

# What Do I Say When ...?

Helping you answer those stubborn questions that keep coming up!

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# What Do I Say When ...?

## Introduction

As I write this introduction, I must confess that I am more excited about this class than I have been over a class in quite some time (and for me, that is saying a lot).

Actually, I should say I am excited regarding these classes. This is actually the first quarter of a two quarter series that the Dowlen Road Church of Christ will be offering in our auditorium class.

I am certain that you desire to be involved in saving souls. I am confident that you want to be able to teach people the truth. However, for many Christians, the thought of teaching others or even just discussing the Bible is disconcerting. You may frequently ask yourself, "What if they ask a question to which I do not know the answer?" Or maybe you know the answer but you are not too sure about where to find it in the Bible.

Whatever the case, we are often afraid to have Bible discussions or studies with people. This class is designed to help you be comfortable with talking about the Bible and teaching the Bible to your friends, neighbors, family, co-workers, etc.

While this series will last for 6 months and will cover 41 questions, I am well aware that we will not discuss all the possible questions that could be brought up. However, we are going to cover some of the most frequently asked and most divisive questions.

Additionally, I understand that since we are covering each question in a single class period, we will not be exhausting the answers to any one question. However, we will be providing you a great foundation to be able to hold Bible conversations and direct others to the Bible to find the answers to their questions.

The most difficult aspect of putting this material together has been giving an order to the questions. Should they be ordered alphabetically, for easy reference? Should they be ordered by grouping similar questions together? Should they be ordered by foundation and then building a structured understanding? I am not sure which would be the best method. But I have chosen the last. I have decided to begin with more foundational questions about the existence of God and the trustworthiness of the Bible and then build up from there to talk about salvation and the church.

Thus, in this first quarter the questions deal mostly with the major subjects of God, the plan of salvation and the church.

The second quarter will progress to questions regarding worship, false doctrine and discipleship. But all of the questions are important and will come up frequently—some with non-Christians and some even among brethren.

As already stated, the plan is to cover one question per class session. Therefore, you should be able to keep up with where the class is at all times, even if you have to miss one (you will be sorry if you do).

Please, understand that the goal of this class is not just to inform you. It is to equip you and motivate you to talk to people about the Bible. It is designed to help you answer the questions that come up, so you can be a part of the evangelism that this congregation needs to do.

I am excited about the class and I am excited about how this will help us glorify God by bearing much fruit.

*Edwin L. Crozier*

# Lesson 1

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... there is no God?

As we begin this lesson, a few simple remarks need to be made. In no way do I believe that the approaches in the following lessons are the only ways to deal with these questions. They are simply my approaches to answering these questions.

For any question, there may exist several biblical approaches to answer the questions.

For instance, to answer the question discussed in this lesson, some may prefer to answer the question found in lesson two

regarding the Bible's divine origin. Once they establish that the Bible has special qualities that demonstrate it is of non-human origin, they have proven that the non-human author exists—that is, God exists.

I am a pragmatist. Whatever true and biblical approach you can use to produce faith is perfectly fine. In this lesson, I am simply going to present my initial approach to demonstrating the existence of God.

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### ***The First Step: Understanding The Concept Of Faith vs. Fact***

Instead of spending your time trying to “show” God to the atheist or agnostic, you can most easily demonstrate God's existence by making this a question of origins. How do we exist along with this universe? In this instance, the unbeliever will immediately revert to a defensive posture that he argues from the realm of fact, while we argue from the realm of faith. As such, we must first define what we mean when we speak of faith. Then we will note that the question is not: “Should we have faith?” Rather the question is: “In what should we have faith?”

Provide the Bible definition of faith below:

From where do chickens come? Have you seen it? How do you know?

Who was the first U.S. president? Did you see it? How do you know?

What shape is the earth? Have you seen it with your naked eye? How do you know?

Where is the Eiffel Tower? Have you seen it? How do you know?

Research and learn the four criteria for anything to be established as scientific fact:

To be scientific fact, the data must be ...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Does the unbeliever's view of the origin of life and the universe meet any of the above criteria?

Based on your above answer, is his system one of scientific fact or one of faith? Explain.

## ***A Testimony of Three Witnesses***

### *Witness #1—The Laws Of Thermodynamics*

Our question is about how the universe got here. If we break down the answers to their simplest form, we have three choices.

1. It spontaneously occurred without any help.
2. It has simply always been here.
3. Someone separate from it and not bound by its laws put it here.

***The First Law Of Thermodynamics:*** *The Law of Conservation of Energy*—Energy can be transferred from one state to another, but can never be created or destroyed. Thus, we understand that the amount of energy and matter in our universe is constant.

***The Second Law of Thermodynamics:*** *The Law of Entropy*—Stated simply; things become more disorderly. That is, the universal direction of all systems is from complex to simple. Everything breaks down.

Explain in the space below how these two scientific laws provide evidence for God's existence:

### *Witness #2—Louis Pasteur and Biogenesis*

This witness speaks regarding the origin of life. In 1859, Louis Pasteur conclusively proved that a living organism cannot spontaneously generate from a non-living organism. Only the living begets the living.

How does this testify in favor of the existence of God?

### *Witness #3—The Teleological Testimony*

What a great word—teleological. This term simply means the argument from design. In this part of our discussion, we recognize that the atheist looks at our universe, our solar system, our world, our bodies and everything inside us as the result of pure chance. Because of a predisposition against belief in God, their one defense of how all this occurred just right to fit our existence so perfectly is, "Well, here we are. It must have happened." However, if you or I argued for the chance and accidental formation of something even so simple as a mousetrap, we would be viewed as silly.

