "*righteousness*" and "*justice*" both come from the same root word. Therefore the two ideas must not be detached from one another. God's righteousness means 'God always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right'" (Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 204).

❖ **To what degree is God just and upright?**

—Deuteronomy 32:4—

❖ **Are "Righteousness" and "Justice" essential attributes to the person of God?**

—Psalm 89:14—

❖ **What are the implications of God's righteousness and justice upon our own actions?**

—Galatians 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10—

D. OMNISCIENCE

Omniscience refers to God's ability to know all things perfectly.

God Knows All Things because He Decrees All Things

- God's omniscience is ultimately brought about because of God's sovereignty. God knows all things because he decrees all things to come to pass. Nothing happens outside of God's sovereign will."
- Isaiah 46:9-10 "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purposes."

God Knows All Things because He Sees All things

- Hebrews 4:13 "and no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

♣ In what ways does God know us?

—Psalm 139:1-6—

E. OMNIPRESENCE

God's Omnipresence refers to the fact that God is perfectly present in all points of space at every point of time; that he transcends all limitations of space.

God's Omnipresence is Connected to his Immensity

- 1 Kings 8:27 (Solomon's Dedication for the Temple) "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built."
- Isaiah 66:1 "Thus says the LORD: 'Heaven and earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?'"

♣How does God's omnipresence relate to us

—Psalm 139:7-12—

God's omnipresence assures that there is never a time in which we cannot reach out to him in prayer or experience his presence to guide comfort, or protect.

F. LOVE

Unlike human love, God's love is not subject to passing emotions or change. His love is the ultimate and final expression of love and is complete and perfect in every aspect

How is God's love most clearly demonstrated?

- 1 John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
- Romans 5:8 "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

♣In what ways is God's love applicable to us?

—1 John 4:8—

—1 John 3:16—

G. MERCY, GRACE, PATIENCE

God's mercy, grace, and patience are three specific aspects of God's goodness towards humanity.

— Definitions —

Mercy: mercy is God's goodness toward those in misery and distress

Grace: Grace is God's goodness towards those who deserve only punishment

Patience: Patience is God's goodness in withholding punishment toward those who sin over a period of time

Definitions come from: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 200

Evidence of God's Goodness

- Psalm 145:8-9 "The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made."
- Exodus 33:19 "And he said, 'I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

- Exodus 34:6 "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, The LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

❖ In what ways is God's mercy, grace, and patience applicable to your life?

❖ How have you already seen God's mercy, grace, and patience working in you?

III. HOW CAN I KNOW GOD

— A. W. Tozer—

"A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well... I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God."

❖ **Is God knowable? What does the knowledge of God inevitably result in?**

—John 17:3—

A. GOD IS KNOWABLE THROUGH HIS WORD

God's word exists as his personal self-revelation

PSALM 19:7-11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

B. GOD IS KNOWABLE THROUGH THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

HEBREWS 1:1-2

"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."

JOHN 14:6-7

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'"

JOHN 8:19

"Therefore they said to him, 'Where is your father?' Jesus answered; 'You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.'"

C. GOD IS KNOWABLE THROUGH THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

ACTS 5:30-32

"The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witness to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9

"But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him' —these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

YOU TOO CAN BEGIN TO KNOW GOD TODAY AND BEGIN A
RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM BY TRUSTING IN CHRIST AS
YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR AND PLACING YOUR FAITH IN
HIS REDEEMING WORK ALONE!

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LESSON 4

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

— Charles Spurgeon —

Marvel at this mystery! The Infinite became an Infant!

I. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

By "Deity of Christ," it is specifically meant that Christ is the divine Son of God. For time sake, we assume that Christ is equal to the Father, not subordinate, but possessing all the full attributes and power of God as is sufficiently argued in the Scriptures and confirmed by the teaching of the church.

A. CLAIMS OF DEITY

Scripture proclaims the Deity of Christ

- John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- Colossians 2:9 "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."
- Hebrews 1:3 "He (Christ) is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

♣ In what ways does Titus 2:13 describe Christ?

