

Bibliology- the Study of God's Word

Course: Bibliology

Catalog Description: A Biblical study of the nature, necessity, and Biblical basis for the doctrine of Bibliology. The course will emphasize Biblical exposition of key passages of Scripture dealing with each doctrine. Students will prepare a doctrinal statement.

Purpose of the Course: The purpose is to equip the student for the exposition of the Scriptures through a solid grounding in biblical theology. Doctrinal themes of Scripture are identified, discussed, and defended with the goal of practical ministry and life application.

Texts: The Holy Bible, Authorized (King James) Version

Learning Outcomes: Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the doctrine of Bibliology.
2. Explain key passages of Scripture associated with the doctrine covered.
3. Express detailed overviews of the doctrine studied.

Overview:

Week 1- Introduction/Inspiration

Week 2- Inspiration continued

Week 3- Revelation

Week 4- Canonicity

Week 5- Translation

Week 6- Midterm/Review

Week 7- Interpretation

Week 8- Interpretation continued

Week 9- Preservation

Week 10- Inerrancy/Infallibility

Week 11- Illumination

Week 12- Final/Review

Course Project:

Students will present a one-page single-spaced doctrinal statement concerning the doctrine of Bibliology. Class notes may be used, as well as other doctrinal helps from reliable sources. The paper must include at least 5 of the above-mentioned aspects of Bibliology, along with Scriptural support and explanations. It will be presented on the final day of class.

Bibliology

BIBLIOLOGY



'biblio' is Greek relating to a 'book' or 'books' 'ology' is Greek for 'the study of'

Introduction:

Bibliology is simply the study of a book, but as applied to Christianity, it is the study of the doctrines and nature of the Bible. The majority of that which we can know about God comes from the Bible. If men do not hold the Bible in high esteem as the inspired and inerrant Word of God and fail to handle it properly (interpretation and application), then they will turn to other sources as their authority (human reason alone, science, tradition, the church, mysticism, experiences) for what they believe and practice. Consequently, if men do not hold to the Scripture as the *complete, sufficient, clear, authoritative, and adequate rule of faith*, they will reject the Bible's truth either completely or partly and, in the process, miss its message of salvation and deliverance from sin, which it offers them in the person of Jesus Christ. God has revealed information about Himself in three ways: creation, conscience, and through Scripture. The first two are considered general revelation, while the latter is considered special revelation. Bibliology is primarily concerned with Special Revelation. Along with special revelation comes oral and written revelation. Oral revelation (Heb. 1:1) is God giving His Word specifically to someone at a specific time. Written revelation is God giving us the information that He wants us to know about Himself. God's Word was not simply written at one time to be used only for one purpose; it is useful "from eternity past to eternity future" as one put it. Its truths will last forever and are applicable to any and every generation (Psa. 119:160; I Pet. 1:25). Through a period of 1,500 years, 40 different authors, and 66 agreeable books, God proved that His Word remains perfect and beneficial for all who read it.

An overall look at the doctrines of Bibliology would be as follows: The Bible is the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God, and thus is both inerrant and infallible. The Bible is the sole and complete authority for the believer in all matters of faith and practice. It is to be interpreted normally, and with dependence upon the Divine Author for understanding and application. The canon of Scripture was determined by God, recognized by man, and nothing was added or lost. The Bible has been preserved by God in the traditional Hebrew (Masoretic) and Greek (Textus Receptus) manuscripts, and is accurately translated into English in the Authorized Version. If you wanted to boil down all the specific parts of Bibliology, it could be put together as such: God has recorded His *revelation* though *prepared* holy men by *inspiration* thus guaranteeing its *inerrancy* and *infallibility*. This *canonized* record was providentially *preserved* to enable believers of all generations to *interpret* and *apply God's all-sufficient* Word by the *illumination* of the Holy Spirit.

