

Bibliology
The Study of the Word of God

Introduction

1. When we think of the nature of God, it makes sense that He would choose to reveal Himself to us, and He did this in two primary ways:
 - a. General Revelation:
 - 1) Refers to God revealing general things about Himself through Creation—including what we see and experience in nature, how God acts in history, and even the internal witness He has placed into the soul of every man
 - 2) The purpose of general revelation is to reveal God’s existence and His nature:
 - a) His “**glory and the work of His hands**” (READ Psalm 19:1-2)
 - b) “**His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature**” (READ Romans 1:20)
 - 3) Limits to General Revelation:
 - a) It’s not intended to reveal everything God wants us to know about Himself
 - b) Sin interferes with our ability to interpret it correctly without divine help (READ Romans 1:21-23)
 - b. Special Revelation:
 - 1) Refers to God revealing specific things to specific people at specific times, and generally in verbal form (spoken or written)
 - 2) The purpose of special revelation is to reveal more specific and detailed knowledge about God to specific people at specific times so that we can enter into a redemptive relationship with Him
 - 3) Forms include:
 - a) Theophanies (pre-incarnate Christ): like when the Lord met Abraham by the terebinth trees of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-3, 13), when Jacob wrestled with the Lord (Genesis 32:24-25, 28-30), or when the many appearances of the Angel of the Lord
 - b) Dreams and visions: like the ones Joseph, Samuel, Daniel, Peter and Paul had
 - c) Direct communication: like God did to Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah, Abraham, and to and through the prophets
 - d) And finally, the Scriptures which is our main topic for today
 - c. So, when we declare that the Bible is God’s Word, we mean that the 66 books of the Old and New Testament are the very words of God—His special revelation given to us—so that we might enter into a personal and redemptive relationship with Him
2. Today we are going to examine four truths regarding the Bible:
 1. The Bible is God’s Word
 2. The Bible is Inspired
 3. The Bible is Inerrant
 4. The Bible is Infallible
3. We will then address why these are important to us

A. The Bible is God's Word

1. The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God:
 - a. The Old Testament: The prophets and authors of the OT repeatedly claimed that they were speaking and recording the very words of God with phrases like **"Thus says the Lord"**, **"the Lord said [or spoke]"**, **"God said"**, **"the Word of God,"** and **"the Word of the Lord"**; it's well over 3000 times!
 - 1) We see this throughout the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible (also referred to as the Law):
 - a) We see the phrase, **"God said"** repeated 15 times in just the first three chapters of Genesis followed by exactly what He said
 - b) Exodus 5:1: **"And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"**
 - c) Leviticus 1:1 opens with, **"Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them...'"** and for the next 27 chapters Moses records in written form exactly what God told Him to speak
 - d) Numbers opens with almost the exact same phrase, and in Deuteronomy Moses continually refers to what he has written as God's commands and statutes
 - 2) We see the same things in the second grouping of OT books called the Prophets, which includes Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the minor prophets:
 - a) Samuel wrote, **"The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue"** (2 Samuel 23:2)
 - b) Jeremiah 1:9: **"Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.'"**
 - c) Isaiah 6:8-9: **"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'"** Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" ⁹ He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.'"
 - d) Zechariah 1:1: **"In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying, ² 'The LORD was very angry with your fathers. ³ 'Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Return to Me,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I may return to you,' says the LORD of hosts.'"**
 - 3) When it comes to the final grouping of OT books referred to as the Writings (books like Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Esther, etc.), we don't see as many "thus says the Lord" type statements, but what we do find repeatedly are statements referring to God's Law, commandments and statutes which are references to all of the books we just discussed:
 - a) In fact, we have an entire Psalm dedicated to God's Word, Psalm 119 (which is the longest psalm at 176 verses); it begins, **"How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the Law of the LORD"** (119:1)
 - b) Proverbs 28:7: **"He who keeps the Law is a discerning son, but he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father."**

- b. What does the New Testament say about the Bible?
 - 1) Jesus referred to the OT as the Word of God (READ Matthew 15:3-7)
 - 2) The author of Hebrews did the same thing; after quoting portions of the OT, he referred to them as **“the word of God”** which is **“living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword...”** (Hebrews 4:12)
 - 3) The Gospels record the words of Jesus, and He said His words came directly from God the Father (Mark 12:36): **“for the words which You gave Me I have given to them, and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent me.”**
 - 4) Paul referred to his own writings as **“the Lord’s commandment”** (1 Corinthians 14:37): **“If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment.”**
 - 5) Peter even referred to Paul’s letters as Scripture (READ 2 Peter 3:14-16, esp. **“the rest of the Scriptures”**)
 - 6) We’ll get to these in a moment but Paul and Peter declare unequivocally that ALL Scripture is **“inspired”** by the Holy Spirit, **“God-breathed”**

