

## ***Session 2: The Trustworthiness of Scripture***

*We believe that the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, without error in its original manuscripts.*

### **I. THE TRIAL, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND THE SCRIPTURES**

- A. As we set out on this journey together as a spiritual family, it is important that we inspect the foundations (so-to-speak). First reason for this honest and necessary inspection is that we live in an information age. We are bombarded by content constantly. Many times being like a constant drip of water
- B. Now, as those working out what it means to be saved by Christ, made anew and guaranteed to be partakers of the hope of the coming kingdom and eternal sabbath we must reaffirm and settle (as much as we can and as often as we can) the internal controversy produced by the outward criticism we face daily surrounding our gospel.
- C. We are in danger of too easily forfeiting or even worst perverting our claims of resurrection, eternal hope, forgiveness, an involved, intentional, intellectual Creator and His purposes observed in this cosmos making sense of our human experience.
- D. Secondly, we live in an age of doubt and deconstructionism. Every christian ideal is under trial and being picked apart. In my line of work, I observe this particular tension concerning the christian faith resulting in an increasing apostasy (falling away or rejection of christian faith and claims).
- E. In this we have seen healthy and careful investigation of truth turn into an intensifying interrogation where the gathering of helpful evidence turns into a violent verbal assault in hopes of a confession of fraudulence. The matter of scriptural trustworthiness in question is now rendered obsolete as historical figures and supernatural figures (namely the biblical grasp of The Creator) within the scriptural library are caricatured, put on trial. Not to answer for their reports but to generally to be ridiculed, put down and falsified without a just process. This treatment is even extended to those who believe the biblical report.
- F. Seemingly in our culture this tribunal, modern self-appointed inquisitors seek not only to control the cultural narrative but to put down anything that they observe is trying to control them, like christian morality, prophesied eternal judgement, a vision and grasp of the Creator as a righteous judge exercising his providence in colorful unyielding absolutes.

- G. At the same time there is a range of legitimate claims of abuse, poor leadership and deep interpersonal wounding to the lukewarm consumerism that has crept into the church prioritizing personal preference and desires that control the output/production of the church messages, services. We are in the same prophesied generation when even those once had a vibrant divine relationship will be unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord ...
- “10 ...who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, 11 leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel.” (Isa. 30:10-11)***
- H. Epicureanism is a fundamental tenet of this culture of enlightenment, consumerism and deconstruction. In the eighteenth century, it went on to shape the cultural worldview of the western world, in the sense that most Westerners to this day—including, alas, many Christians!—don’t realize they are looking at the world through Epicurean lens.
- I. “Epicurean” simply refers to the belief that *the gods, if they existed at all, are entirely removed from the world, does not take notice of us, and certainly doesn’t intervene in our world.* This is foundational to the enlightenment and the establishing of America (including its also popular Deism). Thomas Jefferson a founding father of America, principal author of the Declaration of Independence and editor of the Jefferson Bible<sup>1</sup> famously wrote to William Short, “I too am an Epicurean.”
- J. It is this distant view of deity that principally shaped and continues to drive our culture. The control is now centered in human reason and our ability to recreate the world and bring it to a self-maintained era of utopia.
- K. I’ve noted before how even the 21st century church is reeling from our adoption of values deriving from the enlightenment movement and post-modern culture to define how we approach fulfilling Christ’s call to spiritual maturity, missional fruitfulness and increasing in the knowledge of God.
1. The enlightenment movement emphasizes ***reason*** (to the exclusion of revelation - modern rationalism), ***individualism, and skepticism***. The enlightenment laid the foundations for the values we see and are called to challenge with our gospel in our post-modern culture such as ***the value of self-made happiness (tomorrow isn’t promised get all you can), the pursuit of knowledge obtained by means of reason and the evidence of the senses (earthly and to the exclusion or indiscriminate inclusion of spiritual senses), and ideals such as self-attained liberty, progress, self-regulated toleration, fraternity, constitutional government, and separation of church and state.***

---

<sup>1</sup> A condensed composition of the four gospel omitting the divine works of Jesus, i.e. healings, miracles, even His resurrection from the dead.

- L. Often times we approach the Scriptures with the doctrine that our values are more trustworthy and it is the Scriptures that are outdated and in need of editing like Jefferson to fit and protect our freedoms and indulgence.
- M. The claim and fruit of the Scripture is that it reveals and enables us to rightly discern and view Deity not in the bleak Epicurean light, afar off and aloof to our workings, sufferings, and needs of our world. From beginning to end it reveals a congruent and manifold witness of The Creator as involved, encompassing, enraged by injustice and rebellion to His good order, compassionate to marginalized, deliverer of the oppressed and proactively intervening and moving all things to the recreation of the world, setting everything right and restoring it to His good order. Ultimately, revealed in Jesus the Nazarene, his life, ministry and teaching, death burial and attested resurrection.

***“17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.””*** (Matt. 5:17–18)

***“28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”*** (Matt 7:28–29)

***“27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”*** (Matt 11:27)

***“9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. (Jn 14:9–11)***

***“15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.”*** (Jn 20:15–18)

## II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD AND SCRIPTURE

- A. The Scriptures claims its inspiration is from God the Creator. The claim and the implications are staggering to say the least. The claim that something is inspired (breathed-out) by the divine, holy, sovereign, infallible (reliable, trustworthy, faithfulness) Creator implies that it contains a signature that is divine, holy, sovereign, and infallible. The claim of the Scriptures is due to its “*breathed-out*” Scripture, this insures that they are infallible, for God cannot breathe out error.

