

Introduction:

- This section is called “Bibliology,” or the doctrine of the Bible.
- “Bibliology,” or the doctrine of the Bible.¹
- We will address and answer questions like:
 - What is the Bible?
 - How do we know that these 66 books of the Bible are God’s words? What about other, supposed holy books?
- REVIEW:
 - Revelation.
 - What are the 2 types of revelation from God? Explain them.
 - What can general revelation do? What kind of knowledge does it give and what is its power with humanity?
 - What can special revelation do? What kind of knowledge does it provide?
 - Was God obligated to give special revelation? It was an act of grace.
- Today: Inspiration. The doctrine of Inspiration builds on Revelation.
- But it goes further and asks, “How did God give special revelation? Where did the Bible come from? How did we actually get these written words on the page? And how do we know that they are from God? B/c, after all, mere men held the quill and wrote them.”
- Further, the doctrine of Inspiration answers the questions:
 - How do we know that the Bible is inerrant (without error)?
 - How do we know that it is authoritative in all matters to which it speaks?
- Inspiration answers the question, Where did the Bible come from? And inerrancy answers the question, How true is it?

¹ I am indebted to Paul Lamey (Bibliology Syllabus) and Andy Snider (Theology 1, Master’s Seminary Syllabus) for their help in compiling these notes.

Sinclair Ferguson: “No element is more central to Scripture’s testimony to its own nature than the concept of inspiration.”²

“The doctrine of Scripture is not an opinion of this or that school, not the dogma of a particular church or sect, but a fundamental article, an article of faith of the one holy universal Christian church.”³

1. The Word of God is the Voice of the Spirit.

“If you want to hear from God, read your Bible. If you want to hear Him audibly, read it out loud.” (Justin Peters)

- Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance everything that the disciples would need to record in Scripture:

John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you”

- “This verse is addressed to the apostles. The context limits the “all things” to the interpretation and significance of His person and work. The Spirit worked in their minds, reminding them of His teaching and giving them insight into its meaning.”⁴

John 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

- “This was a promise to the apostles that their partial understanding of the person and work of Jesus as the Messiah would be completed as the Spirit would give them insight into the meanings of the soon-to-come Cross and the Resurrection as well as truths about Jesus’ return (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10). The New Testament books are the fulfillment of this teaching ministry of the Spirit.”⁵

² Sinclair B. Ferguson, “How Does the Bible Look at Itself?” in *Thy Word is Truth: Essential Writings on the Doctrine of Scripture from the Reformation To Today*, Edited by Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2013), 1213.

³ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:435.

⁴ Edwin A. Blum, “[John](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 324.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 329.

- Jesus said that the Spirit is (3x) “the Spirit of truth.” He promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all truth.” So this sets up the question from Jesus promise: did the Holy Spirit accomplish what Jesus promised? The answer of the NT is a “yes”!

A. Two foundational passages which teach inspiration

2 Tim 3:16, “all Scripture is God-breathed”

- “All Scripture” – 51 occurrences of *graphe* (“scripture”) in the NT, it always refers to OT Scriptures. In 1 Tim 5:18 and 2 Pet 3:16, *graphe* includes NT writings as well.⁶
 - 1 Tim 5:18 For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”
 - The words of Jesus recorded by Matthew in Matt 10:10 are “scripture” on par with Deut 25:4.
 - 2 Pet 3:15-16 ...just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also **the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own destruction.
 - Peter says that Paul’s writings are considered “scripture” along with the OT.
- “is inspired by God” – θεόπνευστος, lit. “God-breathed.”
 - It is a passive⁷ verbal form, which means that Scripture is a result of divine action (as opposed to human ingenuity or invention).
 - The key idea here is not to just highlight a process but to show the divine origin of Scripture.
 - It is the words/text of the Bible that are inspired. This does not mean that all other things they thought or wrote on different

⁶ “The way in which he makes this affirmation gives us warrant to relate that truth to “all” of the NT, since it is recognized to be γραφή (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16–17, where this has already taken place in the NT age)” (George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids; Carlisle, England: Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992], 448).

⁷ The passive as opposed to the active is defended well by B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), 275–81. .

occasions were inspired. Inspiration was the act of God to produce his very word in every word of Scripture.

