

SECTION 2

The Bible: God's Amazing Book

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

Preface

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.

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.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denials, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to confirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word, we shall be grateful.

Drafted October 26 - 28, 1978
Summit I
International Council on Biblical Inerrancy
Chicago, Illinois

A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's Divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's Work of Inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His Work of Inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of materials, variant selections of material in parallel accounts or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

Summit I of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy took place in Chicago on October 26 - 28, 1978 for the purpose of affirming afresh the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, making clear the understanding of it and warning against its denial. In the four years since Summit I, God has blessed that effort in ways surpassing most anticipations. A gratifying flow of helpful literature on the doctrine of inerrancy as well as a growing commitment to its value give cause to pour forth praise to our great God.

The work of Summit I had hardly been completed when it became evident that there was yet another major task to be tackled. While we recognize that belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is basic to maintaining its authority, the values of that commitment are only as real as one's understanding of the meaning of Scripture. Thus, the need for Summit II. For two years plans were laid and papers were written on themes relating to hermeneutical principles and practices. The culmination of this effort has been a meeting in Chicago on November 10-13, 1982 at which we, the undersigned, have participated.

In similar fashion to the Chicago Statement of 1978, we herewith present these affirmations and denials as an expression of the results of our labors to clarify hermeneutical issues and principles. We do not claim completeness or systematic treatment of the entire subject, but these affirmations and denials represent a consensus of the approximately one hundred participants and observers gathered at this conference. It has been a broadening experience to engage in dialogue, and it is our prayer that God will use the product of our diligent efforts to enable us and others to more correctly handle the word of truth.

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Merrill C. Tenney
John D. Walt
Bruce H. Wilkinson

Joseph R. Shultz
Raymond C. Stedman
Fred G. Wacker
John F. Walvoord

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

We affirm that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

We deny the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

Article II

We affirm that as Christ is God and man in one person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language.

We deny that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.

Article III

We affirm that the person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible.

We deny that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

Article IV

We affirm that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message.

We deny that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to anyone anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Article V

We affirm that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

We deny that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the Biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

Article VI

We affirm that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that Biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.

We deny that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, Biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

Article VII

We affirm that the meaning expressed in each Biblical text is single, definite and fixed.

We deny that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

Article VIII

We affirm that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations.

We deny that the distinction between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. We further deny that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.

Article IX

We affirm that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the Biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives.

We deny that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the Biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

Article X

We affirm that Scripture communicates God's truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms.

We deny that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God's message.

Article XI

We affirm that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries.

We deny that the meaning of Biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

Article XII

We affirm that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents, which are faithful to the content of Biblical teaching, should be employed.

We deny the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or distort Biblical meaning in the process.

Article XIII

We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of Biblical study.

We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on Biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

Article XIV

We affirm that the Biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact.

We deny that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the Biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

Article XV

We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

We deny the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

Article XVI

We affirm that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning.

We deny the legitimacy of allowing any method of Biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer's expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

Article XVII

We affirm the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter.

We deny that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the Bible's own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words.

We deny that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.

Article XIX

We affirm that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

We deny that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

Article XX

We affirm that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, Biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history or anything else. We further affirm that in some cases extrabiblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations.

We deny that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.

Article XXI

We affirm the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of Biblical teaching with the facts of nature.

We deny that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.

Article XXII

We affirm that Genesis 1-11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.

We deny that the teachings of Genesis 1- 11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

Article XXIII

We affirm the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin.

We deny that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.

Article XXIV

We affirm that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of Biblical scholars.

We deny that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by Biblical scholars.

Article XXV

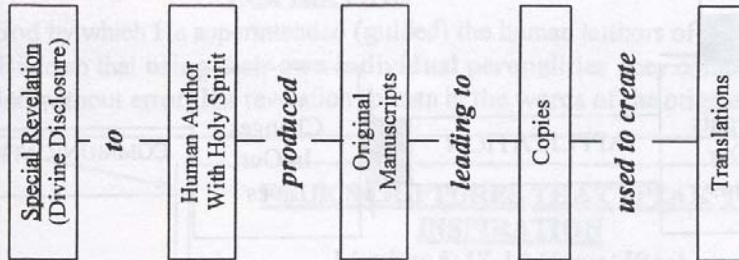
We affirm that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.

