Special Revelation: God’s Truth
In the Inspired, Inerrant Scriptures

By

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WHAT RULE HATH GOD GIVEN TO DIRECT US HOW WE MAY GLORIFY AND ENJOY HIM?
Ans. 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.

I. WHY ARE THE WRITINGS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS CALLED “THE WORD OF GOD” IN THE CATECHISM?
A. Because these writings testify concerning themselves that they were immediately “inspired” by God Himself (2 Tim 3:16).
   1. The term inspired in this passage, from the Greek term theopneustos, means God-breathed.
   2. "Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or passively, the result of it,) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and, therefore, perfectly infallible" (Warfield).
   3. The Scriptures are “inspired” in that God the Holy Spirit sovereignly exerted His supernatural influence upon the human writers of the Bible.
      a. i.e., God the Holy Spirit, in authoring the Scriptures, sovereignly breathed His word in and through human writers (2 Sam 23:2).
B. Because the writers of the Bible did not write by natural inspiration, or an act of the human will (2 Pet 1:20,21).
   1. “…it is the first principle of our faith, that the Scripture is not of human invention, but Divine inspiration; that the prophets wrote not their own private sense in it, but the mind of God; and at his command, not their own pleasure” (Poole).
   2. The Scriptures were not the invention of men, but they were written by men who were sovereignly moved by God the Holy Spirit (Isa 28:14,16; Jere 7:20-26; Ezek 3:27; Amos 5:4; Obad 1:1; Mk 12:35-37; Acts 1:16; 28:25).
      a. See also Rom 1:1,2; 2 Pet 3:15,16
   3. The Bible does not just contain the Word of God—it is the Word of God.
C. Because the Scriptures are inspired by God word for word (e.g. Matt 22:23-32).
   1. i.e., Every word, in the original languages, is fully and equally inspired in all of its teachings.
D. Because the writings of the Bible are to be received and accepted by men as God’s authoritative word (1 Thes 2:13).
   1. “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God” (WCF I:IV).
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II. WHAT EVIDENCES PROVE THAT THE WORD CONTAINED IN THE BIBLICAL SCRIPTURES IS, IN FACT, THE WORD OF GOD?

A. The consent and harmony of the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. A consent between the OT and the NT
   2. A consent between the types and figures under the law and the things typified and prefigured under the gospel
   3. A consent between the promises and prophecies in the Scriptures, and the fulfilling of those promises and prophecies
      a. The Scriptures contain numerous ancient promises and prophecies that have been comprehensively and accurately fulfilled.
         1. e.g., Gen 12:3b/Gal 3:28,29 (Approximately 1,950 years exists between this promise and its fulfillment!)
         2. e.g., Ps 22:18/Jn 19:24 (Approximately 1,025 years exists between this prophecy and its fulfillment!)
   4. The Scriptures evidence a harmony or agreement of precepts, histories, and design.
      a. There are no (real) irreconcilable differences found in the Bible.
      b. The Bible’s historic accounts are consistent with the historic annals of other ancient sources.
         1. e.g., Josephus and the annals of other ancient civilizations—Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Rome, Greece etc.
   5. The Scriptures advocate the only philosophical system of thought that can produce a unified and comprehensive world and lifeview that is objectively reasonable, rational, and consistent.
      a. Biblical revelation practically synchronizes with life as it truly is in the real world.

B. The Scriptures’ unique history—a history like no other book, ancient or modern—proves that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. The Bible has a unique unity and continuity.
      a. It is a library of 66 books.
      b. It was written over 40 generations, in a period of approximately 1500 years.
      c. It was written by over 40 different authors.
      d. Represented in the Bible’s authors is a cross section of humanity, educated and uneducated, including kings, peasants, fisherman, public officials, philosophers, poets, statesman, farmers, teachers, and physicians.
      e. It was written in a variety of places: including a wilderness, a dungeon, a palace, and while traveling in the rigors of a military campaign.
      f. It was written during times of war and peace and during moods of joy and despair.
      g. It was written on three continents—Asia, Africa, and Europe—and in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

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h. Included in the Bible's subjects are: religion, history, law, science, poetry, drama, biography, and prophecy.

i. Its various parts are as harmoniously united as the parts that make up the human body.

j. It speaks with amazing unity and conformity on hundreds of controversial subjects about which there are hundreds of opposing opinions.

