



TRUTH in LOVE

Apologetics Conference

Gridley, Illinois

October 9, 2021

Sponsored by:
the Elders Teaching Resource

ELDERS TEACHING RESOURCE

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- ~ in their *biblical learning*,
- ~ understanding of our core *doctrines and practices*,
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See website for further details:

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Please direct any questions to Bro. Fred Witzig at witzigf@gmail.com

TRUTH IN LOVE APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 9, 2021

The "Truth in Love Apologetics Conference" will help the Apostolic Christian Church love as Jesus loves by:

- Motivating worship by developing a Christ-centered life of the mind
- Increasing confidence in the Bible's reliability and truth claims
- Shepherding those dealing with doubt
- Equipping to evangelize by removing intellectual barriers to faith and answering difficult questions

TIME	SESSION	TOPIC	SPEAKER	LOCATION
9:30 – 10:00		Registration Opens		Foyer Area
10:00 – 10:05	Plenary	Welcome to Gridley	Harvey Kaeb	Sanctuary
10:05 – 10:15	Plenary	Intro to Conference	Nick Gutwein / Scott Bahr	Sanctuary
10:15 – 11:00	Plenary	Is the Bible the word of God?	John Wiegand	Sanctuary
11:00 – 11:05		Break		
11:05 – 11:50	Plenary	How Did We Get the Bible?	Fred Witzig	Sanctuary
11:50 – 12:40		Lunch		Dining Room
12:45 – 1:20	Breakout 1	Locations to be provided	Panelists	Various
1:20 – 1:30		Break		
1:30 – 2:05	Breakout 2	Locations to be provided	Panelists	Various
2:05 – 2:15		Break		
2:15 – 2:45	Plenary	How to Preach / Teach on Controversial Topics	Jeff Waibel	Sanctuary
2:45 – 3:00	Plenary	A Call to Love the Word: Moving from the Head to the Heart	Joe Gerber	Sanctuary
3:00 – 3:05		Hymn		Sanctuary
3:05 – 3:45	Panel	Panel Discussion		Sanctuary
3:45 – 4:00	Plenary	Closing Comments		Sanctuary

Is the Bible the Word of God?

Speaker: John Wiegand

Summary of Presentation

The Bible is God speaking to us – His creation. In this session, we'll use the Bible to understand why we believe it is God's Word. We'll explore how God's Word can be heard so that we can know and love him, and we will learn how to better describe some of the attributes of the Bible as we grow in our appreciation for what God has given us.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Feinberg, John S. *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018.

Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010.

Sproul, R.C. and Norman L. Geisler and the ICBI. *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy, Hermeneutics, and Application with Official ICBI Commentary*. Arlington, TX: Bastion Books, 2013. This book contains four documents written 1978-1983.

Warfield, Benjamin B. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1948.

About the Speaker

John lives in Salem, OR, with his wife Jane. They have four adult daughters, Tiera, Jenna (and Ethan), Kendra, and Kyla. John worked as a software designer for thirty years. He still occasionally thinks about software development, but no longer as his day job. John is an elder in the Apostolic Christian Church, serving the Silverton, Portland, and San Diego congregations.

How Did We Get the Bible?

Speaker: Fred Witzig

Summary of Presentation

In this talk, we will seek to better understand why the Bible that we have today is the Bible that we *should* have today. We will come to appreciate why we can have high confidence that the Bible has accurately preserved the Truths of God. In spite of copying and translating, we can trust the Bible to communicate what God wants us to understand.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Blomberg, Craig L. *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs*. B&H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016. Probably too exhaustive to sit and read cover to cover, this makes an excellent reference book for answering questions about the reliability of the New Testament.

Hixson, Elijah, and Peter J. Gurry, eds. *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019. Rather academic, this book corrects popular (and common Christian) misunderstandings concerning Biblical manuscripts.

Kruger, Michael J. *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. Academic in style, this is a fantastic explanation of why we can trust the Bible as the correct Christian canon.

Lightfoot, Neil R. *How We Got the Bible*. Third Edition, Revised and Expanded. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003. Written for a more popular audience, this book is a solid introduction to the topics of this presentation.

NETBible.org: Loaded with footnotes, this online resource is excellent for answering questions about translations, historical context, teaching tough passages, etc.

About the Speaker

Fred lives in Washington, IL, with his wife Nancy. Their three adult daughters, Marta, Erica, and Rachel are spread across the world, from Florida to Chicago to Tokyo, Japan. After 18 years teaching college history, he left academia to join the Elders Teaching Resource in 2019. He has been a minister in the Apostolic Christian Church for many years.

Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

Speaker: Daniel Currier

Summary of Presentation

Critics like to point to passages in Scripture that, on the surface, seem to be contradictions. Do these disprove God's word? Should they threaten our belief in the Bible's inerrancy, inspiration, and reliability? In addition to addressing some specific examples of supposed contradictions, we will discuss important principles when thinking about this topic.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Geisler, Norman L. and Howe, Thomas. *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*. Baker Books. Grand Rapids, MI, 1992. This is a clear and concise book that gives answers to major Bible difficulties.

Chaffey, Tim; Ham, Ken; Hodge, Bodie. *Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions: Volume 1 & 2*. Master Books. Green Forest, AR, 2010 & 2012. This two-volume book set answers all the major alleged biblical contradictions.

Geisler, Norman and Howe, Thomas, et. al. *Solutions to Bible "Errors."*

<https://defendinginerrancy.com/>

Winger, Mike. *Blowing up "Bible Contradictions."* <https://bit.ly/3hMouLJ>

About the Speaker

Daniel Currier earned degrees in both technology education and biology, and is a graduate of the Discovery Institute Summer Seminar. He has taught science and technology at both the high school and college levels. He is the founder of iApologia apologetics site and helps lead an apologetic campus group. He and his family attend the Congerville, IL congregation.

Can I Read the Bible Incorrectly?

Speaker: Darren Plattner

Summary of Presentation

“You don’t take the Bible literally, do you?” is a common refrain uttered by skeptics. What is the proper response to this question? How *should* we read our Bible? In this session, we will explore principles of biblical interpretation including:

- Identifying what type of genre is being read (e.g., historical narrative, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy)
- Understanding the historical and cultural context of the passage
- Allowing scripture to interpret scripture (interpreting more obscure scriptures in light of the clear)

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Sproul, R.C. *Knowing Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2016. A theologian and pastor provides practical tools for correctly interpreting the Bible.

Plummer, Robert L. *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2021. Author and Professor of Biblical Studies probes the most pressing problems encountered by readers trying to understand the Bible.

About the Speaker

Darren Plattner attended the University of Illinois, earning an engineering degree and then a Master of Education. He has been a physics teacher at Champaign Central High School for 29 years, and has recently been teaching physics at Parkland College in the summers. He married Sue (Heinold) almost 30 years ago, has 5 children, and became a first-time grandpa this past year. He has had the privilege of teaching/preaching God’s Word at the Champaign Apostolic Christian Church for over 20 years.

Does the Bible Endorse Genocide?

Speaker: Clint Bahler

Summary of Presentation

Is God knowable? Is God consistent? How do we understand God's anger and judgement in the world? How can God defend the vulnerable and at the same time command the destruction of the Canaanites? We will dig deep into the stories with which we struggle and from which we often turn away. What we find may surprise us.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Butler, Joshua Ryan. *The Skeletons in God's Closet: The Mercy of Hell, the Surprise of Judgment, the Hope of Holy War*. Thomas Nelson (October 21, 2014).

I highly recommend this book! It points out how some contemporary beliefs may differ from the early church and keep us from seeing both God's character and the cost of sin.

Lewis, C.S. *The Problem of Pain*. HarperCollins Publishers; 1st edition (February 1, 2001). Originally published in 1940 but still helping people see God's Goodness in suffering today.

Kimball, Dan. *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-Sounding Parts of Scripture*. Zondervan (December 1, 2020). A good reference for many questions on God's Character.

About the Speaker

Clint was born and raised in Remington, IN where he repented in 1995. He moved to West Lafayette and finally Indianapolis for school and work as a Urologist. He married Alesa Knapp in 2005 and they have 4 children between the ages of 4 and 10 (Greyson, Ellie, Olivia, and Bree). His curiosity and love of learning exposed him to differing world views early in life and drove him of necessity to apologetics. His initial focus in apologetics related to questions of origins (e.g. unguided evolution versus design), however, for the past 15 years he has focused on the question of God's character (e.g. Exodus 34:6-7) and how our conflicts-of-interest (e.g. self-seeking) affects our reading of the Bible.

Does the Bible Condone Slavery?

Speaker: Brian Sutter

Summary of Presentation

This talk will focus on what the Bible says about slavery and some of the common objections raised by sceptics. We will consider the cultural context from which the Bible comes and into which it speaks. Defining important terms and considering the overarching storyline of the Bible will provide a framework to consider some of the difficult passages in the Bible. This talk will seek to equip the listener with information along with strategy for engaging the sceptic in a humble and winsome manner.

Relevant Passages to Consider:

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Exodus 21:1-11
- Leviticus 25
- Deuteronomy 15:1-18
- Luke 4:18
- Philemon
- Galatians 3:28

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Cowan, S.B., & Wilder, T.L. *In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013.

Copan, P. *Is God a Moral Monster? Making sense of the Old Testament god*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011.