We deny that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.

Bibliology

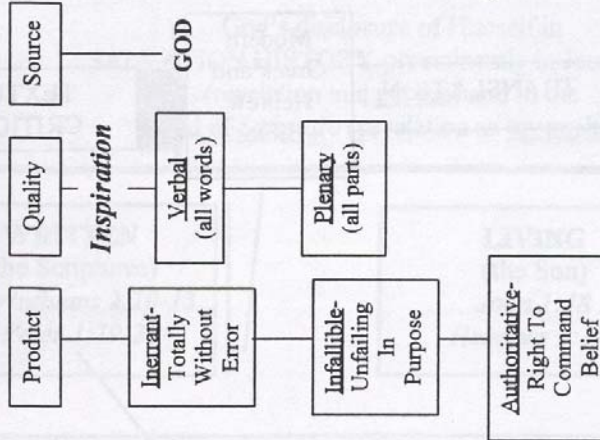
How Did The Bible Come To Us?

ORIGIN



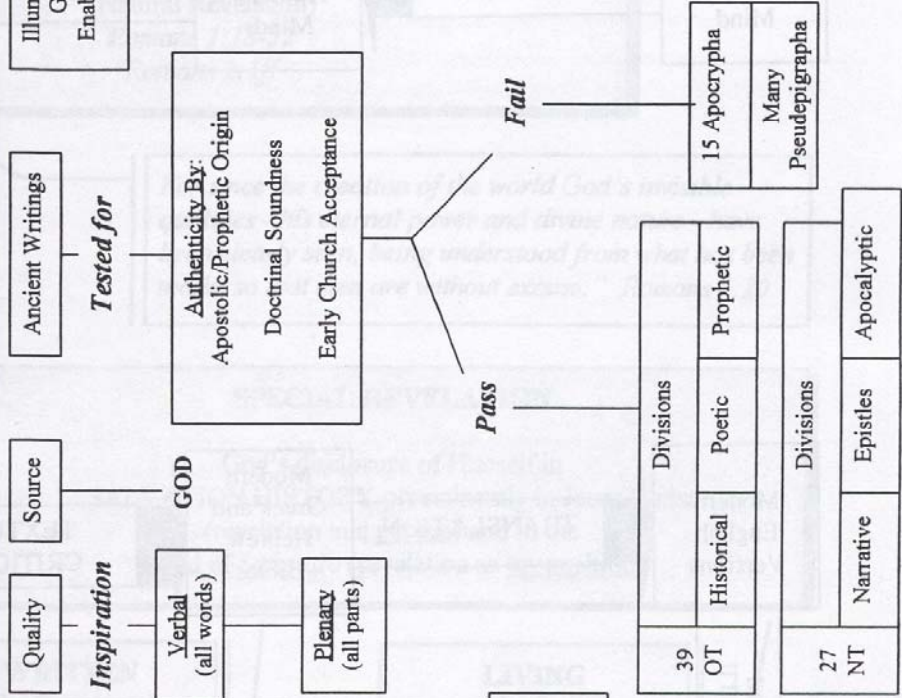
How Do We Know The Bible Is Reliable?

INSPIRATION



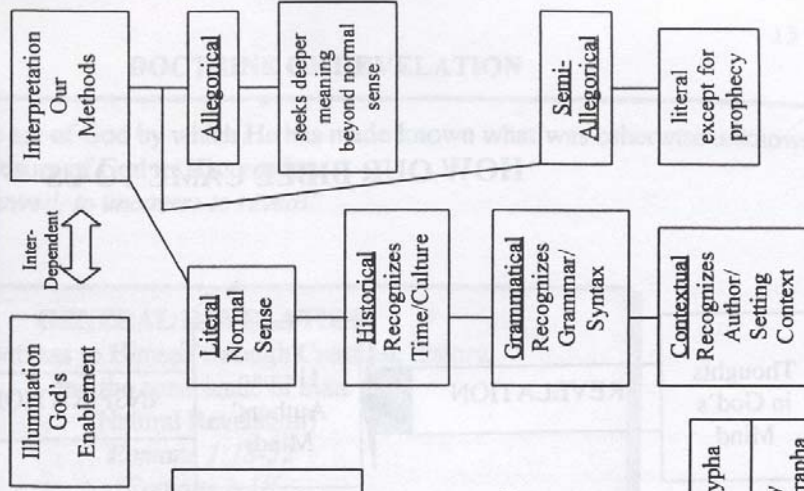
How Did We Select The Books Of The Bible?

