

This midweek study will help students understand how God has preserved the Scriptures for the Church. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Preservation of Scripture

God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity through the text of Scripture, having inspired it and directed it to be free from error. God has also acted providentially throughout the course of history to ensure the biblical text is faithfully preserved for future generations. Our belief in the preservation of Scripture is supported by investigation into how the canon of Scripture was formed, and how manuscripts were faithfully transmitted throughout the centuries.

1 God reveals Himself through inspired Scripture. (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Pet. 2:2).

Invite students to call out some things they see or experience that make them think of God's power. (Perhaps a thunderstorm, the ocean, a tornado, etc.)

Read Romans 15:4.

► Why were the Scriptures given to us?

So that we may have hope. If we read the Scriptures and walk away without more hope, we might be reading them through the wrong lens. We need to remember that all Scripture is ultimately about Jesus, and He gives life and hope.

► How can the Scriptures help us in tough times?

The Scriptures give us a long-term view of life. We see that suffering is temporary and that God can bring good out of it in ways we never could have imagined. Joseph's life is a good example of that.

► What Scriptures do you find particularly encouraging?

This varies for each person, but many people find the Psalms encouraging. Psalm 103 is a good one. Also, the Book of Galatians is an encouraging reminder of the gospel.

2 God has providentially preserved the Scriptures for us. (Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; 24:14,35; 1 Cor. 13:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:24-25)

Read Matthew 5:18.

► Why was it important for Jesus to affirm the permanency of the Scriptures?

Because some people were accusing Him of invalidating the Old Testament Scriptures. He said He fulfilled them rather than doing away with them as the religious elite suggested.

Read Matthew 24:14.

► How is the Word of God crucial to the mission of the Church?

The gospel will be preached to all the nations before Jesus returns. The Word of God creates mission and fulfills it. The great Reformation pastor/theologian Martin Luther attributes all of his success in ministry to the power of the Word of God.

3 God oversaw the forming of the canon of Scripture. (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18).

Read Jude 3.

► Why is it important that our faith was delivered once for all?

Because it indicates that Scripture is complete and sufficient. We can have confidence that God communicated in His Word what He wanted us to know. We are not lacking knowledge of His will or His ways.

Read Revelation 22:18.

► Why must we avoid adding to or subtracting from the Word of God?

When we add or subtract from God's Word we potentially change the meaning in significant ways. Plus, we don't have the authority to do that. God's Word comes from Him, not from us.

WRAP IT UP

You might not have thought much about the preservation of Scripture and how we can be sure that what we have is the Word of God. It's an important doctrine (and reality) because the world will always question the authority of the Bible. When we think of God's power and control, we tend to think of big, flashy miracles, but He works in quieter ways, too. He has supernaturally preserved His Word for the Church. He is communicating God, and His Word still speaks, giving us hope and changing our lives.

► Why do you think people question the preservation of the Bible?