

Essentials.

The Biblical basis for the core beliefs of
Christianity.

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Philippians 4.20

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Here are the questions you will be able to answer:

1. Why did God make us?
2. Does it matter how we live?
3. Who is Jesus?
4. Can we trust the Bible?
5. Can we influence God?
6. Can Satan influence us?
7. What is our part in God's plan?

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Lesson Four

Can we trust the Bible?

The Authority of Scripture



4

Here are some ideas and verses we will consider in this lesson:

- Can we trust the Bible?
 - Where did the Bible come from?
 - One author, many writers
 - Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
 - Clay & stylus, papyrus & ink
 - Scribes and check sums
 - Who chose the books?: F.F. Bruce
 - Translations and paraphrases
 - What does the Bible claim?
 - “The Word of the Lord came...”
 - Inspired: 2 Peter 1.20-21
 - Internal affirmations
 - Daniel affirms Jeremiah: Daniel 9.1-2
 - David affirms his writings: 2 Sam 23.1-2
 - Moses affirms his writings: Deut 4.2
 - Paul affirms OT: Galatians 3.16
 - Paul affirms NT: Ephesians 3.2-5
 - Peter affirms Paul: 2 Peter 3.15-16
 - It is penetrating: Hebrews 4.12
 - Always effective: Isaiah 55.8-11
 - God-breathed: 2 Timothy 3.14-17
 - It stands forever: Isaiah 40.8
 - What did Jesus say of the Bible?
 - It is above history: Matthew 5.18
 - It is God’s word: Matthew 22.31-32
 - Spirit-inspired: Matthew 22.42-44
 - It is about Him: Luke 24.44
 - Can it be confirmed?
 - The Spirit: 1 Corinthians 2.12-14
 - Prophecy confirms: Daniel 9.20-26
- Third parties confirm
 - Jews on Jesus: Mishnah & Talmuds
 - A Roman on Jesus: Tacitus
 - Josephus on John: Antiquities
 - Josephus on Jesus: Antiquities
 - Josephus on Agrippa: Antiquities
 - Scripture on Agrippa: Acts 12.18-23
- Archeology confirms
 - Jericho
 - David
 - Dead Sea Scrolls
 - www.christian.edu
- History confirms
 - The census: Luke 2.1
 - 2 B.C.: 25th & 750th anniversaries!
 - The Star
- Interpreting the Bible
 - History, poetry, prophecy, wisdom?
 - Who, to whom, when, why?
 - Get the whole Word on a subject
 - Interpret obscure by the clear
 - Example: 1 Corinthians 15.29
 - Example: Acts 17.23
- God’s people love God’s word
 - We delight in it: Psalms 19.9-11
 - We memorize it: Psalms 119.11
 - We obey it: Luke 6.46-49
 - It works in us: 1 Thessalonians 2.13
 - It is our life: Deuteronomy 32.44-47

+ Can we trust the Bible?

+ Where did the Bible come from?

- One author, many writers
- Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
- Clay & stylus, papyrus & ink
- Scribes and check sums

+ Who chose the books?: *F.F. Bruce*

- From *The New Testament Documents*: “One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon
- because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa—at Hippo Regius in 393
- and at Carthage in 397—but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.”

+ Translations and paraphrases

- NIV: easy reader, untrustworthy
- KJV: majestic, obscure, dated
- NKJV: poetic, updated for accuracy
- NASB: most accurate, stilted
- RSV, RKJV, CEV, etc: avoid
- Best paraphrase: J.B. Phillips

+ What does the Bible claim?

+ “The Word of the Lord came...”

- 1 The words of Jeremiah... to whom the word of the LORD came...
1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea... to Micah... to Joel... to Zephaniah...
Jeremiah 1.1-2, Hosea 1.1, Micah 1.1, Joel 1.1, Zephaniah 1.1

+ Inspired: 2 *Peter 1.20-21*

- 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

+ Internal affirmations

- + Daniel affirms Jeremiah: *Daniel 9.1-2*

- 1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom--
 - 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.
- + David affirms his writings: *2 Samuel 23.1-2*
- 1 These are the last words of David: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs: 2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.
- + Moses affirms his writings: *Deuteronomy 4.2*
- 2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.
- + Paul affirms OT: *Galatians 3.16*
- 16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.
- + Paul affirms NT: *Ephesians 3.2-5*
- 2 Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.
 - 4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.
- + Peter affirms Paul: *2 Peter 3.15-16*
- 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.
 - His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.
- + It is penetrating: *Hebrews 4.12*
- 12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- + Always effective: *Isaiah 55.8-11*
- 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
 - 10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
 - 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

+ God-breathed: *2 Timothy 3.14-17*

- 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ
- Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

+ It stands forever: *Isaiah 40.8*

- 8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands for ever."

