

*Men of the Word*

**SESSION 4:**

**The Bible Is True**

**IT IS WRITTEN**



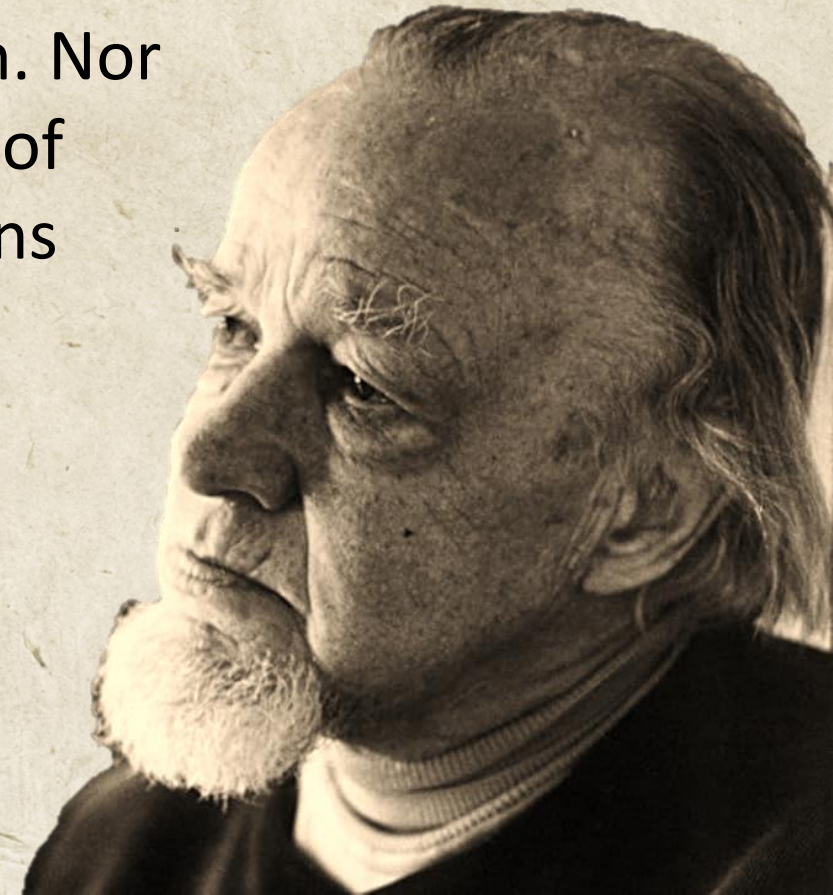
“Evangelicals today are facing a watershed concerning the nature of biblical inspiration and authority. It is a watershed issue in very much the same sense as described in the illustration. Within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the Bible so that the full authority of Scripture is completely undercut. But it is happening in very subtle ways. Like the snow lying side-by-side on the ridge, the new views on biblical authority often seem at first glance not to be so very far from what evangelicals, until just recently, have always believed. But also, like the snow lying side-by-side on the ridge, the new views when followed consistently end up a thousand miles apart.”

—Francis Shaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 43



“Unless the Bible is without error, not only when it speaks of salvation matters, but also when it speaks of history and the cosmos, we have no foundation for answering questions concerning the existence of the universe and its form and the uniqueness of man. Nor do we have any moral absolutes, or certainty of salvation, and the next generation of Christians will have nothing on which to stand.”

—Francis Schaeffer,  
*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 46







“The truthfulness of Scripture, its correspondence to reality, and its internal coherence have been under attack since the incident in the garden of Eden. ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent told the woman in the face of God’s warning to the contrary (Gen 3:4). Doubt about the veracity of God’s word was deliberately sown in order to cast doubt on God’s character and intention.”

