



Scripture Alone: Inerrancy

Lesson Seven

Why Is Scripture Alone Uniquely Necessary?

AUTHORITY: The Bible Is God Speaking UNIQUELY and ABSOLUTELY with Divine Authority.

- ❖ **The Verbal, Plenary Inspiration of Scripture:** *Because the original Scriptures were “God-breathed” as “Spirit-moved” men wrote them, they are fully (plenary) the Word of God even down to the very words (verbal). 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*
- ❖ **The Absolute Divine Authority of Scripture:** *Because the original Scriptures were “God-breathed” to the degree that they are the very Word of God down to the very words written down, they speak with the absolute divine authority of God Himself in all things God Himself deemed progressively necessary for all people in all places at all times.*

“In summation, the Bible is an unusual book, It is composed of two testaments which contain sixty-six books claiming divine inspiration. By inspiration is meant the original manuscripts [autographs] of the Bible were given by revelation of God and thereby invested with divine authority for Christian thought and life. This means that whatever is taught in the Bible is for the Christian the final court of appeal.”
- Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible*

INERRANCY: The Bible Is God Speaking Uniquely and TRUTHFULLY Without Error.

❖ Defining Our Terms

Inerrancy /Inerrant – **WITHOUT** error / the quality of being without error.

Infallible / Infallibility – **INCAPABLE** of erring or being wrong / the state of not being able to err.

❖ Defining the Inerrancy of the Scriptures

Definitions

“The Scriptures are without error or fault in all its teachings.” – The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrine or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences.” – Evangelical Dictionary of Theology

Confessions

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in the Preface says:

“Recognition of **the total truth and trustworthiness** of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.”

The London Baptist Confession on the Holy Scriptures

The testimony of the church of God may stir and persuade us to adopt a high and reverent respect for the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, the heavenliness of the contents, the power of the system of truth, the majesty of the style, the harmony of all the parts, the central focus on giving all glory to God, the full revelation of the only way of salvation, and many other incomparable qualities and complete perfections, all provide abundant evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God. **Even so, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures comes from the internal work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.**

Three Vital Facts About Inerrancy of the Scriptures

1. The Inerrancy of the Scriptures Is Directly Tied to the CHARACTER of the Holy Triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit.

- ❖ All three divine members of the Trinity are involved in the revelation and inspiration and yet all three are revealed as being absolutely true and Truth-tellers!

Numbers 23:19; Romans 3:4; John 1:18; 8:40; 14:6; 18:37; 16:13; Ephesians 3:4-5

- ❖ Therefore, what has been revealed and written under divine inspiration by this true and truth-telling Trinity must be incapable of error and actually without error because God **CANNOT LIE!**

Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:1-3; Hebrews 6:13-18; Psalms 119:160; John 17:17; Ephesians 1:13

2. The Inerrancy of the Bible Is Directly Tied to INSPIRATION and, therefore, the Authority of the Bible.

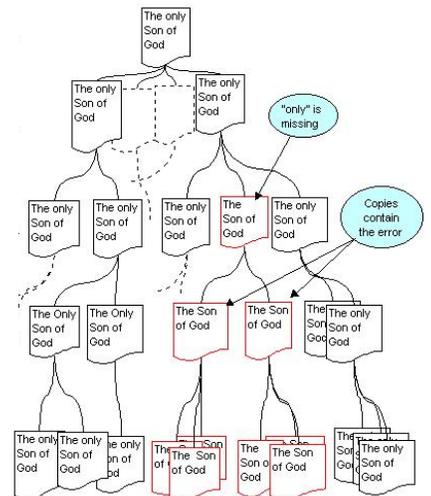
3. The Inerrancy and Inspiration of the Bible Are Directly Tied to the ORIGINAL Writings (Autographs).

SEE HANDOUT on *How the Bible Came from God to Us in a Unique, Trustworthy, and Authoritative Way*

Two Critical Questions About the Inerrancy of the Scriptures

1. If *only* the original writings were inspired and inerrant and we *no longer* have the original writings, then *why* does it matter if the original writings were inspired and inerrant in the first place?