+ **What did Jesus say of the Bible?**

+ It is above history: *Matthew 5.18*

- 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

+ It is God's word: *Matthew 22.31-32*

- 31 But about the resurrection of the dead--have you not read what God said to you, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

+ Spirit-inspired: *Matthew 22.42-44*

- "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'"

+ It is about Him: *Luke 24.44*

- 44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

+ **Can it be confirmed?**

+ The Spirit: *1 Corinthians 2.12-14*

- 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in
- spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

+ Prophecy confirms: *Daniel 9.20-26*

- 20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-- 21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight
- about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you,

- for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: 24 "Seventy `sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness,
 - to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. 25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One,
 - the ruler, comes, there will be seven `sevens', and sixty-two `sevens'. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two `sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.
 - The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.
- + Third parties confirm
- + Jews on Jesus: *Mishnah & Talmuds*
 - Jesus was a transgressor in Israel, practised magic, scorned the words of the wise, led the people astray, said he had not come to destroy the law but add to it. He was hanged on Passover Eve for heresy and misleading the people. His disciples healed the sick in his name.
 - + Tacitus on Jesus: *The Annals*
 - Consequently, to get rid of the report [that he had torched Rome], Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the
 - extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things
 - hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred
 - against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.
 - Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle... even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being
 - destroyed.
 - + Josephus on John: *Antiquities*
 - "Now some of the Jews thought that Herod's army had been destroyed by God, and that it was a very just penalty to avenge John, surnamed the Baptist. For Herod had killed him, though he was a good man, who bade the Jews practice virtue, be just one to another
 - and pious toward God, and come together in baptism. He taught that baptism was acceptable to God provided that they underwent it not to procure remission of certain sins, but for the purification of the body, if the soul had already been purified by righteousness.

- And when the others gathered round him (for they were greatly moved when they heard his words), Herod feared that his persuasive power over men, being so great, might lead to a rising, as they seemed ready to follow his counsel in everything. So he thought it much
- better to seize him and kill him before he caused any tumult, than to have to repent of falling into such trouble later on, after a revolt had taken place. Because of this suspicion of Herod, John was sent in chains to Machaerus, the fortress which we mentioned above, and
- there put to death. The Jews believed that it was to avenge him that the disaster fell upon the army, God wishing to bring evil upon Herod.”

+ Josephus on Jesus: *Antiquities*

- “And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvellous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had
- condemned him to the cross on his impeachment by the chief men among us, those who loved him at first did not cease; for he appeared to them the third day alive again, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of
- other wonderful things about him; and even now the tribe of Christians, so named after him, has not yet died out.”

+ Josephus on Agrippa: *Antiquities*

- “When Agrippa had reigned three full years over all Judea, he came to the city of Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato’s Tower. There he exhibited shows in honor of Caesar, inaugurating this as a festival for the emperor’s welfare. And there came together to it a
- multitude of the provincial officials and of those who had been promoted to a distinguished position. On the second day of the shows he put on a robe all made of silver, of altogether wonderful weaving, and arrived in the theatre at
- break of day. Then the silver shone as the sun’s first rays fell upon it and glittered wonderfully, its resplendence inspiring a sort of fear and trembling in those who gazed upon it. Immediately his flatterers called out from the various
- quarters, in words which in truth were not for his good, addressing him as a god, and invoking him with the cry, “Be propitious! If hitherto we have revered thee as a human being, yet henceforth we confess thee to be superior to mortal
- nature.” The king did not rebuke them, nor did he repudiate their impious flattery. But looking up soon afterwards he saw the owl sitting on a rope above his head, and immediately recognized it as a messenger of evil as it had formerly
- been a messenger of good, and a pang of grief pierced his heart. There came also a severe pain in his belly, beginning with a violent attack... So he was carried quickly into the palace, and the news sped abroad among all that he
- would certainly die before long... And when he had suffered continuously for five days from the pain in his belly, he departed this life in the fifty-fourth year of his age and the seventh of his reign.”

+ Scripture on Agrippa: *Acts 12.18-23*

- 18 In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him,
- he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. 20 He had been quarrelling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and
- sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. 21 On the appointed day Herod,
- wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord
- struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

+ Archeology confirms

- Jericho
- David
- Dead Sea Scrolls
- www.christian.edu

+ History confirms

- The census: *Luke 2.1*: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.
- 2 B.C.: 25th & 750th anniversaries!

+ The Star

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+ **Interpreting the Bible**

- History, poetry, prophecy, wisdom, instruction?
- Who, to whom, when, why?
- Get the whole Word on a subject
- Interpret obscure by the clear

+ Example: *1 Corinthians 15.29*

- Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptised for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptised for them?

+ Example: *Acts 17.23*

- 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

+ **God's people love God's word**

+ We delight in it: *Psalms 19.9-11*

- 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring for ever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. 11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

+ We memorize it: *Psalms 119.11*

- 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

+ We obey it: *Luke 6.46-49*

- 46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.
- When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.
- The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

+ It works in us: *1 Thessalonians 2.13*

- 13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

+ It is our **life**: *Deuteronomy 32.44-47*

- 44 Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. 45 When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. 47 They are not just idle words for you--they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

+ **Silly stuff**

+ Center of the Bible

- Shortest chapter in the Bible? Answer - Psalms 117
- Longest chapter in the Bible? Answer - Psalms 119
- Center of the Bible? Answer - Psalms 118bb

- 594 chapters before Psalms 118
- 594 chapters after Psalms 118
- Add these numbers up and you get 1188.
- Center verse in the Bible? Answer - Psalms 118:8