

Westminster Confession of Faith

Introduction & Historical Overview

I. Administrative items.

- A. Weekly schedule, format, etc. Recording classes and online availability.
- B. Pass out books and materials.
- C. Library materials available.

II. Why do we need Creeds & Confessions?

- A. Written vs. unwritten confessions.
- B. Christians are called to know and be able to articulate what you believe. Doctrine matters!!
 - 1. Titus 1:9; 2:1
 - 2. Ephesians 4:11-14
 - 3. Proverbs 8:10
- C. You should be able to state what you believe to be true about core areas the Bible addresses.
- D. Definitions:
 - 1. "Statement of faith" -
 - 2. "Creed" -
 - 3. "Confession" -
 - 4. "Catechism" -
- E. "Confession-like statements" in the Bible show this was the practice in the 1st century. (examples...)
- F. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) helps us with defining truth:
 - 1. "Fences us off" from heterodox or heretical positions
 - 2. Gives *amazing latitude* in areas that Scripture seems to give latitude
- G. Usefulness of the Westminster Confession of Faith:
 - 1. Solid guide for the *READING & UNDERSTANDING* of the Bible
 - 2. Clear direction with fundamental doctrines that are difficult

3. Provides us with a systematic organization of Scripture
4. For pastors/leaders/teachers to clearly articulate their doctrinal views

III. Historical & theological context in which the WCF was written.

- A. English context - tug-a-war between Protestant & Roman Catholic
 1. King Henry VIII (1509-47) up to Elizabeth I (1558-1603)
 2. King James I (1603-25) (James VI of Scotland)
 3. Rise of the Puritans
 4. King Charles I (1625-49)
 - a) Charles calls Parliament to raise taxes for his wars

IV. The CREATION of the Westminster Assembly

- A. Long Parliament
- B. "Root and Branch Petition"
- C. English Civil War (1642-1646)
- D. Establishment of the Westminster Assembly
 1. The makeup of the Assembly:
 2. The work of the Assembly: