

Is The Bible Infallible? Session 4

Hi guys!

This companion is going to be a little different to usual! As you know, I usually write something that expands on the points in the main podcast, but the information I shared in the podcast is pretty sufficient! I don't think there's a huge amount more to say.

To that end, this is more of a transcription of the podcast, and a pace for you to find the Bible I quote and a few helpful resources toward the end.

Enjoy!

We're continuing on with our series on 'is the Bible infallible?', continuing on from where we left off last week as we dealt with the idea of God being necessary for objective moral values and duties. Less of a bummer than the previous week, so we're on the up here! Hopefully this week takes us out on a high note.

Onto today's topic and, by way of a reminder, we're currently looking at 3 major, under-pinning beliefs that the Christian worldview and teachings hold to. If we can show these are more likely to be true than false, then we can be more confident that other, less significant teaching, is also likely to be true. These are:

1. Without God, life has no meaning, purpose or value
2. Without God, good and bad, good and evil, right and wrong are all meaningless terms
3. Without God, humanity does not have any inherent value

Today we will be looking at number 3 – without God, humanity does not have any inherent value.

Let's just jump in and clarify some terms!

When I say inherent value, I mean that there's something about humans that makes them valuable, completely independent of their contributions, actions, etc.

That is to say that, at their core, a millionaire who gives to charity and volunteers at an orphanage, is equal in value to a criminal who kills people and steals money from the elderly.

These two people might commit significantly different moral acts in their time on earth, with the millionaire's being significantly better, but at their base, their humanity makes them equal in inherent value.

But is this true?

Let's explore this idea a little bit.

Do we live as if humans are valuable? If so, why?

Let's consider the law, just as an example: Do people who commit murder get greater or lesser sentences based on *who* the victim was?

Nope!

Sentences for taking of human life are given without any regard to the actions of the individual murdered, because whether they acted morally well or morally terribly is completely irrelevant to their worth as a human being.

Here's another consideration of the law: do we charge people with murder if they kill (accidentally or not) cats, dogs, spiders, mice, or anything else?

Nope! They don't have the same value as us. That's not to say they don't have some form of value, but it's not the same as humans.

Let's flip the perspective here and consider this from the alternative – how have dictators and the

most evil world leaders managed to get people to feel okay about killing others?

By dehumanizing them.

For example, when Hitler stoked up aggression and hatred in Nazi Germany toward the Jews, he did so by categorizing them as *untermenschen* – literally, subhuman. He wasn't being metaphorical either, that they were *like* subhumans, but that they literally *were* subhuman. This is known as dehumanization – making someone less than human to make it more acceptable to hurt them. Lest you not take my word for it, [here's author of 'Less than Human'](#), David Livingstone Smith, explaining it:

"So, to get the ball rolling, I'll briefly discuss the role that dehumanization played in what is rightfully considered the single most destructive event in human history: the Second World War. More than seventy million people died in the war, most of them civilians. Millions died in combat. Many were burned alive by incendiary bombs and, in the end, nuclear weapons. Millions more were victims of systematic genocide. Dehumanization made much of this carnage possible."

The worst atrocities in history have followed this theme – in addition to the above, during the Holocaust, Nazis referred to Jews as rats. Hutus involved in the Rwanda genocide called Tutsis cockroaches. On the flip side of the Nazi propaganda, Stalin's Red Army had its own propaganda dehumanizing the Germans (calling them "two-legged animals who have mastered the technique of war" — "ersatz men" who ought to be annihilated. "The Germans are not human beings," Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg wrote, "... If you kill one German, kill another — there is nothing more amusing for us than a heap of German corpses.").

Dehumanize, make them less human, make it less horrific and more acceptable to kill them.

Another prime example of this would be the slave trade!

Now, I don't bring these things up to scare or upset you, this is leading to a point.

In the slave trade, the major way in which they made it okay to own, abuse and trade humans is to say they were animals, ergo not human.

Here's something worth noting, however – do we know what stopped the slave trade?

Christians working in earnest to show the Bible taught all humans have intrinsic value and that slavery was therefore wrong!

People tend to leave that bit out, I'm not sure why.

I'm not saying this was the only thing that stopped the slave trade, but it was a *huge* component.

Christian abolitionists who sought to end the slave trade and reform the morality of the west sought to get the Biblical teaching of humanity's equal value into practicality. Prominent among these abolitionists was Parliamentarian William Wilberforce in England, who wrote in his diary when he was 28 that, "God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the Slave Trade and Reformation of Morals." ([Wikipedia](#)).

This leads us nicely into what this Biblical teaching is!

So, with that said, let's read some parts of Genesis relating to Adam & Eve (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-8, 18-25, & 3:20):

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ...

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed...

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame...

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living."

So, let's quickly pick the major beats from this!

We are created *imago dei*, that is, in the image and likeness of God. This is massive for one reason and one reason alone – we, above all else in creation, have been gifted with the image and likeness of God! Whether you believe this means we look like God or our characteristics and attributes are dim versions of His own is up to you to decide, though I personally fall in the latter, but the fact remains – we have been given a unique privilege that no other has.

Secondly, Adam and Eve are created in completely different and unique ways, unlike the rest of creation. We could sit and talk about animal evolution, macro or micro, Darwinian or Neo-Darwinian, 'til the cows come home, but what truly matters is the uniqueness with which we are created.

Thirdly, we are put in a position of authority by God over the rest of creation. This alone would put us into a category of our own, but when paired with *imago dei* you can really see the esteemed and valuable position humanity holds.

Finally, Eve is set apart as the crown of creation, the last thing God creates in order for it all to be deemed 'good'. In addition, she is named Eve as it means 'mother of all' (not by God, we don't believe, but by tradition) which again sets aside esteem for humanity.

See, this is the doctrine that the Christian abolitionists of the 16-1700's – we are all made in the image and likeness of God, regardless of race, gender, creed, etc.

This is another reason the west has a history of free speech rights – no man or woman has more right to speak than another, *because we are all equal*.

The more you think on these things, the more you realise the importance of this teaching! It has such a wide-reaching effect and impact; it has a stake in virtually every major issue we face today:

- Murder
- Abortion
- Gender equality
- Evolution
- Animal rights
- Slavery
- Racism

All of these have a basis in the belief that we, as humans, are all created equal, with inherent value which is given to us alone by a creator God.

Why does it matter who we kill if we're not all equally valuable?

Why does it matter if we abort children if we're not all equally valuable?

Why does it matter that men and women are equal if we're not all equally valuable?

What can't evolution explain if we're not all as equally valuable as animals?

Why is it okay to kill animals but not humans if we're not more valuable than them?

Why isn't it okay to keep, abuse and trade other humans if we're not all equally valuable?

Why isn't it okay to look down on other races if we're not all equally valuable?

Now, someone might contend that it is because of evolution that we have this view of equality amongst humans and, since we have evolved further than our other animal counter-parts, that explains why we then see ourselves as more valuable than them.

Could this be true?

Let's think back to what we've said about evolution before – what is the main goal and the main function?

Survival of the species, through survival of the fittest, with random mutations and natural selection.

That is to say, the prime directive of evolution is for humanity to survive. This is done by ensuring the fittest and strongest survive to procreate, thus creating a stronger species, with natural selection picking off those least adapted to their surroundings (again, creating a stronger species), with random mutations added in (so changes that aren't necessarily helpful to the circumstance or environment).

Where, in all of that, can we get the idea that humans are all equal? The whole thing is about ensuring the *strongest* survive, because they're more valuable! Additionally, evolution doesn't work itself out as 'let's pick this one species and evolve them further than the rest because we like them', because it's not a sentient thing – we're evidently *different* to the rest of the animal kingdom, as we have rational souls and minds – this can't be explained through evolution.

All that is to say that there are no good explanations for human life being equally valuable in a worldview that does not include God.

But our worldview *does* include God! Because God exists.

This means we're all equally valuable because God created us in His image, distinguishing us from the rest of creation, putting us in a position of authority over creation, called upon to steward everything God has given us. Men and women are distinct but equal, with different roles but no difference in value, the crown of creation.

That is **good news**, hallelujah?!

But beyond that, God not only created us in His image, equal in value, with distinct purpose and authority, but through Jesus there was a plan all along to ensure that we could be given free will whilst also reconciled to Him and not be lost to ourselves.

Isn't that amazing news?!

Let's get to our scripture for today:

Galatians 3:28 – *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Here we have Paul, who is actually the author of Galatians – I checked after I mistakenly said Paul also authored Ecclesiastes a couple of weeks ago, so consider this my official retraction, I got that wrong – we have Paul explaining the condition of humanity in the eyes of God. We are all equal!

There is no male or female, strong or weak, black or white – we are all equally valuable, one in Christ.

Without God, without Christ, this statement simply cannot be made.

Interestingly, our sin doesn't make us less valuable in God's eyes or diminish our intrinsic value at all. The Bible says that whilst we were still God's *enemies*, He made a way for us to be saved. Sin sets us apart from God, but it doesn't diminish the value God has put and still sees in us. In the same way as we have equal value but our moral actions are either better or worse than one another, we can sin more or less than another but our value doesn't change.

Hallelujah, I'm going to wrap this up here.

Here's our question of the week then – if we take God's view of all being equal and divisions amongst us being irrelevant, what does this change about how we view topics like politics and social change?

So, there we have it, guys! The third and final part of our deep-dive into whether the Bible is infallible!

We've looked at 3 different major teachings of the Bible and tried to justify them in order to show that they are more likely true than false, and that we can therefore take the Bible's teachings as far more likely to be true.

In episode 1 we showed that life only has meaning, purpose and value in a world in which God exists.

In episode 2 we showed that objective moral values and duties can only be explained by a transcendent law-giver, called God.

Finally in this episode we have shown that there is no explanation outside of God that makes sense of our view of humans being all equally valuable.

So, I'd like to think we have pretty conclusively shown these three topics to be more likely true than false, and we can fairly confidently claim that the Bible is infallible!

Thank you so much for going through this journey with me, I hope you learned a lot.

Next time we're beginning a new series, which links brilliantly to what we have talked about in this series, and something you guys have asked for quite a lot in the past – we're going to look at the problem of suffering and evil.

As always, get in touch on the youth WhatsApp chat, discuss your thoughts, concerns and prayer requests on there; continue to come to the Thursday bible studies and we can pray and keep in touch there; and follow us on @chawnyouth on Instagram.

Let's stick together as we patiently await the rapture, which at this point might come before the lockdown ends.

Here are some more resources on these topics for you:

- [This quite in-depth discussion of the doctrine of man](#), in William Lane Craig's Defenders class
- [This article on CrossExamined](#) clarifies some terms for us pretty well