Christ attested his own Deity

- John 5:18 "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God"
- John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."

B. ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY

Attributes of Christ	
<i>Caveat:</i> The attributes and references included below are not exhaustive but merely sample some of the more important attributes for the purpose of this study.	
Sovereign/Omnipotent	Matthew 28:18
Eternal	John 1:1; 8:58; Revelation 1:8, 17-18
Unchanging (Immutable)	Hebrews 13:8
Holy	Luke 1:35; 4:34; John 6:69

Sinless	2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22-23
All-Knowing (Omniscient)	Mark 2:8; John 2:24; Colossians 2:2b-3
Immortal	Hebrews 7:16

C. DIVINE WORKS

Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the World

- John 1:3 "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."
- Hebrews 1:1-3a "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

Christ Reveals the Father

- John 1:18 "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

Christ's Exercising of Sovereign Power and Authority

1) Matthew 8:23-27 ¹	Power over	_____
2) Luke 4:40	Power over	_____
3) Mark 1:23-26	Power over	_____
4) John 11:43-44 ²	Power over	_____
5) Matthew 14:17-21	Power over	_____
6) Mark 2:3-12	Power to	_____
7) John 17:2	Power to	_____

D. TITLES OF DEITY

"God with Us"	Matthew 1:23
"Son of God"	John 5:17-18; 10:29-33
"Son of Man"	Mark 14:61-64 (cf. Daniel 7:9-14)
"Lord"	Luke 2:11; John 20:28-29; Philippians 2:10-11

¹ Note that the power over the waters is a power directly associated with God in Old Testament passages (Psalm 65:7; 89:9; 107:29).

² Christ also demonstrated power over his own life and death (John 10:17-18).

The "I Am"	John 8:58
The "Image of God"	2 Corinthians; Col 1:15
The "Radiance of the Glory of God"	Hebrews 1:3
The "Alpha and the Omega"	Revelation 1:8; 22:12-13

II. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

A. THE BIBLE TEACHES THE FULL HUMANITY OF CHRIST

The Virgin Birth

Scripture carefully and clearly indicates that Christ was conceived in his mother's womb by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit apart from the agency of a human father, thereby fulfilling the Scriptures

- Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
- Luke 1:35 "And the Angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.'

❖ Doctrinal Importance of the Virgin Birth

- The miraculous nature of the virgin birth attests to the fact that Christ is not only a man, but also the unique God-Man.
- Being without a Father, Christ does not inherit the sinful and guilty nature of mankind. He therefore is a new representative of the human race and of all who would come to him in faith. Being conceived of the Holy Spirit he is called holy, the Son of God.

The Human Weaknesses and Limitations of Christ

HEBREWS 2:17-18

"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when being tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

❖ In what ways was Christ subject to human frailties

1) Luke 2:7

2) Luke 2:40, 52

3) Luke 19:28; Matthew 4:2

4) John 4:6; Luke 23:26

5) Luke 23:46

The Human Emotions of Christ	
Love	Eph 5:2; Mark 10:21; John 11:5
Joy	John 15:11; Luke 10:21
Anger	Matt 21:12-13; Mark 3:5; Mark 10:14
Compassion	Matt 14:13-14; Mark 6:34; Luke 7:11-13
Grief	John 11:35; Hebrews 5:7
Marveled	Matt 8:10
Fear/Sorrow	John 12:27; Matt 26:36-46

B. HOW DOES THE BIBLE DESCRIBE CHRIST BECAME MAN?

Incarnation: The act of God the Son whereby he took to himself a human nature.

He Emptied Himself

PHILLIPIANS 2:5-8

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

- ❖ By "Emptying Himself," this verse refers to that act of Christ whereby he withheld from himself the divine right to exercise the full range of his sovereign and divine attributes while at the same time taking to himself the limitations of a human nature.

