

Class Schedule

Class: Religious Doctrines & Denominations
 And The Truth Project DVD's in the summer months

Day: Mid-Week Classes

Beginning: Wednesday April 6th

Ending: Wednesday Sep 28th

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Apr 6	1	Introduction - Speaking Truth in Love	_____
Apr 13	2	Are babies born in sin?	_____
Apr 20	3	Are babies born in sin? (cont.)	_____
Apr 27	4	Only some predestined to salvation?	_____
May 4	5	Only some predestined to salvation? (cont.)	_____
May 11	6	Jesus died only for certain people?	_____
May 18	7	God's grace to only a few people?	_____
May 25	8	Once saved always saved?	_____
Jun 1	9	Truth Project Lesson 1 ~ Veritology: What is Truth	
Jun 8	10	Truth Project Lesson 2 ~ Philosophy & Ethics: Says Who	
Jun 15	11	Truth Project Lesson 3 ~ Anthropology: Who is Man?	
Jun 22	12	Truth Project Lesson 4 ~ Theology: Who is God?	
Jun 29	13	Truth Project Lesson 5 Part I ~ Science: What is True?	
Jul 6	14	Truth Project Lesson 5 Part II ~ Science: What is True?	
Jul 13	15	Truth Project Lesson 6 ~ History: Whose Story?	
Jul 20	16	Truth Project Lesson 7 ~ Sociology: The Divine Imprint.	
Jul 27	17	Truth Project Lesson 8 ~ Unio Mystica: Am I Alone?	
Aug 3	18	Truth Project Lesson 9 ~ The State: Whose Law?	
Aug 10	19	Truth Project Lesson 10 ~ The American Experiment: Stepping Stones.	
Aug 17	20	Truth Project Lesson 11 ~ Labor: Created to Create.	
Aug 24	21	Truth Project Lesson 12 ~ Community & Involvement: God Cares, Do I?	
Aug 31	22	Saved by Faith Only?	_____
Sep 7	23	Saved by Faith Only? (cont.)	_____
Sep 14	24	Arguments against water Baptism?	_____
Sep 21	25	Arguments against water Baptism? (cont.)	_____
Sep 28	26	Arguments against water Baptism? (cont.)	_____

Lesson 1 – Apr 6th Speaking the Truth in Love

OVERVIEW

Ephesians 4:14-15: We don't want to be deceived by doctrines from people but speak truth in love and grow up spiritually to be like Christ.

1Timothy 3:15: The church must support the truth of God.

Psalms 119:160: Truth comes from the totality of God's Word

2Peter 3:14-18: The scriptures can be twisted so we must be careful not to be led away by error.

1Thessalonians 5:21: With truth we can test all things and discover what is good.

EXPLORE IT

Eph 4:14-15

Why do Christians need to be careful about the teachings or doctrines of Christ?

1Tim 3:15

What is one of the purposes of the church of God?

Ps 119:160

How can we know the truth of God?

2Pet 3:14-18

What conditions contribute to people twisting the scriptures?

How can we fall or be led away from the truth?

1Thess 5:21

What does God want us to do with any teaching we come in contact with?

GET IT

Does it matter how we speak the truth?

How does God want us to grow?

APPLY IT

How should we respond if someone tells us something contrary to the scriptures?

Lesson 2 – Apr 13th & 20th Are Babies Born in Sin?

OVERVIEW

The doctrine that states we are born in sin is often referred to as Total Hereditary Depravity. It refers to the sin of Adam and Eve and states that all of their children are guilty of their sin at birth, and are therefore born in sin. We will examine this teaching by the scriptures and find that God has not taught this and in fact has taught exactly the opposite.

- The first creed adopted by the Baptist churches in the United States made this statement: “Our first parents by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came to all; all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled, in all the faculties, and parts of soul, and body. (Philadelphia Confession of Faith with Catechism, Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., n.d., p.24)(Dawson, p.24)
- You can see from the statement above that they are claiming we become guilty in our souls of the sin Adam and Eve committed. It is true that our mortal bodies die because of Adam and Eve’s sin since they were cast away from God’s garden and the tree of life (Gen 3:22). However, children may deal with the consequences of their parents’ sin, but that is not the same as being guilty of that sin.

