

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

Doctrine of the Bible Part 2: Inerrancy and the Canon

The Heights Church September 27, 2015

The Big Picture

- We seek to **become** and then **make** disciples (believing learners) by:
- Knowing what we believe.
- Why we believe it.
- Being able to communicate what we believe and why in an effective, winsome manner to fulfill the commands for all Christians in Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Peter 3:15-16.

1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

- **1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.**
- **2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.**
- **3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.**

1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

- **4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.**
- **5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.**

Inerrancy versus Infallibility

Infallibility means it was impossible for the original text to err.

Inerrancy means the original text was without error.

- Ordinary language is used.
- Numbers or measurements can be approximations.
- Vague language is allowed.
- Loose or free quotation is allowed.
- Inerrancy has to do with truthfulness not precision.
- Paradox and mystery does not compromise inerrancy.

Logic 101: contradiction, paradox, mystery

1. **The Law of non-contradiction: Something cannot be what it is and what it is not at the same time and in the same relationship.**
2. **Paradox is something that appears to be a contradiction but on closer examination is revealed to not be a contradiction.**
 - **Does not occur in the Bible**
3. **Mystery is something that presently cannot be understood but may be understandable later.**
 - **Occurs 27 times in the NT: the mystery was made known to me by revelation, Ephesians 3:3**

Modern Attacks on Inerrancy

1. **The Bible makes statements that are not historically accurate or scientifically possible. Or The Bible is only inerrant when it speaks of faith and practice.**
 - **Many examples of supposed historical errors in the Bible have been shown to be true by archeology.**
 - **The Hittites were a real people group.**
 - **Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you. Romans 16:23**
 - **Many terra-cotta shrines of Artemis (Acts 19) have been found at the temple in Ephesus Inscription mentioning a warden named Demetrius at the temple.**
 - **Science will be discussed under the Doctrines of Creation**

Modern Attacks on Inerrancy

1. The Bible makes statements that are not historically accurate or scientifically possible. Or The Bible is only inerrant when it speaks of faith and practice.
2. Jesus believed the Old Testament was inerrant (Matt. 5:18, John 17:17) **BUT** in His human nature did not know everything and therefore gave us a false view of Scripture. (Matthew 24:36) Or Jesus believed the Old Testament was inerrant **BUT** He was wrong.

Modern Attacks on Inerrancy

- 1. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
Matthew 5:18**
- 2. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth John 17:17**
- 3. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only Matthew 24:36**

Modern Attacks on Inerrancy

1. The Bible makes statements that are not historically accurate or scientifically possible. Or The Bible is only inerrant when it speaks of faith and practice.
2. Jesus believed the Old Testament was inerrant (Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, and 17:17) BUT in His human nature did not know everything and therefore gave us a false view of Scripture. (Matthew 24:36) Or Jesus believed the Old Testament was inerrant BUT He was wrong.
3. **There are some obvious errors and contradictions in the Bible.**

Modern Attacks on Inerrancy

3. There are some obvious errors and contradictions in the Bible.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. **It is the smallest of all seeds**, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, Matthew 13:31-32

- **The Southeast Asian Poppy is the smallest known seed.**
- **There are no technical contradictions in the Bible.**

The Canon of Scripture

- Canon means *measuring rod* or *norm*.
- **The Bible is the norm of norms without norms**

The Old Testament Canon

- The **Masoretic Text** includes many copies of Old Testament books and works dated between AD 500-1000.
- The **Codex Leningradensis**: a complete copy of the Hebrew Old Testament dated at AD 1010 (a codex is a bound volume of cut sheets). It is the source on which the Hebrew texts of today are based.
- ***Septuagint* Greek translation of the Hebrew text. Christians have counted 39 books and Jews 24**
- **Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 800 scrolls 200 of biblical material includes two copies of Isaiah dated between 150- A.D. 50**
Isaiah scrolls are more than 95% identical to Codex **Leningradensis**

The *Apocrypha* (Greek for hidden or concealed)

- Written between about 435B.C. and the time of Jesus.
- NT quotes the OT about 295 times but never quotes from the *Apocrypha*.
- The “Hebrew Bible” (Masoretic Text) did not contain the Apocrypha but the Septuagint did include them.
- Melito, Bishop of Sardis (about A.D. 170) includes all the books in our current Protestant OT except Esther and all the present NT books but no Apocrypha.
- Athanasius in A.D. 367 confirms the Melito list. He mentioned some of the Apocrypha but said they are not included in the Canon.

The *Apocrypha*

- Philo quotes from the 22 OT books but not the Apocrypha.
- Josephus confirmed the 22 OT books as canonical and divinely inspired but not the Apocrypha.
- Jerome was forced to put the Apocrypha in the Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible) but clearly stated they were not canonical.
- **These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the **Law of Moses** and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, Luke 24:44-45**
- Origen (A.D. 185 -254) references 22 OT books and the 27 NT books
- ON the other hand Irenaeus, Tertullian and Augustine all included the Apocrypha as did the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397 and the Council of Trent in 1563.

The Old Testament Canon

Roman Catholic Bibles include the following *Apocrypha* writings.

- *1st and 2nd Maccabees, Baruch, Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), additions to Esther, and the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon* which are included in Daniel.

Roman Catholics use the *Apocrypha* to support the Doctrines of:

- **purgatory,**
- **prayers for the dead**
- **indulgences**
- **justification by faith and works not faith alone.**

The Canon of NT Scripture

- **The Council of Carthage in A.D. 397 officially established the NT Canon**
- **Roman Catholics consider their Bible to be an infallible collection of infallible books.**
- **Protestants consider their Bible to be a fallible collection of infallible books.**
 1. **Ester was the only disputed OT book because it does not mention God**
 2. **Philemon, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John and Jude are the only NT books that were challenged at any point in Church History**

The Canon of NT Scripture

- **The criteria for including a book in the NT was:**
 - 1. Written by an Apostle or under the authority of an Apostle**
 - 2. Accepted as authoritative by the early church**
 - 3. Consistent with the rest of Scripture**

Reliability of New Testament Manuscripts

- 1. From the early 2nd to the 16th century there are over 20,000 copies of the NT in various languages. 5700 are in Greek.**
- 2. Classical Greek and Latin authors average only about 20 copies.**
- 3. If all these manuscripts were lost, virtually the entire New Testament could be constructed from the writings of the ancient teachers (church fathers).**
- 4. 99 NT manuscripts exist written before A.D. 400. The average earliest manuscript of a classical author is about 500 years after it was written.**

Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

The Greek NT contains about 138,000 words. Of the 5700 Greek NT manuscripts there are about 400,000 textual variants divided into 5 categories.

1. Spelling or nonsense errors make up the largest group and do not affect meaning.
2. The second largest group involve minor changes and synonyms that do not affect meaning.
3. The third largest group are variants that have some possibility of reflecting the original text: *The gospel of God versus the gospel of Christ* 1 Thessalonians 2:9
4. Less than 1% of the variants changes the meaning to some degree: *we have peace versus let us have peace* Romans 5:1
5. The earliest and best manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11.