He was Born in Subjection to the Law

GALATIANS 4:4-5

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

III. THE WORK OF CHRIST

—Charles Hodges —

We are enlightened in the knowledge of the truth; we are reconciled unto God by the sacrificial death of his Son; and we are delivered from the power of Satan and introduced into the kingdom of God; all of which supposes that our Redeemer is to us at once Prophet, Priest, and King"

(Charles Hodges, *Systematic Theology*, II, p. 461).

A. THE PROPHETIC WORK OF CHRIST

Prophet: A person appointed by God as an inspired teacher, proclaimer of God's will, and as a representative of God before men.

Christ is the Object of Old Testament Prophecies

After Christ rose from the dead he appeared to two of his disciples who were making the small journey to the small village of Emmaus just outside of Jerusalem, though their eyes were kept from recognizing him. While they were walking, the disciples were discussing amongst themselves the events that had occurred in the previous days with relation to the death of Christ that had so disheartened them. Christ's response to these disciples is noteworthy, for it demonstrates that all that had occurred to him was exactly as the Scriptures had foretold.

- Luke 24:25-27 "And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interested to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Christ Fulfills the Divinely Prophetic Role

DEUTERONOMY 18:18

And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.'¹

❖ In what ways was Christ's prophetic office evident in his ministry?

Matthew 7:29

¹ When put alongside Acts 3:23 we see that the Deuteronomy passage had Christ in mind as the fulfillment of this Old Testament prophecy. Christ is that "**Prophet**" to whom the entire Old Testament looked expectantly.

Christ has Revealed the Father

HEBREWS 1:1-3

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

JOHN 14:9

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father?"

❖ **According to the passages above, how has God revealed himself to us? In what ways or to what extent is Christ like the Father?**

B. THE PRIESTLY WORK OF CHRIST

Priest: A person appointed by God in the Old Testament to offer sacrifices, prayers, and praises to God on behalf of all people. This office was fulfilled by Christ, who has become the high priest for all believers.

Christ Alone can Perform the Work of a Priest

Within the scope and context of the Old Testament, the priest not only stood as a representative on behalf of the people before God but he also was the one who carried out the necessary sacrifices for removal of Sin.

It is fitting that since Christ is the only suitable sacrifice for sin, than he too must be the only suitable priest to offer that sacrifice, being that no one greater than himself exists who could offer this sacrifice. Therefore he is not only the sacrifice to be offered but also the offerer of that sacrifice.

- Hebrews 9:11-12 "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.
- Hebrews 10:12 "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God..."

Christ is the Only Suitable Sacrifice for Sin¹

HEBREWS 9:26b

But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 10:11-14

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

❖ What is the result of Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice

— 2 Corinthians 5:21 —

— 2 Corinthians 8:9 —

Christ is the Only Mediator between God and Man

Mediator: The Role that Jesus plays in coming between God and us with the aim of reconciliation, enabling us to come into the presence of God.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...."

HEBREWS 7:25

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."

1 JOHN 2:1

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

¹ According to Scripture animal sacrifices are not sufficient for the removal of sins (Hebrews 10:4)

❖ **How does Christ's mediatorial work affect our standing before the Father**

— Hebrews 10:19-22 —

C. THE KINGLY WORK OF CHRIST

The Source of His Rule

When the angel Gabriel came to reveal to Mary that she would conceive a child by the power of the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Christ, the Son of the living God, it was revealed to her that her child would be a divinely instated king who would fulfill the Davidic Kingly Line.

- Luke 1:32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David."¹

❖ **According to 2 Samuel 7:12-17, what promises did God make to David in regard to the future of his kingdom?**

As a king, Christ has been granted the authority over the kingdom and maintains the necessary attributes and powers necessary to rule that kingdom. According to the passages below, in what ways is Christ equipped to rule as a king? From where did he receive this equipping?

❖ **Matthew 28:18**

❖ **Daniel 7:14**

¹ The reality that Christ's kingdom is of divine origin is further affirmed in Psalm 2:6, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Within this passage, God speaks of the sure reality that his King (Christ) would reign over even the most rebellious of men with divine rule that is inevitable and unable to be usurped.