I. Inspiration- “Recording the Truth”

A. Definitions:

1. *Eerdman’s Dictionary*- A term derived from Lat. *inspirare* (lit., “to breathe into”), referring to the claim that oral or written discourse is prompted by the Spirit.
2. *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*- that extraordinary or supernatural divine influence vouchsafed to those who wrote the Holy Scriptures, rendering their writings infallible.
3. *Holman Bible Dictionary*- Paul’s point, then, is not that Scripture is inspiring to read (it is that), or that the authors were inspired (they were), but that Scripture’s origin means it is the very Word of God.
4. *Personal definition*- “God breathing out the very words through the superintended, prepared human authors of the Bible so they could compose and record without errors His complete message to mankind in their own languages.” *Superintended* was used because it shows the relationship between the writers and God. *Composed* proves that the writers were active writers, not forced robots used by God (John 17:17- “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”)

B. Explanation: II Timothy 3:16 says “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” *Inspiration* in the Greek is: **θεόπνευστος** *theópneustos*; meaning “divinely breathed out” or given uniquely, reliably, and specifically by God.

C. Correct View of Inspiration: Plenary-Verbal Inspiration (literal interpretation)

1. The word *plenary* means “full.” In reference to inspiration, it means that the “full” or entire Bible is inspired and not only those parts that seem to speak directly to issues of faith and practice. This is what the Bible itself claims, and what Christians must choose to believe (Matt. 4:4). *Plenary* inspiration proves the accuracy that is found in every aspect of the Bible and shows that Scripture is infallible and final.
2. The word *verbal* means “by means of words” or “word for word.” When used with inspiration, it means the very words of the Bible were breathed out by God, not just the concepts. The Scriptures reveal unquestionably that God gave the exact words of Scripture (I Cor. 2:12-13). The word *verbal* focuses on the writings as being guided by the Spirit but also containing the writers’ personal characteristics in that writing.
3. Using the term *inspiration* theologically focuses on the influence God had over the human authors of Scripture. Some argue that the writings were simply the words of men. These verses push to show that God’s Word is perfect, and a sinful man by himself cannot produce perfection:
 - Prov. 30:5-6 – “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words...and be found a liar.”
 - Psalm 12:6-“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in fire.”
 - Psalm 19:7- “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul...”

D. Incorrect Views of Inspiration:

1. Mechanical or dictation theory—This theory emphasizes divine authorship rather than human authorship. The theory states that since God dictated Scripture to specific men, the style and writing would be the same throughout the pages. This theory is incorrect because though God did write every word of the Bible, He still enabled the human writers to incorporate their own style of writing in their letters

or books. God remains the Author of the Bible, He simply let man write in the manner God needed (II Pet. 3:15-16).

2. Partial inspiration— As the name implies, this theory says only certain parts of the Bible are inspired while others are not. Hypothetically speaking, if God had the ability to inspire some of it, why would he not inspire it all? (II Tim. 3:16).
 3. Degree inspiration—This theory states that certain parts of the Bible are inspired to a higher degree than others. Once again, this would make the Bible incorrect and would lead to many errors.
 4. Conceptual inspiration— This theory states that God gave man the ideas and thoughts of writing, but then left man to write the words himself. It acknowledges that the concepts are inspired in Scripture, but not the words. The Holy Spirit teaches through words (I Cor. 2:13) and Jesus taught the importance of words as well (John 6:63).
 5. Natural inspiration—This lowest notion of inspiration teaches that man had the capabilities to write the Bible without God’s help. Not only is this wrong, but it is clearly against Scripture because man falls short to anything that is supernatural (I Thess. 2:13).
 6. Encounter Theory of inspiration— This teaches that the Bible becomes the Word of God only when it speaks to you personally. The idea is based on when the reader encounters a blessing, or the Bible becomes truth to them. We know that the Bible is true no matter how you feel about it (Rom. 3:4).
 7. Dynamic or mystical inspiration—This viewpoint says that the authors were natural geniuses who were also Spirit-filled and guided. This means that their writings, whether of the Bible or anything else, should be seen as infallible. We know that no man was able to write inspired Scripture on his own; he had to have been filled with the Spirit. (Handel’s *Messiah* was not inspired)
- E. Defense of Inspiration: There are two key Scriptures which help prove the doctrine of inspiration. They are II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:16-21. The first emphasizes the product of Scripture itself, while the latter emphasizes the process of how the Scriptures came to be.
1. **The first key passage is II Timothy 3:15-16.** The word *inspiration* in II Tim 3:16 is translated from the Greek word which means “God-breathed” (as was stated previously). Thus, this verse would then be read that “all Scripture is God-breathed.” In these verses, Paul declares three specific claims. First, he states that the entire Bible (*All Scripture*) is inspired and profitable which shows the extent of inspiration. In II Pet. 3:16, Peter says that Paul’s writings are Scripture which recognizes their authority, and in many other instances Paul is saying every part of Scripture is inspired (all 66 books in the canon). In I Tim. 5:18, Paul combines an O.T. and N.T. reference together and claims them both as Scripture. The second claim he makes is that the entire Bible is God-breathed. The Scriptures are not continuing to be breathed out by God, they were all given to certain men throughout history (means of inspiration). The third claim is that the entire Bible is profitable because it enables the believer to be prepared to serve God. This gives the purpose of inspiration as believers are to live out the teachings found within God’s Word. In short, these verses teach that all of the Bible came from God so we can know how to live the Christian life.