Archaeologists make a living from digging up rocks that look as though they were carved or designed for a specific purpose, e.g. a knife, spear, bowl, etc. Whole civilizations have been described and documented by this kind of study. But Christians look at the clear evidence of design within the universe and claim that someone outside of our universal laws evidently designed our existence and we are mocked. At best, those who mock us are naïve and do not see their inconsistency. At worst, they are lying hypocrites that can see their own dishonesty but simply do not want to believe in God.

In the space below, provide some evidence of design that you see in our universe:

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### **You Tell Me**

In what should we have faith? The existence of God or the accidental occurrence of all things?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

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## ... the Bible is not from God?

Considering what we have noted about the existence of God, we can certainly formulate some idea regarding the kind of God with which we are dealing.

He is obviously far more powerful than anything we can possibly imagine. Despite this power over us, He obviously has a great deal of care for us—His creation. After all, why go to the trouble of creating a “just right” universe in which we can survive if He does not care? He obviously has a purpose for us. Again, why create this universe and life within it if there was absolutely no reason to do so?

Considering these reasonable conclusions, we naturally expect God to communicate with us in some way. For us to know the purpose for our creation, He would have to communicate it to us. Thus, we should search for this communication.

When you are searching for your lost keys, you do not look everywhere they might possibly be. You look until you find them. To search for God’s communication to us, we need not

examine every book written or every claim made of inspiration and revelation. We need simply to look until we find some communication that measures up to the standard of divine origin.

We will begin our search with the Bible. To do so, despite what some may say, is not prejudicial or biased. No other book has so profoundly impacted our world. No other book has withstood the test of time. No other book has survived the constant and continued onslaught of criticism and persecution. No other book has been translated and published as greatly. No other book has been circulated as widely. Because of the unique history contained within the Bible and of the Bible itself, it makes sense to start our search there. In fact, it is the natural beginning place.

That is not to say that you should never study any other book and test it. It simply says, considering the nature of the book, it is natural to start with the Bible.

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### ***What Would You Expect?***

Before proceeding to the testimony in favor of the Bible’s divine origin, begin by listing below what characteristics you would expect from a communication that came from God.

## ***Six Divine Characteristics of the Bible***

### ***1. The Bible claims to be from God:***

In the space below, give proof that the Bible claims to be from God:

### ***2. The Bible has a consistent unified message:***

This characteristic is all the more impressive when we consider that the Bible was not written by one man, in one location, at one time or with one mood. Below, list the kinds of men, the various times, different moods and varying places in which the Bible was written:

### ***3. The Bible deals honestly with reality.***

If mere men wrote the Bible to dupe the masses into false faith, we would expect shallow writings and dishonesty. But the Bible presents even its heroes in a bad light at times. There are even things about Jesus, the central figure of the Bible, that mere men would leave out. But the Bible deals honestly with all these events. The Bible is not mere human invention. It is simply divine truth. List below some of the facts God reveals in the Bible that mere men would have left out to shore up their book.

### ***4. The Bible is historically accurate:***

If the Bible were written by mere men to dupe the masses, we would expect to find a great deal of spurious "history." Since men have finite knowledge, we would expect historical flaws and anachronisms. However, in every case where the study of history and archaeology has shed light on the Bible, it has always been vindicated. Do some research and list some examples in which the Bible has been criticized but proven correct.

### ***5. The Bible is scientifically accurate:***

While the Bible was not written to provide scientific of explanations of things, we do find times in which the real science of our world was revealed in scripture prior to man learning it for himself through scientific study. Consider the following verses and what was explained with scientific accuracy prior to man's scientific knowledge.

**Genesis 10:25 –**

**Job 26:7 –**

**Psalms 8:8 –**

**Leviticus 17:11-14 –**

### ***6. The Bible's own internal test of divine origin—Fulfilled Prophecy.***

Any communication claiming to be from God should have some kind of internal proof or test with which it demonstrates its divine origin. People recognize this naturally. That is why those who claim to have had some kind of miraculous communication with God consistently try to provide some proof, either by claiming miraculous powers or some other such proof.

Read **Deuteronomy 18:21-22**. What test for divine origin does the Bible give? Is this a reasonable test? Does the Bible fulfill its own test?

## Lesson 3

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... the Bible has been corrupted?

Even among those who claim that the Bible originally came from God, some claim that the Bible, as we have it today, is not accurate. It is filled with mistakes and has become corrupt.

That has led some to trust their instincts and feelings as if it were the Holy Spirit guiding them to know the truth. It has led others to believe new prophets, new revelations and new books were necessary to restore the original doctrine of Christ. Finally, it has led others to simply do whatever they want, thinking that God must not care exactly what we do, He just wanted us to know He loves us.

There are two approaches to answering this question. First, there is the historical document

approach. That is, we can examine how we got our Bibles from the ancient manuscripts to the modern translations and learn that in fact, the evidence is overwhelmingly in the Bible's favor that modern versions accurately represent the autographs.

The second, is to demonstrate the spiritual ramifications of claiming a corrupted Bible and see if that lines up with the God these very same people claim to believe in.

To cover the first approach, I will simply supply you with some information that you can study. To cover the second approach, I will provide some passages and questions for you to consider and use when talking to others.

