



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 14

"How Do We Know Spiritual Truth?"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for the privilege and opportunity that we have again to turn to the word of God and to study some of the basic doctrines that have to do with our Christian faith. Enable us Lord to profit from our time together. Enable us to think well and understand, and enable us to be bold in our testimony for surely Lord Thou hast provided us with a faith and reasons by which we may hold it that do not embarrass us at all. Enable us to learn our faith and enable us to be bold and aggressive in the proclamation of the Gospel under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We know that our case is good for we stand with truth. Thou art a God of truth, and therefore the things that Thou doest say are true. And we thank Thee for the privilege of reading the truth and then speaking the truth. We thank Thee too Lord that even though we do not understand many of the reasons that lie back of the truths of holy Scripture. They are nevertheless truths, and the Holy Spirit uses the word that we proclaim even when we do not fully understand all of the implications of it.

So we thank Thee for the privilege of knowing Thee. We worship Thee for the salvation that we possess. Be with us tonight as we study, "How we know that we know." For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, I'd like for you to take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and will you listen as I read verses 1 through 5 and also verse 14, 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 1 through verse 5 and then verse 14? Now, you know from reading 1 Corinthians chapter 2 that this is one of the great passages on the understanding of the Bible. Now we'll not deal with the later part of the chapter this time, but it will be the subject of one of the studies at a later date. The first part of the chapter, however, is an account of the apostles preaching in Corinth, and it is very revealing for it lets us in on the reasoning behind the apostle's presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, of course, you particularly know it because of verse 2 which is a very common verse cited very frequently by preachers who are orthodox in the faith. Mr. Spurgeon in his sermon on 1 Corinthians chapter 2 entitles it, "The Man of One Subject." Well, that is really what Paul was. Now listen as I read, beginning at verse 1,

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." (That's very interesting isn't it that the apostle in Corinth was in the presence of the Corinthians preaching to them in weakness, in fear and in much trembling.) "And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (And then will you listen as I read verse 14.) "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Our subject tonight is, "How do we know that we know?" Men were convinced, a few generations back, that human existence, while puzzling, was not without purpose. For example, Alexander Pope wrote, "This scene of man a mighty maze! but not without a

plan," but now things are different. We live in what someone has called, "The Age of Perplexity," what Marx called, "The Millennial Age of the Proletariat," what William Alden called, "The Age of Anxiety," what Spengler called, "The Twilight of Civilization," what Franz Kafka called, "A Nightmare," and Jean Paul Sartre, "Absurdity." The noble Pender, whom those who study Greek know, failed at last himself and wrote some Greek words, which I won't read for you, but translated they are, "What are we, what not, man is a shadow of a dream." Yet amidst the perplexity and insanity of the day, Christianity claims an answer that gives meaning and purpose to life. But Christians who are beginning their study of the Bible, and non Christians, would like to know, "Is it credible?"

There are three important questions that one must answer. Is there a God? That's a question that has to do with the existence of God. Then the second question follows naturally after that one. Has he spoken? And that is a question that has to do with divine revelation. And the third question is how do we know? Now that is a question that deals with epistemology.

Now, epistemology is a word that philosophers know but which perhaps some of us are not so acquainted with. The Greek *epistamai* means, "to know." It's one of the words that mean "to know." And *logos* means reasoning. It literally means "word." Sometimes it means "account." It has a number of different meanings. It's very common in Greek. But it also means "discourse," and that's the word that is used in theology, discourse about God. Soteriology, discourse about salvation. Pneumatology, discourse about the spirit. Ecclesiology, discourse about the church. So epistemology is discourse about knowledge, in other words, epistemology is how we know things.

Now, it is a division of philosophy and a very important one, as you can see, because how we know is something that is foundational to all of the knowledge content that we may have in any particular subject and it is particularly important in theology. Epistemology, how do we know? How do we know really that we know spiritual truth? Some people just rely on feeling. They just say I feel good when I hear some message or

when I do something, and therefore it's true. Others think differently. They think well it appeals to my human reason and because it appeals to my human reason and seems coherent, well then I think I can believe that. So we have various theories of epistemology in our daily life, and we express them even though we may not know what the term epistemology means. So we all practice epistemology, but how do we really know that we know spiritual truth?

