



Lecture #1, Part 1

Course Information

1. Course Description

A study of the persons of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit and their unified teaching of the doctrines of the Bible.

2. Objectives

By the end of this course, students will.....

1. Be able to articulate a reformed understanding of the doctrines of the Bible, identifying key Scriptural passages which support these doctrines as well as passages that are difficult for the reformed understanding.
2. Be able to interact respectfully and knowledgably with those hold different views on these doctrines.
3. Be able to identify key areas of contemporary Christian life which are impacted by these doctrines.
4. More deeply understand and appreciate the special covenant character of their relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Themes & Keywords

The Doctrine of the Bible: The authority and Inerrancy of the Bible, The clarity, Necessity, and Sufficiency of the Bible, The Doctrine of God: The Character of God, Incommunicable Attributes, The Communicable Attributes of God, The Trinity, Creation, God's Providence, Prayer, Angeles, Satan and Demons. The Doctrine of Man: The creation of Man, Man as Male and Female, Sin, The Doctrine of Christ: The Person of Christ, The Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension, The Doctrine of Application of Redemption, Common Grace, Election, The Gospel Call, Regeneration, Conversion (Faith and Repentance), Justification and Adoption, Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ), The Perseverance of the Saints (Remaining a Christian), The Doctrine of the Church: The Nature of the Church, Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Gifts of the Holy Spirits, General Questions, Specific Questions, The Doctrine of the Future: The Return of Christ: When and How?, The Millennium, The Final Judgment and Eternal Punishment, The New Heavens and New Earth. (Many more).

4. Texts

Book and handouts are required for class since there are many reading assignments due for class.

1. Grudem, Wayne: *Bible Doctrine Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*: Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530, 1999
2. Sproul, R.C.: *Essential Truths Of The Christian Faith*: Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois, 1992



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Recommended Reading: Throughout the course, Dr. Ildefonso will identify books that you will find helpful for further study. You will want to note the many books related to topics covered in the lectures.

5. **Exams:** There will be (2) Exams which will be available upon completion of Week #5 & Week #10 assignments.

Completed exams are to be emailed to Dr. Eddie Ildefonso: eildefonso@Covingtonseminary.org

“Why is sound doctrine so important?”

Paul charges Titus, “**You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine**” ([Titus 2:1](#)). Such a mandate makes it obvious that sound doctrine is important. But why is it important? Does it really make a difference what we believe?

1) **Sound doctrine is important because *our faith is based on a specific message*.** The overall teaching of the church contains many elements, but the primary message is explicitly defined: “**Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [and] . . . he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**” ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#)). This is the unambiguous good news, and it is “**of first importance**.” Change that message and the basis of faith shifts from Christ to something else. Our eternal destiny depends upon hearing “**the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation**” ([Ephesians 1:3](#); see also [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#)).

2) **Sound doctrine is important because *the gospel is a sacred trust, and we dare not tamper with God’s communication to the world*.** Our duty is to deliver the message, not to change it. Jude conveys urgency in guarding the trust: “**I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints**” ([Jude 1:3](#); see also [Philippians 1:27](#)). To “**contend**” carries the idea of strenuously fighting for something, to give it everything you’ve got. The Bible includes a warning neither to add to nor subtract from God’s Word ([Revelation 22:18-19](#)). Rather than alter the apostles’ doctrine, we receive what has been passed down to us and keep it “**as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus**” ([2 Timothy 1:13](#)).

3) **Sound doctrine is important because *what we believe affects what we do*.** Behavior is an extension of theology, and there is a direct correlation between what we think and how we act. For example, two people stand on top of a bridge; one believes he can fly, and the other believes he cannot fly. Their next actions will be quite dissimilar. In the same way, a man who believes that there is no such thing as right and wrong will



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naturally behave differently from a man who believes in well-defined moral standards. In one of the Bible's lists of sins, things like rebellion, murder, lying, and slave trading are mentioned. The list concludes with **“whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine”** ([1 Timothy 1:9-10](#)). In other words, true teaching promotes righteousness; sin flourishes where **“the sound doctrine”** is opposed.

4) Sound doctrine is important because *we must ascertain truth in a world of falsehood*. **“Many false prophets have gone out into the world”** ([1 John 4:1](#)). There are tares among the wheat and wolves among the flock ([Matthew 13:25](#); [Acts 20:29](#)). The best way to distinguish truth from falsehood is to know what the truth is.

5) Sound doctrine is important because *the end of sound doctrine is life*. **“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers”** ([1 Timothy 4:16](#)). Conversely, the end of unsound doctrine is destruction. **“Certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord”** ([Jude 1:4](#)). Changing God's message of grace is a **“godless”** thing to do, and the condemnation for such a deed is severe. Preaching another gospel (**“which is really no gospel at all”**) carries an **anathema**: **“let him be eternally condemned!”** (see [Galatians 1:6-9](#)).

6) Sound doctrine is important because *it encourages believers*. A love of God's Word brings **“great peace”** ([Psalm 119:165](#)), and those **“who proclaim peace . . . who proclaim salvation”** are truly **“beautiful”** ([Isaiah 52:7](#)). A pastor **“must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it”** ([Titus 1:9](#)).

The word of wisdom is **“Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set”** ([Proverbs 22:28, NKJV](#)). If we can apply this to sound doctrine, the lesson is that we must preserve it intact. May we never stray from **“the simplicity that is in Christ”** ([2 Corinthians 11:3](#)).

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