

INFALLIBILITY IS GREATER THAN INERRANCY

By Del Potter M.A.A.

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God's truth (**Infallibility**) is greater than man's inability to write down or transmit His word (**Inerrancy**) perfectly. God's truth remains true regardless if man regards or disregards it to be true.

Allow me to explain more in-depth. Inerrancy, is defined as the belief that Scripture contains no errors in its original manuscripts, so obviously inerrancy struggles with textual variants like **John 8:1–11**. The story is missing from the oldest Greek manuscripts (e.g., **Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus**) and its stylistic differences raise red flags for many textual critics. But if our faith rests solely on inerrant transmission, what happens when that transmission wavers? Are such passages now less inspired? We are warned from scripture itself that errant transmission could and can occur. God through Moses warns the Israelites that *"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I am commanding you"* (**Deuteronomy 4:2**).

Jesus seems to place an exclamation point on this line of thinking and says *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (**John 14:15**) clarifying further that if you love God you will not tamper with His word. God places a capstone on this discussion by warning His readers at the close of Revelation *"and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book"* (**22:19**). My point? We are warned through scripture itself there is and would be a problem with those that would add or even take away from God's infallible word thus making it errant and not inerrant. This is where the strength of infallibility steps in.

Infallible simply means *"incapable of error."* The difference is God is incapable of error and is against His nature to error. *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless"* (**Psalms 18:30**). Inerrancy is like a flawless earthly mirror. Crack it, and it's compromised. However, Infallibility is like the sun: Even if seen through a foggy lens, it still gives light and heat because its origin is not of the earth.

Psalms 119:89 reminds us that truth originates not in human manuscripts, but in the eternal counsel of God. Combined with **John 21:25** - *"Jesus did many other things... if all of them had been written down, the world itself would be unable to contain the volumes"* We are confronted with a key theological insight: not all truth has been written, but all truth is known. In Scripture, it is clarified that omission from man's history does not imply absence from God's history. So, even when the earthly record is incomplete, the heavenly record has been completed.

Again, it is true that manuscripts such as Codex Sinaiticus omit stories like the *Pericope Adulterae* (**John 7:53–8:11**), leading some to question its authenticity. Yet, early Christians like Didymus the Blind (pre-Nicene era) affirmed the passage's existence in *"certain*

Gospels." Augustine later wrote that some scribes intentionally excluded the story out of fear it could be misused to justify sin using the story of the Pericope Adulterae.

"Certain persons of little faith... removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of forgiveness toward the adulteress." (Augustine 'De Adulterinis Coniugiis' - 419 A.D.)

This demonstrates that the story may have been removed due to fear, politics, or human discretion, but not by divine silence. In light of **Psalm 119:89**, we must remember that God's word is "**SETTLED**" [**Greek: Natsab = stationed/established**] in heaven before it's written on earth.

This challenges an empirical view of truth. If divine revelation is only accepted when it aligns with surviving manuscripts, the church's oral tradition, apostolic memory, and lived theology are undermined. The early church did not rely solely on manuscripts, but on witnesses, oral, and Spirit-led preservation. As *Tertullian* wrote in the 2nd century:

"We do not need curiosity after Christ Jesus, nor inquiry after the gospel. When we believe, we desire to believe nothing more. For this we believe, that there is nothing else which we ought to believe." - *Prescription Against Heretics*, **Ch. 7–8**.

Scripture acknowledges its own incompleteness—yet affirms the completeness of God's eternal counsel.

The failure to accept any truth that has not been recorded in early papyri amounts to ignoring the '*heavenly library*' where truth is established. There is a consensus among Scripture, tradition, and theology that the absence of paper does not imply the absence of preservation. Despite the fact that earth has not penned it, that does not mean heaven has not done so. As Christians, we believe that the eternal Word, who is Jesus Christ, the Logos (**John 1:1-14**), has embodied and preserved all truth, some written, some spoken, and some remembered in the heart of the Church. The Word of God cannot fail - even if manuscripts do. That is the beauty and greatness of infallibility over inerrancy.

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." (**John 21:25**).