CANONICITY

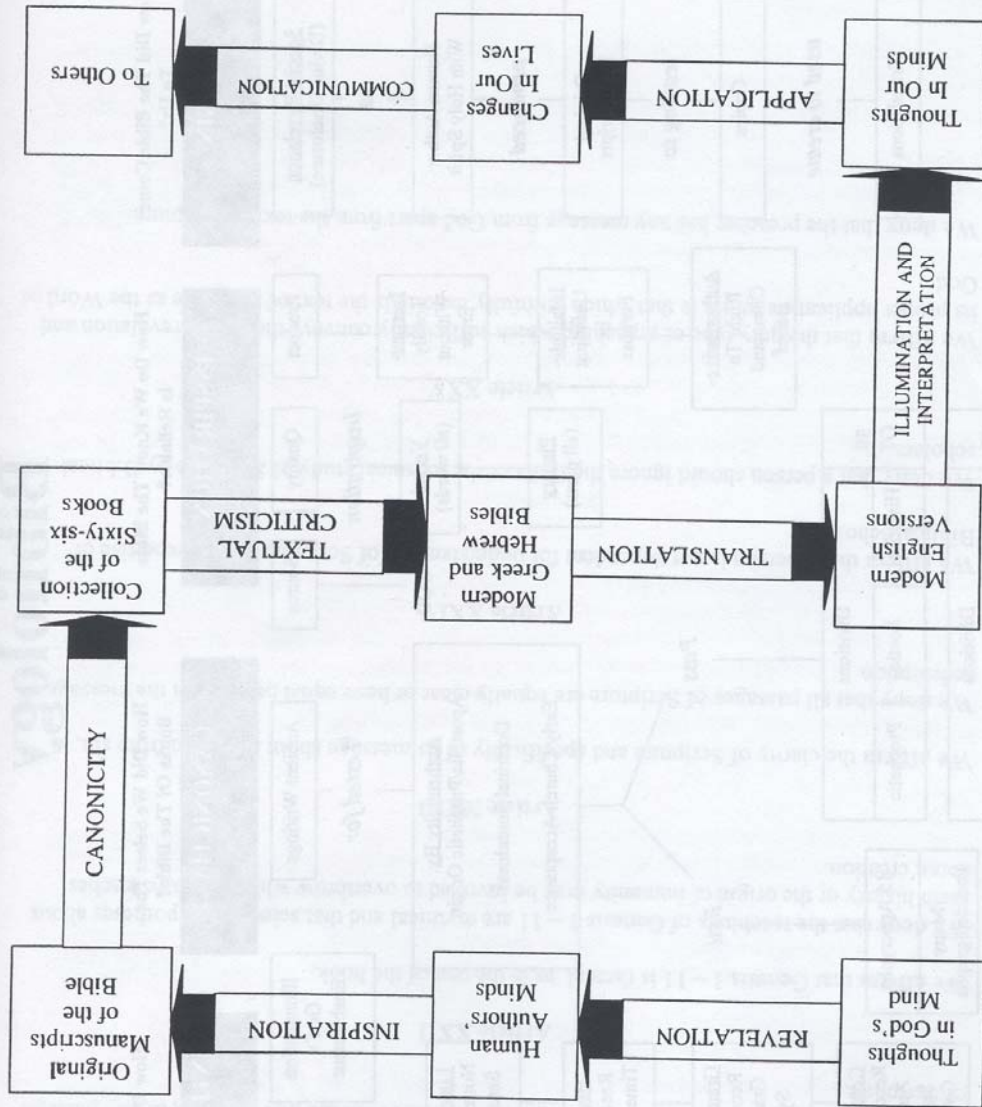


How Do We Interpret The Bible?

INTERPRETATION (Hermeneutics)



HOW OUR BIBLE CAME TO US



DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

DEFINITION: The act of God by which He has made known what was otherwise unknowable. It is the truthful disclosure of God to His creation.
Apokalupsis = "to unveil, to uncover; to reveal"

GENERAL REVELATION

God's witness to Himself through Creation, history, and the conscience of man.

