

# Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

Doctrine of the Bible Part 1: Revelation, Inspiration,  
Characteristics of Scripture

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# Logic 101 and the problem of unbelief

**Unbelievers accuse Christians of a circular argument**

- **The Bible says it is the inerrant word of God.**
- **Therefore, the Bible is the inerrant word of God.**

**Notice that this is a statement of fact not a logical argument.**

# Biblical Logic 101

**For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, Hebrews 6:13**

**Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14**

# Logic 101 and the problem of unbelief

**Unbelievers make the following fallacious argument**

- **The Bible contains miracles.**
- **Miracles are scientifically impossible.**
- **Therefore, the Bible is not true.**

# God is incomprehensible

Incomprehensible means we will never be able to fully understand God **BUT** it does not mean we cannot understand God at all.

- God has made us in God's image but we are not God.
- We can know God not just facts about God.
- We can never know too much or everything about God.
- God made us in God's image so that he could reveal himself to us.

# General Revelation

- 1. Creation is available to all people in the world. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Psalm 19:1**
  - Mediate general revelation – it comes through the medium of creation.
- 2. God reveals himself inwardly to everyone via a conscience by general revelation. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them. Romans 2:15**
  - Immediate general revelation – comes directly to our souls from God

General revelation wipes away the excuse that God has failed to provide sufficient evidence of his existence *BUT* it cannot save.

**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 his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, Romans 1:18-22**

# Special Revelation

- 1. Not everyone receives Special revelation**
- 2. In OT times God sometimes spoke directly to people, through dreams, signs, casting of lots, Urim and Thummim, and theophanies.**
- 3. God primarily communicated with the people of Israel through the prophets.**
  - Divinely called**
  - Ministry was authenticated by miracles**
  - Fulfillment of their prophecies**



# Special Revelation in the New Testament

1. **Apostles (NT equivalent of the OT prophet):** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, Ephesians 2:20
2. **The Incarnate Word:** 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. Hebrews 1:1-2
3. **The written Word**

# The Word of God

- 1. Jesus Christ: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1**
- 2. God's Decrees: And God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." Genesis 1:3**
- 3. God's Personal Address to People: And the LORD God commanded the man, saying "You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but.....Genesis 2:16**
- 4. God's Written Word: The Bible**

# Inspiration

**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 2Timothy 3:16**

**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26**

**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 2 Peter 3:16-17**

# Four Characteristics of Scripture:

## 1. **Authority** *sola scriptura*

**“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the Pope or councils, alone since it is well known that they have erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me. Amen.”** *Martin Luther @ the Diet of Worms 1521*

***Though the Scriptures reflect the personalities, vocabularies, and concerns of the human authors and are not merely dictation, they were not written by human power but rather superintended by God.***

# Four Characteristics of Scripture:

## 2. Clarity

- **The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is not written in a secret code but such that its teachings are understandable by all true believers.**
- **Clarity does not mean every one will agree on the meaning.**
  1. **We are fallen and err.**
  2. **We have preconceptions and try to make Scripture say what seems right to us.**
  3. **Scripture is silent on some issues.**

# Four Characteristics of Scripture:

## 3. Necessity

- **The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for:**
  - 1. Knowing the Gospel**
  - 2. Maintaining spiritual life**
  - 3. Knowing God's will**

# Four Characteristics of Scripture:

## 4. Sufficiency

- **The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Scriptures contain all the words of God that he intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for:**
  - 1. salvation**
  - 2. obeying him perfectly**
  - 3. trusting him perfectly**