EXPLORE IT

Matt 18:1-5

Why do we need to be like children to enter the kingdom of God?

Rom 7:9-11

When did Paul die? What death is he talking about?

Ezek 18:5-20

Would God hold children responsible for their parents’ sin?

Deut 24:16

Should children be punished for their parents’ sin?

Deut 1:39

How did God describe the children below age 20 who came out of Egypt?

Eccl 7:29

What is the condition of people when made by God?

GET IT

Rom 5:12

Why did death spread to all men?

Rom 5:21

What is the life that Jesus offers? Is it eternal life in our mortal bodies or spiritual life?

Col 2:10-13

Why do people need the circumcision made without hands?

What does baptism rely on to raise us to new life?

What trespasses made us dead? Adam's, Eve's, or someone else's?

Whose sins does God forgive us for?

APPLY IT

We may encounter people from other churches who believe this doctrine, if so they will want their children baptized as infants or some other ritual to cleanse them of Adam's sin.

How can we help them understand their babies don't need saving?

When do their children need saving?

Lesson 3 – Apr 27th & May 4th Only Some Predestined to Salvation?

OVERVIEW

Some suggest that God has chosen which people he will bless with eternal life and which ones He will send to eternal death. It is a doctrine that rises from a few passages, but most strongly from Eph 1:1-14 and Rom 8:28-30. We will examine these scriptures after understanding some basic principles God teaches. We need to remember that on any given subject, the totality of God's Word is truth, which in other words, means we can't apply one passage in such a way that it makes another passage wrong. It is the sum total of the passages that help us know the truth.

- The following statement comes from a confession of faith book by Presbyterian churches in the US. "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass...By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite it cannot be either increased or diminished. (cited by Gordon H. Clark, *What do Presbyterians Believe?*, Philadelphia and Grand Rapids, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1965, p 36) (Dawson,32)
- We will notice that God, before He created the world, predestined (meaning to establish before what will happen) some things, and that He has foreknowledge (meaning He can see the future) of events, but He teaches us that the way of salvation is open to any who will believe, and He does not give preference to some people over others.

EXPLORE IT

Acts 10:34-35

What did Peter realize after He heard why Cornelius had sent for him (Acts 10:29-33)?

Who did Peter say could be accepted by God?

Rom 2:11-16

How will God judge all people?

Acts 17:30-31

Who does God command to repent?

Rev 22:17

Who did Jesus invite to come and drink freely from the water of life?

GET IT

Eph 1:1-14

In verse 4, before God made anything, what did He chose for Christians to be?

In verse 5, what did God predestine Christians to?

In verse 13, how does Paul say they became Christians?

Based on the passages we looked at earlier and these in Ephesians, what did God predestine? Choose the option that best fits all the scriptures.

The options are:

- The specific people to be Christians, -or-
- What Christians would be before God, for whoever will believe?

Rom 8:28-30

Who are the called people referred to in verse 28?

Is it possible that God foreknew who would respond to the calling of the gospel (for the calling see 2Thess 2:14)?

If God knew who would respond, does that mean He is responsible for our choices?

What did God predestine those who love God to be?

What did God plan to do for those whom are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ?

APPLY IT

After studying these passages, can anyone respond to the call of the gospel?

If anyone responds to the gospel what has God determined for their destiny?

Lesson 4 – May 11th Jesus Died only for Certain People?

