

BIBLE STUDY
REV. DR. DARRYL B. STARNES, SR., INSTRUCTOR

Topic: “THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE”
Lesson # 1: THE AUTHORITY AND FINALITY OF THE BIBLE
Key Verse: 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

THEME: THE BIBLE IS GOD’S LIVING WORD: THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

INTRODUCTION: THE THREE EMPHASIS OF THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE

1. **“Revealed Religion”:** a religion based on the Bible.
2. **“Experienced Religion”:** a religion of the Bible confirmed in the heart.
3. **“Ethical Religion”:** a religion of the Bible put into action and expressing itself in responsible living in the community.

I. THE BIBLE: THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEF & PRACTICE

- A. Biblical Statement: (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
 1. The Bible makes us “wise unto salvation” (v.15)
 2. The Bible is inspired by God (v.16)
 3. The Bible is useful (v.16)
 - a. For teaching
 - b. For reproof or rebuke
 - c. For correction
 - d. For training in righteousness
 4. The Bible aids in growth and equipping (v.17)
- B. Wesleyan Statements:
 1. “I am a man of one book!” The Bible stands alone because it alone showed him how to live on earth and how to get to heaven.
 2. “For as all faith is founded upon divine authority, so there is now no divine authority but the Scriptures and therefore, no one can make that to be divine authority which is not contained in them.”
 3. “My ground is the Bible ... I follow it in all things, great and small.”
 4. “The Scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice; they are clear in all necessary points.”
- C. Statements from THE DISCIPLINE
 1. Article of Faith
 - a. Article V – The Sufficiency of the Holy Scripture for Salvation.
 - b. Article VI – Of the Old Testament

2. General Rules: Par. 33. Conclusion. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even His written Word, which is the only Rule, and a sufficient
3. Rule, both of our faith and practice.

II. **THE BIBLE: THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE (2 PETER 1: 19-21)**

- A. The Bible is above “reason”. (Is. 55: 8-9)
- B. The Bible is above “private revelations”.
- C. The Bible is above religious experience”.
- D. The Bible is above “Christian tradition”. (Mk. 7:7-9)
- E. The Bible is above “natural creation”. (Rom. 1:19—20)

III. **THE BIBLE AND ITS INTERPRETATION (ACTS 17: 2, 3, 11; ACTS 18: 24-26)**

- A. “Quadruga”: The fourfold Sense of Scripture
 1. Literal interpretation (literal sense)
 2. Allegorical interpretation (figurative sense)
 3. Tropological interpretation (moral sense)
 4. Anagogical interpretation (spiritual sense)
- B. The Rules of Interpretation:
Let the Scriptures explain themselves. (Is. 28: 9-10)
 1. **Text:** the verse or verses) which is the focus of the sermon or lesson. (Proverb 23:7)
 - a. **Context:** the verse which form the background or setting the text (Proverb 23:1-8)
 - b. **Greater Context:** other verses in the Bible which shed light on the same subject or theme. (Mark 7:6)
- C. The keys to sound Biblical Teaching (Luke 24:27)
 1. Christian teaching must be based on the Bible.
 2. Christian teaching must point to Jesus Christ.
 3. Christian teaching must not contradict Scripture.

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Topic: "THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE"
Lesson # 2: ERRORS TO BE AVOIDED
Key Verse: 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

THEME: ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATIONS CAN BE VERY HARMFUL TO A CHRISTIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND THE CHURCH.

