



Equipping Hour

The Inerrancy of Scripture

Key Verse: Psalm 12:6

“The words of the LORD are pure words;
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.”

Overview

In the fall of 1978, over 200 evangelical leaders met together to sign a statement on the inerrancy of the Bible. This meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency O’Hare in Chicago. The document produced and signed is called the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.” In the preface to the statement it reads, “The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God’s written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.”

It goes on to read, “The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God’s own Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.”

Just as inerrancy was under attack in 1978, it is under attack today. One of Satan’s greatest attacks is to get people to discredit the Bible by claiming it has errors in it. If the Bible has errors in it, then it cannot be trusted and cannot be absolute. This is popular in our postmodern world where many people make the claim, “There is no absolute truth.” This leads people to believe that there are no moral absolutes and there is no authority for deciding right and wrong. However, there is one absolute who is always true and cannot lie—God. Because God, who is absolute truth, is the author of Scripture, He cannot produce something that has any error in it. To deny the inerrancy of Scripture is to call God a liar.

Biblical inerrancy is extremely important and must be believed by Christians because our view of God, man, and the world around us is founded in the Bible. If a person doesn’t not believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, they will come to a wrong conclusion about God and a wrong understanding of everything the Bible teaches. Truth is absolute and truth does matter. God has given us the truth in His inerrant, infallible, and trustworthy Word.

The Meaning of Biblical Inerrancy

1. Numbers 23:19. What does this verse tell us about God? _____
2. Titus 1:2. How can we be confident of God's promises? _____
3. Psalm 19:7. How does David describe God's Law? _____
4. Psalm 119:142, 151. What does this verse say about God's law? _____
5. Psalm 119:160. What does this say about God's word? _____
6. John 17:17. What did Jesus say about the Word? _____
7. James 1:25. What does James say about God's law? _____

Inerrancy: The Bible is _____ error.

The Meaning of Infallibility

1. Hebrews 6:18. What is impossible for God to do? _____
2. John 10:35. What did Jesus say about the Scripture? _____

Infallibility: The Bible is _____ of error.

The Case for Inerrancy

1. 2 Timothy 3:16. Who is the ultimate author of the Bible? _____
2. Hebrews 6:18. What is impossible for God to do? _____

The case:

- God wrote the Bible.
- God always speaks the truth.
 - Therefore, the Bible contains no _____ and always speaks the truth.

The Origin of Scripture + The Nature of God = The Inerrancy of Scripture

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

—Paul Feinberg

Objections to Inerrancy

1. **Objection #1:** Inerrancy is a relatively new doctrine.

- a. Answer: Both Augustine (AD 395) and John Calvin (AD 1543)
- b. “For it seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books: that is to say, that the men by whom the Scripture has been given to us, and committed to writing, did put down in these books anything false. It is one question whether it may be at any time the duty of a good man to deceive; but it is another question whether it can have been the duty of a writer of Holy Scripture to deceive: nay, it is not another question — it is no question at all.” – Augustine, Letter 28.3
- c. “But as nothing will be more effectual to confirm the faith of the pious than to show them that the doctrine which we have laid down is taken from *the pure word of God*, and rests on its authority, I will make this plain with as much brevity as I can” (italics added). – John Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.26

2. **Objection #2:** Inerrancy is impossible due to human authorship.

- a. Answer: Is it possible for an infallible God to use fallible men in order to produce an infallible document? Yes!

3. **Objection #3:** Inerrancy is limited to matters of faith and practice, not history or science.

- a. Answer: Jesus treat the Old Testament narratives as historical fact.
 - i. Creation (Matt. 19:4-5); Abel (Luke 11:51); Noah (Matt. 24:37-39); Abraham (John 8:56); Moses (Matt. 8:4; 19:8); Jonah (Matt. 12:40-41); the snake in the desert (John 3:14); David as a psalm writer (Matt. 22:43-44); Elijah (Luke 4:25-26)

4. **Objection #4:** Inerrancy does not extend to the smaller details.

- a. Answer: Both Jesus and Paul quoted the Old Testament and based their arguments on minute details in the text.
 - i. Jesus in Matthew 22:31-32: “But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”
 - ii. Paul in Galatians 3:16: “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

Problems with Denying Inerrancy¹

1. The one who denies the inerrancy of Scripture accuses God of being a liar.
2. The one who denies inerrancy is confronted with a moral problem: May we imitate God and intentionally lie in small matters also?
3. The one who denies inerrancy will begin to wonder if they can really trust God in anything He says.
4. The one who denies inerrancy essentially makes their own human mind a higher standard of truth than God's Word itself.
5. The one who denies inerrancy must also say the Bible is wrong not only in minor details but in some of its doctrines as well.

“The Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God. It is the result of divine inspiration, which produced divinely authoritative and factual accounts that are truthful in what they record. This doctrine applies directly to the original autographs and indirectly to the texts and translations of today.”

—*Biblical Doctrine*, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds.

Application

1. Do you trust every word in your Bible?
2. How would a denial of the inerrancy of Scripture affect your reading of the Bible?
3. Is it okay to believe something about the character of God or something about salvation that is not taught in the Bible?

¹ Wayne Grudem, “Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 99-100.