Now, some of you well taught in the word will say, "Well, we know because we are illumined by the Holy Spirit." Well that's fine. That's good epistemology, and I won't argue with that at all. In fact, that's the position that we will take. But now we want to turn and consider it in a little different way tonight. We want to look at it from the standpoint of confrontation with the world and also from the standpoint of trying to reason out our faith.

I'd like to begin by speaking for a few moments about faith, presuppositions and knowledge. Now presupposition is something, of course, that we presuppose. It is an axiom. It's something that we accept which we do not argue because, by nature, a presupposition is a presupposition. If there is some reason why we believe a certain presupposition then that's not a presupposition. That reason becomes our presupposition. So a presupposition is an axiom. It's something that we accept and on the basis of which we discuss. Everybody has presuppositions. But anyway, let's say just a few words first about Augustine, Anselm and others. Now Augustine was one of the greatest of the ancient theologians, and Augustine's epistemology was an epistemology which may be expressed in a little sentence that faith precedes knowledge, *fides praecedit intellectum*. Now, that simply means faith precedes knowledge.

Anselm, who was another Augustine, though he came many hundreds of years after, one of the greatest of the medieval theologians said, "Credo ut intelligam." If you remember your Latin, that means simply I believe in order that I may understand. So that in the epistemology of these two men, faith stands at the foundation of what they

believed, and on the basis of faith, they came to knowledge. John Calvin also stands in that particular strain of epistemology. So that faith preceded knowledge, they recognized that faith stands at the bottom of all of the knowledge that we possess.

Now, let's turn to capital "A" in the outline, "The Nature of First Principles," "The Nature of First Principles." Now, you'll notice I have put in the outline the word "Principia." That is a neuter plural noun. The singular is principium. Now principium means a first principle. It's used in that sense in this particular context. This is plural, so this is principles or first principles, "The Nature of First Principles," or Principia. Now principia, or first principles, are first in systems of thought. In geometry, if you remember, you began with certain axioms. Now you didn't argue those. You began with those and, on the basis of those axioms, you worked out certain problems. Those axioms were presuppositions. They are mathematical presuppositions. Now, axiom in geometry is the same as a presupposition, or a principium, a first principle in thought in theology. They are ultimates. That is we cannot go back beyond them. They are things that we believe. Now if we believe them for a particular reason then the reason becomes the ultimate, but they are things that we accept. Therefore, ultimates are chosen. They are chosen. We choose certain presuppositions.

Now, does a Christian, because he has certain presuppositions, therefore, beg the question of the Christian faith? Does he not assume the truthfulness of his position before he starts to argue? Does he not beg the question by assuming, for example, the existence of God? Well, yes, he does assume the existence of God. But what I want to hasten to say is that everybody begins with certain presuppositions. This is true of all reasoning. Nobody can reason about anything without having presuppositions.

Now, philosophers speak about the Laws of Thought, and I'm going to say this slowly in case I see some of you taking notes, and I'll try to go slow enough for you to get these down, The Laws of Thought or Philosophical Laws of Thought. They are logical laws of thought. The Laws of Thought are assumed in their proof. For example, the Law

of Identity, whatever is, is. Now that seems rather simple, doesn't it? Whatever is, is. That's something that's assumed. Try to argue it. Whatever is, is. We assume that. So when we start out speaking we've already started out with faith presuppositions. You have faith that that particular law is a true law. Everybody argues on the basis of presuppositions. Don't let anyone come to you as a Christian and say, "Look, you're assuming," before you start to argue. Why the fellow who has made that statement has already assumed a lot of things himself. He just doesn't know about it yet, but that's your duty, to point it out to him that he himself has his presuppositions.

Now, let's take another Law of Thought, the Law of Contradiction, or as it is sometimes called the Law of Non-contradiction. Nothing can both be and not be. Nothing can both be and not be. That's a presupposition. That is something we cannot argue. We accept that. Nothing can both be and not be.