(Natural Revelation)

Romans 1:18-32

Romans 2:1ff

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Romans 1:20

SPECIAL REVELATION

God's disclosure of Himself in **SALVATION HISTORY** preeminently in Jesus Christ (revelation in a person) and in the Word of Scripture (revelation as proposition)

WRITTEN

(the Scriptures)

1 Corinthians 2:10-13

2 Peter 1:19-21

LIVING

(the Son)

John 1:18

Hebrews 1:1-3

INSPIRATION

The act of God by which He superintended (guided) the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original.

FOUR SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK TO INSPIRATION

Matthew 5:17-18 (Jesus' View)

John 10:35

2 Timothy 3:15-17 (Paul's View)

2 Peter 1:16-21 (Peter's View)

Bibliology
Key Word and Concept

What?

REVELATION
 “The act of God by which He has made known what was otherwise unknowable.”
Apokalupsis – “to unveil, to uncover”

GENERAL “God’s witness to Himself through creation, history, and the conscience of man.”	SPECIAL “God’s disclosure of Himself in Salvation History (revelation in a person) and in the interpretive word of Scripture (revelation in proposition).”
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HISTORY Judges Ruth	CREATION Psalm 19:1-3 Rom. 1:18-20	CONSCIENCE Romans 1:19 Romans 2:14-15	WRITTEN I Cor. 2:10-13 II Peter 1:19-21	LIVING John 1:18 Hebrews 1:1-3
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How?

INSPIRATION
 “The act of God by which He superintended/controlled the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that using their own individual personalities they composed recorded without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original.”

Result

INERRANCY
 “The quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.”
 Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35; 17:17

Result

INFALLIBILITY
 “The quality of neither misleading or being misled which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe and reliable guide in all matters.”

Responsibility

INTERPRETATION
 “The process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning.”

Resource

ILLUMINATION
 “The work of the Holy Spirit, which assists the reader in gaining both the sense and significance of God’s written revelation.”
 John 16:12-15; I Corinthians 2:9-16

Response

APPLICATION
 “The process of determining the current relevance of Scripture and then actively responding.”
 James 1:19-27

Jesus' view of Scripture**Matthew 5:17-18**

“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. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

John 10:35

“...the scripture cannot be broken...”

Paul's view of Scripture**2 Timothy 3:15-17**

“...and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting; and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Peter's view of Scripture**2 Peter 1:16-21**

“...And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of Man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

(vv. 19-21)

INERRANCY

The quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35

John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

INFALLIBILITY

The quality of neither misleading nor being misled which ensures that the truth of Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable guide in all matters to which it speaks.

INTERPRETATION

The process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning.

ILLUMINATION

The work of the Holy Spirit, which assists the reader in gaining both the sense and the significance of God's written revelation.

John 16:12-15 "I have much more to say to you than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

I Corinthians 2:9-16 "...but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

APPLICATION

The process of determining the current relevance of Scripture and then actively responding.

James 1:19 27 "...Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says ...[For He who forgets is] like a man looking at his face in a mirror and ... immediately forgetting-But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this... he will be blessed in what he does."

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR REVELATION

1. The Existence of God

COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - Romans 1:19-20 - Creator/Creation

ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - that "Being" of which no greater can be conceived

MORAL ARGUMENT - Romans 2:12-14 - law/lawgiver, universal awareness of God and the presence of moral law in all cultures

HISTORICAL ARGUMENT - God has revealed Himself clearly and decisively in the historical process

CHRISTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - John 1:1, 14, 18 - The person and work of Christ is evidence of the God who exists and has revealed Himself.

2. The Nature of Man

Created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27): Man is capable of receiving God's revelation.

Fallen in sin (Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 2:14-16): Man is certain of misunderstanding God's revelation (without the aid of the Holy Spirit.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF REVELATION

A. It is distinct from illumination

Revelation is objective - disclosure of truth

Illumination is inward and subjective - discovery of truth revealed

B. It is distinct from inspiration

Revelation is the what, the content, the message, the product. Inspiration is the how the conveyer, the means, the process

C. In Biblical Usage: Revelation

1. It is INTELIGIBLE
2. It is often VERBAL
3. It is VERBALIZABLE
4. It is PERSONAL in Christ (John 1:14)

TWO EVANGELICAL VIEWS OF REVELATION TODAY:

- 1) Normative Revelation - in the Bible only, for ALL believers, provides general guidance.
- 2) Private Revelation - Bible PLUS experience, for individuals only, provides special guidance (this view is not biblical; it is dangerous, unnecessary, the origin of cults, and it can be reduced to the absurd).

