

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Scripture (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on Scripture reads as follows:

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

2. This statement is derived from various passages in the Bible. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Psalm 19:7-10.
- B. Matthew 5:17-18.
- C. 2 Timothy 3:15-16.
- D. 2 Peter 1:19-21.

3. There are five major emphases in this statement:

- A. Revelation: Scripture is God's revelation of Himself and divine instruction to mankind.
- B. Inerrancy: Scripture is truth without any mixture of error.
- C. Sufficiency: Scripture is sufficient as the center of Christian unity.
- D. Authority: Scripture is the final standard by which all things are to be tried.
- E. Christ-focused: Scripture is a testimony that points to Christ.

4. The BFM 2000 differs from the BFM 1963 in a few spots.

- A. The 2000 adds the line “*Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy*” after “*truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.*” The 1963 did not contain any statement on the trustworthiness of Scripture.
- B. The 2000 changes the last line of the statement. It went from “*The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ*” to “*All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.*” In the 1963 edition Jesus is the interpretive grid through which the Bible is to be read. The 2000 edition makes Jesus the goal, the aim, the focus of the Bible.

Let's talk: Do you think these changes matter? If so, why?

5. This statement about the Bible stands at the beginning of the BFM 2000 for a reason. The Bible must inform everything we believe. Whether it's our beliefs about God, Jesus, the church, society, or the last days, God's Word must be the final and ultimate authority.

Let's talk: What happens if the Bible is not the final authority in the life of the church?

LBC | Bible Basics 101: God/God the Father (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on God/God the Father reads as follows:

God: *There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.*

God the Father: *God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.*

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Deuteronomy 6:4: There is **one** God.
- B. Isaiah 43:3: God is **Savior**.
- C. 2 Corinthians 13: 14: God is **three** in **one**.
- D. 1 Timothy 1:17: God is **sovereign**, **divine**, **unique**, and worthy of praise.

3. The BFM's statement on God falls in line with most other denominational statements that identify as Evangelical and Protestant. In other words, there is nothing distinctly "Baptist" about it. It does, though, exclude two ideas that are embraced by fringe movements. Let's talk about both of them.

A. Oneness Pentecostalism. OP denies the **Trinity** and instead teaches that God is a **single** person who manifests Himself through different personalities. You might think of this belief system along these lines: God manifested Himself in the Old Testament as **Father**, in the ministry of Jesus as **Son**, and now in the church as the **Spirit**. This belief is countered in the BFM 2000 with these words: *The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.* The word "triune" was added into the BFM 2000.

B. Open Theism. OT denies that God exhaustively **knows** the future. The future is "open" to Him and because of this He **learns** as time goes on. In an effort to try and protect the principle of human freedom God, OT teaches that God takes **risks** and adapts His plans to our decisions. This belief is countered in the BFM 2000 with these words: *God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.*

Questions: *Are there any practical consequences to believing in either OP or OT? How should we think about relating to these movements? Can we agree to disagree over OP and OT or are these ideas in a different category than those things we agree to disagree over?*

LBC | Bible Basics 101: God the Son (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on God the Son reads as follows:

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.

He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Isaiah 53:1-12: Jesus would come to be a suffering servant.
- B. Romans 1:1-4: Jesus is the subject of prophecy, the Son of David, and is both God and man.
- C. 1 Corinthians 1:30: Jesus is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.
- D. Hebrews 1:1-4: Jesus is God's revelation, God's Son, upholding the universe, and our High Priest.

3. There is one change from the BFM 1963 to the BFM 2000 that seems slight. Yet, when you consider what it changes it is very important.

The BFM 2000 adds the words “*taking upon Himself human nature*” to the sentence “*Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin.*”

What difference does the addition of these words make, if any?

4. There is a lot packed into this article. A few important ideas need to be pointed out. They are as follows:

- A. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Jesus did not become Son of God at His birth or at His baptism.
- B. Jesus was born of a virgin. The virgin birth is a fundamental belief of the Christian faith.
- C. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law of God. He did more than just die a substitutionary death.
- D. Jesus is the one and only mediator. He does not co-mediate with anyone.
- E. Jesus is Lord, not just in a general sense, but in a very personal way for every believer. As a general rule, Southern Baptists believe in Lordship salvation.

LBC | Bible Basics 101: God the Spirit (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on God the Spirit reads as follows:

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. 2 Peter 1:20-21: The Holy Spirit inspired men to write Scripture.
- B. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16: The Holy Spirit illuminates men and women to understand Scripture.
- C. John 3:1-21: The Holy Spirit is the acting agent in bringing about the new birth.
- D. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: The Holy Spirit bestows gifts for the good of the church.

One way to think about how the Holy Spirit works is to say that He operates in relation to **God's Word** (inspiration and illumination), **God's World** (conviction and new birth) and **God's People** (spiritual gifts). It is important to note that He has a distinct role in God's plan for the ages.

3. A few things need to be highlighted in this clause on the Holy Spirit...

- A. There is a difference between inspiration and illumination. Inspiration was a unique work of the Spirit in the lives of those men who authored Scripture. Illumination is a general work of the Spirit in the heart of every believer. The Spirit's work of inspiration was foundational to the formation of God's Word. His work of illumination is foundational to the formation of every follower of Jesus.
- B. The new birth is absolutely necessary for a person to enter the kingdom of God. It is not something that we do to ourselves. It is something done to us. Yes, we must believe and repent to enter the kingdom, but we do not have the power or authority to bring about the new birth. It is a unique work of the Spirit.
- C. The Spirit gives gifts to the church to further the mission of the church. Sometimes we see the simple usage of our gifts as the purpose for having them. God desires that we use them, but also that we use them for the purpose of ministering the Word to those inside and outside the church. So a question we need to constantly be asking is "How can we use my gifts to further the mission of the church?"