- I. An Austere Predestinarianism:** the erroneous view which fosters that "God chooses some people to be eternally saved and others to be eternally damned".
- A. The Methodist position is called the universality of salvation" and fosters that "all people are chosen by God for salvation, but in order to be saved they must respond to God's gracious offer in Jesus Christ".
(1 Tim. 2:3-4) (Rom. 10: 10-13)
 - B. The Bible teaches that God saves all who repent and believe.
(2 Peter 3: 9; Acts 17:30)
 - C. Grace is free for all and in all who believe. (2 Cor. 5:14,15; Titus 2: 11)
 - D. Man has freedom of choice and by God's own creative action, he is not a mere puppet.
(John 2:16; Rev. 3:20; 22:17)
 - E. Salvation is something that God wants us to experience and not speculate about or hope for. (Mark 1:14, 15; Acts 16:30,31)
- II. A Barren Sacerdotalism:** the erroneous belief that the rituals and sacramental functions of the priesthood (communion, baptism, etc.) alone can effect the Grace of God in the lives of people.
- A. The Methodist position is that "religion must be experienced in the heart" as a result of one's faith before the sacraments and other rituals can have any real spiritual and lasting impact. (Rom. 10:8-10; John 1:12,13).
 - B. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of those who believe which give power and reality to rituals and sacraments. (John 1:26,27; John 5:10,13).
- III. A Mystical Nonchurchism:** the erroneous view which stresses the mystical presence of the Holy Spirit without emphasizing the "means of grace" and the "fruit of the Spirit". It fosters separation from the community of faith.
- The Methodist position stresses that the "means of grace" are made available primarily through the church; its orderly service of worship, duly administered sacraments, regular habits of the Bible Study, directed prayer groups, carefully planned preaching, organized program of service to others and disciplined living. (Acts 2:41-47; Acts 10: 23-25).
- IV. An Irresponsible Antinomianism:** the erroneous belief that "when we are under the grace of God in Christ, we are free from the requirements of the law. We are free to do as we please.

- A. The Methodist position fosters that even though we are not saved by obeying the law and commandments, the Bible teaches that one of the evidences of being saved is that we obey God's law. (1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 3:6-10).
- B. "Good works" and a godly life are not means of salvation, but are evidences of genuine faith and a vital relationship with Christ. (James 2:17-20).

V. A Cold Intellectualism: an erroneous emphasis on intellectual understanding of truth without the heart experience of that truth.

- A. The Methodist position emphasizes that knowledge and piety must go together. The understanding of Biblical truth must be accompanied by the experience of its realities. (1Cor. 8:1-3).
- B. Sound thought is an aid to grace but not the substance of it. Our religious knowledge and Biblical understanding must not be allowed to make us cold, conceited and self-reliant. (Proverbs 3:5-7; Rom. 12:3).

VI. An Uncaring Institutionalism: the erroneous position which holds that the church lives in a community only to promote, preserve, and provide for itself.

The Methodist position fosters that the church is a community of faith in the world as a servant of God and the community and not as an "an end in itself". It is to care for and minister to those within fellowship as well as those outside itself. The church is to God's instrument to reach out to the community and the world. (Gal. 6:9,10; Rom. 12:13) God judges people and nations on the basis of how they responded to the needs of the people around them. Matt. 25:34-40).

VII. A Narrow-minded Dogmatism: the erroneous view which forces one's views of the Bible on others, insisting that all persons must adopt those views in order to be in favor with God.

- A. The Methodist position fosters that in all matters that do not strike at the heart of Christianity, "we think and let think".
- B. John Wesley knew that each person must worship according to conscience and that the Bible with its emphasis on the love of God and man, requires the "catholic spirit" toward all people, including those whose beliefs and practices are contrary to our own. (Rom. 14:1-13).

C. He knew that the Scriptures taught against arguing over Christian beliefs and although he could defend his own views on the Bible on others. (2 Tim. 2:23-25).

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Topic: "THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE"
Lesson # 3: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART I
"THE TRINITY OF GOD"
Key Verse: 1 PETER 1:2

THEME: EVEN THOUGH THE WORD "TRINITY" DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE BIBLE THE CONCEPT OF THE TRINITY OF GOD RUNS THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE.

I. THE FIRST APPEARANCES OF THE TRINITY OF GOD IN THE BIBLE.

- A. In the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:1, 2, 26, 27)
- B. In the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22)
- C.