- ❖ If the original writings contain errors and falsehoods, then they were **NEVER** inspired by God and, therefore, were not uniquely necessary and authoritative.
- ❖ If the original writings were breathed out by God but God spoke in error, then God **LIED** and He cannot be trusted and He cannot be truly God.
- ❖ If the original writings were filled with errors, then we have **NO HOPE** of recovering them through the process of transmission and textual criticism.



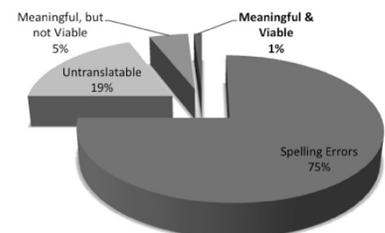
2. If *only* the original writings were inspired and inerrant and we *no longer* have the original writings, then *how* do our present-day translations of the Bible have any authority?

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- ❖ We have **MORE** manuscript copies of the NT than any other historical document.

- ❖ While no two copies are exactly the same, by comparing the over 5,800 manuscripts and various textual evidence with each other it is now recognized that the NT Greek text is approximately **99.9% PURE** in relation to the original autographs.

Types of NT Manuscript Variations



Taken from Dr. Daniel B. Wallace's interview with Justin Taylor, Mar. 21, 2012

Apologist Norm Geisler states that

"the NT is 100% free from any errors in essential doctrines of the Christian faith."

The English Translation We Hold in Our Hands Is for All Practical Purposes the Very Word of God and Is, Therefore, Reliable, Trustworthy, and Authoritative!

"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe." 1Thessalonians 2:13

How the Bible Came from God to Us in a Unique, Trustworthy, and Authoritative Way

