

1. 7 Different Views of Inerrancy:

- 1.1. Naive inerrancy** assumes that God actually dictated the Bible to the writers. The passages that indicate that the Spirit told the author precisely what to write are regarded as typical of the entire Bible. It seemingly ignores style differences and historical and cultural contexts.
- 1.2. Absolute inerrancy** affirms that the Bible is accurate and true in all matters and that the writers intended to give a considerable amount of exact data in such matters. This view tries to separate itself from the view of mechanical dictation but sometimes fails to take seriously the human aspect of Scripture and its historical contexts.
- 1.3. Balanced inerrancy** affirms that the Bible is completely true in all the Bible affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the writer. This position regards scientific matters as phenomenal; that is, they are often reported as they appeared to the human writer, which perhaps may be different from the way they really are. It regards the historical matters as accurate, though sometimes in a very general way. This approach attempts to take seriously the human and divine aspects of inscripturation.
- 1.4. Limited inerrancy** maintains that the Bible is inerrant in matters of salvation and ethics or faith and practice. Inspiration did not necessarily protect the biblical writers from misstatements in matters of science or history. This, however, is no problem because the Bible is inerrant in the matters for which the Bible was given.
- 1.5. Functional inerrancy** contends that the Bible inerrantly accomplishes its purpose. This view does not equate inerrancy with factuality. The purpose of the Bible is to reveal God and to bring people into fellowship with Him. To the degree that this is done, the Bible can be said to be inerrant. Often this pragmatic approach sees the whole discussion as distracting and irrelevant.
- 1.6. Errant but authoritative** is a view built on an encounter view of inspiration. It sees the Bible not as revelation but as a pointer to a personal encounter with God. Questions of truth or falseness are of little concern. It reaches the faulty conclusion that the Bible contains errors because it was written by human beings who are sinful and therefore err.¹
- 1.7. Errant and non-authoritative** is the view that the Bible is a work of men, and it should be abandoned because it is a flawed book containing little more than fables.

2. Definition

- 2.1. David Dockery: “Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Bible (in its autographs, that is, the original documents), properly interpreted in light of the culture and the means of communication that had developed by the time of its composition, is completely true in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author’s purpose, in all matters relating to God and His creation.”²
- 2.2. Wayne Grudem: “The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact.”³
- 2.3. Paul Fienberg “When all the facts are known, the Bible in the original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true and never false in anything that it

¹ The First 6 views are quoted from David Dockery, *The Doctrine of the Bible*, 86-87.

² Dockery, 89.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 91

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affirms, whether that has to do with doctrine, ethics, the physical, social, or life sciences.”⁴

2.4. FBC Constitution: “We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, written by men by God’s control, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts, and the final authority in faith and life.”⁵

3. **What does the Bible Say?**

3.1. Nowhere in scripture do we find the word inerrant or inerrancy.

3.2. The Bible is the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

3.3. God is truthful. (Psalm 19:7-9)

3.4. God’s Word stands forever & cannot be broken. (Matthew 5:18, John 10:35)

3.5. God’s Word is pure and proves true. (Psalm 12:6, Proverbs 30:5)

4. **What do the Opponents Say?**

4.1. “The Bible: So Misunderstood It’s a Sin” by Kurt Eichenwald in Newsweek

4.1.1. “No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we’ve all read a bad translation – a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times.”

4.1.2. “Take one of the most famous tales from the New Testament, which starts in John 7:53. A group of Pharisees and others bring a woman caught committing adultery to Jesus. . . It’s a powerful story, known even by those with just a passing knowledge of the Bible. It was depicted in Mel Gibson’s movie *The Passion of the Christ* and is often used to point out the hypocrisy of Christians who denounce what they perceive to be the sins of others. Unfortunately, John didn’t write it. Scribes made it up sometime in the Middle Ages. It does not appear in any of the three other Gospels or in any of the early Greek versions of John.”

4.1.3. “Which raises a big issue for Christians: the Trinity – the belief that Jesus and God are the same and, with the Holy Spirit, are a single entity – is a fundamental, yet deeply confusing, tenet. So where does the clear declaration of God and Jesus as part of a triumvirate appear in the Greek manuscripts? Nowhere. And in that deception lies a story of mass killings. . . Those who believed in the Trinity butchered Christians who didn’t. Groups who believed Jesus was two entities – God and man – killed those who taught Jesus was merely flesh and blood.”

4.1.4. “And even in ancient times, many Christian leaders proclaimed 2 Peter to be a forgery, an opinion almost universally shared by biblical scholars today.”

4.1.5. “None of this is meant to demean the Bible, but all of it is a fact. Christians angered by these facts should be angry with the Bible, not the messenger.”

4.1.6. “The declaration in 1 Timothy – as recounted in the Living Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version Bible and others – could not be more clear: Those who ‘practice homosexuality’ will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the translation there is odd, in part because the word *homosexual* didn’t

⁴ Paul Feinberg, “The Meaning of Inerrancy,” in *Inerrancy*, 267-304, as quoted by Micah Carter in Southern Seminary Systematic Theology Course Fall 2008.

⁵ First Bible Church Constitution Article 3.

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even exist until more than 1,800 years after when 1 Timothy was supposed to have been written. So how did it get into the New Testament? Simple: the editors of these modern Bibles just made it up. Like so many translators and scribes before them, they had a religious conviction, something they wanted to say that wasn't stated clearly enough in the original for their tastes. And so they manipulated sentences to reinforce their convictions.”

4.1.7. “Nowhere in the Gospels or Acts of Epistles or Apocalypses does the New Testament say it is the inerrant word of God. It couldn't – the people who authored each section had no idea they were composing the Christian Bible, and they were long dead before what they wrote was voted by members of political and theological committees to be the New Testament.”⁶

4.2. Responses to Eichenwald

4.2.1. Darrel Bock:

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2015/01/14/darrell-bock-responds-to-kurt-eichenwalds-newsweek-article-on-the-bible/>

4.2.2. Al Mohler: <http://www.albertmohler.com/2014/12/29/newsweek-on-the-bible-so-misrepresented-its-a-sin/>

4.2.3. Michael Brown: <http://www.newsweek.com/response-newsweek-bible-299440>

5. What do we have in our modern Bibles, and why does it matter?

5.1. “This is not to say that the study of textual variants is unimportant, but it is to say that the study of textual variants has not left us in confusion about what the original manuscripts said. It has rather brought us extremely close to the content of those original manuscripts. For most practical purposes, then, the *current published scholarly texts* of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament are the same as the original manuscripts. Thus, when we say that the original manuscripts were inerrant, we are also implying that over 99 percent of the words in our present manuscripts are also inerrant, for they are exact copies of the originals.”⁷

5.2. To deny the inerrancy of the scriptures is to make God a liar.

5.3. To deny inerrancy puts human knowledge and understanding above the revelation of God.

5.4. To deny the inerrancy of scripture leaves you with no solid foundation on which to build theology and doctrine.

6. Why is there so much division and different views on this topic?

6.1. “But although we may maintain the sacred word of God against gainsayers, it does not follow that we shall forthwith implant the certainty which faith requires in their hearts. Profane men think that religion rest only on opinion, and therefore that they may not believe foolishly, or on slight grounds, desire and insist to have it proved by reason that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely entrusted. This connection is most

⁶ <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/01/02/thats-not-what-bible-says-294018.html>

⁷ Grudem, 96.

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aptly expressed by Isaiah in these words, ‘My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever’ (Isa 59:21). Some worthy persons feel disconcerted, because, while the wicked murmur with impunity at the Word of God, they have not a clear proof at hand to silence them, forgetting that the Spirit is called an earnest and seal to confirm the faith of the godly, for this very reason, that, until he enlightens their minds, they are tossed to and fro in a sea of doubts.’⁸

6.2. 1 Corinthians 1:18-19

6.3. Hebrews 4:12

6.4. 1 Peter 3:15-17

⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1 Chapter 7 Section 4.