

## Emmaus Essentials

### The London Baptist Confession of 1689

#### Introducing the Confession (Part 1)

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### Recommended Resources for this Course

We will be studying through the London Baptist Confession together over the next several months. The main resource that you will need is a copy of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. There are a number of options:

- 1) You can download a PDF copy from our website by clicking [here](#). This is a copy of The Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 – Update English with notes by Peter Masters, used by permission. The updated English and the notes are helpful for those going through the confession for the first time.
- 2) You can purchase the same resource mentioned above but in booklet form – the only difference is in the format. [Amazon](#)
- 3) You can order a really nice bound version of The Baptist Confession of Faith & The Baptist Catechism, published by Solid Ground Christian Books. This is a really nice and well laid out version. The English is not updated, like the Peter Masters version mentioned above, and so the reading can be a little more challenging if you are not used to it. I like the Old English, and I really like the quality of this book (not to mention that the forward is written by my professor down at Westminster), and so I recommend it to you. (Looks like they are out of print, but they are taking orders.) [Solid Ground Books](#)
- 4) If you really want to spend some time studying the Confession I would recommend a commentary on the Confession by Sam Waldron called, 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, a Modern Exposition. [Solid Ground Books](#), [Amazon](#)

### Recommended Resources for the Introductory Lessons

- 1) For an overview of the history of the London Baptist Confession please see the article [CONFESSING THE FAITH IN 1644 AND 1689](#) by Dr. Renihan. This would be worth reading to help gain an understanding of what we are handling here before we move on. I would also encourage you to spend some time browsing the rest of the Reformed Reader website. Great stuff there.

## I. Introduction

### A. Future Plans

1. I'm going to spend a number of weeks introducing the confession.
2. To jump right in to chapter 1 would do us no good – we need to understand what we are handling before we start to deal with the details.

### B. Resources

1. Indebted to Dr. Renihan and the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies down at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido
  - a. Class Notes
  - b. True Confessions
  - c. <http://www.reformedbaptistinstitute.org>

C. A Modern Exposition of the Baptist Confession of Faith by Samuel Waldron

D. The Westminster Assembly and Its Work – The Doctrine of Holy Scripture by B.B. Warfield

E. Truth's Victory Over Error by David Dickson

## II. Three Questions to be Answered in This Lesson

- A. What is a confession of faith?
- B. Why are confessions important?
- C. What does it mean to be a “confessional church”?

## III. What is a Confession of Faith?

### A. Creeds and Confessions

1. Three ways to approach the Bible
  - a. Chronological/Redemptive Historical
    - i. Luke 24:25–26
    - ii. What is God doing?
  - b. Ethical – God’s righteousness and our obligations to obey his commands.
    - i. Holiness – what does God want me to do?
    - ii. Indicative, imperative
  - c. Theological
    - i. What does God want me to believe?
    - ii. What am I to believe?
    - ▶ Have you ever heard the saying that the word “Bible” stands for **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth**? That’s only partly true. The Bible gives us more than basic instructions (ethical commands), it also reveals what God is doing in human history and what we are to believe concerning ourselves and God. In fact the instructions that we receive flow from the doctrine or the teaching that is presented to us in the scripture.
2. A creed or confession is simply a collation of the teachings of the Bible.
  - A. Remember that what we believe is connected to how we behave. Orthodoxy leads to orthopraxy. Doctrine ought to produce doxology.
    - i. Rom 12:1–2
    - ii. Right living cannot happen apart from right thinking.
  - B. If we don’t know who God is or who we are, this will lead to problems.
    - i. Who is God?
    - ii. Who are we?
    - iii. Why are we in need of a savior?
    - iv. What is sin?
    - v. Who is Christ?
    - vi. What is salvation?
  - C. A creed or confessions answers these basic questions (which are needed for right living).
  - D. Creeds and confessions state “the faith.”
    - i. A creed is usually a brief statement, more personal statement.
    - ii. A confession tends to be longer and more public.
3. Examples of Christian Creeds and Confessions
  - A. Read the Nicene Creed – 4th – 6th Century

## IV. Why are Confessions Important?

### A. Creeds and confessions function positively and negatively

1. Positively
  - a. They state the contents of faith so that belief may be intelligent.
    - i. “And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6, ESV)
  - b. A creed serves to connect Christians from other times and other places.
  - c. A creed gives us a definable theological identity.

- d. The confession allows us to know ourselves and for others to know us.
  - e. It provides us an opportunity for continuity within the congregation and between congregations.
2. Negatively
- 1. A creed serves as a defense mechanism, protecting the church from doctrinal infection.

**V. What does it mean to be a “confessional church”?**

- A. Emmaus Distinctive's – “We are Confessional”
- B. We Subscribe to the London Baptist Confession of 1689
  - 1. This is what the leadership believes
  - 2. These are the doctrines of the Church
  - 3. The confession’s place in the membership process