—Mark Thompson, *The Doctrine of Scripture*, 155



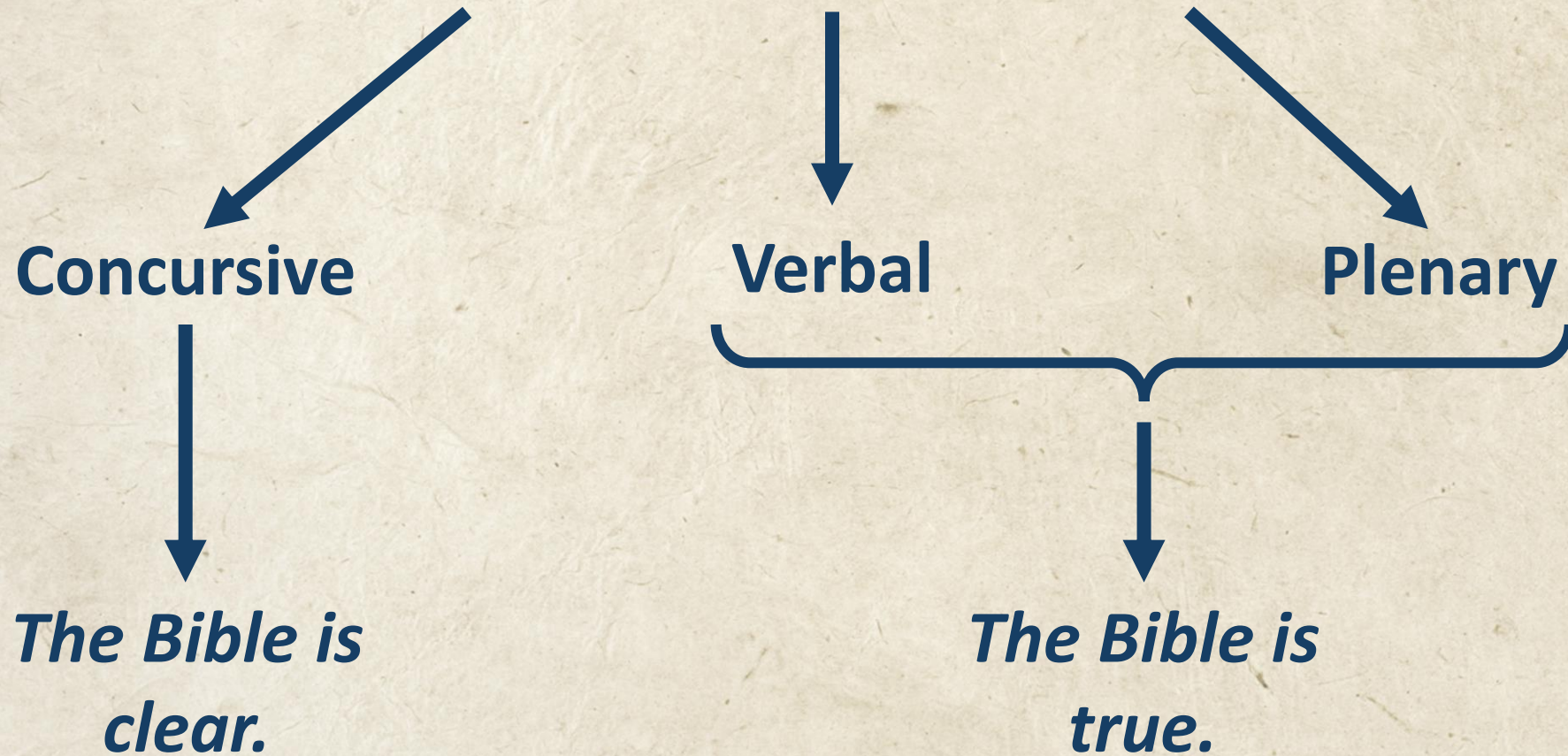
# REVIEW: Revelation, Inspiration, and Clarity

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- The doctrine of **revelation** explains **that** God has made His knowledge known—most decisively in *the Scriptures*.
- The doctrine of **inspiration** explains **how** God has made this knowledge known in the Scriptures:
  - 1) Inspiration is **plenary** in nature—it is a characteristic of *all* that is properly called “Scripture.”
  - 2) Inspiration is **concurative** in nature—Scripture is the product of both God and man, so that it is equally divine and human.
  - 3) Inspiration is **verbal** in nature—it extends to the very choice of individual words and their grammatical functions.



# THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION





“The question is whether in writing they were so acted upon and inspired by the Holy Spirit (both as to the things themselves and as to the words) as to be kept free from all error and that their writings are truly authentic and divine. Our adversaries deny this; we affirm it.”

—Francis Turretin, *Institutes*, 2.4.5







Inspiration is “a doctrine which claims that by a special, supernatural, extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, the sacred writers have been guided in their writing in such a way, as while their humanity was not superseded, it was yet so dominated that their words became at the same time the words of God, and thus, in every case and all alike, *absolutely infallible*.”

—B. B. Warfield, *Works*, 1:399, emphasis added

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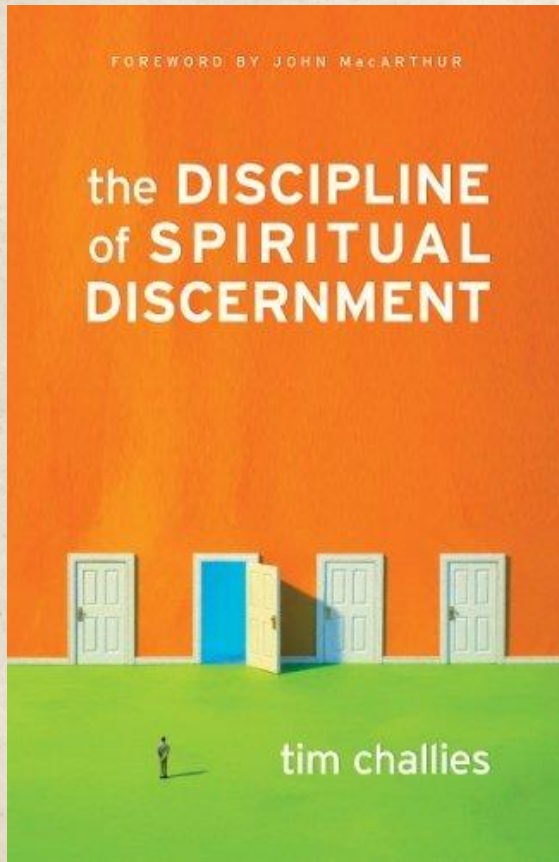
# I. The Nature of Truthfulness

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- **Q:** What is “truth”?
- **A:** Truth is that which corresponds to reality as determined by God.
- *Truth* is that which is contrary to *falsehood* or *error*.
- Any expression of *falsehood* or *error* originates in either *ignorance* or *deceit*.
- Conversely, any expression of truth originates in *knowledge* and *integrity*.







“Truth is what God thinks; it is what God does; it is what God is; it is what God has revealed of Himself in the Bible. Truth is found in its fullest form in God, for He is truth; He is the very source and origin of all truth.”

—Tim Challies, *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment*, 94



## A. “Infallibility”

- “To be incapable of failing”; positively, “to be trustworthy.”
- J. I. Packer: “the quality of neither deceiving nor being deceived” (*God Has Spoken*, 111).
- E. J. Young: “Scripture is unfailing, incapable of proving false, erroneous, or mistaken” (*Thy Word Is Truth*, 113).
- **John 10:35** – “the Scripture cannot be broken.”
- **1 Peter 1:25** – “the word of the Lord endures forever.”



*“Infallible* signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.”

—Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), “Exposition”



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## B. “Inerrancy”

- “To be without error”; positively, “to state that which is entirely true or consistent with reality.”
- J. I. Packer: “freedom from error of any kind, factual, moral, or spiritual” (*God Has Spoken*, 111).
- E. J. Young: “we mean that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability of mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth” (*Thy Word Is Truth*, 113).
- **John 17:17** – “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”



“Similarly, *inerrant* signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.”

—Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), “Exposition”



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“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.