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### ***The Historical Approach***

The following quotes and information can be found in Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Here's Life Publishers, inc., San Bernardino, CA, 1979. And in F.F. Bruce's *The New Testament Documents*, Inter-varsity Press, Grand Rapids, 1992.

### ***Some Facts Regarding Old Testament Transcribers***

Consider the following list of rules, which Talmudist copyists followed to preserve Hebrew scripture:

[1] A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, [2] prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew. [3] These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. [4] Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex. [5] The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters. [6] The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words be written without a line, it is worthless. [7] The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other colour, and be prepared according to a definite recipe. [8] an authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate. [9] No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him ... [10] Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; [11] between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants; [12] between every book, three lines. [13] The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not to do so ...

... the rolls in which these regulations are not observed are condemned to be buried in the ground or burned; or they are banished to the schools, to be used as reading-books. (*Evidence*, p 53).

After the Talmudists, a group called the Massoretes carried on the work of copying. Note the following regarding their work.

[The Massoretes] devised a complicated system of safeguards against scribal slips. They counted, for example, the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in each book; they pointed out the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible, and made even more detailed calculations than these.

Besides recording varieties of reading, tradition, or conjecture, the Massoretes undertook a number of calculations which do not enter into the ordinary sphere of textual criticism. They number the verses, words, and letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and the middle letter of each. They enumerated verses which contained all the letters of the alphabet, or certain number of them; and so on. These trivialities, as we may rightly consider them, had yet the effect of securing minute attention to the precise transmission of the text; and they are but an excessive manifestation of a respect for the sacred Scriptures which in itself deserves nothing but praise (*Evidence*, p. 55).

Until relatively recently, the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament dated only back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Because of these exacting rules for copying, the Jews placed more confidence in new manuscripts, because the old, through aging and wear, could be misread. But the new were certainly correct because of the great care given in the transmission of the text. Therefore, when a manuscript started to get old they would destroy them.

However, in 1947 the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls sealed the reliability of the manuscripts used. Archaeologists discovered fragments of 38 Old Testament books dating back as early as 150 B.C. This included one complete copy of Isaiah and another nearly complete copy of Isaiah.

Scholars explain that the Dead Sea manuscripts "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations of spelling." "It is a matter of wonder that through something like a thousand years the text underwent so little alteration" (*Evidence*, p. 58).

I remember playing the "gossip game" in elementary school. One person would whisper to another and then they would whisper to the next. When the message got to the end of the line, it was practically unrecognizable as even being related to what the first person said. That is the kind of variation we would expect from over 1000 years of hand-copying the Old Testament. Instead, we see such minute variation that we can have great confidence in our modern Old Testaments.

### ***Some Facts Regarding Our New Testaments***

Regarding New Testament reliability, F.F. Bruce writes:

The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no-one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt. It is a curious fact that historians have often been much readier to trust the New Testament record than have many theologians. Somehow or other, there are people who regard a 'sacred book' as *ipso facto* under suspicion, and demand much more corroborative evidence for such a work than they would for an ordinary secular or pagan writing. From the viewpoint of the historian, the same standards must be applied to both. But we do not quarrel with those who want more evidence for the New Testament than for other writings; firstly, because the universal claims which the New Testament makes upon mankind are so absolute, and the character and works of its chief Figure so unparalleled, that we want to be as sure of its truth as we possibly can; and secondly, because in point of fact there is much more evidence for the New Testament than for other ancient writings of comparable date (*Documents*, p. 15).

At present, there are over 5300 manuscripts of the New Testament. This is more than any other ancient work of literature. The earliest of which dates back to 125 A.D. The earliest complete manuscript, Codex Vaticanus, dates to 325 A.D. These dates are closer to the time of writing than the manuscripts for any other ancient literature.

Second in line to the New Testament is Homer's *Illiad*. The *Illiad* was written about 900 B.C. It has only 643 manuscripts, the earliest of which dates back to 400 B.C.



Consider some further comparisons between the New Testament and Homer's *Illiad*. "... The New Testament has about 20,000 lines ... the *Illiad* [has] about 15,600. Only 40 lines (or 400 words) of the New Testament are in doubt whereas 764 lines of the *Illiad* are questioned. This five percent textual corruption compares with one-half of one percent of similar emendations in the New Testament" (*Evidence*, p. 43).

Note the following statements regarding the textual variations:

There is an ambiguity in saying there are some 200,000 variants in the exiting manuscripts of the new Testament, since these represent only 10,000 places in the New Testament. If one single word is misspelled in 3,000 different manuscripts, this is counted as 3,000 variants or readings.

Although he was dealing with fewer manuscripts than we have today, *Philip Schaff* in *Comparison to the Greek Testament and the English Version* concluded that only 400 of the 150,000 variant readings caused doubt about the textual meaning, and only 50 of these were of great significance. Not one of the variations, Schaff says, altered "an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching."

The proportion of words virtually accepted on all hands as raised above doubt is very great, not less, on a rough computation, than seven-eighths of the whole. The remaining eighth, therefore, formed in great part by changes of order and other comparative trivialities, constitutes the whole area of criticism.

We possess so many [manuscripts], and we are aided by so many versions, that we are never left to the need of conjecture as the means of removing errata (*Evidence*, p. 44).

