

THE BIBLE

Part 2

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Confessions On The Bible

Baptist Faith and Message 2000

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17-17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

The Abstract of Principles

Prepared for and adopted by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, founded in 1859.

I. The Scriptures.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

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 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.

What Did Jesus Believe About the Bible?

(Matthew 5:17-18)

I. Jesus believed all the Scriptures point to Him. 5:17

- 1) He did not come to destroy the Scriptures.
- 2) He came to fulfill the Scriptures.

II. Jesus believed all the Scriptures were perfect in detail. 5:18

- 1) Jesus affirmed the OT and promised the NT. John 16:12-15
- 2) Jesus said the Scriptures cannot be broken. John 10:35
- 3) Jesus said God's Word is truth. John 17:17

FACTS CONCERNING BIBLICAL INERRANCY

1. All Scripture is of equal inspiration, but not of equal importance or application. All of it, however, is true and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16).
2. Inerrancy implies a natural interpretation of Scripture recognizing, for example, historical context, literary genre and linguistic devices.
3. Inerrancy means that the Bible is true in what it says and affirms in all areas of reality.
4. Inerrancy **does not deny** the use in Scripture of summation, approximation, phenomenal language (language of appearance) or cultural linguistic devices common to the time of writing. (example: the way NT authors cite OT passages and paraphrase the OT)
5. Inerrancy does not demand the application of modern Western/scientific standards on ancient (OT) or first century documents (NT ex. Matt. 27:9-10).
6. The Bible teaches truth and therefore it is completely authoritative.
7. While recognizing the epistemological (how we gain knowledge) contributions of experience, reason, tradition, and the church, inerrancy affirms that the ultimate religious and spiritual authority for the Christian is Scripture interpreted by the historical/grammatical method of interpretation. The plain sense of Scripture is to be sought, affirmed, and obeyed.

WHY INSIST ON INERRANCY? A SUMMATION

1. The necessity of a sure word from God.
2. The nature of God. (If the Bible is God's Word and God is true, the Bible must be true.) This is a deductive argument.
3. The testimony of Scripture. (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21). This is an inductive argument.
4. The analogy of the **Living Word** (Christ) and the **Written Word** (the Bible). Both are fully human and fully divine. Both are perfect.
5. Fulfilled prophecy.

6. Archaeological confirmation.
7. The testimony of Jesus. His view of Scripture must be our view if we are to live under His Lordship (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35).

Jesus and the Scriptures

Full inerrancy is consistent with Jesus' attitude toward Scripture. (The following material is adapted from John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, Downer's Grove: IVP, 1972.) In fact, the issue of Bibliology is ultimately an issue of Christology.

1. Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the Old Testament as straightforward records of fact. He referred to Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah (Matt. 24:37-39), Abraham (John 8:56), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15, 11:23-24), Lot (Luke 17:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 8:11), the manna (John 6:31), the wilderness serpent (John 3:14), David (Matt. 22:43), Solomon (Matt. 6:29, 12:42), Elijah (Luke 4:25-26), Elisha (Luke 4:27), Jonah (Matt. 12:39-41) and Moses (Matt. 8:4), among others.
2. He often chose as the basis of his teaching those very stories that many modern skeptics find unacceptable (e.g., Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jonah).
3. For Jesus, Scripture was the final court of appeal in his disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is worth noting that both Jesus and Satan accepted scriptural statements as arguments against which no further argument was possible (Matt. 4:4-11). Jesus set aside or reject the Rabbinic and Pharisaical interpretation of the Old Testament, but He never questioned its authority or truthfulness.
4. He taught the Scripture could not pass away (Matt. 5:17-18) or be broken (John 10:35).

Jesus did not distinguish between revelatory as opposed to nonrevelatory matters. His attitude was unquestioning acceptance of the whole of Scripture.

Many who deny biblical inerrancy agree that Jesus viewed Scripture as inerrant. H.J. Cadbury declared that he was far more sure as a mere historical fact that Jesus held to the common Jewish view of an infallible Bible than that Jesus believed in his own messiahship. Adolph Harnack insisted that Jesus was one with his apostles, the Jews and the entire early church in its confidence of the complete dependability of Scripture (cited by Harold Lindsell, *Battle for the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, pp. 43-44). Emil Brunner acknowledged that the "doctrine of Verbal Inspiration was already known to pre-Christian Judaism and was probably also taken over by Paul and the rest of the Apostles" (*Christian Doctrine of God*, vol. 1 of his *Dogmatics*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950, p. 107). Rudolf Bultmann (*Jesus and the Word*, New York: Scribner's, 1934, pp. 60-61) agreed that Jesus accepted the common notion of his day regarding the full trustworthiness of Scripture.

Suggestions for Interpreting the Text of Scripture (A Summation)

- I. Study the book as a whole.
 - 1) Consider the questions of date, authorship, recipients, and purpose (general matters of introduction).
 - 2) Develop an outline of the entire book (study Bibles and commentaries will be helpful).
 - 3) Examine the relationship of the passage under consideration to the book as a whole.

- II. Establish the best textual base possible.
 - 1) Use the original language if you can.
 - 2) Compare various versions and translations.

- III. Investigate the text linguistically (eg. word by word).
 - 1) Make a lexical (definitional) study of crucial words.
 - 2) Research the passage for key words, phrases, and ideas.
 - 3) Track the verbs!

- IV. Examine the form or forms of the material in the passage.
 - 1) What is the literary type (history, poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic)?
 - 2) Is there any indication of the life situation from which the material came?

- V. Analyze the structure of the passage.
 - 1) Determine if the material constitutes a literary unity.
 - 2) Is there a logical sequence of ideas present?

- 3) Isolate the basic themes or emphases.
- 4) Outline the passage you are studying. Use the outline as the framework for your teaching.