Now, today in our office in the church here I was reading a review of a particular theological work by Roger Hazelton. Now, Hazelton was, in 1976, the Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School. Now he has a book on God, and he says that he doesn't any longer believe in God. He's lost all confidence in a God who creates, who rules, judges and saves, but he rather likes the word God. And so he wants to retain the word God until a better term comes along. So he'll talk about God but he doesn't believe in God. This is the kind of thing that fools people in the pulpit because they think that they hear him talking about God in the pulpit, well he must believe in God. But he's talking about God only in the sense he's using that for a term because he hasn't thought of a better term for this ultimate reality. Now in the course of this particular book, he offers a definition of God. Now this is his definition of God, "We transcend ourselves by virtue of that which transcends us; our humanity is given us by that which is more than human, yet not other than human."

Now that's a definition of God. And the reviewer at this place says he wonders what the seminary graduates taught such theology preach in their pulpits. Well, I know, I

don't have to wonder. They don't preach any theology that has anything to do with the Bible. But now notice what he has said. He said something irrational. He's violated the Law of Non-contradiction. He has said, "Our humanity is given us by that which is more than human, yet not other than human." Now something cannot both be and not be. So that is irrationalism, but it's very interesting that our friend has used the Laws of Thought in order to give us this irrational thought. So he has actually used, in his speaking with us, the Laws of Thought to express an idea that is contrary to the Laws of Thought. One cannot talk without using these particular Laws of Thought. So if you do not want to begin with a presupposition, you know what you should do? Keep quiet, keep quiet. Don't ever say anything, and also don't think because if you think, you'll be thinking with the Laws of Thought also.

Now, let me give you one more. This is the Law of the Excluded Middle. You'll run across these every now and then in somebody's thought even in politics. Occasionally someone will criticize a politician for taking an irrational position having forgotten the Law of the Excluded Middle. Everything must either be or not be. Whatever is, is the Law of Identity. Nothing can both be and not be. And the Law of the Excluded Middle, everything must either be or not be. So everyone begins with presuppositions. Everyone uses presuppositions in talking. Now these are faith presuppositions. They are things that we accept by faith. We just believe that, and we begin with that. Scientists like to say, "Christianity and faith is like believing something without any evidence, but we scientists, we believe on the basis of facts." Now that poor scientist who made a statement like that just never has thought about his faith at all. He doesn't realize that even the whole scientific process rests upon a number of faith presuppositions. So you can just mark it down, if anyone said that, he's just an ignorant scientist. He may be very good one in the practice of his particular profession in the laboratory, but so far as understanding the philosophy of science, he doesn't understand the philosophy of science at all.

Well let's now think about the range of presuppositional axioms. Now, of course, in a study such as this, in which we have only an hour, we're not having the Believers Bible Institute, so this will be a little longer tonight. When we have only an hour, it's not possible to speak of all of the possibilities of presuppositions that one may use as a basis for a system of thought. But I really think that all presuppositions may be classifiable under two heads. And the two heads are the presuppositions of reason and the presupposition of Divine Revelation.

Now let me speak for just a moment about the presupposition of reason, or the presuppositions of reason. There are some philosophers and others who think that we learn by empiricism. That is we learn by experience. Empiricism is a word that has to do with sense experience. And so our knowledge is thought by these particular philosophers to come from empiricism or that particular type of thinking. Now that may appeal to us in many ways because there are a number of things that we can, it seems, learn from our experience. Roses are red, and violets are blue. Well we accept that, do we not? Until we think about it, but not all roses are red, are they? Not all violets are blue. As a matter of fact, sometimes when one person looks at a rose and sees a red rose, somebody else looks at it and sees one of a different kind because there are people who are color blind. It's impossible for us really to know through empiricism. Perceptions of pain, perceptions of sensation, these things may be, at times, very instructive for us, but not only do we not have any assurance of certain knowledge from our experience, but our experience can never give us norms. It can only tell us what we see or think or feel. It can never tell us what we ought to see, think or feel, and consequently, understanding through that particular type of thought has its faults.