1. For 40 authors, with such varied backgrounds, to write on so many subjects over a period of approximately 1500 years in absolute harmony, is a mathematical impossibility. It could not happen! Then how do we account for the Bible? The only adequate explanation is "...men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

2. The Bible has had a unique circulation.

a. From the Bible societies alone, as of 1974, 2 billion, 582 million Bibles, New Testaments, or individual scriptural portions have been printed.

b. To print every Bible, New Testament, and individual portions of the Bible, published up to 1974, one printer would have to produce:
   - 1 copy every 3 seconds
   - 20 copies every minute
   - 1,200 copies every hour
   - 28,800 copies every day
   - 10 1/2 million every year
   - non stop for 245 years

3. The Bible has had a unique translation history.

a. It has been translated into approximately 1,280 languages.

4. The Bible has had a unique history in its survival.

a. Both its OT and NT manuscripts have been amazingly preserved.

   1. e.g., the dead sea scrolls

5. The Bible has had a unique history in its influences.

a. Throughout history it has significantly influenced individuals, churches, communities, nations, continents, and even hemispheres.

C. The design and contrivement of the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

1. The design of the Scriptures is to give God all the glory—to exalt God’s name and grace in the world (a design contrary to idolatrous man’s innate, fallen nature).

2. The design of the Scriptures is not to exalt any man, but to debase and empty all men (another design contrary to idolatrous man’s innate, fallen nature).

3. Only an infinite mind could have invented the marvelous contrivement of wisdom in the Scripture aimed at fallen man’s salvation.

   a. e.g., The plan of man’s recovery and salvation through the God-man, Jesus Christ:

      1. “...[He was] conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and
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distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man” (WCF VIII:II).

D. The high mysteries which are revealed in the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

1. Such high mysteries as:
   a. The Trinity of persons in the Godhead
   b. The relationship of God’s sovereignty to man’s will
   c. The mystical union of Christ and His members

2. These (and other high mysteries) were beyond the reach of the most wise and learned men to invent—much more beyond the reach of unlearned fishermen, by whom they were, in large part, revealed.

E. The power and efficacy of the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

1. The Scriptures are powerful to:
   a. Convince, awaken, and wound the conscience
   b. Convert and change the heart
   c. Quicken men out of spiritual death and deadness
   d. Rejoice and comfort men under the deepest distresses

2. The Scriptures, opened and applied, produce powerful effects that exceed the power of nature.
   a. The Bible has always exercised, and still exercises, a self-evidencing power—an unparalleled power upon the lives of men.

F. The antiquity of the Scriptures proves that the Bible is the Word of God.

1. The Scriptures were written, in part, before any other writings of men.

2. The Scriptures contain a history of the most ancient things, and things are there revealed as none but God knew:
   a. The creation of the world
   b. The flood
   c. The institution of marriage
   d. The co-existence of evil and good
   e. The angelic beings

G. The majesty of the Scriptures proves that the Bible is the Word of God.

1. God’s majesty is set forth in such high expressions, and these expressions are not to be found in any human writings:
   a. e.g., “…the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Tim 6:15,16).
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b. e.g., “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Rev 20:11).

2. The style or way of the Scriptures is with such majesty as is not in any human writings:
   a. Duties are therein prescribed, which none but God can require.
   b. Sins are therein condemned, which none but God can prohibit.
   c. Threatenings of punishment are therein denounced, which none but God can inflict.
   d. Promises of rewards are therein made, which none but God can bestow.

H. The holiness and purity of the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. The Scriptures are holy from beginning to end.
      a. The Bible does not savor at all of anything that is earthly, impure, or unholy (another design contrary to idolatrous man’s innate, fallen nature).
         1. Thus, it is evident that the Scriptures are the word of the **holy** God, and that the **holy** men which wrote them were under the inspiring influences of God the **Holy** Spirit.

I. The miracles that are recorded in the Scriptures prove that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. The validity of the Biblical writers and their doctrine was confirmed by miracles that only God could have performed (Ex 4:1-9; 1 Kings 18:30-40; Jn 6:14; Acts 2:22; Heb 2:3,4; Acts 14:3).

J. The blood of ancient martyrs proves that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. There were many thousands of Christians, in primitive times, who sealed and gave testimony to the truth of the Scriptures with the loss of their lives.
      a. e.g., The great faith, patience, and constancy of the Apostles—as well as many other first century believers—in their persecutions and deaths.
         1. These people might easily have found out any deceit, had there been any deceit imposed upon them (i.e., deceit relative to attesting miracles, false historic testimony etc.).

