

BASICS • Part 1 – The Bible

I. INTRODUCTION – COLOSSIANS 1:28

A. Tom's Story

1. Tom grew up in a Christian home; he, his parents and his two older brothers had gone to church for as long as he could remember
2. When Tom became an adult, he moved out of the area but continued on in the same tradition – attending a church in the same denomination
3. But he never really participated in the life of his church, he just attended at least once a month
4. His knowledge of the bible was really only rudimentary; in fact he never brought his bible with him to church, nor did he read it on his own
5. If anyone asked him what his religion was, Tom said he was a Christian; but if asked anything beyond that he'd be at a loss to give an answer
6. One Saturday morning while mowing the lawn, a couple of well dressed young men came walking down the sidewalk and introduced themselves
7. Their neatly tailored suits and slick leather satchels stood in stark contrast to Tom's tank-top and cut-offs
8. But despite their difference in dress, the two men greeted Tom with genuine warmth
9. They asked him if he had heard the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom
10. He said he thought he had; and asked them what church they were from
11. They replied that they were with the Watchtower organization which Tom had heard of here and there but knew nothing about
12. In his curiosity he asked them what they believed.
13. This was the open door the two Jehovah's Witnesses had been hoping for as they made their way thru the neighborhood over the last hour.
14. They launched into their presentation with passion
15. Tom was impressed; these guys really knew their stuff and used words he'd heard many times before at church, but never delivered with this kind of intensity and excitement
16. Tom told them he went to church – so they asked him some questions about what he believed
17. He had to admit he didn't know, so they told him what they believed.
18. Tom was embarrassed that these young men, who admitted they'd only been Witnesses for a couple years, knew so much when he had gone to church all his life and knew so little.
19. When it came time for them to go, they asked if they could return on Tuesday for another chat.
20. When Tuesday came, Tom found himself looking forward to the conversation
21. This time he had questions – and when the two arrived, they answered every one of them.
22. This time as they left they invited him to their meeting at the new Kingdom Hall

23. Tom went, and found himself warmly greeted
24. A month later, he contacted his parents to tell them he had become a Jehovah's Witness

B. Where the Cults Get Their Converts

1. Tom's story is repeated over and over again
2. Both the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses find the vast majority of their converts from the ranks of those who claim some kind of church affiliation
3. Lesser known cults like The Way, Scientology, and the Religious Sciences also draw most of their new members from mainline and evangelical churches
4. The reason for this is that the mainline denominations and many evangelical churches have not done a very good job of *grounding* their people in the *Truths* of the Christian Faith
5. They've forsaken the hard work of preaching and teaching the Doctrines of Scripture and instead turned the church into a theater of performing arts

C. Why This Series

1. For the next several weeks, we're going to seek to lay a solid foundation of the *core doctrines* that define the Christian Faith
2. There are two reasons why we're doing this:

- 1) It's my duty as Pastor!
 - a. in Colossians 1:28-29 we find these words; Paul says . . .

We preach Jesus Christ, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

- b. Paul knew the day would come when he would stand before God and give account for how he had discharged his call, for how he had performed his ministry
- c. each and every person he had had the privilege of teaching, he would answer to the Lord for
- d. so he spent himself in the faithful proclamation of Jesus Christ and the *whole counsel* of God
- e. one day, I too will stand before God and give account for how I have fulfilled my call and ministry as pastor
 - 1) while I can't live the life *for* you,
 - 2) I must declare the gospel of Christ and the Truth of God
 - 3) more than that, I must endeavor with all that I have to make sure you don't just hear, but *understand* and then put into practice what we look at.
 - 4) just like Paul, I must warn and teach with all the wisdom the Lord gives me
 - 5) I must labor and strive at the tasks of preaching, teaching, prayer, and example so that your heart burns with faithfulness to the Lord
- f. to know that someone sat here week after week for years and then got sucked into some a cult would kill me

