

Essential Theology

The Word of God – The Authority of Scripture Part 2

Q. What is the Bible?

The Inerrancy of Scripture

[Taken from Wayne Grudem – Systematic Theology]

Definition: “The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.” (Grudem – Systematic Theology)

Related to the truthfulness in speech... in the language of Scripture...

- The Bible always tells the truth.
- The inerrancy of Scripture does not mean that the Bible tells us every fact there is to know about any one subject, but it affirms that what it does say about any subject is *true*.

1. The Bible is inerrant and it also still speaks in the ordinary language of everyday speech.

Science/Historical

- The sun rising and rain falling
- Ordinary communication would be impossible if these descriptive terms are not allowed...

“From the standpoint of the speaker/writer, the sun does rise and the rain does fall...” and this is “perfectly true”

- The use of rough numbers (8000 men were killed... vs. 7983)

“...the limits of truthfulness would depend on the degree of precision implied by the speaker and expected by the his original hearers... [...and not our demand for specificity or precision]

“It should not trouble us, then, to affirm both that the Bible is absolutely truthful in everything it says and that it uses ordinary language to describe natural phenomena or to give approximations or round numbers when those are appropriate in the context.”

2. The Bible is inerrant and it also still includes loose or free quotations.

“Written Greek at the time of the New Testament had no quotation marks or equivalent kinds of punctuation, and an accurate citation of another person needed to include only a correct representation of the content of what the person said: it was not expected to cite each word exactly.”

Example: Writers quotations of Jesus

“The original writer did not ordinarily imply that he was using the exact words of the speaker and only those, nor did the original hearers expect verbatim quotation in such reporting.”

Problems with Denying Inerrancy

- a. If we deny inerrancy, a serious moral problem confronts us: May we imitate God and intentionally lie in small matters also?

Eph 5:1 tells to be imitators of God. And if, the Scriptures are God-breathed words... then God spoke falsely and yet we are to imitate Him?

- b. If we deny inerrancy, we begin to wonder is we can really trust God at anything He says.

Distrust in God's word = Distrust in God Himself

- c. If we deny inerrancy, we essentially make our own human minds a higher standard of truth than God's Word itself.
- d. If we deny inerrancy, then we must also say that the Bible is wrong not only in minor details but in some of its doctrines as well.

“Denial of inerrancy means that we say the Bible's teaching about the nature and Scripture and about the truthfulness and reliability God's words is also. These are not minor details but are major doctrinal concerns of Scripture.

The Clarity of Scripture

(Psalm 19:7 ESV)

“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;”

(Psalm 119:129-130 ESV)

“Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”

God’s word is so understandable and clear... even the simple [a person who lacked sound judgment] can be made wise by it.

When there is misunderstanding concerning the Scriptures, the problem does not lie with the Scripture. Rather, the problem lies with us.

Our Hope

There are mysteries in Scripture, but they should not overwhelm us in our reading... we can prayerfully read the Bible, asking the Lord to give us understanding and wisdom... after all His word says that He desired to do this... and He will do it.

In the Benediction of 1 Thes. 5, vs 12-22 enumerate several things to do and not do... but listen to our Hope in vs 23-24:

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”

The Necessity of Scripture

“The Necessity of Scripture means that it is necessary to read the Bible or have someone tell us what is in the Bible if we are going to know God personally, have our sins forgiven, and know with certainty what God wants us to do.” Grudem

1. The Bible is necessary for knowledge of the Gospel.

(Romans 10:13-17 ESV)

“For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who

preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

2. The Bible is necessary for maintaining spiritual life.

(Matthew 4:4 ESV)

[Jesus quoting Deut. 8:3], “It is written, “**Man shall not live** by bread alone, but **by every word** that comes from the mouth of God.””

(Deuteronomy 32:47 ESV)

“For it is no empty word for you, **but your very life**, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

(1 Peter 1:22-25 ESV)

“... since you have been born again, ...through the living and abiding **word of God; ...**

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

...(1 Peter 2:2 ESV) “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by **it** you may grow up into salvation—“

3. The Bible is necessary for certain knowledge of God’s will.

(Deuteronomy 29:29 ESV)

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, **that we may do all the words** of this law.”

Example:

(1 Thessalonians 4:3 ESV)

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;...”

4. But the Bible is *not* necessary for knowing that God exists.

(Psalm 19:1 ESV)

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”

(Romans 1:19-20 ESV)

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of

the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

...even sinful man can recognize that God exists...

5. And the Bible is *not* necessary for knowing something about God’s character and moral laws.

(Romans 1:32 ESV)

“Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”

(Romans 2:14-15 ESV)

“For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, ...”