

REVIEW: AUTHORITY

1. The Bible's authority

"It means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God."

2. We sought to prove how we can know this book is the Word of God

- A. Because it says it is
- B. Because of the Spirit's bearing testimony to us as we read it – the work He does in us through it
- C. Because of the Bible's historical accuracy
- D. Because of the Bible's internal consistency
- E. Because of the prophetic accuracy of the Bible
- F. Because of the influence on history
- G. Because of the changed lives – every salvation a miracle
- H. The depth and the beauty of the Bible

Transition: This study carries on and strengthens the last study – adding to it

- A. If the Bible is the final authority in all things in my life – if I'm to surrender myself to its teachings
 - 1). Then I have to know the Scriptures are the truth
 - 2). I need to know the Scriptures do not contain any error

I. THE TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE

1. The truthfulness of Scripture is based on the fact that God cannot lie

- A. I could prove last week that this book is authored by God
But a book authored by a liar does us no good at all does it? I can't base my life on that! Can't trust that!
- B. That is why we need to understand the character of the one whose words they are

2. Scriptural proof that God is a truthful God

Tt 1:2 (ESV) in hope of eternal life, which God, *who never lies*, promised before the ages began

- A. God's Words can be trusted because He is a God who *never* lies
- B. Hebrews goes even further

Heb 6:18 (ESV) ... *it is impossible for God to lie...*

- 1). Not only does God not lie – He can't lie – it is impossible
To lie would go against His nature – who He is
- 2). AND God never goes against His nature - He can't

2 Ti 2:13 (ESV) if we are faithless, he remains faithful — *for he cannot deny himself.*

- a). God cannot act in any way that would be inconsistent with His holy nature
- 3). This is why we can trust in all the promises isn't it?

Heb 10:23 (NIV) Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, *for he who promised is faithful.*

- a). Don't lose confidence in the hope you have in Him – Why?
He is faithful! All those promises come from a God who cannot lie

Pr 30:5 (ESV) *Every word of God proves true;* he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

- a). Not some of the words are true – every word is true

3. That is why we can say the Scriptures are the ultimate standard of truth

Jn 17:17 (ESV) Sanctify them in the truth; *your word is truth.*

- A. Interesting verse – we would expect Him to say "your word is true" (*alēthinos or alēthēs = true*)

- 1). But He uses *alētheia* (*truth*) – what is that saying? So important
God’s Word is not simply “true” but it is “truth” itself

Question: Why is this difference so important?

- A. Tells us not to think of Bible as being “true”
 - 1). That could mean that it conforms to some higher standard of truth
- B. It is saying that *the Bible is that higher standard of truth – the final standard of truth*

Point: The Bible is God’s Word – He cannot lie – therefore it is all true but more than that
It is THE truth – the ultimate standard!

- A. Therefore, the Bible is THE reference point by which we test every of truth claim against
 - 1). Those statements that comply with the Bible are true
Those statements or books (book of Mormon, Koran...) that don’t comply are NOT truth
- B. Here is our answer to the relativism of our day – no absolute truth – differs for everybody
 - 1). Wrong! There is an absolute truth – given by a God who cannot lie
He said His book IS THE TRUTH - IS THE STANDARD
 - a). Jesus said that – therefore to not believe it is – is to call Him a liar!

4. Summary: The Scriptures are authoritative because they are God’s Word

- A. But if He had lied when He authored them – how could we trust them – build our life on them
 - 1). But He didn’t lie – not once – that would be impossible for Him because His nature is truth
 - a). Therefore we can give ourselves to this book – it will never lead us astray
Therefore we can trust every promise – they are backed by the character of God
Ps 12:6 (ESV) *The words of the LORD are pure words...*

Transition: That brings us to our next point

- A. A key component when we think of the truthfulness of Scripture - Inerrancy
 - 1). This is a Word you need to know about – it is a concept that is under attack today
- B. It is something that flows out of the truthfulness of Scripture
 - 1). Speaks of the *extent* of that truthfulness

The authority of the Scriptures – the truthfulness of the scriptures

II. THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

1. Biblical Inerrancy defined

“The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the **original manuscripts** does not affirm anything which is contrary to fact”

Al Mohler: “Inerrancy is nothing less than the affirmation that the Bible, as the Word of God written, is totally true and totally trustworthy. When the Bible speaks, God speaks.”

