

The First Principles

Class 6 • Human Documents

- We looked at the “Gospel” because it is described by Scripture as something that must be believed before baptism - One of our definitions of a First Principle
- We looked at nine (9) First Principles lectures in Acts. Lectures designed specifically to lead the hearers to faith, repentance and baptism.
- We’ve looked at nine (9) of Paul’s “Sayings of Faith”, kind of an early “Statement of Faith”
- Lastly, we looked at the “Seven Unities” in Ephesians 4... possibly, a well-known list of First Principles, that Paul was reciting. We then looked in his other writings for places where he used the same words, and learned more about those First Principles.
- We now have established an excellent Index to First Principles.
- One would have thought that if there was anything else that either Jesus or the Apostles thought was a First Principle, then it would have shown up in our research.
- We should, therefore, feel pretty comfortable now with “What the First Principles are”, and how to find them.
- The next thing we’d like to do is take a look at how we got from here to our current, “Statement of Faith”.
- We’ll look at three different documents:
 - The Apostle’s Creed - Probably the first, ever, Statement of Faith
 - John Thomas’ EARLY Statement of Faith
 - Our current, Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith
- The goal is to give them a fresh look, comparing them to our Index of First Principles, that we all feel quite comfortable with Biblically, and see how they stack up

- Remembering, most of the First Principles are in the Statement of Faith, but it also contains much other helpful exposition. Exposition that is profitable for us to know... but, not necessarily First Principles
- There are basically two different types of topics in the Word of God:
 - Matters of exposition on which a difference of opinion is tolerated - Should be!
 - Fundamentals of our faith where it is critical that we all believe the same
- Examining our own Statement, and being clear on which is which, will help us in our endeavour to **INCLUDE** others in our fellowshiping.
- Fellowship is about including, not excluding...
- First, let's look at the Apostle's Creed.
- It's not known who wrote the Apostle's Creed, or when...
- it is verified as being around in the middle of the second century, and history has it that members of the original twelve wrote it.
- We would expect this to be close to our Index of First Principles.
- **COMPARE**
- What are the differences?
- What problems would we have with this today?