There is another kind of presupposition of human reason, which is very common in the church. It is practiced by one of the large religious organizations. It is the presupposition of tradition. That is, if something is taught in the Bible and in the tradition we may accept it. If it's taught in the tradition and it's not taught in the Bible, we still may



accept it because the church has informed us that this particular tradition is true. Now, that may seem to you to be a different presupposition. But it really is a presupposition of human reasoning, just as the first that I mentioned. So it is really classifiable as a position of human reason.

Now, what we are really saying, in that case, is that the church is to do our thinking for us, and therefore, we are to follow the church and the reasoning that lies back of it. I'm sure that many of you are quite familiar with. It reminds me of an old story about one of the foreign ministers of the Soviets whose name was Andrey Vyshinskiy. Some of us are old enough to remember Mr. Vyshinskiy. And there is an old story about him walking on the Champs-Élysées in Paris with an umbrella up over his head, and the sun was shining brightly. And someone said, "Mr. Vyshinskiy, why have you got your umbrella up?" And he says, "Radio Moscow says it's raining." [Laughter] And the kind of reasoning in which we rely upon church tradition rather than the teaching of the word of God, and thus base our thought upon authoritative decree from the church is a human kind of thing and similar to that.

Now let me speak, just for a moment, about the presupposition of revelation. The Bible presents truth as absolute truth. That's one thing that you gain from reading the Bible right from the beginning. You do not hear the apostles say, "It is commonly thought that," [Laughter] or "We suppose that," or "Generally speaking, we apostles stand behind this particular view point." The Bible is characterized by, "We know." "We know that we have passed from death unto life." "We know that all things work together for good." Any kind of system of truth that does not allow us to think absolutely is not a biblical system of truth. Any kind of epistemology that leads us only to probable truth cannot be wholly true to the Scriptures because the Scriptures present truth as absolute truth.

Now we are not living in a day in which absolute truth is very popular. Relative truth is very popular. But the Bible does not speak in relative terms. Whatever we may

say about these forms of reasoning, we have to say the Bible does not speak in that kind of language. Therefore, if we are to understand the Bible, then we must come to understand the basis upon which the apostles and others say, "We know," rather than, "We think," or "Rabbi so and so has said such and such and we're inclined to think that the truth lies with him." That was the one thing that characterized the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching that marked him out as being so different. They commented upon the fact that he did not speak as the scribes, but he spoke as one having authority. That was characteristic of his teaching. That's the characteristic of some Bible teachers too. And it's alright to have that characteristic, if what you're saying is truth.

Now, of course, if you're just trying to cover up and trying to snow people because you really don't know and you're being dogmatic in order to do that then you are justly criticized. Like the preacher whose notes were examined by a member of the congregation, he noticed there was some little writing there, and it said, "Shout here, point weak." [Laughter] There are preachers like that. You can watch them, and if they get real excited over a point, but it's not, the reasoning is not too clear, you can be sure that what they are trying to do is to persuade you emotionally rather than intellectually through their thought.

Now the Bible presents truth as absolute. For example, "No man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son has led him forth into full revelation," John 1:18. There we are told that God has been revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. If you turn over to the 5th chapter of the gospel of John, that was chapter 1 and verse 18, but if you turn over to the 5th chapter, you will find that the Lord Jesus authenticates the Old Testament writings of Moses and actually links his own revelation with Moses, and what Moses wrote in the Pentateuch, verse 39 of John chapter 5,

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not

honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

So if we cannot believe Moses writings, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, we cannot believe the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, they both are part of the divine revelation that has come through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Scriptures. Now Christians base their doctrine upon the presupposition that God has spoken in the Bible. So this is their presupposition. It's a faith presupposition. It's like the presuppositions of thought. It's like the presupposition of the scientist. It's a faith presupposition, but it's something upon which we base our thought.

Now, of course, we believe that if you look at the Christian faith, you will find it coherent. You will find that it makes sense. You find also that it explains life better than any other system, but that's not why we accept Christianity, as we shall see. We accept Christianity on better testimony than coherence, as we understand coherence. We accept Christianity on the testimony of God, as we shall see.

Now, capital "C", The Christian presuppositions, we've said that we do accept the idea that God has spoken, that is that he has revealed himself. There is a God. He has revealed himself. Now essentially the Christian accepts this one presupposition. Incidentally, when I say the Christian, I don't mean every Christian does. I mean this Christian does. And when I say that, I don't mean to rule out every other person's understanding of Christianity as being non-Christian. Of course, if I don't believe that particular system of defending Christianity, well I mean that it's much weaker than what I

am suggesting to you, but I don't mean by that that the individual who holds it's not a Christian, maybe a much better Christian than I am. I hope you'll understand that. And if you believe something a little different from me, well that's alright. We both should keep studying the word and seek to find the way that God would have us to defend the Christian faith. I don't understand everything about the defense of the Christian faith at all, and I want to freely acknowledge that. Essentially Christians accept the Bible is the word of God. That is their fundamental presupposition. It is a faith stance but remember everyone thinks on faith. I'll illustrate that further in a moment. I think you'll have to agree with me.

Now, let's think about the particulars of this. If we say the Bible is the word of God, if that's what we stand upon, we can also, I think, define the particulars that this would indicate, at least generally. And I would say that when we say we believe the Bible is the word of God, that's our faith stance. The particulars of this would include, that is if we spelled out what is meant by the Bible is the word of God, in its teaching, we would say first of all, we accept the existence of the biblical, triune God, not the existence of God, simply, but the existence of the biblical, triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit. Now men can use the term God and mean something entirely different, as our friend who's the Professor of Theology at Andover Newton. That's a good old Baptist school historically, incidentally. It's amazing isn't it? It's a good old Baptist school, but here's the Professor of Theology using the term God, but he doesn't even believe in God. Then you can use the term God and refer to the God that the Unitarians down there over on Preston, the God that they have in their minds when they use the term God. He's not the biblical God of the Bible. He's not a triune God. Or you can use the term God like Kalmani uses it, and he's another one that's first cousin to the boys over on Preston Road. [Laughter] He too believes in one God, but not the God of the Scriptures, the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So when we say the Christian believes the Bible is the word of God and the particulars of that statement include the existence of the biblical God. We mean

the biblical triune God, the one God who subsists in three persons, and he is not truly God unless we define him as the Bible does define him. No use to talk about saying well so and so believes in God. Kalmani believes in God. Jimmy went over, and he said that Sadat believed in God and Begin believed in God and he, the Baptist, believed in God. But they didn't believe in the same God, if Jimmy is a good Baptist. They believed in a different God. They use the same term perhaps, but the concepts were different. So the Christian believes in the biblical triune God. I'm laboring that point because I don't want anyone in Believers Chapel to be mistaken about the kind of God the Bible presents.

Now, the second thing we could spell out as a particular is that the revelation of God is in the word, in the Scriptures. I don't deny that God has revealed himself in nature, in history, in providence, but we learn of this from the word, so it is revelation in the word. Then we also believe that the meaning of every so called fact comes from God. There is no such thing as a bare fact, incidentally. People often say, "Tell me what the facts are." There's no such thing as a bare fact. Every fact comes to us interpreted.

Let me give you an illustration. Here are a group of people standing around a Roman cross, and someone is hanging on it dying, and they are listening. And they hear him say, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." They're interested. They hear him say other things like, "I thirst." "It is finished." "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" So a little interested, you go over and you speak to a woman and say, "What's happening here?" "Well a good, kind man is being crucified by the Romans." And then you go to another person who is dressed in religious robes and garments and you say, "What's happening here?" "Well a blasphemer is being put to death because he's blasphemed Jehovah." And you go over to one of the Roman soldiers and he says, "Well an insurrectionist is being put to death." Then finally, you go over to a woman there and some tears are streaming down her face, and perhaps standing by her is a young man about twenty years of age. He looks like he wants to run. And you ask, "What's

happening?" And they say, "The Son of God is being crucified for my sin." You see they are looking at the same fact, but, oh, what a different interpretation they put upon it.