II. OTHER PASSAGES SUPPORTING THE TRINITY OF GOD IN CREATION

- A. John 1: 1-3
- B. 1 Corinthians 8:6
- D. Ephesians 3:9
- E. Colossians 1:15-17
- F. Hebrews 1:1-3

III. OTHER APPEARANCES OF THE TRINITY OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

- A. At Christ's baptism (Matt 3:16, 17)
- B. In the baptismal formula given by Christ (Matt 28:19)
- C. In the promise of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. John 14:15-17
 - 2. John 15:26
 - 3. John 16:13-15
 - 4. Acts 1:4, 5, 7, 8
- D. In the plan of redemption
 - 1. Romans 5:5-8
 - 2. Galatians 4:4-7
 - 3. Ephesians 2:13, 16
 - 4. Titus 3:4-7
 - 5. 1 Peter 1:2
- E. In the Divinity of Christ
 - 1. John 1:1, 14
 - 2. John 5:17, 18, 21-23, 26, 27
 - 3. John 10:30
 - 4. John 14:6-10
 - 5. Philippians 2:6-11
 - 6. Colossians 1:15
 - 7. Colossians 2:9
 - 8. Hebrews 1:3

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Topic: “THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE”
Lesson # 4: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART II
“THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN & PREVENTIVE GRACE”
Key Verse: ROMANS 3: 23
TITUS 2: 11

I. THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN OR “ORIGINAL SIN”

THEME: EVERY HUMAN BEING IS A SINNER WITH A DEPRAVED NATURE THAT IS AT WAR WITH GOD; AND IS IN NEED OF GOD’S REDEEMING GRACE.

ARTICLE OF RELIGION: VII – OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly say), but it is corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil and that continually.

- A. **ORIGINAL SIN:** the disobedience of Adam & Eve that plunged humankind into sin and has been followed by every person (except Jesus Christ) receiving a sin nature and choosing to sin.
(Romans 5:18, 19)
- B. **THE FALL:** the result of the first human sin, which marred the image of God in humans and created an environment for and a tendency towards sin for all people. (Romans 5:12)
- C. **DEPRAVITY:** a state of sinfulness, corruption, helplessness and enmity with God in which every human finds himself (or herself) before salvation and redemption. (Romans 3:10-12; 5: 6-10)
- D. **ACTUAL SINS:** the sins that humans commit by thought, words and deeds; which are the direct result of the human’s sin nature. (Rom. 3:13-18)
- E. **CONDEMNATION:** the declaration of guilt for sin which involves not only temporal punishment, but also eternal damnation (hell).
(Romans 3:19, 23; James 2:10; 2 Th. 1:7-9)
- F. **JUSTIFICATION:** sinners may be forgiven and put right with God not through their works or goodness, but only through God’s grace and their “saving faith” in Jesus Christ.
(Romans 3: 20-28; Gal 3: 16; Eph. 2: 8, 9)

II. PREVENIENT GRACE OR “PREVENTING GRACE”

THEME: THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS PRESENT IN EVERY PERSON ENABLING HIM OR HER TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG AND THUS TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE SAVIOR AND RESPOND TO HIM.

- A. **DEFINITIONS:**
1. **PREVENIENT:** means “going before”.
 2. **GRACE:** is “God’s unmerited favor”.
 3. **PREVENIENT GRACE:** is the presence of the Holy Spirit even before salvation, helping the sinner on his or her to God.
- B. Man is depraved, but not “totally” depraved. God gives every human enough grace to answer God’s call to repent and believe the gospel.
1. Jesus gives light to every person to either accept or reject. (John 1: 9; John 3: 17-19)
 2. God has put His law in the hearts of people who do not even have the written law so that they are able to tell right from wrong. (Romans 2: 15)
 3. It is the Holy Spirit Who convicts and convinces the world about sin, righteousness and judgment. (John 16 : 7-11)
 4. No one can come to Christ unless the Father, draws him or her; and whoever comes to Christ will not be denied by Him. (John 6: 44; John 6: 37)
 5. God wants everyone to repent of his/her sins, be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
(1 Timothy 2: 3. 4; 2 Peter 3: 9)
 6. The grace of God, which brings salvation is being offered to everyone.
(Titus 2: 11)

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Topic: “THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE”
Lesson # 5: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART III
“JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH”
Key Verse: ROMANS 5: 1, 2