K. The testimony of the Spirit of God in, with, and by the Scriptures proves in a true believer’s heart that the Bible is the Word of God.
   1. Without this testimony, and teaching of the Spirit, all other arguments will be ineffective in persuading a person unto a saving faith (2 Cor 4:3-6; 1 Cor 2:14).
      a. “The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation [and by many other incomparable excellencies]: **but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God**” (LCQ, 4).

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III. WHAT IS MEAN BY THE WORD “SCRIPTURES” IN THE CATECHISM?
A. The word “Scriptures” in the catechism refers to the writings of the Protestant Bible, both the Old and New Testaments.
   1. The word *Scripture* essentially means “something written—a writing.”
      a. Biblically, the word *Scripture* is used in connection with a variety of writings:
         1. Royal writings such as edicts, registers, enrollments, rolls, records, and letters (e.g., Ezra 2:62)
         2. Holy, sacred writings considered to have Divine authority (e.g., 2 Tim 3:16)

IV. WHY WAS THE WORD OF GOD PUT INTO SCRIPTURES, OR WRITINGS?
A. The Word of God was put into scriptures so that its history and doctrine might be accurately passed down from one generation of men to another (2 Pet 3:1, 2).
   1. If God’s Word (which was revealed to holy men ages ago) had been entrusted to the memories of men only, many truths, in all likelihood, would have been lost by this time.
      a. The memories of men are weak and unfaithful.
      1. Historically, “truths” passed on by word of mouth and tradition have become seriously distorted (e.g., the multiple, distorted legends regarding the great flood in Noah’s day).
   2. The Word of God—put into writings—was God’s wise and sovereign way of assuring that His revelation of truth and grace would be accurately preserved for mankind in future ages.
B. The Word of God was put into scriptures so that the gospel, revealed in the Word, might be effectively propagated in several nations (Mat 28:18-20).
   1. Reports of God’s gospel, passed down by word of mouth and tradition, would not have been as easily believed as the writings of the Prophets and Apostles themselves, unto whom God’s Word was revealed (Eph 2:20; 3:5).
   2. The Word of God—put into writings—was God’s wise and sovereign way of assuring that His revelation of truth and grace would be preserved—authoritatively—for men of all nationalities.
C. The Word of God was put into scriptures so that there might be a standing rule of faith and life in the Church (Isa 8:20; 2 Tim 2:15-18).
   1. The Church needed a standing rule by which all doctrines might be examined.
   2. The Church needed a standing rule by which all actions might be ordered.
   3. The Word of God—put into writings—was God’s wise and sovereign way of assuring that His revelation of truth would prevent corrupt principles and practices in His Church.

V. WHICH ARE THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND WHICH ARE THE SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?
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A. The scriptures of the Old Testament (originally written in Hebrew, and in a few places Aramaic) are the scriptures in the former part of the Bible, beginning at Genesis, and ending with Malachi.

B. The scriptures of the New Testament (originally written in Greek) are the scriptures in the latter part of the Bible, beginning at Matthew, and ending with the Revelation.

VI. WHY ARE THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS ALSO REFERRED TO AS “THE BIBLE?”

A. The term “Bible” is from the Greek word biblia (i.e., the books), the plural of biblion, diminutive of biblos (i.e., book), from byblos (i.e., papyrus).

1. In ancient times papyrus was used in making the paper from which books were manufactured.

B. Essentially, the Greek word biblia (the term used by the church to refer to the Scriptures until sometime around the 5th century) means “The Books.”

1. Jerome, the fourth century translator, called the Scriptures “the Divine Library.”
   a. He wanted to stress that the many books were, in fact, one.

2. Later (around the fifth century) Greek speaking believers, who also wanted to stress that the many books were, in fact, one, shifted from the early plural form biblia, meaning “The Books,” to The Bible, meaning “The Book.”
   a. The plural term biblia stressed the fact that the Bible was a collection of books; that the word came to be used in the singular emphasizes the fact that behind these many books there lies a wonderful unity.
   b. Long before, the Jews had faced the same problem when they spoke of The Scriptures and Scripture.