Orr-Ewing, A. *Is the Bible Intolerant? Sexist? Oppressive? Homophobic? Outdated? Irrelevant?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

About the Speaker

Brian Sutter is a member of the Washington, IL congregation with his wife, Alison, and their three children. He serves there as a Bible Class Sunday School teacher. Brian is a counselor at Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services in Morton, IL.

Is the Bible Sexist?

Speaker: Heidi Gerber

Summary of Presentation

In this breakout session, we will first examine what it means to be sexist and what we need to know about the Bible and even ourselves before we dive into the heavy question of “Is the Bible Sexist?” Then, through the lens of Creation, the Fall, redemption through Jesus Christ, and the new heavens/new earth, we will discern difficult scripture passages pertaining to women.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

Alsup, Wendy. *Is the Bible Good for Women?* Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2017.

Using the Bible to interpret itself, Alsup answers and examines many tough questions pertaining to women. Her answers start with Creation and our identity as women made in God’s image. She ends with what the Bible’s instructions mean to women today.

Kimball, Dan. *How (Not) to Read the Bible: Making Sense of the Anti-women, Anti-science, Pro-violence, Pro-slavery and Other Crazy-sounding Parts of Scripture* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.

This honest book is written specifically for skeptics but is extremely beneficial for Christians to understand how unbelievers are viewing issues surrounding women, among many other difficult topics. Kimball begins by laying an important groundwork for biblical interpretation and only then delves into specific parts of Scripture that are very hard to understand.

About the Speaker

Heidi Gerber has been married to Joe for 13 years and they have 5 children ages 3-12 years. They attend the Champaign Apostolic Christian Church and love being actively involved. She is very thankful to be a stay-at-home mom and enjoys how each day is different.

How to Preach / Teach on Controversial Topics

Speaker: Jeff Waibel

Summary of Presentation

Preaching and teaching today is different today than it used to be due to the proliferation of technology. Your students or congregation may be “fact checking” you while you are speaking! As a result, it will be helpful to think through various biblical difficulties before you teach on them. This talk will focus on passages that are disputed due to questions of authenticity or interpretation. A few key examples will be discussed and basic approaches for preaching/speaking will be suggested.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

All books should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.

When studying disputed passages, it's best to survey multiple theologically conservative (hold to the doctrines of biblical inerrancy, sufficiency, and authority) commentaries and look for consensus. There is safety in a multitude of counselors (Prov. 11:14). Because of the potential length of the list, suggested biblical commentaries are not listed here.

J. D. Barry & R. Van Noord (2014). *Study Like a Pro: Explore Difficult Passages from Every Book of the Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. A collection of articles from Bible Study Magazine that explore various notorious difficult passages, this is only available electronically (Kindle ebook, various Bible software programs, etc.). It's easy to understand, but only covers about 30 passages.

Geisler, N. L., & Howe, T. A. (2008). *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, Mich: BakerBooks. This book has become the go-to book for Bible difficulties outside of biblical commentaries. Geisler was a principal author of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (see below). This is an excellent resource that is easy to read.

Torrey, R. A. (1998). *Difficulties in the Bible: Alleged Errors and Contradictions*. Willow Grove: Woodlawn Electronic Publishing. Originally published in 1907, this is the classic book on this subject, though it only addresses 24 passages and obviously doesn't include modern archaeological discoveries.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978). This document (only about 6 pages long) can be easily found online with a simple search and outlines the basic principles of biblical inerrancy. Its very conservative approach to biblical inerrancy has received criticism from more liberal theologians and scholars, but it nicely summarizes many principles of biblical inerrancy.

About the Presenter

Jeff Waibel grew up in our Bay City, Michigan congregation, but is now an ordained deacon in our Leo, Indiana congregation. Jeff was put on the pulpit in Leo in August 2009 and ordained as a deacon in September 2018. Jeff is the Director of Residential Services at Gateway Woods Family Services in Leo. Jeff married Margo Stettner in 2003, and they have three children.

A Call to Love the Word: Moving from the Head to the Heart

Speaker: Joe Gerber

Summary of Presentation

While having a solid apologetics understanding of the Bible is important, it's our heart-felt love, dedication, and commitment to the Living Word that empowers and animates a fully developed defense of the Bible. As we wrap up this conference focusing on the "Reliability of the Scriptures," this session is a call to remember that the Bible is a supernatural Word from God that should enlighten our minds and capture our hearts.

Suggested Resources for Further Reading

The Bible

About the Speaker

Joe has been married to Heidi for 13 years. They live in Mahomet, IL, and are the parents of 5 children. Joe has been privileged to serve on the Minister Team of the Champaign-Urbana Apostolic Christian Church for the past 3 years and is currently the Director of Domestic Operations for Loving Shepherd Ministries.