

English Transcript

Foundations of the Christian Faith – Course 1

Lesson 2 The Bible (Part 2)

Welcome back to Foundations of the Christian Faith, Course 1, continuing in Lesson 2, part 2 of the Doctrine of the Bible. We will discuss four more doctrines related to Special Revelation: Clarity, Illumination, Sufficiency, and the Necessity of the Bible.

This lesson begins on page 14 in your handout. **The first topic is the Clarity of the Bible.**

By clarity we mean that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings can be understood by all who read it, seeking God's help through the Holy Spirit and being willing to follow it. Believing the Scriptures are clear does not mean that every part is equally easy to interpret. Neither does it mean we will never make mistakes in our interpretation. It does mean that with God's help, people can understand the biblical text for themselves as they employ proven methods of interpretation.

So, when we think of clarity of the Bible, the word for us to attach to that is the word "Clear." You can see the picture of the Bible with a light bulb. This picture illustrates that God has revealed himself to us through the Bible and He is not hiding himself. There are two passages that help us gain a better understanding of this doctrine.

Turn to Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

"Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?' No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it."

Notice that the apostle Paul references this passage in Romans 10:5-17 when speaking about the clarity of the gospel that is available to all who have ears to hear. God is not far off. You do not need travel up to the heavens or down to the depths to find God. Moses and Paul both affirm the Word of God is near and clear.

Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

The saving message of Christ is plainly taught in Scripture and can be understood by all who have ears to hear it. We do not need an official religious magisterium or councils to tell us what the Bible means.

The clarity of the Bible is also seen in the widespread Christian recognition of the inspired books of the Bible. This is called the canonicity of the Bible. Certain books were universally recognized as belonging to the canon as books belonging in the Bible. The canon of the Old Testament was universally recognized before the time of Jesus.

The New Testament canon has been widely recognized among believers long before the fourth century. The doctrine of the Clarity of the Bible working in concert with these other doctrine of Special Revelation show that ordinary people using ordinary means can accurately understand enough of what must be known, believed, and observed for them to be faithful Christians.

On page 15 we continue with the doctrine of the Illumination of the Bible.

Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and our wisdom and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through the process that we call illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not rely upon human reason in the process of interpretation, nor do we rely solely upon an institution or a body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Holy Spirit of God, who illuminates the Scriptures in our heart and mind.

Jesus provides some of the richest and encouraging teaching related to the role of the promised Holy Spirit in John chapters 14, 15 and 16. The Holy Spirit is the Counselor. He is the one who will teach us and lead us into all truth. Jesus said that after His ascension, the Holy Spirit would not just be with believers, but He would permanently indwell each of us.

The key passage for this doctrine of Illumination will be 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Please follow along as I read this passage and listen for the words that speak about understanding the truth the Word of God. Listen for words such as "understood," "understand," and "comprehend," that are repeated five times in this one passage. The illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit relates to helping believers understand the spiritual truths found in the Word of God. In addition, listen for references to wisdom, revelation and interpretation connected to the Word of God through the Holy Spirit.

*"Yet among the mature, we do **impart wisdom**, although it is not a **wisdom** of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden*

wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age **understood** this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written,

‘What no eye has seen, nor ear has 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. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him? So also, no one **comprehends** the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 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. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has **understood** the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor 2:6-16)*

The Bible is not just a book; it is a spiritual book. It is filled with spiritual truths, and we need God's helps to understand spiritual truth because these truths are not discerned through natural, human wisdom and reasoning. We need the indwelling Spirit of God.

Notice that the picture I have provided to illustrate this doctrine is an open Bible with the image of a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, shining the light of understanding over the Word of God as we read, study, meditate, and memorize it.

When we put our trust in Jesus, the Spirit of God indwells every believer. This passage affirms that we have not received the spirit of the world, but rather we have received the Spirit who is from God, so that we can understand spiritual truths. God is not hiding himself from us. He has revealed himself to us and God wants us to understand the truth of his Word and the grow in relationship with Him.

In this lesson we have seen that the Bible is meant to be clear and it is intended to be understood, through what we refer to as the illumination of the Spirit of God.

Continue with me to the top of page 16.

- The Holy Spirit is the teacher, and His presence in each believer's life guarantees the availability of this ministry to all believers.
- Unbelievers, those without the Holy Spirit, cannot experience this ministry. Even though they may achieve a level of understanding of the Bible, they consider what they know to be foolishness (1 Cor 2:14) without the Spirit of God.
- Carnality in the life of a believer (this is when we live more like people of the world, not yielding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our life) can quench or resist the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our life.
- The Holy Spirit can use those who have the gift of teaching to conduct His ministry.

- The Holy Spirit illuminates the meaning of the Bible through the hearing, reading, study, meditation, and memorization of the Word of God.
- Study employs all the proper tools for understanding the meaning of the text of scripture. Meditation causes us to think about the truth of the text and applying them in our lives.
- The result of the illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God is to glorify Christ and promote healthy doctrine that brings spiritual health and wholeness to the believer's life, producing Christlikeness.

That is a concise summary of the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of Illumination.

The next doctrine of the Bible related to Special Revelation is the Sufficiency of the Bible.

Wayne Grudem defines the sufficiency of scripture as follows:

“The sufficiency of scripture means that scripture contains all the words God intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting him and obeying him perfectly.”

A key passage for me to illustrate this doctrine is 2 Peter 1:3-4.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these, he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

The key word I will highlight for the Sufficiency of the Bible is the word “Enough.”

