

THE WORD OF GOD

INERRANCY AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

Many of us have heard the term “Systematic Theology”, which is a big word that basically means the study that answers the question, “*What does the whole Bible teach us today about any given topic*”¹ It involves collecting and understanding all relevant passages in the Bible and then summarizing their teachings so that we can know what to believe about each topic.

A topic that has been in debate for years is that of the Doctrine of Scripture. Southern Baptists have a document called the “Baptist Faith and Message” that defines what we believe about the Bible: The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

I. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

1. The Bible is inspired. The Bible is God’s words. Although it was written by men, they were inspired by the holy Spirit.²
 - The Bible is our only standard of truth in fact it is absolute truth. Absolute truth – The Bible is the believer’s source of truth. It is perfect and without error. *Psalm 19:7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Psalm 119:142, “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.”*
2. There are those who say that there are no absolutes that define reality.

¹ Frame, John Westminster Seminary, definition of Systematic Theology

² <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

- **No moral absolutes: no right or wrong.** This type of thinking leads to situational ethics: right or wrong is relative to the situation; a “whatever feels good” mentality.³

3. The Bible has divine authority because it is God’s written word. There is evidence for the existence of absolute truth:⁴ *2Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God^[b] may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

- ⇒ **Teaching – What is right**
- ⇒ **Reproof – What is not right**
- ⇒ **Correction – How to get right**
- ⇒ **Training – How to stay right.**

The authority of Scripture means that all the words of Scripture are God’s words written in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.⁵

- **All the Words in Scripture Are God’s Words.**
 - This is what the Bible claims for itself.
 - **Old Testament: “Thus says the Lord” – is a phrase used to indicate that the Lord is speaking to His people. The prophets of the Old Testament commonly used this phrase.**
 - The prophets used this phrase to indicate that they were messengers of the Lord.
 - **The words that they were about to speak were the authoritative words of the Lord.**
 - **The New Testament: 2Timothy 3:16-17.**
 - **To disbelieve or disobey the words of a prophet was to disobey the Lord Himself. Deuteronomy 18:19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.**
- 4. The bible is sufficient. The bible tells us everything God intends to communicate with all people verbally.⁶**

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/absolute-truth.html>

⁴ <https://www.gotquestions.org/absolute-truth.html>

⁵ Grudem, Wayne Bible Doctrine, pg. 33

⁶ <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

5. Knowing absolute truth is only possible through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible communicates everything a person needs to be saved.⁷
- The existence of absolute truth points us to a sovereign God who is the creator of the heavens and the earth.
 - He has revealed Himself to us in order that we might know Him personally.
6. The Bible is centered on Christ. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is about Jesus.⁸
7. The truthfulness of scripture.
- God cannot lie or speak falsely. *Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began...*
 - Because God cannot lie, his word can always be trusted.
 - All words in the Bible are completely true and without error in any part. Psalms 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.
 - God's words are the ultimate standard of truth.
John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.
 - Jesus uses truth as a noun here meaning that His word is not simply true, it is "truth."
 - The Bible is the ultimate example of what is true.
 - Absolute truthfulness fights against the modern viewpoint of "pluralism". Pluralism is the belief that every person has a perspective on truth that is just as valid as anyone else's perspective.
 - Pluralism says that there is not any absolute truth.
 - Pluralism is one part of a contemporary view called "Postmodernism". Postmodernism would also say that there is no absolute truth.
 - Relativity: One's truth is the result of our own background, culture, biases, and personal agenda.
 - Skepticism: A distrust of absolute truth and authority.
8. The Bible is inerrant. The scriptures are trustworthy and reflect the perfect Character of God.⁹

II. THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

⁷ <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

⁸ <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

⁹ <https://bfm.sbc.net/>

1. What does inerrancy mean? The inerrancy of scripture means that the scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.

- **The Bible always tells the truth and it always tells the truth concerning everything it talks about.**
- **It affirms that what it says about any subject is completely true.**
 - a. The Bible can be inerrant and still speak the ordinary language of everyday speech.**
 - **This is true in scientific and historical descriptions of facts or events.**
 - **We should not be troubled that the Bible is absolutely truthful in everything it says and that it uses everyday language to describe natural phenomena or to give approximation or round numbers when describing an event. (ex. Someone can say that 8,000 men were killed in a battle without implying that he has not counted everyone...7,900 or 8,001)**
 - b. The Bible can be inerrant and include loose or free quotations as long as the content is not false to what was originally stated.**
 - c. It is consistent with inerrancy to have unusual or uncommon grammatical constructions in the Bible.**
 - **Some writings are elegant and stylistic.**
 - **There is sometimes language that is of ordinary people.**
 - d. The Bible is historically accurate, internally consistent, and contain numerous prophecies that have been fulfilled.**
 - **It has influenced the course of human history.**
 - **It has changed lives of countless individuals.**
 - **Its teachings are unmatched by any other book.**
- **There are occasions when a statement is not grammatically correct but is still inerrant because it is completely true.**
- **God used ordinary people who used ordinary language.**

2. Current Challenges to inerrancy.

- a. The Bible is only authoritative for “faith and practice.”**
 - **The scripture is to teach us only in areas that relate directly to our religious faith and ethical conduct.**
 - **This would allow for the possibility of false statements in Scripture in areas such as historical details or scientific facts.**
 - **Those that hold to this position would say that the Bible was “infallible” but not “inerrant”. In the early to mid 1960’s infallible**

came to mean, in a weaker sense that the Bible will not lead us astray in matters of faith and practice.¹⁰ The response to this objection is 2Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

- The New Testament affirms the reliability of all Scripture. *Matthew 24:35* – “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

b. We have no inerrant manuscripts; therefore, talk about an inerrant Bible is misleading.

- Those who hold to this argument say that we have no original manuscripts we only have copies of copies. The answer to this objection is that we know that for 99% of the words of the Bible are what the original manuscripts said.
- God never acted contrary to his moral character and there are no false historical or scientific errors in the Bible regardless of the secular teachings were of that day. (Ex. Flat earth)

c. There are clear errors in the Bible.

- This claim is made by those that have no ideas where the errors occur. So the first question to ask is, “Where do the errors occur?”
- Close observation is the key to bringing light to the “error” in question. Upon this evaluation the truth is revealed.
- Our bible is over 1900 years old and has been examined by biblical scholars for years and they have no trouble affirming that the Bible is inerrant.

3. The problems with denying inerrancy.

a. The denial of inerrancy while still claiming that the words of Scripture are true can lead us down a slippery slope.

b. We begin to wonder can we really trust God.

- If we feel that God has spoken falsely it will affect our ability to take God at His word.

c. We make our minds higher than God’s

d. We must also say that the Bible is wrong not only in minor details but in some of its doctrine as well.

“WRITTEN SCRIPTURE IS OUR FINAL AUTHORITY”

¹⁰ Grudem, Wayne Bible Doctrine pg.43

DISCUSSION

- **How would you defend the following statement: “All the words in Scripture are God’s words.”**
 - **How can we know that God’s words are true?**
 - **Define inerrancy and share how it is consistent with the Bible’s use of language of ordinary, everyday speech.**
 - **What are the dangers of denying the inerrancy of the Bible?**
 - **What is your greatest take away from this study?**
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William Tyndale's Scripture Translations

Picture a cold, dimly lit prison cell in 1536. A man, gaunt from months of confinement, wraps himself in a thin cloak. His name is William Tyndale, and he’s about to pay the ultimate price for one unshakable belief: that the Bible is God’s perfect, error-free Word—and that everyone, even the common plowboy, should be able to read it.

Tyndale had dared to do what was illegal in England at the time: translate the Bible into English. The Church feared that if ordinary people read the Scriptures for themselves, it would undermine their control. But Tyndale believed the exact opposite. He once said to a clergyman, “If God spares my life, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than thou dost.”

He was convinced—not only that the Bible should be accessible—but that it could be trusted down to the smallest word. That it was free from error because it was God’s Word, not man’s invention. Tyndale wasn’t just translating a book; he was defending its perfection. He pored over ancient manuscripts, working with such accuracy that much of his language still lives on in our Bibles today.

Eventually, Tyndale was betrayed, arrested, and condemned. On the day of his execution, he was tied to a stake, strangled, and then burned. But before he died, he cried out with his last breath: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes!”

Within just a few years, his prayer was answered. The King authorized an English Bible—much of it based on Tyndale’s work. Why does that matter for us today? Because it reminds us that this Book we hold in our hands came to us not casually, but at great cost. Men like Tyndale believed every word of it was worth translating, worth defending, worth dying for. He didn’t believe it contained some truth—he believed it was the truth.

(Source: [Christian History Institute](#))