- g. please know this – my aim is to present you to the Lord on that day, complete in Christ.
 - h. so, #1, it's my duty as pastor to present you to Christ, well-grounded
 - i. and that lead me to the 2nd point . . .
- 2) You need a solid foundation!
- a. in that same chapter of Colossians, Paul writes in vs. 21-23
- ²¹And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²²in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—²³if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, . . .**
- b. Tom was moved away from the hope of the gospel and became a Jehovah's Witness simply because he wasn't well-grounded in the Bible
 - c. if he had been, he would have known what he was hearing didn't square with the Scriptures, and he would have been able to stand his ground
 - d. a series like this will help ground you in the faith and give you answers to the many cults who prey on the uninformed
 - e. also, we live in a culture that is highly mobile; people move around easily.
 - 1) whether they move from one city to another or from one church to another
 - 2) there's a high degree of mobility
 - 3) we have two military bases in the area – Pt. Mugu and Port Hueneme; so we regularly see people come to stay in the area for 3 or 4 years, and then they are given orders for somewhere else
 - f. what this means is that as I look out here on a Sunday, as our congregation has grown to between 500 and 600 adults, we're all at different stages in our spiritual growth
 - 1) and many of us have never had a chance to take a foundations class
 - 2) we've never been taught a systematic theology of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith
 - 3) again, that's what we're going to do over these next few weeks
 - g. that way, if you should get a job transfer in a year, or new orders to move to Japan or Virginia, you've had a chance to lay a solid foundation for your faith.
 - h. a foundation on which you can build a secure and on-going relationship with God
3. That is why we are including study sheets along with this BASICS series
- a. we want you to not just sit back passively and hear
 - b. we want you to take an active part in your learning and apprehension of this material
 - c. there are times I will ask you to say the verses out loud with me
 - d. I am going to ask as well that you please memorize at least one key verse from each study
 - e. that verse becomes the hook upon which you can remember the entire content of what we look at that day.
4. Keep these sheets in the front of your bible and use them in the future as a

refresher

II. THE BIBLE

A. *First In Our Series*

1. The first subject we are looking at in our BASICS series is *the Bible*
2. The reason for this is that what we believe as Christians comes from the Word of God
3. Now of course, this subject is so broad, we could spend many hours on it
 - a. there are entire college and seminary courses devoted to the theology of Scripture
 - b. today, our concern is limited in scope to dealing with just a couple important issues
 - c. I hope that this just whets your appetite to do more study on your own to see how the Bible was compiled, the evidence for it's reliability, and why Christians believe it as inspired
4. Today, we're going to take a look *The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Scriptures*
5. Next week we'll consider . . .
 - a. The Reliability of Our Modern Bibles - &-
 - b. The Bible As Our *Sole* Authority

B. *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

[TOGETHER]

<p>¹⁶All Scripture <i>is</i> given by inspiration of God, and <i>is</i> profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,</p> <p>¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.</p>
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1. It would be unwise for us to make a claim for the Bible it does not make for itself
 2. But the Apostle Paul is clear in this passage; *All scripture is inspired*
 3. Now, the inspiration he refers to here is not the kind of inspiration the poet feels when he or she writes a sonnet – that's *poetic* inspiration, that's just the feeling of *awe* in the face of something great
 4. The inspiration Paul speaks of here is *divine* inspiration
 5. The word he uses is *theopneustos*; from *theo* – God & *pneuma* – breath
 6. All the scriptures, and of course Paul would have been referring to the OT at this point, were God-breathed
 - a. though God used human scribes, it was His breath and Spirit that animated them as they penned the words
 - b. though God used human instruments to do the writing, what they wrote was of divine, not human origin.
 7. Peter amplifies this in 2 Peter 1:21
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Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

- a. Peter uses the word *prophecy* here in its broadest sense; the context makes it clear that he means *all of scripture*
 - b. he says that the scriptures are *not* a thing of human invention, they didn't come by human will
 - c. they're the result of the Holy Spirit's movement on those who wrote and spoke
8. When we put these 2 passages together we arrive at this conclusion . . .
- a. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that the **Scriptures** were divinely inspired
 - b. 2 Peter 1:21 says the authors were divinely inspired
9. Look again at what Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .

- a. Paul applies the inspiration of God to *all* scripture
- b. the language he uses is precise – “all scripture” means literally, “all the writing” and includes the *very* words themselves
- c. inspiration wasn't just to the level of ideas or thoughts –
- d. it extended all the way to the *selection of the words*
- e. this is why Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 & 18