The Extent of His Rule

Christ's authority as the only divine king is exercised over all spheres of life. Consequently his authority does not merely extend over the church, but over unregenerate man, the entire creation, spiritual forces, and Satan himself.

The Domains of Christ's Authority		
Over the Church	Colossians 1:18	"And he is the head of the body, the church."
Over Creation	Colossians 1:16	"For by him all things were created... all were created through him and for him"
Over Mankind	Philippians 2:9-11	"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
Over Spiritual Forces	1 Peter 3:22	"Who (Speaking of Christ) has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him."
Over the Satan	1 Cor 15:25-26	"For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

The extent of Christ's kingdom is further elaborated by the reality that it is an eternal kingdom as can be seen in the verse below.

ISAIAH 9:6-7

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."

❖ In what ways does the verse above detail that Christ's reign is one that is eternal?

The Realm of His Rule

The realm over which Christ rules is one that is primarily spiritual

- John 18:36 "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.'"

Though the rule of Christ's realm is one that is primarily spiritual, that is not to say that his authority and dominion does not extend over the created physical realm. As can be noted in the passages listed in the table listed on the previous page, Christ's realm extends over all spiritual and physical life.

IN LIGHT OF WHO CHRIST IS, HOW SHOULD WE RELATE TO HIM
AS LORD AND SAVIOR? WHAT PLACE SHOULD WE AFFORD HIM
IN OUR LIVES?

"He is the king of every believing soul. He translates it from the kingdom of darkness. He brings it into subjection to himself. He rules and reigns over it. Every believer recognizes Christ as his absolute sovereign; Lord of his inward, as well as of his outward, life. He yields to Him the entire subjection of the reason, of the conscience, and of the heart. He makes Him the object of reverence, love, and obedience. In Him he trusts for protection from all enemies, seen and unseen. On Him he relies for help in every emergency, and for final triumph. On him the Loyalty of the believer terminates. To acquit himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, to spend and be spent in his service and in the promotion of his kingdom, becomes the governing purpose of his life."

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2. 601.

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LESSON 5

THE HOLY SPIRIT

— Constantinopolitan Creed —

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father,
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the
Prophets...

I. THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

— John 14:16-17 —

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

A. INTELLIGENCE

ROMANS 8:27

"And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

EPHESIANS 1:16-17

"I do not cease to give thanks for you remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him..."

❖ According to the passage above, how is the the Holy Spirit described?

❖ According to 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, what does the Holy Spirit know?

❖ Why is the anointing of the Holy Spirit important for the lives of believers according to 1 John 2:27?

B. EMOTION

The Emotions of the Holy Spirit		
He can be Grieved	Ephesians 4:30	"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

He can consider something good	Acts 15:28	"For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements."
He can be Outraged	Hebrews 10:29	"How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?"

C. VOLITION

Volition refers to the faculty or power of using one's will. To state that the Holy Spirit has volition is to affirm his unique will and the ability to set that will into motion for the accomplishing of his divine proposes.

❖ **According to the verses listed below what aspects of the Holy Spirits' volition and will are put into use. What decisions or judgments are being made by the Spirit?**

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11

Acts 13:2; 16:7

D. ACTIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Actions of the Holy Spirit	
Work in Creation	Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6; Psalm 104:30
Revelation	2 Peter 1:21
Teaches	John 14:26; 16:13; Luke 12:12
Testifies to the Father	John 15:26
Intercedes for the Saints	Romans 8:26
Encourages the Saints	John 14:26
Convicts	John 16:18

II. THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. STATEMENTS AND TITLES OF DEITY

Scripture Affirms the Deity of the Holy Spirit

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

ACTS 5:3-4

"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.'"