- Everything that belongs to the category of *Scripture* had the character of being “God-breathed.” Scripture’s words are God’s words.
- “Paul appears to be saying, therefore, that all Scripture has as its source God’s breath and that this is its essential characteristic.”⁸
- “It was not only ‘God-breathed’ at the time it was written; it IS ‘God-breathing.’”⁹

2 Pet 1:20–21, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

- The context: Peter is relaying that his message is reliable not because of him, but who the message is from.
- “No prophecy of Scripture is a matter...” – what the prophet said was not his own ideas but ones divine. It is not his interpretation of what he *thinks* God might like to say...it is God speaking in his words.
- ‘Interpretation’ – refers to the idea of origin.
- He’s not speaking of our interpretation (subjective understanding) of Peter’s message, but an author who is delivering the text to the reader from God (to the target audience).
- “Men moved/carried by the Holy Spirit” – has the sense of “produced/borne” and puts the emphasis on the active agent.
- “moved/carried” - Same word used in Acts 27:15 – speaks of a ship being carried along.
- The writers spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- Not always dictation (often in OT, ‘thus says the Lord’).

⁸ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: a Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Carlisle, England: Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 447.

⁹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:385.

- Element of mystery: truly human words, yet truly divine words.
 - The dual authorship of Scripture
 - Men (Moses, David, Paul, etc) are the instruments of the work, the point is that these men spoke a direct word given by the Holy Spirit.
- “It is not Peter’s intention to deny completely human volition or personality in the writing of Scripture (he says that the men ‘spoke’, but rather to say that the ultimate source of every prophecy was never a man’s decision about what he wanted to write, but rather the Holy Spirit’s action in the prophet’s life, carried out in ways unspecified here (or, in fact, elsewhere in Scripture). This indicates a belief that all of the Old Testament prophecies (and, in light of vv. 19–20, this probably includes all of the written Scripture of the Old Testament) are spoken ‘from God’: that is, they are God’s own words.”¹⁰
- “Why is there so much similarity in these books [i.e., the Gospels], and how could these men be reminded of so much? Because it was the Holy Spirit who recalled everything to the mind of the disciples who has been present with the Lord.”¹¹ (cf. John 14:26, 16:13)
- Scripture was inspired through some 40 different authors, on a few different continents, over about 1600 years. Considering the diverse cultures, contexts, and personalities, the unity of Scripture is best explained by a single Author who inspired every word of the text. The 66 books of the Bible have their origin in God. Thus, Scripture is rightly called, “the word of God.”
- The Bible is the product of the inspiration of God.

B. Inspiration Defined:

- What biblical inspiration does *not* mean:
 - That the biblical writers felt a subjective enthusiasm or stir, such that the Bible came to be.
 - That Scripture is the product of significant human achievement. (It is against human nature to conclude that all humanity is justly deserving of God’s wrath in eternal hell).

¹⁰ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: IVP; Zondervan, 2004), 75.

¹¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Christian and the Old Testament* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1998), 226.

- That God acted on the general thoughts of those who wrote Scripture, but did not give the exact words. (This view would say that the Bible contains the word of God, but is not the word of God in every word. It would deny the fact of plenary (all) verbal (words) inspiration of Scripture).
- Rather, God objectively acted upon them in a real context, with real need, to exercise his care for his people.

What biblical inspiration is:

- God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings." (C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 38)
- "Inspiration is . . . a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given divine trustworthiness." (Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, 131)
- "Biblical inspiration [is the] . . . work of the Holy Spirit by which, without setting aside their personalities and literary or human faculties, God so guided the authors of Scripture as to enable them to write exactly the words which convey His truth to men, and in doing so preserved their judgments from error in the original manuscripts." (K. S. Kantzer, "The Communication of Revelation," in *The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation*, ed. M.C. Tenney, 180.)
- "It's more correct to say that the letter is inspired, not the writer." (Andy Snider, and others)
- A few passages from which we derive the correct understanding of biblical inspiration:
 - "The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6).
 - "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:9).
 - "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:7).

- “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting” (Ps. 119:142).

C. Witnesses to the Inspiration of Scripture

1. Christ's witness to the inspiration of the OT (that the OT is the very word of God).

What did Jesus think of the Bible?