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

¹⁸Assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

- f. Jesus recognized the divine inspiration not only of the words, but the smallest marks that are used in Hebrew to distinguish one letter from another; we might say the crossing of a “t” or dotting of an “i”
 - g. Remember what Jesus said to the devil in the wilderness when he was tempted to turn the stones into bread, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every WORD that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
10. When the Holy Spirit moved on those who wrote the scriptures, He worked in such a way that they were enlightened personally, and then communicated to others in words that were hand-picked by God Himself.
- a. He didn't turn them in to *automatons*, robots who slipped into some kind of trance-like state and blurted out words or scrawled letters on a parchment
 - b. no, God opened their minds and hearts to understand and then He used their unique personalities to communicate the truths they shared
 - c. this is why we see a definite difference in the writing style and vocabulary of the different books of the Bible – they were penned by different writers
 - d. but even though the literary styles are different – there is an unmistakable unity and theme behind all scriptures that reveals its central author and inspiration is God.
11. A moment ago I said that in 2 Tim. 3:16 Paul was referring to the OT scriptures

when he said they were inspired; what about the NT – does inspiration apply to them too?

12. It certainly does – in 1 Corinthians 2:13 Paul says this . . .

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches . . .

- a. Paul understood this process of divine inspiration
 - b. he had experienced it first hand, and here says that there were times when he spoke and wrote when he knew what he was saying was not of his own ingenuity or wisdom
 - c. he saw himself as a vessel through which God spoke to man
13. The Apostle Peter recognized God's inspiration of Paul; in 2 Peter 3:15 & 16, Peter includes Paul's writings with the rest of scripture
14. There came a point in the history of the Church when the Church Fathers realized there was a need to close the NT and identify those writings that were truly inspired
- a. they gathered and prayerfully established stringent tests for deciding how to determine the divine inspiration of a manuscript
 - b. though there were many candidates, the Fathers found only *these 27 books* that were able to pass the tests
 - c. the 27 books that comprise our NT all possess the same evidence of divine inspiration that mark the 39 books of the OT
15. Your study sheet includes some more information regarding this
16. Let me give a simple proof of this evidence that reveals the divine inspiration of scripture

C. The Unity of the Word of God

1. One of the most powerful proofs for the inspiration of scripture is the *Unity* of the Word of God
2. Let me use an example:
 - a. let's say you didn't age and could live over a period of 2500 years
 - b. during the span of those 2500 years you visit 3 different continents and ask 40 different people, who spoke 3 different languages to write on any subject they chose.
 - c. now of these 40 different people, you picked people of different backgrounds and occupations; a couple fisherman, a doctor, a lawyer, a king, some shepherds, a farmer or two, teachers, and so on
 - d. as far as what they wrote, you tell them they can write about anything; history, poetry, ethical instruction, science, they could even write what they through the future would be like
 - e. now, at the end of that 2500 years, you collect their various musings
 - f. compile it in one volume – tell me, what do you have?
 - g. I'll tell you what you have – an interesting collection of confusion!
3. Yet those are the very factors that comprise the Bible.
 - a. it was written by 40 different writers, over a time span of 2500 years, on Africa, Asia and Europe, in three different languages; Hebrew, Aramaic,

& Greek

- b. these authors came from widely diverse **backgrounds** and cultures and they wrote on a wide range of topics – from **historical** narrative to **predictive prophecy**
- c. yet from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation there is one unifying theme that ties it all together
- d. that theme is **Jesus Christ!**
- e. Jesus Himself said this – He challenged the religious leaders of the day by saying that if they had really understood their Bibles, they would have believed in Him because he was the purpose and theme of the Law and the Prophets
- f. John 5:39

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

4. Anyone who reads the Bible consistently realizes this – Jesus ***IS*** the central message of Scripture
5. Consider this; there are many genealogies given in the bible – in fact, that’s why many people who start reading the bible give up so quickly; they start in a chapter that gives a long list of names and that seems just boring
 - a. but isn’t it interesting that though there are many genealogies in the Bible, the only one that carries on, the only one that’s maintained is the one that leads to Christ
 - b. there are many people in the OT, many families that could have been recorded
 - c. but the only genealogy that carries on is Jesus’
 - d. and don’t forget, the OT was written and closed some 400 years **BEFORE JESUS WAS EVEN BORN!**
6. And that leads us to another very powerful proof for the inspiration of Scripture – Prophecy!