***“19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (2 Pet. 1:19-21)***

***“14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Ti 3:14–17)**

- B. Infallibility is “*The characteristic of being completely trustworthy, incapable of erring or failing to accomplish an intended purpose...If one assumes that a purpose of the Bible is to communicate revealed truth, then infallibility logically implies at least limited inerrancy. Nevertheless, in practice some theologians affirm the infallibility but not the inerrancy of the Scriptures...*”<sup>2</sup>
- C. Infallibility concerns only the original documents. The limits of what we can consider inerrancy concerned mistranslations, printing errors, and typos, which are obvious human mistakes are discernible. However, infallibility is the belief that what the biblical writers originally wrote was completely free from error or omission, as the Spirit *superintended* their task (2 Pet. 1:21). God is truthful and perfectly reliable (John 14:6; 17:3), and so is His Word (John 17:17).
- D. Concerning inerrancy (limited inerrancy), though the meaning is regulated by a modernist rationalism framework—truth is corroborated by scientific and mathematical method of reason—the Scripture claim a sense of inerrancy as it pertains to being true in all that they teach, and thus without error.

***28 And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. (2 Sam. 7:28)***

***“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground,***

---

<sup>2</sup> Evans, C. Stephen. Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion. InterVarsity Press, 2002, pp. 60–61.

*purified seven times. (Psa. 12:6)*

*“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.” (Pro. 30:5)*

*“17 Sanctify them[a] in the truth; your word is truth.” (Jn. 17:17)*

- E. Inerrancy does not allow for any false teaching, but limited in the sense that the Scripture does on occasion record the lie of someone (i.e., Genesis 3:4). As one reads the Bible, he must carefully distinguish between what God records and what he sanctions. Thus, while lying, murder, adultery, and polygamy are to be found in the Word of God, they are never approved by the God of the Word.
- F. Also limited inerrancy is acceptable and doesn't diminish the claim of infallibility due to possible human error that often happen in transliteration. The Bible has found its way out and into the world through transliterations. For example, Jesus most likely taught in Aramaic yet we have translated His words to English from a Greek manuscript.
- G. Jesus confirms the currently canonized Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible books as the *Holy Scriptures* or the *Wisdom of God*. Jesus demonstrates that the canonized Hebrew Scripture (excluding any extra biblical books i.e. the Apocrypha ) the collections of books starting with Genesis (*the blood of Abel*) and ending with 2 Chronicles (*the blood of Zechariah*).
- “49 Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.” (Lk 11:49–51)*
- “27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Lk 24:27)*
- H. Jesus taught and confirmed that His incarnation, passion and resurrection was the climax of the Old Testament. The Hebrew Scripture led up that critical time of the appearing of God, Emmanuel that brought the Scriptures and its Author into focus.
- I. Therefore, we have the writings of the Apostles as primary witnesses to the gospel, resurrection and second coming of Christ. The inspiration—the breathing-out of God—onto and through His apostles as they reflected on the Old Testament demonstrations a continuation of Christ work to reveal Himself by His Spirit through His apostles.

- J. Jesus points to and authorized a New Testament writing by anointing and commissioning the apostles. By his words Jesus prepared the early church to expect that he was planning an authoritative canon of teaching concerning himself and his word to govern his church when he was gone. Christ demonstrates and declares that God has given him all authority and His authority would be exercised through the teaching and witness of his authorized spokesmen empowered and guided by the Spirit of Truth (the twelve, then later by the Holy Spirit Paul, his brothers James and Jude, and the writer of Hebrews, someone within the Pauline circle, possibly Priscilla).

*12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Lk 6:12–16 cf. Acts 1:21-26; Eph. 2:19-20; Rev. 21:12)*

*“25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (Jn 14:25–26)*

*“12 “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (Jn 16:12–15 cf. 2 Cor. 4:4-6)*

*“20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” (Jn 17:20–23)*

### III. THE PROOF IN THE PUDDING - CONFIRMED TRUTH

- A. The tenet of infallibility therefore leads us to ask, then how can we know that the Scriptures are true? In short, illumination that comes by faith in Christ and by the Spirit. It is necessary for God to act and enlighten His people to understand His revelation and its relevance to our lives.

*16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. (Mt 16:16–17)*

***“12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Co 3:12–18)***

1. Man is inherently unable to properly comprehend or obey God’s special revelation in Scripture.

***9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Co 2:9–14)***

2. The grace of regeneration changes man’s perspective on Scripture, while the grace of progressive sanctification continually improves man’s understanding and submission to it

***3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Co 4:4–6)***

***“Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.” (Jn. 12:39-41)***

3. The Spirit does not create new revelation or meaning during the process of illumination, but rather opens one’s understanding to the revelation.

***44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures...” (Lk 24:44–45)***

***“...remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened...” (Eph. 1:16–18)***

4. The Spirit’s ministry of illumination is never a substitute for the hard cognitive work of exegesis (study and right handling) and interpretation.

***“15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)***

***“11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching...15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Ti 4:11–16)***

***“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.” (Psa. 19:7-11)***