- A. This means that the Bible always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about
- B. Inerrancy doesn’t mean the Bible tells us every fact there is to know about every subject
 - 1). It does mean – whatever the Bible says about any subject will always be the truth
 - 2). This is the natural result of it being the word of somebody who cannot lie

David Farnell: “The importance of inerrancy generates from the very perfections of the character of God Himself who cannot lie. *To say that His Word errs or is imperfect is to blaspheme God Himself who is the Author of His Word.*”

- a). But that is exactly what is happening today in many seminaries and churches

Transition: Let’s look at some things we need to see when we speak about inerrancy

2. What inerrancy doesn’t mean

- A. It doesn’t mean the Bible won’t speak in ordinary language

Need to see this – because some will deny inerrancy because of this

- 1). Ex. The Bible will speak of the sun rising – is that accurate
 - a). It is from the perspective of the speaker – that is exactly what happens
 - b). We understand the earth is turning now – they didn't
Yet we still say the Sun rises and the sun sets
 - 1a). We don't get corrected because everybody understands what we're saying
- 2). So the Bible speaks in everyday language – so those who read it can understand it easily

B. It doesn't mean the Bible won't use approximations rather than precise numbers

- 1). Writer can say 8,000 were killed in battle without implying he counted everybody
And there wasn't 7,975 or 8,015 dead soldiers – it was exactly 8,000
 - a). If it wasn't the Bible is in error – no!
- 2). This would also be true with measurements
 - a). I can say I live about 7 miles from Portola Springs elementary
Even though Google maps says 6.9 miles
 - b). It's about 15 minutes – good enough – without “Well now it depends upon whether they are working on one or two lanes on Irvine blvd. and sometimes those bike guys slow you down... plus....”
 - 1a). No. It's about 15 minutes – good enough
Absolute accuracy in this case would be obnoxious
 - 2a). Carrying it out to that degree is unnecessary for the truth – complicates it

Thought: It shouldn't bother us that we can say the Bible is absolutely truthful in everything it says
Yet admit that it uses ordinary language to describe natural phenomena

A. It speaks like we do without muddying up the waters

- 1). It says the sun rises because we understand that
It approximates numbers because we don't need the number to the 3rd or 4th decimal point

John Frame “Salvation belongs to the Lord”: Error is not the same thing as imprecision. We often express ourselves imprecisely, as when we use round numbers. But to do so is neither to lie nor to make a mistake. Often we must use some round numbers to express ourselves clearly. If I tell you my age down to the minute and second, that is too much precision, precision that interferes with communication. *The Bible never claims to be perfectly precise. It only claims to be true.*

- a). Do you know why that is so important to understand?
Because skeptics will take imprecision in things that don't matter and say SEE!

Transition: Because this is such an important issue – let's look at some of the challenges to this point

- A. I want to arm you against the thinking that is happening in seminaries and churches all around you
 - 2). It's getting very hard to find a seminary that believes the Bible is divinely inspired
That it is a book that contains no error

III. CURRENT CHALLENGES TO INERRANCY

FIRST: The Bible is only authoritative for “Faith and spiritual practice”

1. The Bible is good but it has its limits

- A. It's good in getting you saved – good in guiding you in ethics but beyond that there are errors
 - 1). When you get to historical or scientific data then this book is not reliable
But's that's OK because the Bible isn't concerned with those areas any way

Point: So it is a book that is trustworthy in some areas in error in others

2. The believer's response

- A. The Scripture repeatedly affirms ALL Of scripture is profitable and divinely inspired
2 Tim 3:16 (NKJV) *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 1). Because of that – it is completely *pure* (Ps. 12:6) *perfect* (Ps. 119:96) and *true* (Prov. 30:5)
 - 2). So the Bible itself doesn't make any restrictions on the subjects it tells the truth about
- B. Jesus rebuked the disciples on the road to Emmaus like this
Lk 24:25 (ESV) And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken!"
Paul adds: Ro 15:4 (ESV) For *whatever was written* in former days was written for our instruction...
- 1). These texts tell us Scripture is trustworthy in all that is written
 - a). Whether it is how to be saved – how to live a moral life
Or whether it is historical and scientific fact
 - 2). Why should that surprise us that the creator is accurate with science
Or the one who shaped history is accurate on the facts of history
- Summary:** While we can agree that the primary purpose of Scripture is matters of *faith* and *spiritual practice*
- A. It is obviously more concerned with salvation than science and history
- 1). BUT when it does speak on scientific and historical matters – it does so accurately
 - 2). The more we discover the more we see that precision – not the other way around

SECOND: If there are no inerrant manuscripts how can the Bible be inerrant?