- a. It is the final authority.

“[A]nd he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.’¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY’” (Matt. 4:9-10, cf. vv. 4, 7).

- b. It will necessarily be fulfilled.

“Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, ‘I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED’” (Matt. 26:31).

“How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, *which say* that it must happen this way?” (Matt. 26:54).

- c. It assumes the historical truth of OT miracles and unusual events.

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark” (Matt. 24:37-38).

Christ also refers to the historicity of events such as the burning bush, the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19), manna in the wilderness (Exod. 16), the healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5), Jonah and the fish (Jonah 1:17), etc.

- d. It is consistently accurate.

“...and the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

- e. There is no distinction in value among the various parts of the OT.

“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27).

Everything is considered to be a unified witness.

2. Christ's witness to the inspiration of the NT.

What did Christ have to say about the inspiration of the New Testament?

(Note: None of NT written while Christ was on earth. The first book, James, was written around 45-49 AD).

a. Jesus left revelation unfinished.

“I have many more things to say to you..” (John 16:12).

b. Jesus prophesied the completion of Biblical revelation.

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” (John 16:13)

c. Jesus pre-authenticated the New Testament Scriptures as fact.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:26, cf. John 16:13a).

The Holy Spirit guided the Apostles to provide the church with inspired truth.

- “We believe in the 39 books of the Old Testament, because the Lord Jesus Christ *affirmed* the Old Testament. And we believe in the 27 books of the New Testament, because the Lord Jesus Christ *authorized* His Apostles to write the New Testament. The doctrine of canonicity ultimately comes back to the lordship of Jesus Christ. If we believe in Him and submit to His authority, then we will simultaneously believe in and submit to His Word. Because He affirmed the Old Testament canon, we also affirm it. Because He authorized His Apostles to write the New Testament, we likewise embrace it as well.”¹²

3. The Apostles witness to biblical inspiration.

What did the Apostles think of the inspiration of Scripture?

¹² Nathan Busenitz, <http://www.tms.edu/preachersandpreaching/why-these-66-books>.

- a. The Apostles continued the appeal to the Old Testament as justification for their Gospel.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures**, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **according to the Scriptures**” (1 Cor. 15:3). [Paul assumed that Christ’s death was in accordance with previously-written Scripture, which, at this time, meant the OT].

- b. The apostolic preaching and teaching were tested by the Scriptures.

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily [to] [find] [out] whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

- c. The Apostles assumed that it was necessary for OT prophecy to be fulfilled.

“Men [and] brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus” (Acts 1:16).

- d. The Apostles identified God with the Scriptures and vice versa.

“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth’” (Rom. 9:17).

- e. The Apostles regarded other NT authors as writers of Scripture.

“[A]nd consider [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable [people] twist to their own destruction, as [they] [do] also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:15).

- f. The Apostles regarded their own writings as from God.

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed [it] not [as] the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

2. More Details on Inspiration

- A. Does inspiration apply to the entire Bible?

The phrase which theologians use to accurately describe inspiration is “verbal plenary inspiration.”

- *Plenary*— means “full” carrying the idea that all the words of Scripture are God’s words. Everything in Scripture is God’s word. One of the implications of this is that we are not in a position to pick and choose what is inspired. “All Scripture” does not mean whatever parts we would like to be inspired, but “all,” as in *the totality*, as in *every word*.
- *Verbal*— means that the very words of Scripture, not only the ideas of concepts of the biblical writers. This encompasses the propositions, concepts, events, promises, feelings, tone, etc. So this means that inspiration pertains to far more than the general message of Scripture, but also down to the individual words, even the letters. It “claims that the Bible says *exactly* what God wants to say because the Holy Spirit was responsible for every word written in Scripture.”¹³

Inspiration includes the grammar and syntax of the text (i.e. mood, voice, verb tense, sentence structure, etc.).

B. The Dual Authorship of Scripture

- Since God used human agents to deliver his word, there is a sense in which Scripture has a dual authorship
- Man is the instrument, though God is the ultimate author
 - In Matt 1:22, the words of the prophet Isaiah (in Isa 7:14 are cited as “what the Lord had spoken.”
 - In Matt 4:4 Jesus repeatedly cites Deuteronomy, which is from the pen of Moses, noting that it falls within “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
 - In Matt 19:5, Jesus cites Moses’s words in Gen 2:24 as words that God “said.”
 - In Acts 1:16, the words of David in Psalms 69 and 109 are said to be the words which are “Scriptures...which the Holy Spirit” gave to David.