Finally, Ferrell Jenkins points out that there are not only the multitude of manuscripts and early versions of the Bible, we also have the writings of early Christians who quote the New Testament incessantly. We call these the Patristics. These authors quote the scriptures so completely that if all the manuscripts and version were destroyed, we could reconstruct the entire New Testament from their quotes with the exception of about 20 verses.

The fact is, the New Testament is the most reliable piece of ancient literature we have in existence. To question its authenticity and reliability casts a pallor of doubt on all ancient literature.

### ***The Spiritual Approach***

Some people want to believe in God, but for some reason, they do not want to have to follow the Bible. Thus, they declare God as the all-powerful Creator and the all-loving Savior. But for some reason, He could get us a book that could stay uncorrupted. Consider the following passages and questions and think about the accusation that is being made against God when people claim He has allowed His Word to become corrupted, so we really cannot know what to do.

1. According to **Ephesians 3:3-5** and **II Peter 1:20-21**, how did God's message come from God to men?
2. Based on these passages, what can we do with what was written?
3. What are we commanded in **Ephesians 5:17**? What accusations are we making against God if we claim that He has not allowed us to receive His communication in a way that we can know what He wants from us?

4. What can the scriptures do according to **II Timothy 3:14-17**? If the God who loved us enough to create a world perfectly suited for our survival and enough to send His Son to die for our sins gave us scripture that would make us thoroughly equipped for every good work, do you believe He has enough power to make sure that over thousands of years it continues to be able to accomplish that goal? Why or why not?
5. Considering the above claims from the Bible, if God has allowed it to become corrupted such that we cannot know what God really wants from us, can we still use it to guide our spiritual lives and expect to be saved?
6. What predicament has God let us get in if He has allowed His word to become corrupted such that we cannot know His will for us?
7. Would the God we have learned about leave us in such a predicament? Why or why not?

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What do you think? Does it make any sense to claim the Bible is corrupted?

Do you have any questions regarding this issue?

## Lesson 4

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... the Bible is a love-letter, not a guide?

Some would have us believe that God took 260 chapters simply to say, "I love you." Who would deny that the New Testament is a demonstration that God loves us?

This argument is a smokescreen. Whether consciously or subconsciously, this argument is designed to obscure the real issue. We must

understand clearly that the issue is not about whether or not God loves us. Of course He does. The real issue is what it means to love God.

Examine the scriptures and answer the questions below to help you defend against this error.

### *God's Greatest Commandments*

1. According to Jesus in **Matthew 22:36-40**, what are the two greatest commandments?
2. Read **I John 3:16-4:19**. Why should we love God and love one another?
3. Considering the above, does God's love simply mean I can do whatever I want? Why or why not?

### *Love? How?*

1. According to **John 15:9-10**, how do we abide in God's love?
2. According to **II John 6**, what is love?
3. According to **John 14:23-24**, do we love Christ if we do not live by His words?

### *Patterns and Examples*

1. What is the goal of Scripture according to **II Timothy 3:16-17**?
2. Why did Paul write to Timothy according to **I Timothy 3:15**?
3. Based on the above, is God giving us a pattern? Why or why not?
4. Did God love Aaron's sons? Why did He punish Nadab and Abihu in **Leviticus 10:1-3**?
5. Did God love David and the Israelites? Why did He break out against the Israelites by striking down Uzzah who touched the Ark (**I Chronicles 13:9-12; 15:12-13**)?
6. A point of logic: For those who claim that the Bible is just telling us to love God however we want, from where did you find that pattern?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... Jesus was not God in the flesh?

Some modern theologians teach that Jesus was simply a man endowed with power from God. Others suggest that He was an angel.

The Bible teaches that He was God in the flesh. Not that He was God, the Father in the flesh. But rather that He was the divine Son of God in the flesh.

### *In The Beginning...: John 1:1-18*

1. Who was in the beginning?
2. Was the Word God? Explain your answer.
3. What did the Word become?
4. To whom did John bear testimony as being the Lamb of God, the Word in the flesh?

### *The I Am*

1. Who was "I Am" in **Exodus 3:14**?
2. Who was "the First and the Last" in **Isaiah 41:4; 48:12**?
3. What did Jesus call Himself in **John 8:58**?
4. What did Jesus call Himself in **Revelation 1:12; 2:8; 22:13**?
5. Based on the above, was Jesus God in the flesh?

### *Only God Can Be Worshipped*

1. Why would Paul and Barnabas not accept worship in **Acts 14:12-18**?
2. Why would the angel of the Lord not accept worship in **Revelation 22:8-9**?
3. What did God command of all angels in **Hebrews 1:6**?
4. What did the elders and living creatures do in **Revelation 5:8-14**?
5. Considering the above, is Jesus just a man or just an angel? What is He?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... Jesus was not resurrected from the dead?

Critics and modernists want us to believe that Jesus, being just a man, was not really resurrected from the dead.

Many of them simply deny the miraculous and therefore claim the resurrection could not happen. However, consider the following series of choices.

### A Series of Choices

#### Choice #1: In the tomb or out

1. Today, we do not know where Jesus' tomb is. So some suggest He is still there. But, who knew where the tomb was according to the following scriptures?

Matthew 27:57-60 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 27:61 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 27:62-66 \_\_\_\_\_

2. What testimony was given and by whom in the following passages?

Matthew 28:11-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 24:6-12 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is Jesus still in the tomb or not?

#### Choice #2: Taken by friends or foes

1. If Jesus' body is not in the tomb, then perhaps His body was stolen. But, if the enemies of Jesus had stolen His body, what would they have done when Peter preached in **Acts 2:32-33**?