D. Prophecy As Proof

1. One of the proofs of inspiration that cannot be denied is the presence of *predictive prophecy*
2. Both the Old and New Testaments possess passages which foretell future events in stunning detail
3. In fact, one third of all scripture was predictive when it was originally penned!
4. Because of this, it’s been fashionable for the last 200 years for skeptics to deny that the books of the bible were written when they claim to have been written
 - a. because these critics simple *refuse* to believe it’s possible to foretell the future with such clarity,
 - b. they say these prophecies were written *after* the events they describe and then made to look like they were written earlier
 - c. but archaeology and the discovery of many ancient manuscripts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls have all but silenced this argument
5. Consider this:

- a. Jesus fulfilled 61 major OT prophecies in His life and ministry
 - b. and the critic cannot say that he purposely set out to do so because many of them were things he had no control over whatever
 - 1) where he would be born
 - 2) who would betray him
 - 3) how many pieces of silver would be given to betray him
 - 4) where he would be buried
 - 5) how he would be executed, things like that
 - c. now, Jesus fulfilled 61 major OT prophecies of the Messiah
 - d. what's the mathematical probability one man in one lifetime could do so
 - e. this was something Professor Peter Stoner wanted to know, so he applied the rules of mathematical probability to just 8 of the 61 prophecies Christ fulfilled
 - f. he discovered that the chance one man could fulfill just 8 such prophecies in a lifetime was 1 in 10^{17} ; that's a one followed by 17 zeros!
 - g. to give you an idea of just how big this number this is and how utterly beyond coincidence it is;
 - 1) picture the entire state of Texas covered 2 feet deep in silver dollars
 - 2) one and only one of those silver dollars bears a unique mark
 - 3) now, blindfold a man and let him roam the state in search of that marked silver dollar
 - 4) the chance he'll select the right one is the same as Jesus fulfilling just 8 of the prophecies of his life.
 - h. how many major prophecies were there? 61!
6. This example gives solid evidence for both the claims of Jesus and the inspiration of scripture

E. The Inerrancy Of Scripture

1. Let's turn now and deal with the *inerrancy* of the Word of God
2. What we mean by that is that it is **without error**
3. When we say the Bible is *inerrant*, we don't mean that our *modern translations* are perfect
4. We mean that the *original manuscripts*, penned by the original writers were without error
5. We call these original manuscripts the **autographs**.
6. We don't possess the autographs – all we have are copies
7. And as we read our bible in English today, we're reading a **translation** of the numerous copies of copies of copies of the originals
8. As we will see in our study next week, we have every reason to have great confidence that the bible as we possess it today is *incredibly reliable* to the original text as penned by the Old and New Testament writers
9. One of the common objections you'll hear from people when you're trying to

- share your faith is that the Bible is full of errors and contradictions
10. I've always found this to be a fun objection to answer
 - a. first of all, when someone says the bible is full of errors and contradictions I just say, "I've heard that a lot. But tell me, can you give me an example?"
 - b. the blank stare you usually get is pretty funny
 - c. they act as though it is a *settled fact of science* that the bible is full of errors and contradictions & that someone would deny it is equivalent to denying that the earth is round
 11. So I'll usually quickly add that while I've heard that objection a lot, I've yet to find either an *error* or a *contradiction* in scripture
 12. Rather, what I find as I study the bible is the tremendous weight of evidence pointing to its *inspiration and inerrancy*
 13. Many are the one-time critics of the Christian faith who sought to attack it by debunking the Bible
 - a. because they were objective and sincere in their pursuit of truth,
 - b. the deeper they delved into Scripture, the more they were challenged with their own faulty assumptions
 - c. and instead of finding the errors and contradictions they were sure were there, they realized the *internal consistency* and *integrity* of scripture, and ended up becoming convinced believers.
 14. We'll investigate this in greater depth next week.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *The Scriptures Are Profitable*

1. Let's conclude by looking once more at 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17

¹⁶All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2. Because the Bible is inspired and inerrant, it's profitable for you and me
3. It defines the content of what we ought to believe –
4. It shows us what's right and where we are in *relation* to what's right
5. And if we give ourselves to its counsel, then it provides all we need to live successfully

B. *Study!*

1. Let's end this morning by quickly looking at two more passages

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Joshua 1:8 – Memorize this verse – Say It Out Loud With Me!

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

2. The Bible is far more than an ancient collection of myths and legends of by-gone days
3. It is far more than the superstitious folk-lore of a pre-scientific age
4. It's the inspired and inerrant word of the Living God
5. It's living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, able to pierce to the very heart of every matter, and lay bare the depths of the human soul.
6. History reveals that the people God blesses and uses are people who love His word
7. Study the Word, meditate in and on the Word.