VII. WHY ARE THE SCRIPTURES IN THE FORMER PART OF THE BIBLE CALLED “THE OLD TESTAMENT?”

A. Because the Scriptures in the former part of the Bible primarily reveal God’s covenant of grace under the Old Covenant dispensation.

1. God’s covenant of grace has been administered in two dispensations—the Old Covenant (or Testament) and the New.
   a. God’s covenant of grace was administered under the Old Covenant by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances.
      1. These types and ordinances foreshadowed and fore-signified a Christ to come; that is, a Christ of prophecy who would be the testator of the testament, and the mediator of the covenant.
         a. A testator is the person that establishes or ratifies the covenant—that makes it what it is, an established, fixed, effective arrangement.
b. A mediator is a person who intervenes between two parties in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant.

2. The types and ordinances of the Old Covenant were, for that time, sufficient to build up believers in their faith in a promised Messiah.
   a. Old Testament believers were saved by grace through faith in a promised Messiah, receiving a full remission for their sins and eternal life.

VIII. WHY ARE THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LATTER PART OF THE BIBLE CALLED “THE NEW TESTAMENT?”
   A. Because the Scriptures in the latter part of the Bible primarily reveal God’s covenant of grace under the New Covenant dispensation.
      1. Remember, God’s covenant of grace has been administered in two dispensations—the Old Covenant (or Testament) and the New.
         a. God’s covenant of grace is administered under the New Covenant without types and figures, because Christ Himself—being revealed in the flesh—fulfilled the Old Covenant shadows, types, and ordinances in His life and death.
         1. God’s covenant of grace is administered under the New Covenant by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper.
         2. These New Covenant ordinances of worship are more spiritual than those of the Old Covenant (Jn 4:24).
            a. In the New Testament administration of God’s covenant of grace, grace and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidency, and efficacy, to all nations.
            b. Believers saved by grace under the Old Covenant looked forward by faith to the coming, promised Christ of prophecy; believers saved by grace under the New Covenant look backward by faith to the risen, ascended Christ of history.

IX. WHAT IS MEAN BY THE WORD “RULE” IN THE CATECHISM?
   A. The Word of God (The Bible) is a Divine library of books that together form what is called a “canon.”
      1. The word canon (Greek in origin) means “a measuring rod” or, as we might say, “a ruler.”
         a. A canon is a standard or norm for judging something true or straight.
         2. The Word of God is called a canon because it is a truth standard—it is a “rule” for determining truth.

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a. The Bible is to believers what a tape measure, square, or level is to a carpenter.

X. HOW DO BELIEVERS USE THE SCRIPTURES, AS A “RULE, TO DIRECT” THEM?
A. Believers use the Scriptures as a “rule to direct” them when, interpreting Scripture with Scripture, along with the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, they think and live Biblically.
1. Believers use the Scriptures as a “rule to direct” them when they interpret Scripture with Scripture.
   a. “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly” (WCF I:IX).
   1. e.g., Mat 5:44; 6:24; Gen 29:30,31
   2. e.g., Mat 7:1-5; 1Cor 5:1-3; Jas 4:11,12
2. Believers use the Bible as a “rule to direct” them when (interpreting Scripture with Scripture) they frame all of their religious convictions by it, ever looking to the promised aid of the Holy Spirit who speaks in the Scriptures (1 Cor 2:10-16; Jn 14:16-17; 15:26,27; 16:13-15; Eph 6:17; 2 Cor 10:3-6).
   a. “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture” (WCF I:X).
3. Believers use the Bible as a “rule to direct” them when they... think and live Biblically (Mat 7:24-27; Jas 1:22-27; Ps 119:105).
   a. Believers use the Bible as a “rule to direct” them when they...
      • ...select their friends Biblically (1 Cor 5:9-12; 15:33; Prov 13:20; Ps 119:63)
      • ...choose a marriage partner Biblically (Heb 13:4; 1 Cor 6:14,15)
      • ...visit their neighbor’s home Biblically (Prov 25:17; 27:14)
      • ...treat people who deeply hurt them Biblically (Mat 1:18,19; Gen 50:15,18-21)
      • ...seek the recognition of other people Biblically (Prov 27:2)
   b. Believers use the Bible as a “rule to direct” them when they diligently strive to always maintain an ever-learning, ever-reforming mindset that ever seeks to apply the whole counsel of God to all facets of life!