Scripture uses Titles for the Holy Spirit that Reaffirm his Deity

According to the passages listed below, what are some of the titles that Scripture attributes to the Holy Spirit

♣ Psalm 51:11

♣ John 14:17; 16:13

♣ 2 Corinthians 3:3

♣ 1 Peter 4:14

B. ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY

Attributes of Deity	
Omniscience	Isaiah 40:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:11-1-2
Omnipresent	Psalm 139:7
Omnipotent	Job 33:4
Eternal	Heb 9:14
Truth	1 John 5:7; John 16:13
Holy	Luke 11:13
Life-Giver	Romans 8:2, 11

C. THE ETERNAL PROCESSION OF THE SPIRIT

JOHN 15:26

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."

JOHN 16:7

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."¹

Eternal Procession of the Spirit : "The eternal procession of the Holy Spirit means that in His being and eternality He is related to the Father and to the Son in that He proceeds from them."

Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit*, 26.

Caveat:

That the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, does not imply that he was a created being. Rather, his procession (that reality that he proceeds from or goes out from the Father) has occurred from eternity past to eternity future. In addition, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit is inferior to the other members of the trinity, but rather stresses the necessary unity that must exist between the three.

¹ Further passages that exhibit the Eternal Procession of the Spirit can be seen below...

Psalm 33:6 "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts."

Psalm 104:3 "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground."

III. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION

"It appears in Scripture that each Person of the Trinity has a role to perform. It was not the work of the Spirit to make atonement but to have a powerful role in bringing about its completion. And until the Lord Jesus had completed His great work, the way was not open for the Holy Spirit to descend and perform His role. But when the Savior had fulfilled His work of salvation and had left the earth, the Spirit carried forward the same plan to apply it to men in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification."

Willard Simmons, *The Biblical Anthology of the Spirit of God*, 253

A. THE REGENERATING WORK

Regeneration Defined: Regeneration refers to the secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us; sometimes called "being born again."

The Holy Spirit Regenerates by Convicting the Unbeliever

JOHN 16:7-8

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment..."

❖ According to the verse listed above, what is the primary work of the Holy Spirit for the unbeliever?

❖ By whom are sinners born into the kingdom of God according to John 3:5-8?

The Holy Spirit works by Imparting New Life

TITUS 3:5

"He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

ROMANS 8:11

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

B. THE BAPTISM AND SEALING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The baptism of the Holy Spirit can also be referred to as the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit where he comes and resides within believers at the time of conversion. The baptism of the holy spirit occurs only once at the time of salvation.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

For in one spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

❖ **According to Romans 8:9, what is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Believer? Is it possible to be a Christian and not indwelt by the Holy Spirit?**

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit

Sealing of the Holy Spirit: "A seal was an ancient device, usually a signet ring or cylinder seal engraved with the owners name or with a particular design, used to seal goods, demonstrate ownership, attest a documents authenticity, or impress an early form of a trademark.

The seal indicated ownership and security. It is the guarantee of future blessings. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is God's promise of our inheritance in the future! What a wonderful assurance."
(Grace Community Church Teaching Curriculum, *Fundamentals of the Faith*, 50).

EPHESIANS 1:13-14

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

❖ **What does the Sealing of the Holy Spirit say about the Guarantee of our Salvation?**

C. THE SANCTIFYING WORK

The Sanctifying Work

Sanctification Defined: The progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.

The sanctification which God brings about in our lives is primarily a work of the Holy Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13

"But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth."

The Signs of the Holy Spirit's Work

According to Galatians 5:22-23 what are the visible signs that the Holy Spirit is Sanctifying one's life?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____

Application to the Believer

❖ What exhortations are given to all believers in regard to the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 4:30

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Ephesians 5:18

Galatians 5:16

D.FURTHER MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Ministries of the Holy Spirit	
Guides Believers through the Word	John 16:13
Empowers us to Carry out the Word	Micah 3:8
Sets Us Apart for Himself	2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; 1 Peter 1:2
Comforts Us	John 14:16-26
Gives Inner Joy	Romans 14:17
Helps us in our Worship of God	John 4:23-224
Directs believers to Christ	John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13
Unifies Believers	Ephesians 4:3

Application

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What significance does this verse have for you?

Is there anything standing in in your way of Glorifying God in this manner?
