

Calvary Memorial Church Youth Bible Institute – Fall Semester 2025

Essential Christian Doctrine

The Authority and Inerrancy of the Bible

How does one become convinced that the Bible really is the word of God?

Three Major Characteristics of what the Bible teaches about itself:

The **Authority** of Scripture, the **Clarity** of Scripture, and the **Sufficiency** of Scripture

What do we mean when we say, “The Authority of Scripture”? Matthew 28

The authority of Scripture is the attribute that requires us to read, believe, and obey the words of Scripture as the very words of God. (John MacArthur)

Authority is a crucial issue in any discussion of truth. (P.68)

Our author defines authority as the power or right to enforce obedience, the right to command or give a final decision.

Mankind through the ages has looked to **human reasoning, traditions** of religious and cultural convictions, and to a **community** of people with shared experience and values for authority.

In a biblical Worldview, original and ultimate authority resides with God alone.

Romans 13:1 - See Page 68

Secondary Sources outside of Scripture - Page 69

Rational and scientific evidence, church tradition, and personal intuition

Scripture's Unassailable Authority – P.70

The Words of Scripture are God’s Words, as Scripture claims for itself

-“Thus says the Lord” phrase

- Appears in Scripture hundreds of times – 470 times
- It is like an edict from a king that cannot be disobeyed
- When the prophets say this, they are claiming to be messengers of God
- Deuteronomy 13:1-5 - God’s gave guidelines for testing prophets – truth or die
- Jeremiah 1:9 “I have put My words in your mouth”
- God often speaks through prophets – Jeremiah 37:2
- “Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.” Isaiah 66:2

God's absolute authority is brought to bear on humanity through his Word.

- The Lord made his Law glorious - Isa.42:11
- In Psalms his name and word are exalted above all things – Ps.138:2
- The word is living and active – Heb. 4:12-13
- One who reject his word will be judged – John 12:48
- Not about any human wisdom – Ps. 19:1

Scripture's Clarity and Sufficiency

- **The clarity of scripture** refers to its accessibility Page 71
- God's Word is light – Ps. 19:8 / 2 Peter 1:19
- God's clear expectation for mankind – 2 Tim.3:16-17
- General revelation is clear and renders humanity without excuse – Rom.1:18-20

The Bible is also Sufficient – Ps. 19:7-11

- Faith comes by hearing the word of God
- Sanctifies – John 17:17 / scripture ranked above experience - 2 Peter 1:19
- It will accomplish God's entire plan – Isa. 55:10-11 it lacks nothing!
- It requires the preacher to herald God's word with authority and care – P.72

We are convinced of the Bible's claims to be God's words as we read the Bible.

- The Holy Spirit speaks in and through the words of the Bible to our hearts and assures us that it is indeed God speaking to us
- John 10:27 – My sheep hear my voice

Therefore, to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

- Jesus rebukes His disciples for not believing Scripture (Luke 24:25)
- Disciples' words are to be kept (John 15:20)
- "Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. Isaiah 66:2

The Testimony of the Holy Spirit

Even though God's Word has unmitigated authority, it does not operate alone. Essential to the recognition of Scripture's authority is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The authority of Scripture is recognized by the believer as a result of the Spirit's internal testimony. The Spirit works alongside the text of Scripture to confirm its divine nature, authority, necessity, and truthfulness, giving the believer a certainty that it is the Word of God.

Inerrancy of Scripture

The doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture is predicated on the reality of inspiration, and is a necessary affirmation in light of Scripture's self-witness and of the character of God.
(John MacArthur)

1. What Inerrancy does mean.

- The Bible rightly interpreted teaches nothing contrary to fact.
- Inerrancy applies to the original manuscripts, completely without error as a result of divine inspiration.
- Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God proves true
- The doctrine of Inerrancy allows for the customary use of language
- Inerrancy allows for New Testament writers to paraphrase the Old Testament as they cite it in their writings.

What Inerrancy does not mean.

- It does not mean our interpretation is without error
- It does not mean that the Bible is grammatically perfect
- It does not mean that the Bible does not use ordinary language
- It does not mean that the Bible does not use estimates
- It does not mean that the Bible does not use loose quotations
- It does not mean that the Bible does not have paradoxes that appear to contradict.

Common Objections

- The Bible is infallible in matters of faith and practice but, not inerrant.
- We don't have the original manuscripts
- The Bible is full of errors and contradictions.

What's the big deal?

- To disbelieve any part of the Bible is to call all of it into question. Martin Luther said, "Whoever is so bold that he ventures to accuse God of fraud and deception in a single word and does so willfully again and again after he has been warned and instructed once or twice will likewise certainly venture to accuse God of fraud and deception in all of His words. Therefore it is true, absolutely without exception, that everything is believed or nothing is believed."
- To disbelieve any part of the Bible is to subject God's Word to your own reason. C.F. Walther says, "He who imagines that he finds in the Holy Scriptures even one error, believes not in Scripture, but in himself; for even if he accepts everything else as truth, he would believe it not because Scripture say so, but because it agrees with his reason or with his heart."

Memory Verses

2 Timothy 3:16-17- "All Scripture is breathed out by God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." ESV

Application questions

1. How do secondary sources of confirmation contribute to our assurance that the Bible is the Word of God? And what is the primary source of confidence in the authority of Scripture?
2. What is meant by the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture?
3. Why is the Inerrancy of Scripture important?