4. The BFM 2000's clause on the Spirit is actually pretty broad in that most other Christian denominations would agree with it. There is one exception and it has to do with Spirit baptism.

*All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry. **This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth.** AOG Statement.*

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Man (BFM 2000)

1. The article in the BFM 2000 on man reads as follows:

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Genesis 1:26-30: God created man both male and female.
- B. Psalm 8:4-5: Man is the crowning work of God's creation.
- C. Romans 3:23: Man has fallen and continues to fall short of God's glory.
- D. Ephesians 2:1-3: Man is, by nature, under the wrath of God.

3. There are a few things that need to be pointed out in this statement. They are as follows:

- A. This statement connects gender to the goodness of creation. In other words, gender and gender roles were part of the created order before sin entered the picture. Any deviation from the male and female biological paradigm is directly, and possibly indirectly, a result of the fall. This point was added to the BFM 2000.
- B. While this statement does not directly address the issue of evolution most Southern Baptists are opposed to the teaching formulated by Charles Darwin. Evolutionary ideas were present in the convention a few decades ago due to the presence of liberal ideas in our seminaries. Due to the movement we call the Conservative Resurgence those who held to those ideas are no longer teaching in our schools.
- C. Southern Baptists believe that God must show grace to an individual before they can repent and believe the gospel. Due to man's sinful nature, grace must first be offered to an individual before they exercise faith. In other words, without the grace of God no man can approach Jesus for salvation. The issue of whether this grace can be resisted will be taken up later on in our study.
- D. The last full sentence of our statement talks about the sacredness of human life. It is sacred because every human is born image of God. One thing the BFM 2000 does not address is the death penalty. Even though a resolution was passed in 2000 on capital punishment there is still not a consensus on the issue.

4. We are living in a day and age in which the Biblical teaching on man is being attacked especially in the area of sexuality. Therefore...

- A. We must hold tightly to and proclaim God's truth.
- B. We must be intentional in how we minister God's Word to those who need grace.

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Salvation Part 1 (BFM 2000)

1. The first half of the article in the BFM 2000 on salvation reads as follows:

***Salvation** involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.*

*A. **Regeneration**, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.*

*B. **Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.*

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. John 3:36: One must believe in Jesus to receive everlasting life.
- B. Acts 4:38: One must repent of their sins to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Acts 4:12: Jesus is the only way by which salvation is obtained.
- D. Romans 5:1-2: One is justified by faith in Christ.

3. There are a few things to be pointed out in the above article:

A. The opening paragraph presents to us the exclusiveness of the gospel. In other words, this statement makes clear the point that one must know and believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. This idea excludes universalism which teaches that all people will eventually be redeemed regardless of how they respond to Jesus while on earth. It also excludes the idea of the "anonymous Christian." This idea suggests that a person can follow Jesus having never heard of Him or responded to Him in faith. As long as they have responded favorably to the "light they have" they are in good standing with God. Southern Baptists believe in and uphold the exclusiveness of Jesus and His gospel.

B. Justification is an oft over-looked teaching that needs to be highlighted more than it is. To be justified means to be made right with God. This "rightness" is based upon the righteousness of Christ being imputed to you. Justification does not make us righteous. Rather, it pronounces us righteous. This is why some people call this grace an "alien righteousness." Southern Baptists believe that man is justified by faith alone. Justification does not come through good works or through any act such as baptism.

How should these truths shape our ministry as LBC?

LBC | Bible Basics 101: Salvation Part 2 (BFM 2000)

1. The second half of the article in the BFM 2000 on salvation reads as follows:

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

2. There are a number of passages upon which the above statement is based. Here is a sampling of references:

- A. Galatians 2:20: The sanctified life is one of being joined to Christ and living by faith.
- B. Galatians 5:16-17: The sanctified life is one of walking in the Spirit by the power of the Spirit.
- C. Philippians 2:12-13: The sanctified life is one in which the believer works as God works in him.
- D. Titus 2:11-14: The sanctified life is one that is saturated in grace, marked by discipline, and aimed at godliness.
- E. Romans 8:29-30: The final goal of the sanctified life is glorification.

3. There are a few things to be pointed out in the above article:

- A. Sanctification is an act of God whereby He sets an individual apart at the moment that individual experiences the new birth. It is a divine act on God's part of transferring them from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of Jesus. See Colossians 1:13. Sanctification then is an act that takes place the moment an individual repents of their sin and believes on Jesus. They are instantaneously set apart.
- B. Sanctification is also a process of becoming more and more like Jesus. This is often how we use the term. This process begins the moment a person believes on Jesus and continues until they go to be with Him or He comes back for them. This process is one in which both the Spirit of God and the individual are at work. There is a progressive nature to this aspect of sanctification.
- C. The process of sanctification is marked by both victory and defeat. One will never gain complete victory over sin this side of glory. To put this in terms of Galatians 5, the flesh and the Spirit will always be in conflict with one another.
- D. Sanctification is also a process that should be marked by a growth in maturity. God intends that an individual grow in grace throughout their lifetime. In other words, there should be some kind of steady progression in the sanctified life.
- E. Southern Baptists tend to reject any kind of perfectionist teaching or Higher Life teaching.

4. The BFM 2000 does not go into detail as to how an individual grows in grace. Here are some things to keep in mind...

- A. Growth in grace happens as we walk by faith.
- B. There is a personal aspect to growing in grace.
- C. There is also a corporate aspect to growing in grace.