2. What was the story of Jesus' enemies according to **Matthew 28:11-14**?

3. What happened to the apostles as a result of teaching the resurrection of Christ?

4. Does this sound like the reasonable action of men who knew where Jesus' dead body was because they had stolen it?

#### Choice #3: Came out naturally or miraculously

1. Perhaps Jesus did not die. Perhaps He simply passed out and then revived in the tomb and then walked out on His own. Consider the following passages and explain how this theory falls short:

John 19:34 \_\_\_\_\_

Mark 16:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 28:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

John 20:24-29 \_\_\_\_\_

### A Reasonable Conclusion:

1. Jesus' body is clearly not still in His tomb.
2. It was not stolen by His enemies.
3. It was not stolen by His friends.
4. He did not pass out and come out on His own.

What must have happened?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... everything is predestined anyway?

This statement will be made in several ways. One may simply say that there is no hope of them making it to heaven. It is as if they are convinced God has already decided for them and they cannot do anything to change it.

Others take a more doctrinal approach. They are called Calvinists. They believe and teach that

before time began God predestined all that would happen. Those whom He predestined to be saved would be saved. Those whom He did not predestine to be saved would not be.

What does the Bible say?

### *The Bible On Predestination*

- Ephesians 1:1-14** speaks of predestination, but notice in the various verses who was predestined and to what:  
 vs. 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 vs. 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 vs. 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- Does this passage ever say that God predestined who would be in Christ? What then did He say?
- Romans 8:28-30** also speaks of predestination. In this passage, did God say He predestined who would love Him?
- Who did He predestine and to what did He predestine them?
- Does any of this suggest that God did something apart from our ability to choose? Explain your answer.
- Upon what was God's predestination based?

### *The Bible On Personal Choice*

- In **Joshua 24:14-15**, upon whom did Joshua place the responsibility for serving God?
- In **Psalms 110:3**, a kingdom Psalm, how did David describe God's people? Who made the choice to serve?
- In **Matthew 25:14-30**, whose responsibility was it to use the talents given to make a profit for the master?
- According to the above parable, who must choose to serve God?
- According to **Colossians 1:21-23**, who will be presented holy and blameless to God?
- Reading all the above, is our salvation predestined or do we have to choose to serve God? If we are lost, whose fault will it be?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... the Holy Spirit directs us?

This is another statement that needs to be seen for the smokescreen it is. Who would deny that we are to be guided by the Holy Spirit? The issue under question however is not are we guided by the Holy Spirit.

The real question is, does the Holy Spirit guide us with personal direction or does the Holy Spirit guide us through His revelation in the Bible?

What this boils down to on a practical level is the question, "Do I have to obey the Bible or can I trust my inner feelings as guidance from the Holy Spirit?"

Examine the scriptures and see how the Holy Spirit works in our lives today.

### *The Promised Spirit*

1. What would the Holy Spirit do according to Jesus in **John 14:26**?
2. What would the Holy Spirit do according to Jesus in **John 16:5-15**?
3. To whom, in particular, did Jesus give this promise regarding the Holy Spirit's work?
4. When Jesus prayed in **John 17:20-21**, by whose word did He claim most would believe?
5. How does Paul's testimony in **Ephesians 3:3-4** follow the same pattern as above?
6. Read **Matthew 7:21-23**. Did inner feelings ever demonstrate the working of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.

### *The Spirit and The Scriptures*

1. According to **II Peter 1:20-21**, from where does scripture come?
2. What did the apostles do with the revelation of the Holy Spirit (**I Corinthians 14:37; Ephesians 3:3-4**)?
3. According to **II Thessalonians 2:13**, how are we sanctified?
4. What is the end result of being sanctified according to **II Timothy 2:20-21**?
5. Through what tool does God equip us for every good work according to **II Timothy 3:16-17**?
6. Based on the above, how does the Spirit direct us?

## Lesson 9

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... I can serve God without a church?

One of the more popular modern concepts is that church membership is optional. In fact, many today want to claim they are Christians but they serve God in their own way, on their own time, without any need for organized religion.

Two things need to be addressed in this lesson. First, one cannot be saved if they are not a member of Christ's universal church. Second, God expects every Christian to be a part of a local church.

### *The Universal Church*

1. According to **Matthew 16:18**, what was Jesus going to build? If Jesus was going to build it, do you think it important to be part of it?
2. Of what is Jesus the head according to **Ephesians 1:22-23**?
3. According to **Ephesians 4:4**, how many bodies or churches does Jesus have?
4. What does God do to all who are saved according to **Acts 2:47**?
5. When we are baptized according to the Spirit, what does that make us according to **I Corinthians 12:12-13**?
6. Can we be saved without being members of the church of Christ?

### *A Local Church*

1. What is a local church?
2. For whom are elders accountable according to **I Peter 5:2**? What does that suggest about congregational membership?
3. According to **I Corinthians 5:4-7**, through what means does God discipline His people? What does that suggest about membership?
4. When Paul moved from Damascus to Jerusalem in **Acts 9:23-26**, what did he do regarding the local congregation?
5. In **Acts 18:27**, when Apollos wanted to move from Ephesus to Achaia, what did the brethren do for him?
6. Based on the above, does God expect His children to be a part of a local congregation?



# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... denominations and creeds are biblical?