¹³ Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2009), 86.

- Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28–32 is what “God declares” according to Peter in Acts 2:16–17.
- “Scripture is totally the product of the Spirit of God, who speaks through the prophets and Apostles, and at the same time totally the product of the activity of the authors.”¹⁴
- “...it has flowed to us from the very mouth of God by the ministry of men.”¹⁵
- Various writers, genres, etc. (Propositions, information, tone, emotion, perspective.
- [W]e observe that the prophets and Apostles, as they proceed to write, completely remain themselves. They retain their powers of reflection and deliberation, their emotional states and freedom of the will. Research (Luke 1:1), reflection, and memory (John 14:26), the use of sources, and all the ordinary means that an author employs in the process of writing a book are used. So far from being spurned or excluded by divine inspiration, these means are incorporated into it and made to serve the goal that God has in mind.¹⁶
- “Scripture is both a divine book and a human book... I have chosen, rather, at the risk of being criticized as old-fashioned, to begin with God's intention to speak personal words to his people. I assume here that God is able, one way or another, to get his words to us.”¹⁷

3. Implications for Us? (Because the Bible is God speaking to us...)

- A. The church did not decide what should be in the Bible, but merely recognized the product of God-breathed inspiration.

The act of inspiration by God the Holy Spirit was the act of God deciding what would constitute Scripture; the contents of the Bible. Thus, the Bible is absolute and objective, being preserved from man's subjectivity.

“The church no more gave us the New Testament canon that Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity, by His work of creation, and similarly He gave us the New Testament canon, by inspiring the

¹⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:435.

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Louisville: WJK, 1960), 1:80.

¹⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:433.

¹⁷ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2010), 140.

individual books that make it up.” (James Packer, *God Has Spoken: Revelation and the Bible* (London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1965), p. 81).

B. The Spirit of God cannot be separated from the word of God.

His work of inspiration binds him to the word.

Ephesians 5:18–19 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, **but be filled with the Spirit,**¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

Colossians 3:16 **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you,** with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18) = “let the word of Christ richly dwell within you” (Col. 3:16). These two phrases are in parallel.

Can doctrine be elevated over the Spirit? To say, “Don’t elevate doctrine above the Holy Spirit,” is to make a boogeyman distinction.

John Owen: “He that would utterly separate the Spirit from the word had as good burn his Bible.”

Calvin: “We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it” (*Calvin’s Commentary*, 2 Tim. 3:16).

Therefore, elevating doctrine and God are one in the same act of worship. Objective biblical doctrine is traction for relationship with, and worship of, God through the work of the Spirit.

Thus, the colloquialism, “Don’t elevate doctrine above the Holy Spirit,” is to divide the Spirit against himself, or God against God.

C. We have the chief instrument of our salvation and sanctification.

“The goal of revelation is not information only, but affection, worship, and obedience.”¹⁸

- Those who tend to deny inspiration often admit to wanting to be freed from its claims.
- Scripture tells us who we are and what we are like; it judges us infallibly: Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
- Scripture is the means of transformation: John 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.”
- (affections) Psalm 119:111 “I have inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart.”
- (worship) Psalm 119:175 “Let my soul live that it may praise You, and let Your ordinances help me.”
- (dealing with sin) Psalm 119:11 “Your word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against You”

“Errors can never be uprooted from human hearts until true knowledge of God is planted therein.”¹⁹

- 2 Timothy 3:17 “...so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

“It remains the duty of every person...to put aside his or her hostility against the word of God and ‘to take every thought captive to obey Christ.’” [2 Cor. 10:5]²⁰

“The Holy Spirit does not, after the act of inspiration, withdraw from Holy Scripture and abandon it to its fate but sustains and animates it and in many ways brings its content to humanity, to its heart and conscience.”²¹

¹⁸ Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 36.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Louisville: WJK, 1960), 1:73.

²⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:440.

²¹ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:440.

