

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- Only Two Choices
- Realize the Significance
- Is it Faith or Science?
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- Guess at the Evidence
- Inspect the Evidence
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- No Compromise
 - DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- Love - GOD and MAN
- Increase - GROW
- Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure
- Eternity – Past, Present, Future

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- Personal and Loving
- Omnipotent
- Wise and All-Knowing
- Everywhere and Eternal
- Righteous and Reliable

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason
- Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time
- Loving
- Enforced
- Steadfast

What Are the Rules?

Standards - Knowing the R.U.L.E.S.

We all know that there are rules in life. From the time we're born we are continually learning that one action is considered right, another is considered wrong, if you do this then that will happen, etc. The Rules we're talking about here are the foundational rules of right and wrong. ***The Bible gives us these rules and states that they are from God.***

In the time of the Protestant Reformation a major focus was on "Sola Scriptura" – Scripture Alone. The Roman Catholic Church was teaching that man's reasoning and traditions had as much authority as the Bible. The reformers correctly argued that the Bible alone was the standard for all truth and rules. If the Bible is God's Word, it is not to be amended by men.

Our objective in this section is not to try to summarize all the rules God gives in the Bible. The LIFE chapter summarizes some of them, and Jesus summed them all up with the two greatest commandments:

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40

Instead of listing commandments we'll use the acrostic RULES to identify five general aspects of the rules found in the Bible. These five aspects can help us compare the standards of the Bible to other sets of rules promoted by other worldviews and people.

The Bible's rules are:

- **Revealed** (supernaturally) rather than derived from reason
- **Universal** and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

As we discussed in ORIGIN, if God created us then He has the right to tell us what's right and what's wrong. Because our culture denies God's authority, it often denies His rules. As Christians we need to be ready to explain why God's rules are the standard to use.

R - Revealed (Supernaturally)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible claims to be truth that God has revealed to us supernaturally through the Spirit-inspired writings of men over many centuries.

The reason we look to the Bible for answers to our four big questions is because we believe it is God's Word. As we discussed at the beginning of this book, God is the only One who could know it all. So we take His Word as the source of truth. To find out the rules for life we go to the revealed answers from God found in the Bible.

This is a stark contrast to most other worldviews. We live in a humanistic culture that believes that man determines the rules to live by, and that these rules are derived from our intellect and reason based on experience. In a post-modernist world we even deny that there are "real" rules and therefore we give ourselves a false sense of freedom to do whatever we'd like to do. Referring back to our "whole ball" analogy, this is the laughable effort of someone who knows less than a speck of the ball pretending he knows enough to override the authority of the One who created the ball!

Other religions have sacred writings that they also claim are supernatural in origin. Revealed truth is not a unique claim of the Bible. But because the Bible and these other writings are not in agreement on most topics, it is illogical to say that they can all be "true." Truth is absolute, not relative. The Book of Mormon says things about God and Jesus that contradict the Bible. Either the Book of Mormon is true, or the Bible is true. If the Bible is true, those other sacred writings are not true *at the points in which they disagree with the Bible*. Other writings may have truth in them (the Qu'ran agrees that God created), but the standard of truth for a Christian is always the Bible. *For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.* (Psalms 33:4)

How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word?

Why do we believe the Bible is God's Word? This is another topic that deserves its own book, but I'll try to give a brief but sufficient answer for our purposes.

This topic is similar to our ORIGIN topic because it is not absolutely "provable" in a scientific sense. So we'll use the "expectational" approach we used earlier. We'll look at what evidence we would expect to see if the Bible was true, then we'll inspect some evidence.

What would we expect to see?

Assuming there is a God who created us and who wants to communicate with us, what characteristics would we look for in a book/writing that is from Him? The Bible claims to be from God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21). But how can we know if that claim is true? Since the goal of this book is to provide easily-memorized points we'll simplify this to a familiar phrase. **We would expect God's book to contain "the Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing But the Truth".**

1. The Truth

We would expect that everything written in the book would be true. This would include the areas of:

- a. History
- b. Science
- c. Prophecy

2. **The Whole Truth**

We would expect that the book would sufficiently answer all of life's important questions.

- a. It would answer the questions of where we come from, why we're here, who's in charge, what are the rules
- b. It would be consistent with our observations of the world (including science and the nature of people)
- c. It would provide a foundation for things we depend on such as laws of logic, uniformity of nature, and morality
- d. We would not need any other "sacred" writings to answer these questions

3. **And Nothing But the Truth** (so help us God ☺)

We would expect that the book would contain only the writings that God had inspired.

- a. The "canon" or included writings would be accurate
- b. The writings would be preserved accurately throughout time
- c. The writings would be widely available and widely known
- d. The writings would be consistent and would not contain contradictory statements

So, what do we actually see?

The Bible is the ONLY book that meets all of these expectations. The chart on the next page compares the Bible to other well-known sacred writings. Following the chart are some notes that provide more information on key points. For more details you can refer to books such as Handbook of Today's Religions by Josh McDowell & Don Stewart or So What's the Difference? by Fritz Ridenour. The following online links are also helpful:

- <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v2/n4/other-religious-writings>
- http://www.comereason.org/cmp_rlgn/cmp005.asp
- <http://www.equip.org/articles/bible-reliability>
- <http://debate.org.uk/topics/history/home.htm>