Now, we say that every fact is colored by interpretation. It's impossible for us to say anything neutrally. Our faith manifests itself in everything that we speak about. Therefore to know a fact, truly, we must know what God says about that fact. So we say as Christian, the meaning of every fact comes only from God. Every other interpretation of fact is colored by the view point of the human being. We also believe that the Scriptures teach that there are just two classes of men and women, those who are born again and those who are not. Those who are born again have new life, new spiritual life. They are new creatures in Christ. Those who are not born again do not have new life, and they are perishing. They're on the way to the lake of fire, the Scriptures say. We, therefore, believe there is no common ground between these two men, that is, the unbelieving man and the believing man. No common ground because one stands under the judgment of God and the other has been accepted by him. One has life the other does not have life. One is blinded. The other has been illumined to understand. There is no common ground. There is no way in which you can speak to them on the basis of common ground for if you do, you'd fail to acknowledge that they are lost. Their condition is different from yours.

We also believe that sinners only believe when they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit. They do not understand truth by human reason. You cannot seek and find God through your searching after him. You can only understand God when you are enlightened by the spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him," we read. "Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The man who has never believed in Jesus Christ is spiritually blind. Now, the Holy Spirit may have revealed some things to him, but the fundamental thing, his own nature and his own condition under sin, and the nature of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the experience of it, having received him as savior, that

knowledge rests only with believers. So, sinners only believe when they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit. They are otherwise blind.

Now, what happens then when the gospel is preached? What happens in the coming to know spiritual truth? What is the process of epistemology? Well it's something like this usually. A man preaches the gospel. He speaks about the nature of man. He speaks about the remedy and the sacrifice of Christ, and he calls upon men to believe in the Lord Jesus, renouncing their trust in themselves and, by the grace of God, fleeing to the cross and relying upon him and what he's done for salvation. Now what happens when the individual is converted is the Holy Spirit takes that word and regenerates individuals.

Now he regenerates in accordance with the elective program of God. And the Holy Spirit knows all about the elective program of God. And so he operates in accordance with the divine election, and as the word of God is preached, he regenerates. That is he brings life. And the first response of life is trust. A dead man doesn't believe. As a matter of fact, Paul says a man who is in the flesh cannot believe. And so he must be taken out of the flesh, put in the spirit, then he believes. So he hears the word. He's regenerated. He believes that word. And in believing in that word, he comes to the possession of salvation. The first conviction that he has, wrought by God, the Holy Spirit, is the Bible is the word of God. That's something that is given by God to all believers. The Bible is the word of God.

Now, he may not understand exactly why that's so, in fact, he may even in his mind say, "Why is it so?" I don't know whether I believe that or not, but deep down within he does because that's something given by the Holy Spirit. His whole attitude to divine revelation changes when he's been regenerated and has exercised faith, he believes the Scriptures. He may have certain questions. I have people come to me, I don't know why they come to me, they really ought to go to the Lord, he's able to help, but I like to

talk with them. But they come to me over and over again, wondering about certain things in the Bible.

Now I look at them and I say I know deep down within they believe the Bible. They wouldn't be doing that. They wouldn't keep coming to me if they didn't believe the Bible. They're disturbed about this and disturbed about the other thing and they don't even realize that their trust really is in the Bible. But they have certain questions. Every Christian believes the Bible is the word of God. Deep down within, he knows the truth is there. Know why? Because the Holy Spirit has brought that conviction, we call it the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. He comes. He convinces the individual as the word is preached. This is a true message. He convinces him of the word of God as being that which is true, the majesty of that word, and the response takes place. Well I must hasten on.

Now, I want to say just a few words about the Scientific Method and Knowledge because a lot of people think that Scientific Method is well, if it's not infallible, it's next to it. And I don't want to disappoint you too much, but the Scientific Method is not infallible. To the average man, science is neutral, and if not infallible close to being infallible. You know you often hear scientists say that we are neutral. We seek to investigate in a neutral way. No one can do that. By the time that we discover, unfortunately, the idea that science is neutral and infallible is wrong, it's almost too late to profit from the knowledge that we've gained.