THEME: ONLY “SAVING FAITH” IN THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST CAN JUSTIFY OR PUT ONE IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

I. THE NECESSITY OF SAVING FAITH”

- A. “The desire to be saved from one’s sins and to flee from the wrath to come” is the one condition for membership in the A. M. E. Zion Church.
- B. “Saving Faith” is the primary condition for Full Connectional Membership in the A. M. E. Zion Church.
- C. “Saving Faith” is the only means of salvation according to the Scriptures:
 - 1. Abraham was saved by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4: 1-5)
 - 2. David was saved by faith (Romans 4: 6-8)
 - 3. Christians are saved by faith (John 1: 12; Romans 3: 20-22; Ephesians 2: 8, 9; Hebrews 11: 6)

II. THE MEANING OF SAVING FAITH”

Saving Faith is belief plus commitment. It is believing to the point of committing one’s life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

- A. It involves believing the “gospel”. (Romans 1; 14-17)
- B. It involves believing with “the heart”. (Romans 10: 8-10)
- C. It involves confessing with the mouth (Romans 10:8-10)
- D. It involves calling on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13)
- E. It involves responding to the gospel (Romans 10: 14-17)
- F. It involves opening one’s heart to Christ (Rev. 3: 20)
- G. It involves receiving Christ as Lord and Savior (John 1: 12)
- H. It involves trusting Christ “alone” for salvation (John 5: 10-13)

III. THE JUSTIFICATION THAT COMES BY “SAVING FAITH”

- A. Justification comes only by “Saving Faith”
(Romans 3: 26, 28; Gal. 2: 15-16)
- B. To be justified is to be declared righteous. (Romans 4: 5-6)

- C. To be justified is to have all sins forgiven (Romans 4: 7-8)
- D. To be justified is to have the righteous of Christ imputed or credited to one's account. (Romans 4: 3, 6. 11)
- E. To be justified is to be received into the state of God's grace. (Romans 5: 1-2)
- F. To be justified is to be received into God's family and to become one of his children. (John 1: 12; Gal. 3:26; Gal. 4:4-7)
- G. To be justified is to be delivered from condemnation and to be given Eternal Life. (John 3: 15-18; John 5: 24)

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Lesson # 6: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART IV

"REGENERATION"

Key Verse: TITUS 3: 5

THEME: ONLY "SAVING FAITH" IN THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST CAN JUSTIFY OR PUT ONE IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

I. THE NECESSARY OF REGENERATION

- A. It is necessary in order to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3: 3-7)
- B. It is Necessary in order to understand spiritual things. (1Cor. 2:14)
- C. It is necessary in order to receive spiritual gifts. (1Cor. 12: 7; Eph 4: 7-8)

II. THE MEANING OF REGENERATION

- A. It is experiencing a "new birth" (John 3: 3-7)
- B. It is receiving a new heart. (Ezekiel 36: 25-27)
- C. It is receiving a new nature; the very nature of God
(2 Peter 1:4; 1 John. 3: 9)

III. THE PROCESS OF REGENERATION

- A. It begins with spiritual conception
 - 1. The conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 8-9)
 - 2. An appetite for the truth about salvation and righteousness.
(Matt. 5:6)
 - 3. The fruits of genuine repentance evidenced (Matthew 3: 8)
- B. It results in a new birth as real as that of physical birth
 - 1. The Holy Spirit is the Agent (John 3: 8)
 - 2. The Word of God is the instrument (James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 23)
- C. It is made possible by the "Grace of God". (Titus 3: 5)
- D. It is experienced only by those who exercise "saving faith". (Eph. 2: 8-9)
- E. It is evidenced by a life of "good works". (Eph. 2: 10; James 2:14-20)

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Lesson # 7: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART V

"THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT"

Key Verse: ROMANS 8: 16

THEME: THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT: is God's plan for giving His children the assurance of their salvation.

