

Classification of Biblical Truth*

While we can learn Biblical Truth we will never have complete knowledge in this life or the next. God is truth and He has revealed certain portions of truth in His Word. Our task is to use appropriate methods of exegesis to understand the teachings of scripture. The definitions below assume consistent use of such methods.

CLASS 1: Explicit biblical embrace or condemnation. Truth plainly depicted in clear and specific language in multiple passages without contrary interpretation. Level of doubt is non-existent.

Examples

- Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit & born of the virgin Mary (*Isa 7:14; Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-35; Jn 1: 14*)
- It is wrong to steal (*Ex 20:15; Eph 4:28*)
- We are to love one another (*John 13:34; 15:12, 17; 1John 3:23; 4:7-11*)

CLASS 2: Clearly implicit biblical position. Truth that is clearly implied and confirmed in multiple passages without reasonable contrary interpretation. Level of doubt is nearly non-existent but can vary depending on the issue.

Examples

- Jesus is 100% God and 100% man (*Isa 7:14; Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-35; Jn 1:1, 14; Heb 1:8*)
- The existence of the Trinity (*Gen 1:26; Matt 3:16-17; 28:19*)

CLASS 3: Partisans of both sides quote Scripture but careful study allows biblical conclusions. Truth that requires careful and disciplined study to confirm and typically involves synthesis from multiple passages comparing scripture with scripture. Resolution of apparent contrary interpretations is required. Some doubt exists and can vary depending on the issue.

Examples

- The meaning & practice of communion (*Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:17-20; Jn 6:35, 48-58; 1Cor 11:23-26*)
- Pre-tribulation rapture (*1Cor 15:51-53; 1Thes 4:13-18; 2Thes 2:1-12*)
- Baptism by immersion (*Mk 1:10; Jn 3:23; Acts 8:38-39; Rom 6:3-4*)

CLASS 4: Biblical understanding backed by historical experience and a sense of human nature. Conclusions based on biblical analysis of multiple passages and confirmed by historical record and observation of human behavior. Doubt exists and can vary depending on the issue.

Examples

- War is sometimes necessary and moral (*Rom 13:1-7; 1Pet 2:13-14*)
- The practice of gathering for worship on Sunday (*John 20:1; Acts 20:7; 1Cor 16:2*)

CLASS 5: Navigable only by experts who might themselves be overturned. Conclusions based on analysis of multiple passages leading to most likely interpretations. Contrary interpretations are possible and level of doubt varies but can be significant.

Examples

- Babylon of Rev 17-18 refers to the Roman church
- Sign gifts are not for today (*1Cor 12:7-10; 13:8-10; 2Cor 12:7-9*)

HOMEWORK: Assign a class to each of the statements from the WCC Doctrinal Statement on the next page.

* Adapted from: Telling the Truth, Chapter 1, Marvin Olasky, Crossway Books, 1996.

WCC DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. (Jn 16:12,13, 2Ti 3:16,17, 2 Pe 1:21; 3:15,16) **CLASS** _____
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Dt 6:4, Mt 28:19, 2Co 3:14) **CLASS** _____
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man. (Isa 7:14, Lk 1:35, Jn 1:1,14; 20:28, Heb 1:8) **CLASS** _____
4. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature and that man is totally depraved and of himself is unable to remedy his lost condition. (Ge 1:26, Ro 3:23; 5:12, Eph 2:1-3,12) **CLASS** _____
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe on Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. (Jn 1:29, Ro 3:23-26, 1Pe 1:18,19; 2:24) **CLASS** _____
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Lk 24:39, 1Co 15:3,4, Ro 8:4, Heb 7:24,25) **CLASS** _____
7. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost – the saved to everlasting blessedness and the lost to everlasting conscious punishment. (Mt 25:46, Jn 5:28,29) **CLASS** _____
8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and that they thereby become children of God and members of the Body of Christ, the Church, which includes all born-again persons in this present age. (Jn 1:12; 3:3,8, 1Co 12:12-14) **CLASS** _____
9. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment and who regenerates, indwells, enlightens and empowers the saved, sealing them unto the day of redemption. (Jn 16:8, 1Co 6:19,20, Eph 1:13,14) **CLASS** _____
10. We believe that the saved are called to a life of separation from all sinful practices. (Ro 12:2, 2Co 6:14, 1 Jn 2:15,16) **CLASS** _____
11. We believe that it is the obligation of every Christian to witness by life and word to the truth and to take part in proclaiming the Gospel to all the world. (Ac 1:8) **CLASS** _____
12. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of all sin, the enemy of God and the deceiver of mankind and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. (Job 1:6,7, Mt 4:2-11, Rev 20:10) **CLASS** _____
13. We believe in the eternal security of the saved. (Jn 5:24; 6:39, 40; 10:27-30, 1Jn 5:13) **CLASS** _____
14. We believe in the personal, pre-millennial, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ac 1:11, 1Th 4:16,17, Rev 20:4-6) **CLASS** _____