Reminds me of a statement that a woman made, which I thought was very good, she said, "We should live and learn, but by the time we've learned, it's too late to live." [Laughter] And this is true in matters of the Scientific Method. We have been snowed by scientists. And so we're inclined to say, "What's the scientific truth?" We fail to realize that scientists change their views by the years. They're constantly changing. So it's obvious if they have truth now, they didn't have it in the past. And if they had it in the past, they don't have it now. Now I'm not denigrating the Scientific Method. It's very



useful and valuable. But it's not the way to arrive at absolute truth. No one can arrive at absolute truth following the inductive method of science. Let me say just a few more words about it.

What is the Scientific Method? Well the Scientific Method is a method that is based upon the practice of human reason. Scientists, incidentally, rarely practice formal methodology. Very few of them are even interested in the philosophy of science. The philosophy of science has largely been the province of philosophers, not scientists. But generally speaking when we think about the Scientific Method, we think of an empirical procedure inductive in nature. And the simple steps of the Scientific Method are observation of data, and then the forming of hypotheses, incidentally, that's not empirical, and then validation by testing, a very simple method, a very useful means of arriving at helpful information, but not absolute truth necessarily.

Now, what is involved in this? Well, faith is involved in it. If the scientists say, "Faith is believing in something that's not true," but we study and believe what human reason has found out. Oh you have a lot to learn Mr. Scientist. As a matter of fact, we don't know anything until we have first believed in our senses. I stand up here and I think that Mr. Brink is sitting right over there in the third pew because I trust my senses. And I think Richard Parker is back there in the fifth row. But I trust my senses, I have no proof that he's really there. He might be in the sixth row. But I trust my senses. I believe in my senses. That's one of the first things that we do as an individual so that our life is a faith exercise right from the beginning. But now what does science believe? Why science believes that the universe can be understood by rational procedure. Whoever proved that? That's a presupposition. That's something they accept by faith. Mr. Scientist, who trusts the facts, that's what you believe. That's not proven.

Furthermore, Mr. Scientist, you believe that order exists in the universe. Otherwise you wouldn't practice your experiments. You think that by practicing your particular experiments, you can arrive at truth because you believe there is order in the universe,

but that's not a proven thing. There are many things that might indicate otherwise, but you accept that by faith. You believe also that nature behaves the same way whether it's observed or not. Have you ever wondered does the radio really make any noise when I'm not there to hear it? Has that ever puzzled you? [Laughter] I've often wondered [Laughter] if I'm in one side of the house, and my radio is going over in my study, is it really going, or does it only go when it comes within ear shot?

Now, I haven't gotten to the place where I've sought to sneak up on it yet. [Laughter] But I'm sure there have been some who have thought to do that. [Laughter] Scientists also believe that phenomena that are observed here and now are also valid there and then. They believe that the human mind can form descriptive concepts of the universe. That's not a proven fact either. They believe that a correspondence exists between events of the universe and sensory brain responses. And they also believe, some of them, that their fellow workers do their work, and report their work, honestly. And of course, we know that that's not true in many cases. Well, as a matter of fact, then you can see that scientists, they, have a lot of faith presuppositions. They live by faith. They practice their doctrine by faith.

Now, if I were to critique it scientifically I would like to go into the Inductive Method because many people think that if you study something inductively, that's the way to arrive at truth. I've information for you. It's not. Inductive Bible study is not the way to arrive at truth biblically. One needs not only inductive study of the Bible but deductive study as well. The idea that by induction we can arrive at truth is something that has led astray many students of the Bible. It's not true.

Now, let me show you some other things that are wrong with induction, which means simply a gathering of all the information and then, of course, from this making certain reasoned hypotheses, and then the expressing of them as the result of your particular research. We don't take delivery from the senses as we do from the mail man. Everything comes interpreted to start with.

