

FUNDAMENTALS OF FAITH: GOD'S PERFECT WORD

John 17:17, "Your word is truth." 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words shall not pass away." Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever." Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Isaiah 55:11, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Ps 12:6, "The words of the Lord are flawless." 1 Peter 1:24-25, "All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." 2 Peter 1:20-21, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

The Bible is historically accurate, internally consistent, contains prophecies fulfilled hundreds of years later, influenced human history more than any book, and changed millions of lives. It was written over a 1,500-year span, over 40 generations by more than 40 authors from every walk of life, in different places, at different times, from different moods and perspectives, on 3 continents, in 3 languages on hundreds of topics with harmony and continuity from beginning to end. It has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. It has survived through time. Having been written on material that perishes and having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press did not diminish the style, correctness, or existence. It has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined. It has been preserved as no other manuscript in history. It has withstood persecution from vicious attacks to try and outlaw and destroy it.

The Baptist Faith & Message on The Scriptures: "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."

God for its author: God's Spirit inspired human speech and writing to produce the text of the Bible. The human reader is not judge. Some argue God only inspired the ideas and others argue mechanical dictation. The position most evangelical scholars take is the verbal plenary theory which contends that the Holy Spirit breathed through human authors using their

personalities, writing styles and personal experience to accomplish his perfect purpose. We have exactly what God intends for us to have, nothing more, nothing less.

Salvation For its end: Jesus is the ultimate revelation but we would have no knowledge of Him apart from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to teach people how to be saved. 1 John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Truth Without Any Mixture of Error: Inerrancy means that the Bible always tells the truth in all it talks about. If the Bible contained error, how could we trust it? You can't stake your eternity on a fallible revelation. It is inconceivable that God would give His people a book they could not trust. To disbelieve or disobey any word or scripture is to disobey God. Whatever the Bible says about itself, man, God, life, death, history, science, and every other subject is true. This does not mean that every statement in the Bible is true, because the Bible records the lies of men and of Satan. *But the record is true.* This recognizes that the Bible sometimes uses approx and observational descriptions of nature as well as everyday speech. Spurgeon, "I would recommend you either believe God up to the hilt, or else not to believe at all. Believe this book of God, every letter of it, or else reject it. There is no logical standing place between the two." John Calvin, "We must not pick and cull the Scriptures to please our own fancy, but must receive the whole without exception." In Psalm 119 there are 176 verses celebrating Scriptures using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet as structure.

Objections:

- 1) Some say the Bible is only authoritative for faith and practice. This allows for the possibility of false statements in the Bible but the Bible affirms all and does not make any restrictions on the types of statements to which it speaks truthfully. Everything in Scripture is there b/c God intended it to be there. He says nothing by accident.
- 2) We have no inerrant manuscripts so talk about an inerrant Bible is misleading. In over 99% of the words of the Bible we know what the original manuscript said. Even where there is a textual variant among different manuscripts, the correct decision is clear.
- 3) What about the human element? God's overseeing of the activity is what make the Bible different than any other merely human work.
- 4) There are some clear errors in the Bible. Careful examination will show possible solutions to the difficulty. Many evangelical scholars contend that they do not know of 1 problem text for which there is no solution. Is your starting point faith or skepticism?

Problems with denying inerrancy:

- 1) Can we imitate God and lie too?
- 2) Can we really trust God?
- 3) We make our own mind a higher standard of truth than God's Word.
- 4) We must admit possibility that the is Bible wrong in Doctrines as well.
- 5) When a person, academic institution, or movement abandons this doctrine it will inevitably and eventually alter or abandon other major doctrines.