VARIOUS VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

1. NATURAL THEORY - no supernatural element in Scripture. The Bible is simply an “inspiring” book or piece(s) of literature.
2. ILLUMINATION - (mystical) "Spirit inspired" writings on the same level as any of history's or today's Spirit inspired writings.
3. DYNAMIC - (Partial) "CONTAINS" the Word of God and is without error in areas of doctrine and salvation. It may be, however, in error in the areas of science, history, etc.; (Infallibility of purpose)
4. NEO-ORTHODOX - Inspired, but not without error due *to human element*. The Bible BECOMES the Word of God in existential encounter, but it IS NOT the Word of God.
5. MECHANICAL DICTATION - Writers were *passive instruments* in the hands of God like a typewriter to a typist.
6. VERBAL/PLENARY - GOD SUPERINTENDED THE HUMAN AUTHORS SO THAT IN THEIR OWN WORDS VIA THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES THEY WROTE THE SCRIPTURES AND THEY ARE INSPIRED FULLY, TO THE VERY WORDS, AND ARE WITHOUT ERROR IN ALL THAT THEY AFFIRM.
INNERANT - without error
INFALLIBLE - Incapable of teaching non-truth or leading one astray
INSPIRATION - God breathed.

INSPIRATION EXTENDS TO...

1. The writing (not merely the idea)
2. The words (not simply the word)
3. The tenses of verbs - Mt. 22:31-32
4. The letters of words - Gal. 3:16
5. The smallest parts of letters - Matt. 5:17-18

A HELPFUL CLARIFICATION

“*Phenomenal*” language = language in the phenomenal perspective is from the vantage point of the viewer... i.e. how it was observed, not necessarily the technical/analytical view. (Eg. Sunrise/sunset - the sun actually does neither! But that is our observation).

VARIATIONS ON THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY

1. ABSOLUTE INERRANCY

- Affirms plenary/verbal inspiration while trying to distance itself from a mechanical dictation view of inspiration.
- Affirms the accuracy of the Bible in all matters, including science and history “to a great degree of precision!” (Harold Lindsell)

*2. CRITICAL (NATURAL) INERRANCY

- Makes cautious use of critical methodologies such as form and redaction criticism.
- Affirms the truth of everything in the Bible to the degree of precision intended by the author.
- Usually regards biblical references to scientific matters as phenomenal (how they appeared to the writer).
- Does not seek to harmonize every detail of Scripture because it recognizes that the authors wrote for different purposes. - (Al Mohler; Danny Akin; Paige Patterson; J. I. Packer; D. A. Carson; *Chicago Statement*).

3. LIMITED INERRANCY

- Affirms the Bible is inerrant in all matters of faith and practice, as well as matters which can be empirically verified.
- Inspiration does not grant modern understanding; hence the Bible may contain errors of science or history, but it did secure fully truthful teaching about belief and behavior. (I. H. Marshall).

4. NUANCED INERRANCY

- Affirms that how one understands inerrancy depends on the type of biblical literature under consideration.
- Some portions, such as TEN COMMANDMENTS; seem to have been given through a mechanical dictation form of inspiration. The epistles and historical materials might be described as given by verbal inspiration. A book like Proverbs seems to require a more free view (poss. dynamic view). (Clark Pinnock).

5. FUNCTIONAL INERRANCY (Infallibility of purpose)

- Affirms that the purpose of the Bible is to bring people to salvation and growth in grace. The Bible accomplishes its PURPOSE without fail.
- Affirms that the Bible is sufficiently accurate in factual matters to accomplish its PURPOSE, but seeks to avoid describing the inerrancy of Scripture primarily in terms of FACTICITY. Instead, it speaks of the Bible in terms of trustworthiness and faithfulness. (Jack Rogers, Donald McKim).

6. SPONTANEOUS INERRANCY (View from the Pew!)

- An expression of simple trust and faith in the Bible.
- Often marked by little, if any awareness of, or interest in scholarly discussions of the doctrine of inerrancy. (Ma and Pa Baptist).