These two issues are so inter-related they can be dealt with together. "Creed" simply means "I believe." But when we talk about creeds, we are referring to the documents, books or statements-of-faith that denominations use to govern their churches.

Every denomination has a creed. The reason for this is simple. The higher organization wants to make sure each local congregation teaches what the larger organization teaches. Thus, a book is written for the local churches to follow.

Some denominations use their books widely, as do the Methodists with their Discipline. Others, do not make their books known so readily, as do the Baptists with their Baptist Faith and Message Statement.

The question at hand is whether or not it is biblically authorized to establish an organization of local churches and write some kind of manual to govern them?

### Universal, Local and Denominations

1. Define the following and provide a scripture which authorizes each:

Universal Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you having trouble finding a passage which describes an organization of local churches? What does that mean about whether or not God allows it?

### Statements, Creeds and Manuals

1. According to II Timothy 3:16-17, what did God give us to govern our work?

2. That being the case, do we need an additional man written document to govern the church?

3. What did Jesus say in Matthew 15:8-9, regarding those who follow such things?

### Acts 15—The Jerusalem Council

1. According to vss. 1-5, why did Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem (cf. Galatians 1:11-12; 2:1-5)?

2. According to vss. 6-21, how did the men determine what to teach regarding the Gentiles?

3. Does this really authorize councils writing creeds to govern churches?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... oral traditions are also authoritative?

No doubt, we can read the writings of early post-biblical Christians and learn from them. But that is no different than reading the writings of modern Christians.

The question is whether or not these writings are authoritative. Some groups today assert that these writings and the continued writing of "church fathers" represent an oral tradition passed down from the apostles to the continuing church.

This idea is based on **II Thessalonians 2:15**, in which Paul told the Thessalonians to follow the traditions they had been taught whether in epistle or by word.

Does that mean we ought to know some special oral tradition in addition to scripture? Read the Bible and see what it says.

### All Scripture

1. According to **II Timothy 3:16-17**, for what is all Scripture profitable?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
2. For how many good works will scripture equip us?
3. What does that say about teaching that cannot be supported by scripture but only by "oral tradition?"

### Writing and Talking

1. The great fallacy of this position is believing that what was spoken orally was different from what was written. Notice **Acts 15:27**. Why did the Jerusalem church send out Judas and Silas?

2. What did Paul teach in every church according to **I Corinthians 4:17**? Was what he wrote different from what he taught?
3. Did Thessalonica have all the Scriptures that would be written?
4. When all Scripture was completed would it be different from what had been taught by word of mouth?

### Whose Traditions

1. What do we learn about man's traditions in the following passages: **Mark 7:13**; **Colossians 2:8**; **I Peter 1:18**?
2. What does that mean about an "oral tradition" that cannot be supported with God's written tradition (**II Thess. 3:6**; **I Cor. 11:2**)?

## Lesson 12

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... one church is as good as another?

Division is the order of the day in religion. Despite the clear teaching of scripture that God wants us to be one (**John 17:20-21**), the modern day religions are happy to continue the denominational divisions.

In the midst of this, you will commonly hear that one church is as good as another. The question at hand is does it matter if I am part of a church that teaches error.

Obviously, considering the need for growth, we could never say that membership in any and every church that is wrong on any issue will condemn a person. However, that is not what we are dealing with in modern religion. Rather, we are dealing with numerous churches that are fundamentally flawed on issues of salvation and worship. In fact, what we find is churches teaching different faiths and therefore condemning souls.

### *All Be One*

1. For what did Jesus pray in **John 17:20-21**?
2. How many churches did Jesus claim He would establish in **Matthew 16:18**?
3. How many divisions did Paul want according to **I Corinthians 1:10-13**?
4. According to **Philippians 3:16**, what is the standard for unity?
5. While God did not want division, **I Corinthians 11:18-19** demonstrates they would occur. What did Paul claim division accomplished? How would this be accomplished?

### *All On One Way*

1. How many ways lead to life according to Jesus in **Matthew 7:13-14**?
2. According to **Galatians 1:8**, how many gospels can save? What does this say about a church that teaches a gospel other than what can be found in scripture?
3. If a church is part of an organization that follows a man-written creed, does that matter? (*cf.* **Matthew 15:8-9**) Why?
4. How many faiths does God recognize as saving according to **Ephesians 4:4**? Does it matter then if a church is of a different faith?
5. Considering all the above, can we expect to be saved as members of just any church? Or does it matter what church we are part of?

## Lesson 13

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... salvation is unconditional?

As with the predestination discussed in an earlier lesson, this is part of the Calvinistic error. Some believe that before the world began, God chose who would be saved and they do not have to do anything to be saved.

Do not misunderstand, very few who believe this teach that a person can live however they

want. Rather, they teach that obedience is a result of God choosing them to be saved, not the other way around. That demonstrates the real issue. Is obedience a condition for salvation or is salvation a condition for obedience?

Examine what the Bible says.

### *What If...*

1. According to **Romans 10:9-10**, what if we do not believe or confess?
2. According to **Romans 6:4-5**, what if we are not united in the likeness of His death through baptism?
3. According to **Romans 11:23**, what if we continue in unbelief?
4. According to **Colossians 1:22-23**, what if we are moved away from the gospel?
5. According to **II Peter 1:5-8**, what if these attributes are not ours?
6. What does "if" mean?