D. We have a certain voice in uncertain times.

- (e.g., “the exact truth” in Luke 1:4)

“If Scripture obviously intends to present a story as historical, the exegete has no right, at the discretion of historical criticism, to turn it into a myth.”²²

“You have studied the Holy Scriptures, which are true, and given by the Holy Spirit. You know that nothing unjust or counterfeit is written in them.”²³

- 2 Pet 1:19—“a more sure word”

“All Scripture, as it has been given to us by God, will be found to be harmonious.”²⁴

- 1 John 5:13 “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”
- “we know” 15x in 1 John

John Calvin: “By countless wondrous means Satan with the whole world has tried either to oppress it or overturn it, to obscure and obliterate it utterly from the memory of men — yet, like the palm, it has risen ever higher and has remained unassailable...The whole power of earth has armed itself to destroy it, yet all these efforts have gone up in smoke.”²⁵

²² Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:447.

²³ 1 *Clement* 45:2-3.

²⁴ From Irenaeus cited in Edward J. Young, *Thy Word is Truth: Some Thoughts on the Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, 1963), 38.

²⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Louisville: WJK, 1960), 1:91.

Bibliology Inerrancy: How True is the Bible?

Inerrancy Introduction:

These men ask me to believe that they can read between the lines of the old texts; the evidence is their obvious inability to read (in any sense worth discussing) the lines themselves. They claim to see fern-seed and can't see an elephant ten yards away in broad daylight.²⁶

1. What is inerrancy?

A. Some helpful definitions:

"When we say that the Bible is inerrant, we mean that the Bible makes good on its claims."²⁷

"The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact."²⁸

Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with social, physical, or life sciences.²⁹

- What about our Bible translations? Are they trustworthy?
 - 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. Furthermore, we *know* where [there are] uncertain readings.... Thus, our present manuscripts are for most purposes the same as the original manuscripts, and the doctrine of inerrancy therefore directly concerns our present manuscripts as well.³⁰

²⁶ C. S. Lewis, "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism," in *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 156.

²⁷ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2010), 174.

²⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: IVP; Zondervan, 2004), 90.

²⁹ Paul D. Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 294.

³⁰ Grudem, 96.

- Thus, though not technically inspired, copies and translations partake of inspiration by derivation.
- “Derived Inspiration”: the copies and translations partake of inspiration to the extent that they reproduce the originals. God has not chosen to extend miracle to copying and translation. Translations are therefore not technically inspired. But copies and translations are inspired to the extent that they reproduce the original. We know what the original manuscript said for over 99% of the words of the Bible.³¹

B. Theological Basis.

- Inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16)
 - If we believe that the Bible is God-breathed, given fully by the Holy Spirit and that we are responsible to believe and follow this word then we can only do this *if* God has given it to us completely and without mixture of error.
 - ****The inspiration of the Bible establishes the inerrancy of the Bible: since Scripture is breathed out and given of God, it cannot contain error, because God cannot commit error nor lie.*
 - The Scriptures are God’s word (Gal. 3:8, 22; Rom. 9:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
 - God cannot lie (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; Rom. 3:4).
 - Therefore, the Scriptures cannot contain a lie.

“[I]t means that he speaks truth in such a way that we can understand it, insofar as it can be understood by human beings. . . [Like] a wise parent, while choosing simple language to use with his children, does not lie to them.”³²
 - Scripture is without error (Ps. 12:6, 119:89).
 - His Word is truth (John 17:17).

³¹ Andy Snider, *The Master’s Seminary Theology I Syllabus*.

³² Frame, 175.

“The importance of original inerrancy is that it enables us to confess consistently the truthfulness of God Himself.”³³

“[Inerrancy] is a doctrine that can be shown to be a clear implication of what Scripture says about the character of God, and about the way his character shapes his action as the author of Scripture.”³⁴

The question is not whether the sacred writers could err . . . Rather the question is whether in writing they were so acted upon by the Holy Spirit (both as to the things themselves and as to the words) as to be kept free from all error and that their writings are truly authentic and divine.³⁵

Thus, the question of inerrancy is a question related to the integrity of God, the Holy Spirit. Is and was he able, through his work of inspiration, to put down special revelation which is free from error?