APPENDIX

1. Verbally inspired of God (God breathed): **Class 1** (*2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:21*)
Inerrant in the original writings: **Class 2**
Supreme and final authority because they are God breathed: **Class 2** (*2Tim 3:16; John 17:17*)
2. There is one God: **Class 1** (*Deut 6:4*)
Existing in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **Class 2** (*Matt 28:19*)
3. Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit: **Class 1** (*Matt 1:18-20; Luke 1:34-35*)
Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary: **Class 1** (*Isa 7:14; Matt 1:24-25*)
Is true God and true man: **Class 1** (*John 1:1, 14; Heb 1:8*)
4. Mankind was created in the image and likeness of God: **Class 1** (*Gen 1:26-27*)
In Adam's sin the race fell and inherited a sinful nature: **Class 1** (*Rom 3:23; 5:12*)
Mankind is totally depraved and unable to remedy his lost condition: **Class 1** (*Jer 13:23; 1Cor 2:14*)
5. Jesus died for our sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice: **Class 1** (*John 1:29; 1Pet 2:24*)
All who believe on Jesus are justified based on His shed blood: **Class 1** (*Rom 3:24-25; 1Pet 1:18-19*)
6. The crucified body of Jesus rose from the grave: **Class 1** (*Luke 24:39; 1Cor 15:3-4*)
Jesus ascended into heaven: **Class 1** (*Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9*)
Jesus is at the right hand of the Father as High Priest and Advocate: **Class 1** (*Rom 8:34*)
7. The bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost: **Class 1** (*John 5:28-29*)
The saved to everlasting blessedness; the lost to everlasting punishment: **Class 1** (*Matt 25:46*)
8. Those who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit: **Class 1** (*1Cor 12:13*)
They become children of God: **Class 1** (*John 1:12*)
They become members of the Body of Christ, the Church: **Class 1** (*Eph 1:23; 1Cor 12:27; Rom 12:5*)
The Body of Christ includes all born-again persons in this present age: **Class 2** (*1Cor 12:13*)
9. The Holy Spirit is a person: **Class 2**
The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment: **Class 1** (*John 16:8-11*)
The Holy Spirit regenerates, indwells, enlightens and empowers the saved: **Class 1** (*Titus 3:5; 1Cor 6:19; John 16:13; Acts 1:8*)
The Holy Spirit seals believers unto the day of redemption: **Class 1** (*Eph 1:13; John 1:12-13*)
10. The saved are called to separate from sinful practices: **Class 1** (*Rom 12:2; 2Cor 6:14; 1John 2:15-16*)
11. It is the obligation of every Christian to witness by life and word to the truth and to take part in proclaiming the Gospel to all the world: **Class 1** (*Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)
12. Satan is a person: **Class 2**
Satan is the author of all sin: **Class 2** (*Eze 28:11-19; Isa 14:12-15; Gen 3:1-5*)
Satan is the enemy of God: **Class 2** (*Eze 28:16; Isa 14:13-14; Matt 4:1*)
Satan is the deceiver of mankind: **Class 1** (*2Cor 2:11; 11:14; Rev 20:7-10*)
Satan shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire: **Class 1** (*Rev 20:10*)

13. The eternal security of the saved: **Class 3** (*John 5:24; 6:39-40; 10:27-30, 1John 5:13*)
14. The personal return of Jesus: **Class 1** (*Acts 1:11*)
The pre-millennial return of Jesus: **Class 3** (*1Thes 4:14-17; 2Thes 2:1-12*)
The imminent return of Jesus: **Class 3**