Now, this method can never give us certainty because how do we know that we've not found incomplete data? How do we know that we've found all the data that bear on the particular point that we're trying to study? For example, if we're studying justification by faith, to understand justification we should take from the Bible everything that has to do with justification. But how do we know that we have? The truth is that most Bible students don't even have half the data that the Bible has to say about justification and seek to write a paper on it. We may have made a wrong selection from the data that we have in our possession. We may have reasoned poorly from the data that we have before us. We may have all the data, but our minds may not reason properly as we have studied it, and we may have a limited vision of the hypothesis that may put together all of this material. As you can see, as the Scientific Method, induction is valuable, but it's not inspired. And in fact, the scientist operates on faith when he practices induction. You can see all of the features of faith that rest in the scientific activity. He has a passel of presuppositions. Don't let any scientist ever say to you as a Christian, you have begged the question by accepting a certain presupposition when you begin. He's got a half a dozen for every one you have. So, don't let them fool you.

Well, I don't have time to critique this method anymore than that. Let me say simply, with regard to the critique of this method theologically, it should be clear to us that the Bible teaches that men are sinners. And if men are sinners then, of course, the things that they learn by human reason, I'm speaking of the capital "C," the method critiqued theologically, if men are sinners, then, of course, all of the things that we think that we know by the Scientific Method when they are applied to spiritual things are wrong because they arise out of the blindness of the human heart. Now the Bible makes that plain, and I don't have time to talk about it because we're drawing near the end of the hour, but let me just give you a couple of passages you can put down, Ephesians chapter 4 verses 17 and 18. And there the Scriptures make it very plain that our minds are blinded. Our wills are rebellious. Our emotions are corrupt. 1 Corinthians chapter 2

verse 14 is another passage as well. Romans chapter 8 verses 7 and 8, those passages teach very plainly that men, if they seek to reason by human reason, cannot understand spiritual truth.

Now, let me say a few words about the new birth and knowledge. This, of course, is fundamental to life. This is Roman three in the outline. We must not hesitate to accept the offense of the cross. It's perfectly alright to say that we must accept the teaching of the Bible. And we're not being the kind of Christian that we ought to be if we're not willing to stand up for our faith. And we should say to individuals, "You must be born again if you are to understand spiritual truth." Sometimes even those who are not noted for spirituality are bolder than Christians who make great professions of faith. For example, a few years ago Frank Sinatra turned down an invitation from Madalyn Murray O'Hair to sing for the benefit of the American Atheist Convention scheduled to meet in New York. Mr. Sinatra, who is not noted for fundamental theology, [laughter] sent a one sentence reply to Mrs. O'Hair. He said, "I will not attend or perform or contribute to your Atheist Convention at New York Sheraton on April 9th, 10th, and 11th. Thank God." [Laughter]

Now, capital "A", the New Birth and Science, what the Bible says is that there are two kinds of people, those who have been born again, and those who have not. Consequently, there are two kinds of science, science practiced by the believer, and science practiced by the unbeliever. There are many ways in which they practice science similarly. In things like measuring and weighing, well, they would have the same kind of science. But when science touches upon ultimate questions, then the Christians view will be different from the scientists view. So you should not be disturbed if a scientist is an evolutionist, and a believing scientist is not. What should you expect? They are two different kinds of people, one who has been born again and one who has not, one who has light, one who is in the darkness.

Now, I think I'm going to, since it's time to stop, I don't want to have this go over time for a number of reasons. I have just a couple of more things to say, but I'll say this next week, next Wednesday night, the Lord willing. We will conclude the outline and then go into our next subject. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God. We thank Thee for the light that it gives us, and we thank Thee for the assurance that we have that it is truth. We rejoice in the fact that the Holy Spirit has brought conviction to our hearts that the Bible is the word of God. We thank Thee that the testimony of God stands behind this, not men. And thus, we have the highest testimony for the truthfulness of the Scriptures, and we have the greatest certainty for the Holy Spirit has wrought in the hearts of believers and convinced them of the majesty of th word of God. Go with us as we leave for Jesus sake. Amen.

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**