

Session 3: Inerrancy, Authority, Sufficiency

I. Inerrancy

The Bible is infallible in that it is trustworthy and cannot fail in its purpose, particularly concerning matters of faith and practice.

The Bible is inerrant in that it tells the truth, and it does so without error in all parts and with all its words.

A. Scriptural Defense

1. Self-authenticating

The Bible explicitly claims to be divinely inspired, meaning it originated from God. This "God-breathed" nature is seen as the basis for its truthfulness and authority.

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 2 Peter 1:20-21

2. The Nature of God

A core premise for inerrancy is that God, being perfectly truthful and omniscient, cannot err or deceive. If the Bible is truly God's Word, then it must reflect His character and therefore be without error.

- Numbers 23:19
- Proverbs 30:5

3. The Claims of **Christ**

Jesus frequently appealed to the Old Testament as authoritative and declared that it "cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He treated the Old Testament accounts, including historical narratives, as factual.

- Matthew 5:17-18
- Luke 24:25-27, 44

4. The **Character** of God's Word

God speaks of the character of His Word through the inspired authors who unpack the Bible's integrity.

- Ps. 119:89
- Is. 55:12

B. **Definitional** Defense

1. **Approximations** – Numbers 25:9 / 1 Cor. 10:8
2. **Free** Quotations – Rm. 2:24 / Is. 52:5
3. Language of **Appearance** - Gen. 6:6
4. Different accounts of the **same** event - Mark. 10:46 / Matt. 20:30

C. The **Importance** of Inerrancy

1. The importance of inerrancy **denied**.

a. Inerrancy is not a **biblical** doctrine

b. Since inerrancy **only** applies to the original manuscripts, the doctrine is theoretical and not essential

c. It is a recent teaching that the church was not formerly concerned about

2. Inerrancy is essential

II. Authority

A. Biblical Definitions

Authority = The Bible is the supreme standard for what we should believe and how we should behave because it comes from God, who cannot lie.

Necessity = It is impossible to live the Christ life without the Bible.

Sufficiency = The Bible contains all that we need to know God's will and live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Clarity = The Holy Spirit makes the Bible understandable to all believers who read it, and are seeking to be submissive to what it says.

B. Objections to the authority of Scripture.

1. Reason

Human reason stands autonomous and above Scripture.

2. Feelings

Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

The Bible became an authority in the believer's life after they had a religious experience with it.

3. Conscious

Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The Bible, as a product of human preservation, is unreliable and limited. Therefore, our conscience is the **sole** basis of authority not religious truth.

4. Neo-orthodoxy **subjectivism**

The Bible is a witness to the living Word, Christ. However, it is **fallible**. Therefore, the Bible has no **absolute** authority, but only instrumental authority.

It is the means by which we have **personal** faith encounters. The Bible cannot judge each person's experience. The experience stands **above** the Bible.

C. The **importance** of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture

Whenever you speak, you do it out of a **commitment** to a specific well of truth.

What a person or society believes to be **true** shapes and guides their view of humanity, which in turn impacts the family and ultimately society by defining its culture.

III. **Sufficiency**

A. **Progressive** Sufficiency

Progressive sufficiency = the amount of revelation that God's people have at any point in history is sufficient for them at that **particular** time.

B. **Complete** Sufficiency

Completed Sufficiency = the completion of God's work of redemption leads to the **closing** of the Christian canon and the completion of revelation.

The New Testament **records** this ministry in the Gospels / Acts and **unpacks** it in the Epistles.

The New Testament teaches that the Bible is **complete** now that the foundational work description (Gospels / Acts) and explanation (Epistles) is complete.

- Eph. 2:20
- Rev. 22:18-19
- Heb. 1:1-4

We have **no more** need for revelation now that we have the description and explanation that even the angels have longed to see.

C. **Formal** Sufficiency

Formal sufficiency = Scripture contains **everything** essential for its own interpretation.

It does not mean that Christians should **never** consult other sources of information.

All outside sources must **point back** to the authority of Scripture.

We must always ground our instruction in Scripture and be honest and candid when we are **NOT** doing that.

D. **Material** Sufficiency

Material sufficiency = the Bible tells us **everything** we need to know from God about any topic.

1. **Material sufficiency in the general sense**

God has given enough of His words to us to know how to honor Him in **every** discipline.

2. **Material sufficiency in the particular sense**

There are subjects for which God intends Scripture to provide very **detailed** information.