XI. HOW DO BELIEVERS USE THE SCRIPTURES, AS A RULE, TO DIRECT THEM IN GLORIFYING AND ENJOYING GOD?
A. Believers use the Scriptures as a rule to direct them when they think and live Biblically, with a view to glorifying and enjoying God (1 Cor 10:31).

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1. Believers glorify God when they consciously place God at the center of their lives—in accordance with His written Word.
   a. i.e., when they design, in their every thought, word, and deed, to acknowledge, value, love, obey, trust, thank, serve, honor, praise, worship, and exalt God—in accordance with His written Word.

2. Believers enjoy God when they take great pleasure in, and receive most satisfaction from, a deep, spiritual relationship with God—in accordance with His written Word.
   a. i.e., when they are filled with and experience the satisfying pleasure of God’s gracious presence—in accordance with His written Word.

XII. WHY ARE THE SCRIPTURES DECLARED “THE ONLY RULE TO DIRECT US” IN THE CATECHISM?

A. Because, while natural reason plays a minor role in revealing God to men (Rom 1:19-21; 2:14,15), it cannot fully or savingly reveal God them.
   1. “Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation” (WCF I:1).
   a. Natural reason cannot reveal God’s love and mercy to sinners in His Son.
   b. Natural reason cannot reveal how God is to be glorified and worshipped.
   c. Natural reason cannot direct men in discovering how they should enjoy God either here or hereafter.

B. Because the human heart is prone to follow its own dark, idolatrous understanding and promptings (Rom 1:18-22; Pro 3:5-7; 28:26; Isa 50:10,11; 53:6a).

C. Because the Scriptures are designed of God to objectively inform our faith (Rom 10:17; Heb 1:1).
   1. Biblical "faith" is a spiritual walk in the light not the dark.
   a. It is a rational step or leap within reason (i.e. Biblically objective) verses an irrational step or leap apart from reason (i.e. intuitively subjective).
   2. Because all men have religious beliefs (including the atheist), the arms of their faith will inevitably wrap around someone or something.

D. Because the Bible—and nothing else—is sufficient to direct us in our chief end to glorify and enjoy God (Jn 17:17; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim 3:16,17).

XIII. IN ADDITION TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHAT “OTHER” RULES DO PEOPLE USE TO DIRECT THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES?

A. Hare Krishna: The Path of Perfection + teachings of the sect’s leader
B. Mormons: the Bible + the Book of Mormon
C. Christian Science: the Bible + Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
D. Unity: the Bible + The Unity Way of Life

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E. Jehovah Witnesses: the Bible + the unique interpretation/version of the Bible modified by their leaders + Watch Tower publications
F. Liberalism: the Bible + the spirit of the age
G. Catholicism: the Bible + tradition + the Pope + historic church counsels
H. Charismatics: the Bible + subjective promptings and impressions + personal experiences + so-called prophetic “gifts”
I. Other Christians:
   1. the Bible + horoscopes and psychics
   2. the Bible + superstitions and premonitions
   3. the Bible + philosophers, poets, and artists
   4. the Bible + human reason and rationalizations
   5. the Bible + sales techniques, worldly allurements
   6. the Bible + a person’s own private interpretation of the Scriptures
   7. the Bible + what certain outspoken people in a church think
   8. the Bible + the parental values a person was raised under
   9. the Bible + legalisms (music, haircuts, movies, dress standards etc.)
   10. the Bible + what the Pastor (or any church teacher/leader) thinks
   11. the Bible + people’s preferences
   12. the Bible + political convictions
   13. the Bible + books of church order, confessions, or creeds inordinately leaned upon
   14. the Bible + one’s bad experiences and fears
   15. the Bible + anything that a person uses (consciously or unconsciously) as a plumbline for his or her religious beliefs and values.
J. What do the following peoples’ words reveal about the rule (or rules) they use to direct their religious beliefs and values?