OVERVIEW

Since the time of John Calvin in the 1500's, many have been convinced that Christ died only to save certain people whom God chose before the beginning of creation, and only these people would be allowed by the Holy Spirit to know the true teachings of God in the Bible. They point to a few passages such as John 17:12 where Jesus said "... Those whom you gave me I kept...", they point out that God gave certain people to Jesus, but they ignore other passages that clearly teach Jesus came for all people and He desires all people to be saved. However, the truth is that all people will not be saved (See Matt 7:13-14); many will follow the wide and easy path that leads to destruction. The reason isn't that God will not save them, but that they will not seek Him (See Matt 7:7-8). Below is a statement explaining this belief:

- "Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary sacrifice of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which united them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation." (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975, p.17.) (Dawson,34)

EXPLORE IT

1Timothy 2:3-7

Who does God desire to be saved?

How will they be saved? (See also John 18:37)

Hebrews 2:9

Who did Jesus suffer the death of the cross for?

1John 2:1-2

What does Jesus do for His children?

To whom is the mercy of Jesus available?

GET IT

John 6:33-40

Who are the people God has given to Jesus that they should not be lost?

APPLY IT

Romans 1:16

To whom does God offer salvation through Christ? Who will receive it?

Lesson 5 – May 18th God’s Grace only for a Few?

OVERVIEW

This teaching is often referred to as Irresistible Grace. It is connected to the teaching of babies being completely born in sin and the idea that God has predestined some individuals for His salvation. This idea is that the ones God predestined for salvation He will give grace by the Holy Spirit and they will not be able to resist it, their choice will play no part in this grace. The following quote explains this teaching:

- “Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason Calvinists speak of the Spirit’s call and of God’s grace in saving sinners as being “efficacious,” “invincible,” or “irresistible.” For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ.” (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975, p.49.) (Dawson,35)
- The bible plainly teaches that humans have a responsibility after hearing the Word of God, to believe it and obey it.

EXPLORE IT

Rom 3:21-26

To whom does God offer grace?

Does God require something of those who will receive grace?

Heb 11:6

What must someone do who believes in God?

1 Peter 1:22-23

What part do we have in purifying our souls? What part does Jesus have?

GET IT

Rom 6:15-19

How does our decision of who to follow affect the grace God offers us?

What is the pattern of teachings we are entrusted to?

APPLY IT

Since God’s grace is available to any who will believe, how can our belief help others to receive this grace?

Lesson 6 – May 25th Once Saved Always Saved?

OVERVIEW

This is another belief and teaching of John Calvin that some religious denominations believe. It is a teaching that stems from the doctrine of original sin, it is thought that since man is completely born in sin and needs God to enlighten him by the Holy Spirit in order to be saved that once God has done this to a person that person cannot fall away from the grace or salvation of God. Here is how the *Westminster Confession of Faith* states this idea:

- “They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.” (cited by; David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975, p.56.) (Dawson, 36)
- There are many scriptures that refer to the possibility of falling away or of apostasy, but usually those who believe this teaching respond by saying anyone who fell away wasn't really a Christian in the first place. The passages below clearly warn Christians who have been enlightened or have been in fellowship with God, about suffering destruction if they fall away.

EXPLORE IT

Heb 6:4-6

What does the passage say is impossible to do?

Is it possible for someone enlightened and a partaker with God to fall away?

Heb 10:26-29

Who is this warning directed towards?

John 15:5-6

What is the danger of not abiding with Jesus?

What does it mean to abide or remain with Jesus?

Rom 11:22

Why would someone be cut off from God?

GET IT

Heb 10:35-39

What are Christians encouraged to do so they won't fall away to destruction?

APPLY IT

What can you do, this week, to encourage another Christian to persevere?

Lesson 7 – Aug 31st & Sep 7th Saved by Faith Only?

OVERVIEW

The cry of the protestant reformation of the early 1500's became "Scripture Alone, Faith Alone, Grace Alone", however it was originally in Latin "*sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia*". Martin Luther, a professor of Biblical Studies at Wittenberg College, coined this phrase to attack the unscriptural teachings of the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. His problem with the church teachings in his day were: their elevation of church tradition with scripture, people earning righteousness through works, and meriting salvation by human effort.