1. This objection is because we claim inerrancy for the original manuscripts only

- A. We don't have the originals – and we admit there can be errors in the copies
- 1). So how can we use the term inerrant for the Bible we read today?

2. The believer's response. Want to show you why this is not a problem

- A. Example: Our own constitution. We have the original – National Archives in Washington D.C.
- 1). What would happen if something happened to that building and it was destroyed?
 - 2). Could we ever be certain of what the Constitution said?
Of course we could – we could compare the 100's of copies that are available
 - a). Where they all agreed – we would be certain those were the exact words of the original
- B. It is the same process in determining the original words of the Bible
- 1). It has been proven what we read today is 99.5% accurate to the original
 - 2). We have more than 5600 copies of the NT all written within 100 years of the originals
 - a). As they study these – the accuracy is stunning
 - b). A .5% difference – AND we know exactly where those differences are - footnotes
 - c). No doctrine is affected – peripheral issues only

Point: The book you are reading is unique – it is the same book the writers wrote – authored by God

- A. God wrote it – preserved it – you are reading exactly what God wanted you to read
- 1). The whole science of textual criticism proves this – we're not guessing at this
- B. Textual criticism = the process of attempting to ascertain the original wording of a text
- 1). It is a fascinating study – that we don't have time to really go into now

THIRD: The Biblical writers accommodated their message to the false ideas of the day

1. The argument

- A. To make it easier to communicate the primary message of the Bible
 - 1). The writers didn't bother correcting the mistakes of their contemporaries
Rather than muddying up the waters with controversy they let those mistakes slide
- B. They point to the fact that this is the way we communicate
We don't waste time with incidentals when we want to make a point

Thought: This is all meant to weaken the Bible – you really can't tell what is truth

- A. Some is true – but some false - an accommodation to the culture around them
 - 1). It is true spiritually but in error in other things
 - 2). Because you have copies you have no idea what it should really say
- B. It's all meant to erode our confidence in the Scripture – to loosen our grip
 - 1). And this constant barrage seems to be working

2. The believer's response to the Bible writers accommodating....

- A. God never affirms error – that would go against His character – He cannot lie
- B. He said His word is PURE. Jesus said His word is TRUTH

Summary: Therefore we believe that God has communicated TRUTH without affirming error

FOURTH: There are some clear errors in the Bible

1. This conviction has led many to deny the inerrancy of the Scripture

- A. When somebody says this – I say – “Really! Can you show me one?”
 - 1). Most can't – “So it's just hearsay. Are you really going to gamble your eternity on that!”
- B. Some will have a specific passage they will go to – usually there is a good explanation

Example: Jesus and the demon possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes

- A. Matthew says 2 demon possessed men – Mark and Luke say 1
 - 1). Not a problem – Mark and Luke don't say there was only one
Seems they mentioned the only one who was doing the talking – other didn't speak it seems
 - 2). Same as any eye-witness accounts – speak to many people to get all the details
 - a). One says there was one person – the main character
Another says – there was another standing by him that seemed to be with him

Point: As you gather all the details – you fill in the gaps – same with the Gospels

Transition: Other times it is more difficult

1 John 3:9 (NKJV) Whoever has been born of God *does not sin*, for His seed remains in him; and *he cannot sin*, because he has been born of God.