- Self-witness of Scripture

- Psalm 119:142, 151, 160; Prov 30:5-6

Psalm 119:142 “Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth.”

Psalm 119:151 “You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth.”

Psalm 119:160 “The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

Proverbs 30:5-6 “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”

- Jesus upheld the full inspiration, authority, and accuracy of the Scriptures:

³³ Greg L. Bahnsen, “The Inerrancy of the Autographa,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 181.

³⁴ Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2009), 133.

³⁵ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992), 1:62–63.

John 17:17 “Your word is truth.”

- **What Was Jesus’ View of Scripture?**

- He understood that the OT pointed to Him.

John 5:39-40, 46-47 “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life... ⁴⁶ “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ “But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

Luke 24:25-26, 44-45 “And He said to them, ‘O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ ‘Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?’...⁴⁴ Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

- He taught that the Holy Spirit was given to ensure the message of Scripture.

John 14:16-17 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

- He believed that the Spirit would inspire the Gospel accounts.

John 14:25-26 “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

- He affirmed that the Spirit would inspire the message & accounts that form Acts.

John 15:26-27 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He

will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

- Jesus understood that the Spirit would inspire the Epistles.

John 16:12-15 “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵ “All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.”

- Jesus affirmed that the book of Revelation is the final word of Jesus until He returns.

Revelation 1:2, 19 “who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* to all that he saw...¹⁹ Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”

Revelation 22:18-19 “I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.”

- Inerrancy and the Character of God (divine truthfulness)

“If the Scriptures are from God and His character is behind them, it seems that they cannot be in error.”³⁶

“Scripture did not come from the will of man; it came from God. And if it is God’s word then it must all be true, for in him there can be no error or deceit.”³⁷

C. Myths, Misconceptions, & Misnomers

- Myth #1 – Only the *message* of Scripture is inerrant.

³⁶ Feinberg, 286.

³⁷ Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 39.

- In other words, this myth asserts that only the general idea which Scripture communicates is inerrant, but not every word in every verse.
- “Every word of God is tested” (Prov. 30:5).
- *All Scripture is God-breathed* (2 Tim. 3:16).
- Myth #2—Scripture must follow rules of grammar to be inerrant.

“Scripture never claims to be written in the most impressive language, or even in perfect grammar. What it claims is *truth*. And truth can be expressed in any dialect.”³⁸
- Myth #3—Inerrancy does not allow for figures of speech or literary genre.
 - There is nothing inherent in figurative or poetic language that requires them to contain falsehood because they are not literal. Literary style has nothing to do with falsity or truth of content.
- Myth #4—Inerrancy means that you don’t ask hard questions or struggle with the text.

[F]ar from cutting off wrestling and intellectual struggling with the text, a high view of Scripture’s truthfulness has led to deeper study, prayer, conversation with other interpreters, and wrestling to see how it’s true. Similarly, awareness that these are the very oracles of God should lead to a humble approach that doesn’t arrogate too much authority to one’s own understanding, but trembles at the thought of misrepresenting God’s Word.³⁹
- Myth #5: Some of the historical data, like numbers of people, are inaccurate, therefore, the Scripture is not inerrant.

“[Inerrancy] asserts truth, not precision. Inerrant language is language that makes good on its own claims, not on the claims that are made for it by thoughtless readers.”⁴⁰

³⁸ Frame, 174–75.

³⁹ Derek Rishmawy, “Inerrant ≠ Inerrant Interpretation,” *The Gospel Coalition Blog*, November 21, 2013, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/inerrant-text-inerrant-interpretation>.

⁴⁰ Frame, 174.

- (E.g., “mustard seed...smaller than all other seeds” in Matt 13:31–32). This claim is made relative to the ancient eastern person’s understanding of seeds in his context.
- Many times such “inaccuracies” are built on the misrepresentation that assumes a universal statement rather than a particular context. [Illus: “cleanest water anywhere”]
- Imprecision is not a characteristic of error.
 - However, a journalist can report that, “10,000 people were injured,” when, in fact, there may have been 9878 or 10,201 people injured. Again, the limits of truthfulness depend on the degree of precision implied by the speaker and expected by the audience.
- The existence of a flood narrative amongst many pagan nations does not mean that the biblical account is less historical. Inerrancy does not require Scripture to be *unique* in every detail of history but *true*. In fact, if the flood is as it is reported in Scripture then we would expect various traditions to spin it according to their own methods and ideals.
- It is also mistaken to think that different biblical writers reporting on the same event will always have the same perspective and emphasis. They wrote for different audiences. It does not follow that a difference in perspective requires a deficiency in accuracy and truth.
- In fact no gospel writer makes a claim to exhaust every detail, the opposite in fact is true (see John 21:25). They are supplementary not contradictory.