• “As far as I’m concerned, anybody that serves as an usher at church, but doesn’t wear a suit and tie, simply doesn’t care about honoring God.” (rule = personal preference + legalism + tradition)

• “I don’t see how a person can claim to be a ‘Christian’ and also be for capital punishment—especially if they oppose abortion.” (rule = natural reason)

• “Jesus Christ and His teachings are at the center of my personal religion, but that doesn’t mean that a Jewish person should do the same. We must all give each other room to find God on our own terms.” (rule = Bible + natural reason)

• “Christians who live in a free country like ours sin when they don’t vote. Furthermore, I think God is angry with Christians who fail to take a loud, public stand against abortion, homosexuality, and the lack of prayer in public schools!” (rule = American conservatism)
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- “I think that if Larry and Sue would just start attending all of our church’s gatherings, instead of just coming to Sunday school and worship Sunday mornings, God would quit afflicting them with so many health problems. I think God is trying to get their attention, because they’re not really very committed Christians.” (rule = natural reason + legalism)

- “I don’t go to church, but I do believe I should have my baby baptized. My Mom and Dad feel the same way. They say that if I can’t find the time to go to church, I should at least have my daughter christened. I think they’re right.” (rule = natural reason + Mom & Dad)

- “Last night, when our electricity went out after dark, I realized that God was speaking to us as a family. He was saying that there is too much darkness in our household. I think God is displeased with all the bickering we’ve been doing lately.” (rule = experience + Bible)

- “I believe that the Bible contains the words of God, but I also believe the Bible needs to be received with a grain of salt—like any other book humans have written.” (rule = Bible + natural reason)

- “It is clear to me that according to John 3:16 God loves everybody and Christ died for every sinner equally. To me that is simple. So, why should I sit around and waste my time trying to sort through the maze of Scriptures you’ve brought up about predestination.” (rule = Bible + prejudiced reason)

- “I believe God primarily speaks to His people through His Word, but I also believe, in these last days, He speaks through the gift of tongues. Through the gift of tongues, God the Holy Spirit speaks directly to my heart about my unique, individual circumstances.” (rule = Bible + so-called “gift of tongues”)

- “My husband thinks that since the Bible says people who are married are ‘one,’ that all of our money should be kept together. But I believe (like my mom and sister) that a woman should keep and control all of her money—so she can spend it on what she wants. After all, I earn the money, shouldn’t I be free to spend it as I wish.” (rule = mom + sister + natural reason)

- “I know that the Bible condemns homosexuality, but we live in changing times. What was considered right in the past doesn’t always fit into our modern lives today. Our values must change and evolve with the times.” (rule = relativistic reasoning & rationalizing)

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“I know that technically speaking that the Bible condemns premarital sex, but I don’t believe God is offended if two people, who really love each other, share their love by having sex before they are married. Let’s get real.” (rule = natural reason + spirit of the age)

“When people read the Bible, they need to be allowed the spiritual space to freely explore and interpret its teachings for themselves, because truth is found and perceived differently by each individual person.” (rule = Bible + relativistic reasoning & rationalizing)

“Using an evolutionary process, I believe that, over many millions of years, God first formed man from protoplasm into an ape. Then, again over many millions of years, God formed man from an ape into what man is today.” (rule = Bible + popular science + natural reason)

“When I woke up this morning, God spoke to my heart and said, ‘Tom, stay home from work today, something bad is going to happen to you if you don’t.’ So, ole Tom isn’t going anywhere today.” (rule = feelings + fear + experience + premonition)

“I believe that God is with me wherever I go, but today my horoscope said to ‘avoid all vulnerable situations.’ So, I’m not going to take any unnecessary risks by driving downtown tonight after dark.” (rule = horoscope)

“I don’t know what the Bible says about abortion, but I’m sure my Pastor does. He knows the Bible inside and out, and he says that there is a place for having an abortion—like when a young person just can’t deal with having a child.” (rule = natural reason + Pastor)

“In order for us to get along in our church, we give everyone room to interpret the Bible in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them.” (rule = natural reason + subjectivism)

“Sally, if you were really interested in obeying God, you wouldn’t befriend unbelievers. They bring you down when you traipse off to the movies with them, even if it is just once in a while.” (rule = legalism)

“I don’t know much about the Scriptures, but I do know that the Catholic church is the oldest Christian church—and that is a good enough reason for me to believe that it teaches the truth.” (rule = natural reason + church)
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- “I feel that God has to love all men unconditionally, otherwise He wouldn’t be fair.” (rule = natural reasoning and rationalizing)

- “Last night one of the women in our church, who has the gift of prophecy, called me and told me that God spoke to her heart and said that He wanted me to start a new ladies ministry in our church. I’m so excited! I’ve finally found my calling.” (rule = so-called “gift of prophecy”)

Bibliography

Portions of this outline (some paraphrased and others copied word for word) were derived from these sources:


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