### *Unmerited, Not Unconditional*

1. According to **Luke 17:5-10**, can we earn or merit salvation?
2. According to **Romans 4:1-4**, can we ever work such that God owes us salvation?
3. According to **James 2:14-23**, can I be saved without any work on my part?
4. How do these two concepts coincide?
5. According to **Romans 8:28-30**, upon what is God's choosing and predestination based?
6. Is obedience a condition for salvation, or is salvation a condition for obedience?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... salvation is by grace alone through faith alone?

This is one of those clichéd statements behind which proponents hide. This has the ring of biblical truth because it tries to mirror **Ephesians 2:8**.

However, note two things regarding this statement. First, it adds to scripture which never says either of these things. Second, it contradicts itself. Which is it—by grace alone or by faith alone? Or is salvation by something else?

Please keep in mind the last lesson. We understand clearly that salvation is by grace. It is God's gift to us because we cannot earn it. But in that lesson we noted that God's grace does not happen against our will. Rather, God bestows His grace upon those who meet certain conditions.

Therefore, for this lesson, we will focus mostly on the second half of the statement, is faith the only condition for salvation?

### *The Bible Says, "Faith Alone."*

1. The Bible does use the phrase "faith alone" one time—**James 2:24**. What does it say about being saved by faith alone?
2. Many claim Paul says salvation is by faith alone in **Romans 4:3**. But read **Romans 1:5; 16:26**. When Paul says faith, does he mean faith all by itself?
3. How can you tell someone has biblical faith according to **Romans 10:16**? Can someone be saved then without any obedient action?

### *Faith and ...*

1. What is preached along with faith according to **Acts 20:21** and **Hebrews 6:1**?
2. According to **Luke 13:3, 5**, can we be saved without repenting?

3. What is preached along with faith in **Romans 10:9-10**?
4. According to **Matthew 10:32-33**, can we be saved without confessing Christ?
5. What was commanded along with faith in **Mark 16:15-16**?
6. According to **I Peter 3:21**, can we be saved without baptism?

### *Faith and Works*

1. According to **John 6:29**, is faith a work?
2. According to **Colossians 2:12**, when we are baptized, who is doing the saving work?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... the thief on the cross was not baptized?

First, do not be thrown off course by this statement. This is actually a great admission in the favor of baptism for the remission of sins.

When someone must resort to the thief on the cross, they are admitting that they cannot go to a passage that says they can be saved without

baptism. Rather, they are now scrambling about to try to find someone in the Bible who did what they did and was saved.

However, their example of the thief falls short of the mark.

### *Why Ask About The thief?*

1. Was king David baptized for the remission of his sins? Why not ask about him?
2. Was Moses baptized for the remission of his sins? Why not ask about him?
3. If we used these men and their lives as examples for salvation, what would we become?
4. When was the church established and entrance to it through baptism for the remission of sins first preached?
5. Considering the above, was the thief under a different covenant than Moses and David?
6. Are we under a different covenant than Moses, David and the thief?

### *Do We Know The Thief Was Saved?*

1. Read **Luke 23:39-43**. Do we really know that the thief was saved? If so, how?
2. Can Jesus save anyone anyway He wants to?
3. How would you know that you can be saved in any certain way?
4. Has Jesus ever spoken to you and told you that you were saved by doing something other than baptism?
5. How then can you know how to be saved?
6. By going to the thief to find exception to biblical teaching, we have already admitted what Jesus says in scripture about how to be saved. How do we become saved?

# What Do I Say

## When Someone Says ...

### ... I can't be lost, I am good and sincere?

What a phenomenal shift people will make as you study the Bible with them. In one breath, they will say they do not have to be baptized because good works have nothing to do with salvation.

In the next breath, they know that God cannot condemn them because of all the good works they have done.

Now which is it? Is salvation by grace or does God owe it to them because of how good they are?

What does the Bible say?

#### *Does Goodness Merit Salvation?*

1. According to **Ephesians 2:8-9**, do our good works merit salvation?
2. According to **Romans 4:1-4**, do our good works merit salvation?
3. According to **Proverbs 20:9**, can anyone claim that they have made their hearts pure, even if they are really good and sincere?
4. Were the people in **Matthew 7:22** sincere?
5. Had they done good works?
6. Read **Matthew 7:23**, were they saved? Why or why not?

#### *A Picture Of Good Works*

1. Read **Luke 18:9-14**. Why was the Pharisee so sure he was saved?
2. Was the Pharisee saved?
3. Was the publican saved? How do you know?
4. Did the publican have to do something in order to be justified?
5. Did humbling himself before God merit his salvation?
6. According to **Luke 17:7-10**, must we obey God to be saved? When we have obeyed Him, does He owe us salvation?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... but I feel saved?

We are an emotions based society. Most people live by the motto—If it feels good, do it.

Actions are justified by saying, “It just feels right.”

Regrettably, these humanistic philosophies have made their way into modern “Christian” religions. Many are convinced that they are saved, because they feel saved.

Some have even “got saved” numerous times, but they are sure this last one really took

because it felt different than all those times before.

One friend of mine studied with his aunt. Her final rejection of the gospel was stated like this, “I would not trade a stack of Bibles for the way I feel inside.”

Does feeling saved make us saved? What does the Bible say?

### *Faith and Feelings*

1. Why did Jacob mourn in **Genesis 37:34-35**?
2. Why did Jacob’s heart stand still in **Genesis 45:25-26**?
3. Why did Jacob’s feelings change in **Genesis 45:27-28**?
4. Considering the above, what prompts our feelings?
5. If our faith is misplaced or misguided, what will that do to our feelings?
6. Considering the above, can we trust our feelings as an indicator of salvation? Explain.

### *The Feelings of the Lost*

1. According to **Acts 23:1**, how had Paul felt about his salvation for his whole life?
2. Yet, had Paul actually been saved for his whole life? Explain.
3. If he felt saved when persecuting Christians, why did he convert to Christianity?
4. How did the people in **Matthew 7:21-23** feel? How strong were their feelings?
5. Were they saved?
6. Considering all we have learned, can you really trust your feelings? What can you trust?



# What Do I Say

## When Someone Says ...

### ... I didn't have to know baptism's purpose?

As of yet, I have never seen or heard of a denomination that teaches the truth on baptism. However, many teach something about baptism and most perform some kind of baptism.

That being the case, a great number of people with whom you talk about God's plan of baptism for the remission of sins will apply their new knowledge back to what they did in the past.

They will say it in different ways. Some will simply say, "That's what I did." Others will say,

"Oh, I did not know that's what I was doing." "I have been baptized." And still another will be, "You are not saying that my baptism was no good just because I did not know it was for the remission of sins, are you?"

It all boils down to the same question. Does a person have to know that baptism is for the remission of sins in order to be forgiven of their sins?

#### *How Were You Saved?*

1. According to **Acts 4:12**, by whose name must we be saved?
2. Can we be saved in some way other than Christ has commanded?
3. Can we be saved by obeying a gospel that is different from the one we read in scripture (*cf. Galatians 1:6-10*)?
4. Thus, if you were saved by some different means than what we read in the New Testament, were you really saved?
5. If you believed you were saved before you were baptized, were you saved in the way revealed in scripture?

#### *For the Remission of Sins*

1. Have you ever known people who decided to straighten up their lives—stop drinking, fighting, cussing, fornicating, etc. However, they were doing it because they had children and were not concerned about receiving forgiveness. Did that repentance save them? Why not?
2. When you were younger, did you ever go swimming? Did anyone ever dunk you under the water? That was a burial in water. Did that baptism save you? Why not?
3. According to **Acts 2:38**, baptism is an action with a purpose. What causes baptism to have the purpose of remission of sins?
4. If you were immersed in the water for some reason other than the one in **Acts 2:38**, did you really obey **Acts 2:38**?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... I was baptized by sprinkling (or pouring)?

In many cases, this objection can be dealt with by discussing infant baptism. After all, the great majority of those "baptized" this way were "baptized" when they were infants.

However, there are some adults that have gone through a rite of sprinkling or pouring, so we must also look at the mode of baptism.

### *Infant Baptism*

1. Examine the scriptures, call friends, search through concordances and list all the biblical examples of baptized babies below.
2. What must precede baptism according to each of the passages below:  
**Mark 16:16** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Acts 9:36-37** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Acts 2:38** \_\_\_\_\_
3. Can a baby do any of the above three things? Is an infant a proper candidate for baptism?

### *Baptized With the Whole Household*

1. How do you know babies were baptized in **Acts 16:15, 33**?
2. Wait, how many babies believed in **Acts 16:34; 18:8**?
3. Does "household" baptism necessitate babies?

### *Buried With Christ*

1. Look up the word baptism in a Bible dictionary, especially one that translates the original languages. List the definition below.
2. Can you fulfill the above definition by sprinkling or pouring?
3. According to **Romans 6:3-4** and **Colossians 2:11-12**, baptism presents a picture of something. What is the picture?
4. Are people buried by simply sprinkling or pouring dirt on their heads? Then how could Paul proclaim that baptism represents a burial with Christ to be raised up with Him, if all we do is sprinkle or pour water on people?
5. Does sprinkling or pouring really meet the requirements set forth by scripture? What does meet the requirements?

# What Do I Say When Someone Says ...

## ... baptism must be in Jesus' name?

Once again, we see a smokescreen thrown up by the devil. This objection says one thing but actually means another.

Who would argue that baptism must be done in Jesus' name? But what is really meant here is not about baptizing in Jesus' name. What is really meant is that in order to be properly baptized one must use a certain formula of words.

The one stating this as an objection to what we teach from the Bible is actually saying that a baptism does not count if the baptizer says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Instead, he must say, "I baptize you in Jesus' name."

Is this true? What does the Bible say?

### *"In the Name of ..."*

1. Based on **Acts 4:7-12**, what does doing something "in the name of" someone mean?
2. Considering **Colossians 3:17**, does doing something in the name of Jesus mean having to say the words "in the name of Jesus"?
3. According to **Acts 19:14-16**, does saying Jesus' name provide any special power?

### *United In Authority*

1. According to **John 12:49**, by whose authority did Christ speak?
2. Based on **John 16:13**, by whose authority did the Spirit speak?

3. Is doing something in Jesus' name different from doing it in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit? Why or why not?

### *Does That Baptism Count?*

As a number of churches in our area teach "Jesus only" baptism, we must ask if this is biblical baptism. If someone left an Apostolic or UPC congregation to join with us, would they still need to be baptized for the remission of their sins?

1. Is the "Jesus only" baptism taught in these churches the same baptism taught in the Bible? Why or why not?
2. Ask the UPC or Apostolic, is the baptism we follow different from the one they follow?
3. If the church teaches that it is, then how can we say they are doing what the Bible says?

# Questions or Comments

List any questions or comments you have regarding the class on this page. If we have time during our last class period, we will address these.