- It is appropriate to show that the Roman Catholic teachings during the Middle Ages (their doctrines have not changed significantly since) are opposed to the true teachings of the Bible. However, the middle statement of Luther's phrase has taken on a life of its own through the last 500 years. For many who profess to be Christians, it has come to mean as long as one believes in Jesus Christ they will be saved. Therefore obedience to commandments cannot be required of a Christian because that would mean you are attempting to save yourself through your own works.
- This was not Luther's original intention, but it is the theological result of the application of many teachers over many centuries. Notice how Luther claimed Christians became priests in the following quote, "The pope or bishop anoints, shaves heads, ordains, consecrates, and prescribes garb different from that of the laity, but he can never make a man into a Christian or into a spiritual man by so doing. He might well make a man into a hypocrite or a humbug and blockhead, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. As far as that goes, we are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2 [v. 9]." (Stream, "The Decisive Documents of 1520" article in electronic version)
- Also notice Luther's statement as to how people became Christians, "All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 [vv. 12–13] that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people." (Stream, "The Decisive Documents of 1520" article in electronic version)
- The problem regarding the true teachings of scripture is that many professed believers have rejected the idea that people are required to do anything, including being baptized, to become Christians or have new life with Christ, even though this directly contradicts many scriptures from Jesus' own words to the writings of the Apostles Peter and Paul.
- We will study the scriptures that teach faith and obedience work together with God's grace for the saving of our souls. And God's grace covers our inability to be perfect as long as we continue to practice the faith.

EXPLORE IT

Is faith (or belief) alone enough? Look at the following passages and answer the questions.

James 2:19-20

Is faith alone enough?

What is necessary to complete or perfect our faith in God?

Does James teach that Abraham earned salvation by his works, meaning God owed Abraham salvation because of his actions?

John 14:15-16 and 15:14-15

If we love Jesus or want to be His friend, what must we do?

2Thess 1:6-8

What will happen to people who do not obey the gospel of Jesus?

1John 1:5-10

Does God say a person who walks in the light with Him never sins?

What does Jesus do for the person who walks with Him when they sin?

What does God tell Christians to do when they sin? What will He do?

GET IT

The teaching of faith only comes primarily from the book of Romans in chapters 1-5.

Read these passages in Romans and answer the questions?

Rom 4:1-5

Why does Paul say Abraham was justified by God?

Why does Paul say Abraham was not justified by works?

Is Paul contradicting James? If not, what is the difference between James's and Paul's arguments?

Rom 6:1-4, 16-18

Does Paul expect believers to be baptized? Why?

How does Paul say we can be delivered or set free from sin?

APPLY IT

How would you answer a friend who says to you they don't need to be baptized to be saved because that would be trying to be saved by works?

Lesson 8 – Sep 14th, 21st & 28th Arguments against Water Baptism?

OVERVIEW

Much of the teaching regarding baptism in modern times comes as a response to the teaching of the Roman Catholic church that developed during the Middle Ages. Catholicism viewed baptism as a work that merited salvation by the very act, regardless of the faith of the person baptized. This was just as big a departure from the biblical teachings about baptism as the protestant response which argued against the requirement of baptism. Take note of the doctrinal statements below and then we will study what the bible teaches about baptism before answering some common objections to water baptism.

- Roman Catholic teachings on Baptism:
“Valid reception does not require faith... Therefore, an unbeliever who so desires may be validly baptized even tho he have no faith. “(Jone-Adelman, *Moral Theology*, p. 320, cited by O.C. Lambert, *Catholicism Against Itself, Vol. II*, Winfield, AL: O.C. Lambert, Publisher, 1966, pp.218-222) (Dawson, 96)
- Jehovah’s Witness teachings on Baptism:
“Baptism does not wash away one’s sins (*Make Sure of All Things*, Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, Brooklyn: Revised in 1957, p.40) (Dawson, 91)
“What, then does baptism signify? It is not washing away one’s sins. (*The Truth that Leads to Everlasting Life*, Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, 1968, p.183) (Dawson, 91)
- Baptist teachings on Baptism:
“Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of ‘baptismal regeneration’; but it is essential to obedience since Christ has commanded it.” (Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., *The Standard Manuel for Baptist Churches*, Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1890, p.21.) (Dawson, 91)

EXPLORE IT

Mark 16:15-16

What response does God desire from the teaching of the gospel? What is the undesirable response?