God's Providential Care of His God-breathed Writings by Spirit-moved Men

PROVIDENTIAL PROCESS	BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS	DEGREE of PURITY, RELIABILITY, and AUTHORITY	DETERMINING FACTORS
1 REVELATION	God freely chose to progressively communicate to people what He deemed necessary to know about Him, His will, and His work by His Spirit, which reached its climax in His Son and the inspired Scripture written by His prophets and apostles. Deuteronomy 29:29; Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5	Revelation is settled, sure, sufficient, and the supreme authority, because there is only one divine Source of revelation, the God who is true and speaks truth.	Revelation rests upon the true and trustworthy character of God Himself and is authenticated by His Son and by His Spirit to His people. Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; 55:11
2 INSPIRATION Verbal & Plenary	Spirit-moved men wrote God breathed words that are divinely authoritative, incapable of error and without error, so that what was written is true and trustworthy down to the very words in all that God deemed necessary to reveal. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; Matthew 5:17-19; John 10:35; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13	Inspiration is settled, sure, sufficient, and the supreme authority, because there is only one process of inspiration carried along by the one Divine Author through the many human authors he freely chose to use.	Inspiration rests on God's sovereign and total control of the divine-human process without violating the personalities of the human authors. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21
3 TRANSMISSION Manuscript Copies	The ancient process of accurately copying the Hebrew and Greek writings for successive generations. 2 Timothy 4:13; Colossians 4:16; see how Jesus and the Apostles confidently used the copies they had as the authentic and authoritative Word of God.	Transmission is settled in the sense that we have more than enough copies to confidently know we have a 99.9% pure text in relation to the original autographs. Transmission has been sure and sufficient in providing the supreme authority in the Hebrew and Greek texts. And even more copies are being discovered which only affirm the accuracy and authority of the copies we already have.	The transmission of these texts is amazingly accurate and has benefited from the painstaking copying by the OT scribes and the multitude of NT copies that provide a 99.9% pure text of the original inspired autographs. The Dead Sea Scrolls witness to the accuracy of the OT text and over 5,800 manuscripts and many more early translations witness to the accuracy of the NT text and more are being discovered all the time.
4 CANONIZATION Active & Passive	God actively provided a "canon" (rule/standard) for measuring truth by divine revelation and inspiration. He then guided the early church to passively recognize and receive the divine authority of the books He had already inspired. God was already providentially guiding this process as the NT was being written. Acts 2:42; 2 Peter 3:14-16; 1 Timothy 5:18	The canon of Scripture (OT and NT without the Apocrypha) is settled, sure, sufficient, and the supreme authority. There is only one final collection of inspired books and none are to be added or taken away. Scripture alone is the final authority for God's people and church.	Canonicity depended upon God providential control and care of an otherwise human process involving His people, churches, and councils recognizing the divine authority God had already revealed and inspired. Jesus and the Apostles confidently used the OT copies they had as the authentic and authoritative Word of God.
5 TEXTUAL CRITICISM Hebrew & Greek	The modern process of comparing and collating the existing Hebrew and Greek manuscript copies to determine the original inspired, infallible, and inerrant text.	Textual criticism has shown that we have more than enough copies to confidently know we have a 99.9% pure text in relation to the original autographs. Even though several different theories exist about which original manuscripts are the most reliable, the difference between such texts are minuscule and do not impact any major or essential doctrine.	The accuracy of existing texts depends on the competence of the scholars involved in textual criticism and upon the texts available which are more than sufficient to discover what God originally inspired and has providentially preserved through the various manuscript copies.
6 TRANSLATION Common Language	The process of translating the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek texts into the common languages of common people. Acts 2:5-11; Matthew 28:10-20; Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9-10	We have many reliable translations in English and other languages but there are still people groups in need of translation into their heart language. These translations are very reliable with minimal impurities and speak with authority to the extent that they accurately translate the text of the original languages.	Translations depend on the knowledge and accuracy of the translator(s) and, to some degree, upon their interpretive understanding of the text but God has providentially persevered so many resources to do translation work that practically every translation is a sure and sufficient authority for knowing and glorifying God.
7 ILLUMINATION	The process of the Holy Spirit helping the reader understand and apply the Bible through instruction and interpretation. Psalm 119:18; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Acts 16:14	The Holy Spirit's illumination is available to all believers, but will vary from believer to believer. But the authority of Scripture rests in God's nature not ours.	Illumination depends upon the reader's relationship with the Divine Author and being led by His Spirit and being submitted to the incarnate Word and the inspired Word. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
8 INTERPRETATION	The process of a reader studying to understand what God's Word means by what it clearly says with the help of the Spirit and through a diligent process of comparing Scripture with Scripture and letting what is clear interpret what is less clear as well as learning from God's gifted pastors and teachers from the past and in the present. Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:10-15; 1 Timothy 3:14-16; Ephesians 4:11-16	The meaning of the inspired text is what the Divine Author intended, which is discovered by inductive study of the text in context and comparing Scripture with Scripture. The accuracy and reliability of interpretations varies greatly but God has spoken in the Bible uniquely, truthfully, clearly, and sufficiently so that what is needful can be heard, understood, and applied.	Interpretation is influenced by the spirituality, maturity, accuracy, theology, and the honesty of the student, preacher, teacher, or author. But the illumination of the Spirit and interaction with the universal church (church history) and the local church will bring a unity of consensus on the essentials of the faith once delivered to the saints. 2 Timothy 2:15; Philippians 3:15-16; Jude 3; Ephesians 4:3-6, 11-16
9 APPLICATION Whole Person	The process of putting into practice what the reader has learned through illumination (Spirit), instruction (Word), and interpretation (study). Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:21-25	The goal of the one interpretation is personal transformation and will yield many applications in various contexts and cultures, but these contexts and cultures do not change or determine the meaning of the text.	Transforming application depends upon the grace of God at work in the person's heart and the person's willingness to obey God. Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:2-11; Hebrews 13:20
10 COMMUNICATION All Peoples	The process of sharing with others what the reader has learned and applied. Acts 1:8; 2:5-11; Matthew 28:10-20; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Romans 1:16-17; 10:12-17; Ephesians 6:18-20	Personal application and transformation results in a joyful desire and passionate determination to share the good news of God's Word with others across the street and around the world.	Personal communication depends on and is determined by all of the above in order to be faithful to the living God who speaks uniquely, truthfully, clearly, and sufficiently in the Bible and to be fruitful in the lives of the hearers. Romans 1:16-17; 10:12-17; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:8