“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.

“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.”

—Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), “Short Statement”



## C. Qualifications

- “Inerrancy does not demand strict adherence to the rules of grammar.”
- “Inerrancy does not exclude the use of either figures of speech or literary genres.”
- “Inerrancy does not demand historical or semantic precision.”
- “Inerrancy does not demand the technical or observational language of modern science.”
- “Inerrancy does not require verbal exactness in the citation of the Old Testament by the New.”



- “Inerrancy does not guarantee the exhaustive comprehensiveness of any single account or of combined accounts where those are involved.”
- “Inerrancy does not demand the infallibility or inerrancy of the non-inspired sources used by biblical writers.”
- Inerrancy does not automatically extend to the copies made of the original, inspired manuscripts.
- Inerrancy does not automatically extend to any interpretation of the biblical text.



“Scripture contains Satan’s lies, Job’s friends/comforters’ erroneous evaluations of his situation, the mishandlings of Scripture (as in the Pharisees’ twisting of Scripture to try to trap Jesus), and immoral reasoning of people like Caiaphas who believed it morally preferable that an innocent man, Jesus, should die instead of many Jews being slaughtered by the Romans as they quelled a rebellion that Jesus’s followers might instigate. All of this is in Scripture, and since *all* Scripture is God’s word, the incorrect thinking just mentioned must also be God’s word. . . . These passages are the word of God, but that just means the Holy Spirit wanted a written account of what these individuals said, not that their false claims are true!”

—John Feinberg, *Light in a Dark Place*, 191

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“When all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences.”

—Paul Feinberg, “The Meaning of Inerrancy,” 294



## II. The Testimony to Truthfulness

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### A. The Necessary Consequence of God's Character

- An infallible, inerrant Bible is the necessary consequence of a God who “cannot lie,” but is both *omniscient* and *righteous*.
- **Numbers 23:19** – “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”
- **Titus 1:1–2** – “Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.”



- The agent of inspiration, the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10–13; 2 Peter 1:21) is specifically called “the Spirit of truth.”
- **John 15:26** – “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.”
- **John 16:13** – “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”
- Thus, in light of the nature of God’s *inspiration* of the Scriptures (plenary and verbal), Scripture necessarily reflects His truthfulness.



# AN INERRANCY SYLLOGISM

**PREMISE 1:** All Scripture is the product of divine inspiration, which encompasses all that is properly called Scripture, and extends to the very choice of words and grammar (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Cor 2:10–13).



**PREMISE 2:** No word from God can be false or contrary to reality, since God cannot lie; He is both omniscient and righteous—the very God of truth (Num 23:19; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; John 16:13).



**CONCLUSION:** Therefore, no part of Scripture, *His Word*, can mislead or communicate error when understood according to its intent.



“It is not even enough to believe that God is trustworthy, who can neither deceive nor lie, unless you hold to be beyond doubt that whatever proceeds from him is sacred and inviolable truth.”

—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III.2.6.





## B. The Explicit Self-Descriptions of Scripture

- **2 Samuel 7:28** – “Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.”
- **Psalms 12:6** – “The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.”
- **Psalms 18:30** – “As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.”
- **Psalms 19:7–9** – “The law of the LORD is perfect, . . . the testimony of the LORD is sure, . . . . The precepts of the LORD are right, . . . the commandment of the LORD is pure, . . . . The fear of the LORD is clean, . . . the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.”



- **Psalm 119:140** – “Your word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it.”
- **Psalm 119:151** – “You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth.”
- **Psalm 119:160** – “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.”
- **Proverbs 30:5–6** – “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”
- **John 17:17** – “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”



## C. The Authoritative Assessment of Christ

- Most of the criticism of the doctrine of inerrancy is leveled against the historical accuracy of the Old Testament. The One who rises to respond to such criticism is none other than Jesus Christ.
- B. B. Warfield: “We believe this doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures primarily because it is the doctrine which Christ and his apostles believed, and which they have taught us.”
- John Wenham: “[Jesus] consistently treats the historical narratives as straightforward records of fact” (*Christ and the Bible*, 17).
- Consider Christ’s assessment of the historical trustworthiness of these three categories of history:



## 1. Primeval (the earliest) History

- The Creation of Man (Matthew 19:4–6 → Genesis 1–2)
- Noah and the Flood (Matthew 24:37–39 → Genesis 6–9)

## 2. Patriarchal History

- Abraham (John 8:56)
- Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15; 11:23–24; Luke 10:12)
- Lot and His Wife (Luke 17:28–32)
- Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28)

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### 3. Israelite History

- Moses (Matthew 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 30:37; John 5:46; 7:19, 22)
- Manna and the Wilderness Wanderings (John 6:49 → Numbers 11)
- The Wilderness Serpent (John 3:14 → Numbers 21:6–9)
- David and the Showbread (Mark 2:25–26 → Leviticus 24:9; 1 Samuel 21:6)
- Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Matthew 6:18–29; 12:42 → 1 Kings 10)



- Elijah and Elisha (Luke 4:25–27)
  - Jonah (Matthew 12:39–41 → Jonah 1:7)
  - Abel to Zechariah (Luke 11:49–51 → Genesis 4:8 through 2 Chronicles 24:20–21)
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- Jesus treated Old Testament history—from its beginning to its end—as *historical reality*. In fact, Jesus affirms the very narratives which most critics today reject as “myth” (e.g., Adam, Sodom and Gomorrah, Jonah).
  - Not once does he cast suspicion on it, correct it, or imply it is just a fable. He refers to it as the infallible account of redemptive history—in the storyline in general and in its particular details.



## D. The Consistent Recognition of the Historic Church

- Irenaeus (AD 130–202): “The Scriptures are indeed perfect . . . . All Scripture, which has been given to us by God, shall be found by us perfectly consistent” (*Against Heresies*, 28.2–3).
- Augustine (AD 354–430): “it is to the canonical Scriptures alone that I am bound to yield such implicit subjection as to follow their teaching, without admitting the slightest suspicion that in them any mistake or any statement intended to mislead could find a place” (“Letter 82”).
- Luther (1483–1546): “But everyone, indeed, knows that at times [the Church Fathers] have erred, as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred” (*Defense and Explanation of All the Articles*, in *Luther’s Works*, 32.11).



### III. The Challenges to Truthfulness

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- “To be human is to err, therefore, since Scripture contains a human element, there must be error.”
- “Historical accuracy is not necessary for religion.”
- “The Bible is at odds with science, history, and archaeology.”
- “The Bible contains contradictions.”
- “Inerrancy is a modern invention and was never advocated until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”



## IV. The Implications of Truthfulness

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A. The Bible provides the trustworthy justification for our *belief*.

- B. B. Warfield: “The trustworthiness of the Scriptures lies at the foundation of trust in the Christian system of doctrine, and is therefore fundamental to the Christian hope and life.”
- Augustine: “The most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books. . . . For if you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement as made in the way of duty, there will not be left a single sentence of those books which, if appearing to anyone difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away” (*Letter 28*).



B. The Bible exercises an unassailable authority over our *conscience*.

- Francis Turretin: “The basis is the divine and infallible truth of the books, which have God as author, because he has the supreme privilege of binding mankind to faith and obedience” (*Twenty-One Questions on the Doctrine of Scripture*, 4.3).

C. The Bible provides the necessary mandate for our *proclamation*.

- John MacArthur: “It is simply not possible to handle Scripture faithfully apart from the unshakable conviction that it is true” (“Introduction,” *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 14).



D. The Bible is the powerful motivation for our *praise*.

- “Since the Word of God is pure truth, we can and should place our complete trust in what God has said. To trust in the Bible for truth is to trust in the God who cannot lie. . . . Therefore, the trustworthiness of the Bible is the trustworthiness of God” (Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, 1.380, 377).



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**2024–2025**

# IT IS WRITTEN

A Study of  
the Doctrine  
of Scripture