The picture for Sufficiency on page 16 is like the one I used for Clarity. There is an open Bible with a light shining on it. The Word of God is meant to be “Clear.” With the illumination of the Bible through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God can be “Understood” as spiritual truth. Based on the Clarity and Illumination of the Bible, it is “Enough.” The Bible provides enough to know how to be saved and to live for God.

- The sufficiency of Scripture helps to keep tradition in its place.
- We are careful not to add or subtract from the Word of God because the word of God provides what we need for salvation and for life in relationship with God.
- The sufficiency of scripture leads us to expect that the Bible will be relevant to all areas of life. We have been given everything we need for life and godliness. All of Scripture is God-breathed and it is useful in many different ways, so we will be fully equipped for every good work that God has for us.
- The sufficiency of Scripture also invites us to open the Bible and hear directly from God.

There is an activity on page 17 that you can complete on your own. I selected a number of topics and included a few Scriptures that speak to each topic. This activity is meant to

illustrate how God's Word provides everything we need for the knowledge of salvation and godly living. There is no need for new revelation from heaven.

Some may ask, if the Bible contains everything we need to know God and live for Him, then what is the value of these other sources of input to our lives?

- **Godly Counsel?**
Godly counsel is encouraged in the Bible. But any counsel we receive must be filtered through the Word of God.
- **Sermons and Bible classes?**
These are wonderful in support of our spiritual training. But we should always be like the Bereans. We must search the Scripture to confirm that everything we hear is aligned with the truth of the Word of God. The Bible is our standard, not a favorite teacher, not a favorite pastor. There is also much false teaching, only a click away on the internet.
- **Our Consciences?**
If soft and tuned to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, our conscience is an immense help. But the Scriptures also warn us about consciences that can become hard and seared because of unrepentant sin.
- **Our Feelings?**
Our feelings can come and go. Our feelings can be godly or self-centered. We should not look to make spiritual decisions based on how we feel but rather on the truth of God's Word.
- **The leading of the Holy Spirit?**
The Holy Spirit will only speak to us or lead us in alignment with the Word of God. The Holy Spirit is God, and He cannot lie and He will not contradict Himself.
- **Circumstances?**
God has and continues to speak through circumstances and events of life.

Again, as with all these examples, these are all relevant ways that we might hear from God. We must always evaluate everything against the Word of God.

The Word of God is sufficient. The Word of God gives us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him.

And the final doctrine point relative to Special Revelation in this lesson deals with the Necessity of the Bible.

This is just a short principle.

- The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book.

- As of early 2026, the full Bible has been translated into 776 languages, the New Testament into 1,798 languages, and portions of Scripture into a total of 4,007 languages.
- The Bible is the most widely published and read book in history.

But why is it so important? Why do we need the Bible?

The Bible is “Essential.”

The Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel. In Romans 10 we are told that faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

The Bible is necessary for salvation, growing spiritually, and for knowing God's will.

The picture I selected to illustrate the Necessity of the Bible is the Bridge of Life. Our sin has separated us from God, and a huge chasm exists between us and God that can never be crossed resulting from anything we could ever do or say on our own.

We cannot come to God. We cannot clean away our sin through any work on our part. But because of God's great love for us, He provided the solution through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The cross of Christ becomes the bridge that can bring us to God. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

There is no other way for us to know how to be saved other than through the gospel and the Word of God. General Revelation is not enough to save us. We cannot hear the gospel through creation, personal experience, or human reason. We need God's Word to point us to Christ for salvation and godly living.

The Bible is necessary. It is Essential!

We will conclude this lesson with a chart on page 19.

It is God who desired to give man His Word.

It is God who also gave the gift of language so He could fulfill that desire.

He gave us His Word to communicate clearly with us, not to confuse us.

We should seek to understand what God has communicated, which is the objective of all communication.

The Bible is clear enough to be understood by anyone who seeks such understanding.

It is sufficient to meet our spiritual needs, and it is the only written revelation we need from God. We do need it. It is necessary if we want to hear and respond to the gospel and have a renewed relationship with God.

- It was God's plan to communicate. This is called Revelation.
- There were human authors that wrote that were carried along by the Holy Spirit of God. This is Inspiration. Every word is from God. Every word is divine. It is breathed out by God, and it is without error because the Holy Spirit guided the process.
- The human author wrote the original manuscripts, and these documents were without error. These sixty-six books are called the canon of Scripture, or the Bible.
- God, in his providence, has preserved His Word that has been translated from the original text of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into more modern translations than any other book in history.
- Through the illumination doctrine and ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit takes these thoughts and makes them clear in the mind of the reader, the person with the Spirit.
- We are equipped to interpret the meaning of the spiritual truth and apply it to our lives which leads to transformed lives.
- This leads to us being able to communicate and teach others.

This is a nice summary of the doctrine of the Bible related to special revelation.

- Inspiration means the Bible is divine.
- Inerrancy means the Bible is truth.
- The Bible is authoritative; it is the final authority.
- The Bible is meant to be clear.
- The Bible is intended to be understood through the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- The Bible is sufficient; it is enough for life and godliness.
- The Bible is necessary, it is essential. There is no way to grow in our relationship with God other than through the Word of God.

In these two lessons we explored what the Bible teaches about the Bible, the doctrine of bibliology, the study of the Bible.

We discussed General and Special Revelation.

And we defined the doctrine that support Special Revelation: Inspiration, Inerrancy, Authority, Clarity, Illumination, Sufficiency, and Necessity.

When we continue with lesson 3, we discuss Theology proper, the study of God. We will focus on God the Father in lessons 3 and 4, God the Son in lessons 5 and 6, God the Holy Spirit in lesson 7, and a summary of the Trinity in lesson 8.

God bless.