Matthew 28:19

What did Jesus tell the Apostles to do to make disciples of all the nations?

Acts 2:37-39

What did Peter tell the people, who were feeling guilty about crucifying the Lord Jesus, to do?

Acts 10:47-48

What did Peter command the people who had been baptized by the Holy Spirit to do?

Acts 19:3-5

Why were John's disciples baptized again into Christ?

Acts 22:14-16

What did Ananias tell Paul he needed to do wash away his sins?

Gal 3:26-27

Who has put on Christ? How?

Rom 6:3-4

What does baptism into Christ Jesus do?

1Peter 3:18-21

What is the opposite image of baptism in this passage?

Based on Peter's definition of baptism is faith required of the one being baptized?

GET IT

Arguments against water baptism examined and answered.

- Argument #1: Baptism is a work and we are not saved by works.
 - This argument is focused on the fact that we cannot earn salvation by our works because salvation comes by the grace of God. With this primary point I agree, however those who argue against baptism for this reason extrapolate this point to all works God requires of us. For example, if we cannot be required to do any work in order to be saved then we can't believe, or confess, or repent, because these would also be works we do. Look at the following verses:
 - John 6:28-29 ~ Jesus said our belief is the work God wants us to do.
 - Rom 10:9-10 ~ Paul writes we must confess with our mouth to be saved, certainly this is also a work, though not one that earns salvation, but is done because God commanded it.
 - Luke 13:3 ~ Jesus told people that if they didn't repent they would perish, again this is a work or maybe a change of works, but not one that earns salvation, rather it is the right response to Christ's gospel message.
 - Likewise with baptism, the act of getting wet does not earn salvation, but being baptized in response to Christ's gospel is the work of God to raise us to new life, see Col 2:11-13.
 - It is our faith in the working of God that makes baptism effective for our spiritual birth to walk in new life with Christ. See John 3:5 & Titus 3:4-7

- Argument #2: Paul said Christ didn't send him to baptize, therefore baptism is not essential.
 - This argument is made using 1Cor 1:17 "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect."
 - Paul did not say don't baptize but that being baptized wasn't the primary focus of Paul's mission, which was to preach the gospel. Baptism was the response by those who believed the gospel even in Corinth. Acts 18:8 demonstrates that: Crispus believed and Paul tells us he baptized him in 1Cor 1:14, and many other Corinthians heard the gospel, believed it and were baptized.
 - Also from 1Cor 1:14-15 it is clear that Paul was glad he had only baptized a few in Corinth so many people would not claim they were baptized in Paul's name.
 - 1Cor 12:13 states that by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. If Paul were saying baptism wasn't important, why was everyone baptized into the body?

- Argument #3: The thief on the cross wasn't baptized but he was saved anyway.
 - This is probably the most heard argument against baptism into Christ for the remission of sins. In fact it was used by my own family when I was a new Christian. However, it is the easiest argument to answer.
 - Romans 6:3-4 "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - How could anyone be baptized into Jesus' death before He died?
 - Paul wrote in 1Cor 15:1-4 that the first thing he preached when declaring the gospel was that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day. This message of the gospel was not preached until the feast of Pentecost approximately 50 days after the death of Christ.
 - Who were the first people ever to be told they should be baptized into Christ (and his death) for the remission of their sins? Write down the passage.

APPLY IT

How can we best help those who only understand the catholic or protestant view of baptism understand the bible's teaching on it?

Works Consulted

Dawson, Samuel G., *Denominational Doctrines: Examined, Explained, Exposed*, Amarillo, TX, Gospel Themes Press, 1990.

Stream, Carol, *Christian History Magazine-Issue 34: Martin Luther: The Reformer's Early Years* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1992).