DEFINITION: "THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT IS AN INWARD IMPRESSION ON THE SOUL, WHEREBY THE SPIRIT OF GOD IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY WITNESSES TO MY SPIRIT THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD; THAT JESUS CHRIST HATH LOVED ME AND GIVEN HIMSELF FOR ME; THAT ALL MY SINS ARE BLOTTED OUT, AND I EVEN I, AM RECONCILED TO GOD".

JOHN WESLEY

I. THE IMPOTANCE OF ASSURANCE

- A. It gives the believer boldness in sharing his/her faith.
- B. It gives the believer a positive motive for holiness, service, worship and praise.
- C. It gives new meaning to the believer's life, service and worship.
- D. It gives the believer a new view of death and eternity and thus new values as he/she looks at life in the now.

II. THE MEANING OF ASSURANCE

- A. It is an impression on the soul (1John 5: 10)
- B. It is the Holy Spirit witnessing to the believer's human spirit that he is indeed a child of God. (1 John 5: 6-10; Romans 8: 16)
- C. It is the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart assuring him that his sins have indeed been forgiven and atoned for by the death of Christ and that he is thus an heir of salvation. (Gal. 4: 4-7)
- D. It is the Holy Spirit assuring the believer that he is in Christ and that God loves him and gave his son for him. (1John 4: 10-13)
- E. It is the believer knowing that he/she has eternal life. (1John 5: 10-13)

III. THE PROCESS OF ASSURANCE

- A. The believer knows that he/she is saved because the Holy Spirit has imparted spiritual life into him/her.
(1Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2: 1-5; Matt. 13: 16-18)

- B. The believer knows that he/she is saved because the Holy Spirit has given him/her a new desire and ability to keep God's commandments and do God's will. (1 John 2:3-6)
- C. The believer knows that he/she is saved because the Holy Spirit has given him/her Christ-like love. (Romans 5:5)
- D. The believer knows that he/she is saved because the Holy Spirit has given him/her His indwelling presence. (Romans 8: 9; 1 John 3: 24)

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Topic: “THE BIBLE IN THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE”

Lesson # 8: VITAL DOCTRINES - PART V

“SANCTIFICATION”

Key Verse: 1 THES. 4: 3, 4

THEME: SANCTIFICATION: is that work of God’s grace by which we are renewed after the image of God, set apart for His service, and enabled to die to sin and live unto righteousness.

I. THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION (WHAT IS IT?)

- A. It gives the work of God’s grace which imparts in the Christian the desire ability to do His will. (Phil. 2:2: 13)
- B. It is the process of Christian character development in which the believer “is being renewed after the image of Christ”.(Col. 3: 10)
- E. It is the process of life transformation whereby the Christian is dying unto sin and living unto righteousness. (Romans 6: 10-13)
- F. It is the process of growing useful to the kingdom in which the Christian “is set apart unto God”.
- E. It is a process that involves social as well as personal holiness. (1 Th. 3: 12-13)

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SANCTIFICATION (WHY IS IT NECESSARY?)

- A. It is God’s will for the Christian. (1Th. 4: 3-4)
- B. It is God’s purpose in redeeming us (Titus 2: 11-14)
- C. It is God’s command to His people (Peter 1: 15-16)
- D. It is God’s way of being glorified (Matt. 5:16; John 15:8)
- E. It is God’s requirement for seeing Him (Matt. 5:8; Hebrews (12:14)

III. THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION (HOW IT IS AC HIEVED?)

- A. The Human Side: CONSECRATION (Romans 12: 1, 2)
 - 1. Fleeing evil and following righteousness (Titus 6: 11)
 - 2. Taking of the “old man and putting on the “new man” (Ephesians 4: 22-24)
 - 3. Denying ungodliness and living righteously (Titus 2: 12)
 - 4. Attending the means of grace (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10: 25)
 - 5. Working “out” our own salvation (Philippians 2: 12b)
- B. The Divine Side: SANCTIFICATION (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
 - 1. The Blood of Christ, the Source (Hebrews 10:10; 13:12)
 - 2. The Word of Christ, the Instrument (John 17:17)
 - 3. The Spirit of Christ, the Agent (1 Peter 1: 2)