2. **The second key passage is II Peter 1:16-21.** Here Peter explains how the words of Scripture made it to the page. Peter claims that the inspiration of God is more reliable (“a more-sure word of prophecy”) than actually seeing Christ’s glory and hearing God speak. Inspiration is superior to eyewitness accounts because it is not influenced by fallible man. These forty men were all different, were all holy and set apart, and were prepared by God for this task (Gal. 1:15-16). Scripture was given in a variety of situations involving the writers as whole people (their minds, emotions, wills, etc.) in their own particular life situations (linguistic, religious, political, economic, etc.). He says the Spirit “moved” these specifically chosen men of God. This word *moved* has the connotation of how a crew would let their ship be guided by the sea in a storm. This verse teaches that the Bible is not from man, but rather from God. The Bible is clear that God is the Author of the Bible despite using many men to pen the words (Psa. 68:11; Heb. 1:1).
- F. Proofs of Inspiration:
1. The character of God- if we have the correct view of who God is, then we should have a better understand of the words that come from Him (I John 4:8; II Pet. 3:9)
 2. The phrase “Thus saith the Lord” and other similar phrases are used 3,800 times in the Old Testament alone.
 3. The character and claims of the Bible- we already looked at two important verses that show this claim, but there are numerous other passages which give proof to the inspiration of God’s Word. (John 14:26; 17:17)
 4. The claims of Christ Himself- Matthew 4:4; 5:17
 5. The judgments attached to adding or taking away from God’s Word- Deut. 12:32, Prov. 30:5-6, Rev. 22:18
 6. History has shown that the Bible is indestructible- Isa. 40:8; 55:11, Luke 16:17
 7. The fulfilled prophecies of the Bible- Christ and his coming found in the O.T. and historical events proved in the N.T.
 8. The scientific and historical accuracy of the Bible- archeology, cosmology, human anatomy, and correctly dating historical events
 9. The ability to transform lives- Heb. 4:12, I Peter 2:2, Psa. 119:9

II. Application of Inspiration

- A. We must have God’s Word. Through Spirit-inspired writings God has preserved an historical/theological record of his words and deeds and has given it to his covenant people as a means of grace that they might trust him fully and obey him implicitly. As a result of our sinfulness and finiteness we stand in *need* of such divine guidance and wisdom; scripture was inspired to that end.
- B. We must be ready to claim a defense for the Bible. Other religions have their “holy books,” but we know that we have God’s Word.
- C. We must live a life that is characterized by the truths which He has given: walk in Spirit, be more like Christ, striving for perfection with spiritual maturity, maintaining unity in the body, etc.