- A. So I guess nobody is saved – doesn't that contradict other scriptures – even John's
1 John 1:8-9 (NKJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9)
If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- B. This is where you have to do some study. Good commentary etc.
 - 1). Original readers would have no problem here – Greek word for “does not” = practice
 - a). It is not just occasional sin – it is a lifestyle of sin – it is claiming Christ with no change

2. Will there be some difficult passages we are have no answer for?

- A. There are a few where the linguistic or historical context we need to understand
Are not known to us in the present
- B. Here's the thing – this is extremely rare – none of it affects any important doctrine

- 1). The problem passages are incidental scriptures that aren't necessary for salvation
- C. For many this is just a matter of time until we do discover the key that unlocks it
- Thought:** We are getting better at this all the time – the more we discover the better we are
- A. Why Strong's concordance isn't as good as more recent works – Why?
 - 1). We understand more about ancient Greek and Hebrew words now – keep getting better
 - 2). As we get better – the Bible is proven to be so accurate – 99.5%
- B. Many of the passages that seem difficult now will clear up with greater discovery!
 - 1). Problem is not with the Bible – it is with us – our lack of knowledge – getting better all the time
- Summary:** The Bible is God's Word – it is Truth – It is inerrant = it is accurate and trustworthy
- A. The more we discover – the more we study – the more convincing it becomes – not the other way around
- Transition:** Quickly let's look at some problems with denying inerrancy
- A. I want you to understand how significant denying this is – not some small thing
 - 1). So that you will affirm and fight for the inerrancy of the Bible in the Church
 - 2). So you will not support anybody who does not insist on this

IV. THE PROBLEMS WITH DENYING INERRANCY

1. The problem of morals: If God can lie – shouldn't we be able to lie also

- A. Doesn't Eph 5:1 tell me to be an imitator of God? So I guess I'll like just like He does
- B. If the Bible isn't inerrant – if God's word isn't pure – that is a valid conclusion

2. We will begin to wonder if we can really trust God

- A. If He's spoken falsely in some passages – how can I trust any passages
 - 1). Which ones are correct and authoritative – which ones are not
Which ones do I have to obey and which ones can I neglect
 - 2). What Promises will He fulfill – which ones are just talk?

Point: Denying the inerrancy of the Bible robs it of all its power and comfort

3. If inerrancy is denied we make our minds a higher standard than God's Word

- A. We sit in judgment of God's word rather than it sitting in judgment on us
 - 1). I determine what I should embrace and what I can deny

4. To deny the Bible at any point is to begin to question it at every point

- A. If I deny the nature of Scripture in the minor things – it will not leave the major doctrines untouched
 - 1). Maybe Paul's teaching on salvation is wrong
Maybe the Pope is right – it doesn't matter what you believe as long as your sincere
Maybe Rob Bell is right – a loving God would never send anybody into hell for all of eternity
 - 2). Maybe those who say about those hard passages "God isn't going to really do that. He's just trying to scare people straight." Maybe they are right
 - a). Maybe He is just using scare tactics – we don't really have to worry about it though
- B. When you allow foundations of inerrancy to erode– the Bible's authority starts to slip away
 - 1). How do I know what part is truth and what part is error?
Paige Patterson: "The inerrancy of Scripture is an essential and not optional doctrine for the church. Otherwise we are cast on a raging sea of subjectivism with a high priesthood of scholars who assume the position of God, telling what we should and should not believe."
 - 2). This will eventually lead to questioning the whole Bible
Ravi Zacharias: "The Bible is the Word of God, and God cannot err. So, to deny inerrancy, rightly understood, is to attack the very character of God. *Those who deny inerrancy, soon enter the dangerous terrain of denying all Scriptural authority for both doctrine and practice.*"

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- 3). This will eventually open the door to all kinds of heresies
 - a). The truth blocks heresies – but when that truth is eroded – the door is open

Point: This is so important: Is the Bible the Word of God? And it is impossible for Him to lie?

- A. Then He doesn't use lies as scare tactics – He says exactly what He means
 - 1). Both in the warnings and in the promises
 - B. Then this book is pure – it is the truth (the standard) – it is accurate in all that it says
 - 1). Therefore any other truth claim that contradicts the Bible is actually a lie
 - a). Now we are guarded against heresies that seem to be constantly entering the church
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CONCLUSION

1. What we have seen so far about the Bible

- A. It is authoritative – because it is the Word of God – To disobey it is to disobey God Himself
- B. It is truthful – we can trust the Bible because there is no lies in it
 - 1). When we submit to its authority we are submitting to truth – not being led astray
- C. It is inerrant – the extent of truth – every subject the Bible speaks about is accurate
 - 1). There are no errors in this book

Summary: This is a book we can give ourselves too