John 21:25 “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

- We can also not divide the truth claims of Scripture from their historical contexts.

Excursus # 3: Truth Claims and History God Together

God revealing – tied to historical virgin birth

God redeeming – tied to historical death on a Roman cross

God reconciling – tied to historical resurrection & ascension

“The gospel of salvation may sound wonderful, but if the history in which it is all said to have happened is not correct, then how can we trust the gospel itself? The heart of the Christian message is rooted in history.”⁴¹

- Scientific claims
 - We have argued that the Bible is written in ordinary language, not technical or scientific (“sun sets”). However nothing in Scripture restricts God’s words to specific subject matter. When Scripture touches on any discipline then we must yield to its authority as true and right.
 - If God is who He says He is then He can do exactly what the Bible depicts Him doing.
 - Could God create everything out of nothing, could he place a man and a woman in a brand new garden that would have appeared to have grown up over time – with the appearance of age, yet only days old. If the genealogical material in Genesis 5 and 11 lead us to assume a young earth created with the appearance of age, is it possible that some scientific frameworks are not taking into account other possibilities?

“The history of scientific theories is full of spectacular reverses of opinion.”⁴²

2. What are the implications of inerrancy for us:

A. Inerrancy means that we can trust God fully and completely.

- The issue is whether or not a perfectly honest God is able to communicate His word in a way that is perfect and true.

I conclude that Scripture is inerrant because the personal word of God cannot be anything other than true. When he gives us propositional information – and he certainly does – that information is reliable, though expressed in ordinary, not

⁴¹ Brian H. Edwards, *Nothing But the Truth* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2007), 129.

⁴² Ibid., 130.

technical language. The written Word, further, is just as inerrant as the oral message of the prophets and apostles. And their word is just as inerrant as the divine voice itself.⁴³

“I’d find it strange to tell people that the whole Bible represents the word of God, and the word of God is completely truthful, but that parts of the Bible aren’t completely truthful.”⁴⁴

B. Inerrancy allows Scripture to speak for itself without qualification.

“Only when we doubt inerrancy do we have to invent new principles for interpreting Scripture that for convenience turn history into poetry and facts into myths.”⁴⁵

C. Inerrancy is a guardrail to the sin of unbelief

“To deny, disregard, edit, alter, reject, or rule out anything in God’s word is to commit the sin of unbelief.”

D. Inerrancy is foundational to a reliable gospel.

“We cannot offer the world a reliable gospel presented in an unreliable Scripture.”⁴⁶

One cannot doubt the Bible without far-reaching loss, both of fullness of truth and fullness of life. If therefore we have at heart spiritual renewal for society, for churches and for our own lives, we shall make much of the entire trustworthiness—that is, the inerrancy—of Holy Scripture as the inspired and liberating Word of God.⁴⁷

E. Inerrancy is foundational to the work of the church in the “Great Commission.”

Central to this ‘Great Commission’ is Jesus’ instruction that His disciples are “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20). We see in Jesus an unswerving commitment to the Word of God, a high view of Scripture, a Christ-centered understanding of the text, and His confidence that Scripture alone

⁴³ Frame, 176.

⁴⁴ Andrew Wilson, “Why I Don’t Hate the Word ‘Inerrancy,’” *The Gospel Coalition Blog*, June 23, 2013, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-i-dont-hate-the-word-inerrancy/>.

⁴⁵ Edwards, *Nothing But the Truth*, 131.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁷ J. I. Packer, *Truth and Power: The Place of Scripture in the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1996), 55.

through the power of the Spirit is enough to save and sanctify the believer. A Christian without this confidence will not make disciples but doubters.

*Cornerstone Doctrinal Statement: [from our 3 Bibliology lessons now, we can see where we get our doctrinal statement; the logical flow] "We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed."