

INTRODUCTION: *PRACTICE MAKES BETTER*

I. THE PROBLEM: *VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE*

- A. SINGLE AUTHORITY FOR FAITH & LIFE** (Mt4:4; Jn17:17; 2Tm3:14f; 2Pt1:19-21 /WCF,I; Ps119:160)
- B. MULTIPLE READINGS IN BIBLE TEXT** (e.g. Jn.1:4,18; 7:53-8:11; Mk.16:9-20)
- C. DISRUPTED TEXT OCCASIONS DISCARDED AUTHORITY** (e.g., liberal-mainline Christianity, Islam, secularists, “common sense” humanists; *also* undermines Bible believers, Mk.9:24)

II. THE SOLUTION: *THE WISDOM OF GOD*

- A. WORKS SUBJECTED TO FUTILITY, YET EFFECTIVE** (Gen1:31; 3:17; Rm8:20; **yet** Rm1:20; Ps19:1f)
- B. WORDS SUBJECTED TO FUTILITY, YET EFFECTIVE** (Gn.3:10-12; 4:9;23,24; *11*:9,1f; **yet** Is.55:11,6f; Jer.1:9,12; Rom.10:17; 1Th.2:13; 2Tm.3:15-17; Heb.4:12)
- C. GIFT OF MEANS TO DISCERN TRUTH IN MIDST OF FUTILITY** (Dt.19:15; see 17:6; Mt.18:16; 2Cor.13:1; 1Tm.5:19; Heb.10:28)
 - 1. God's **works**: multiple witnesses to same *created law* (laboratory) or *providential event* (courtroom)
 - 2. God's **words**: multiple witnesses to same *revealed word* (manuscripts, versions, lectionaries, commentaries, letters; see also *Exodus-Deuteronomy; Kings-Chronicles; Matthew-Mark-Luke; Romans-Galatians; Ephesians-Colossians*; and, especially, Scripture as a *whole*, see WCF,I,9)
- D. SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE VS. ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE** (Dt.19:15; 29:29; see Rom.1:20; 2Tm.3:14-17; 2Pt.1:19f)

III. THE POINT: *GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH!*

- A. YOUR BIBLE IS A RELIABLE TESTIMONY TO THE WORD OF GOD!** (Jn.17:17; see Jer.1:9,12; e.g., Mt.4:1f; 2Pt.1:19f; 3:16)
- B. NO ELEMENT OF SAVING FAITH & LIFE IS AFFECTED BY TEXTUAL ISSUES** (see Rom.10:17; 2Tm.3:14-17; see WCF,I,7)
- C. YES, GOD HAS SAID!** (Gen.3:1f/Mt.4:1f (Gen.3:24/Heb.10:19) /2Cor.2:11 /Jer1:9,12; Jn17:17; 2Pt1:19f)
- D. JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE ONLY PURE TEXT!** (Jn.1:1f; 5:39; see 2Kngs.18:4)
- E. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUBJECT & OBJECT OF THE SCRIPTURES** (Jn.1:1f; Heb.1:3; & Lk.24:44; Jn.5:39; 2Cor.1:20)
- F. HEAR HIS VOICE AND HEED HIS WORDS** (Jn.10:27(3,4,16); see Mt.13:9f; 1Cor.2:12(1Jn.2:20; Lk.11:13); 2Tm.3:14-17; see WCF,I,5,10)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE, FAMILY AND SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP

Suggestions: *Don't feel obliged to use every question or every part of every question. Go through and discuss those that are of greatest **interest** to you. Then consider going back and discussing those that may also be **useful**, including those that may have seemed a bit difficult. In all questions, keep the outline before to identify entries relevant to the question and to look up appropriate verses listed.*

1. What most surprised, puzzled or impressed you from this sermon?
2. What was most helpful? Why? How will you apply it in your daily life?
3. What Scripture references were most helpful and why?
4. What are the primary *doctrinal* points of this passage? Do you *believe* these things?
5. What are the primary *practical* points? Do you do *these* things?
6. What is the problem that is addressed in this sermon?
 - a. Have you considered this problem before? If so, how did you solve it?
 - b. Is this a problem for your faith?
 - c. If so, how? If not, why not?
7. What is the solution presented in this sermon?
 - a. Is this solution true to the Scriptures? Why or why not?
 - b. Does this solution make sense to you? Why or why not?
8. What means has God given us to discern the original text of the Scriptures?
 - a. How is this means applied in other discernments in human life?
 - b. How does this process actually enhance our confidence and understanding rather than undermine them?
9. Can we know for certain that our Bibles reflect the original texts of the Bible?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. Can we know anything with absolute certainty? Why or why not?
 - c. How is this evident in the rules of judgment in our courtrooms?
10. Do you believe that your Bible is reliable? Why or why not?
11. How are Satan's fingerprints all over this issue and the stumbling it involves?
 - a. How can you defend yourself against this scheme of the Devil?
12. Where can the pure text of God's word be found?
13. What is the theme and purpose of the Bible?
14. Having considered all these things, what is your privilege and duty?
15. Read Chapter 1 in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and Questions 2-5 in the *Larger Catechism* (see <http://www.opc.org/confessions.html>). What three things most impress you from this chapter?
16. Consider memorizing questions 2 and 3 of the *Shorter Catechism* (below)
 - Q. 2. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*
 - A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. (2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 2:20; 1 John 1:3-4)
 - Q. 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*
 - A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. (2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 3:16)