2. Skeptics claim we can’t rely on the Bible’s statements about itself to prove it’s the Word of God, but how can we not when the Bible’s trustworthiness and reliability has been proven over and over and over again?
 - 1) The Bible is unparalleled in its accuracy in recording history, geography, science and in describing human behavior; in fact, not a single historical, geographical, or scientific statement in the Bible has been disproven, contrary to claims made by skeptics
 - 2) It’s impact on history, governments, nations, eras and people is unmatched; no other book or even collection of books even comes close to the Bible’s influence on culture and society
 - 3) It’s the most widely published, read, studied, and even STOLEN book in history; estimates are that in just the last 500 years since Guttenberg invented the printing press anywhere between 6 and 10 billion Bibles have been printed; and that’s just the PRINTED copies; it’s impossible to count the electronic versions that are now even more prevalent!
 - 4) And think about this: in spite of intense efforts over thousands and thousands of years by nations and governments to outlaw it, destroy it, cancel it, and irradicate all traces of it, it’s the most well-preserved book in history; not just in how accurately it’s been copied but the sheer number of ancient manuscripts that have been preserved; they number more than 30,000 while the second best ancient works preserved are those of Demosthenes and Homer which number a measly few hundred
 - 5) There has never been, and will never be, another book anything like it
 - 6) Billions of people throughout history and around the world have recognized the Bible as the Word of God because everything about it screams that it is!

B. The Bible is inspired

1. This is what makes the Bible different from every other book or writing in history
2. The orthodox theory of inspiration, and the one we hold to, is called plenary, verbal inspiration:
 - a. Every single word that the authors wrote in their original writings was the word God intended them to write
 - b. It’s not just the ideas, concepts, and thoughts that are inspired, but the very words

- c. Late 19th and early 20th century theologian Benjamin B. Warfield defined it this way: “the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit on the writers of the Scriptures so that, fully using their own personalities and writing styles, they wrote precisely what God intended them to write and therefore are God’s words as well as man’s words.”
 - d. NOTE: This applies to the original autographs, not copies or translations (that is covered under the preservation of the Scriptures)
3. This is precisely what the Bible describes in two of the most important passages we have:
- a. 2 Timothy 3:16 (READ)
 - 1) The Greek word translated here as “**inspired**” is theopneustos
 - 2) It’s two Greek words stuck together: theo for God and pneustos meaning to breathe or blow: so, a literal translation would be “**all Scripture is God-breathed...**”
 - 3) In other words, Scripture is the very breath of God
 - b. 2 Peter 1:19-21 (READ):
 - 1) Peter starts with what Scripture is not:
 - a) Scripture did not come from man’s own understanding: “**no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation**”:
 - 1) Interpretation here is not referring to interpreting Scripture like we the word or phrase
 - 2) Rather, Peter is referring to Scripture coming from the writers own understanding or explanation of things
 - 3) The NET renders this, “**No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet’s own imagination**”
 - b) Scripture was not produced “**by an act of human will**”: in other words, the writers of the Bible weren’t the initiators of what they wrote
 - 2) Now, Peter tells us what Scripture is using three important phrases (ESV): “**but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**”:
 - a) The first is “**Men spoke from God**”—this means that God is both the source and the originator of Scripture (not from man’s imagination or will as per above):
 - In Luke 1:70, Zacharias said that God spoke “**by the mouth of the holy prophets from of old**” (as he quoted David from Psalm 106:10)
 - Twice in Acts 3 Peter said that God spoke “**by the mouth of His holy prophets**” (3:18, 21)
 - b) The second is “**as they were carried along**”:
 - The word “carried” (moved in the NASB) at its root refers to bearing or carrying something and it’s used in this way to describe Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus’ cross (Luke 23:26)
 - However, it has a wide range of usages in the NT (at least 12) including to drive or carry along
 - Luke and James both use it in this way to describe how ships are carried along by the wind (Acts 27:17; James 3:4)

- This is what Peter is describing here; the writers of the Scriptures spoke from God as they were carried along in much the same way the wind fills the sails of ships and moves them along the sea
- c) The third is **“by the Holy Spirit”**
- Throughout the Bible, prophesy is linked to the Holy Spirit; this is seen in a spectacular sense when people prophesy after He comes upon them (Numbers 11:25; 1 Samuel 10:10; 19:20, 23; Nehemiah 9:30; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:4; 19:6)
 - One of His roles as the third Person of the Trinity is to communicate God’s Truth to us (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.”**

C. The Bible is inerrant

1. Inerrancy refers to the Bible’s truthfulness
2. The simplest definition is that the Bible is wholly and completely without error, not just in matters of faith and practice, but in every statement it makes including historical and scientific matters.
3. We know the Bible is true in every way because God cannot lie:
 - a. Numbers 23:19: **“God is not a man, that He should lie,”**
 - b. Hebrews 6:18 says, **“it is impossible for God to lie...”**
 - c. Listen to what Paul writes in this regard as it relates to what God reveals in His Word (Titus 1:1-3): **“Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, 3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,”**
4. The Bible attests to its inerrancy/truthfulness:
 - a. Psalm 119 states **“Your word is very pure”** (140), **“Your Law is truth”** (142), **“all Your commandments are truth”** (151), and **“the sum of Your word is truth”** (160)
 - b. Psalm 19:7 says, **“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple”**
 - 1) Perfect means it’s entirely in accord with truth and fact
 - 2) Sure means it’s verified, confirmed
 - c. Nehemiah wrote, **“You came down on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven; You gave them just ordinance and true laws, good statutes and commandments”** (Nehemiah 9:13)
 - d. Paul wrote in Romans 2:20 that **“in the Law [we have] the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth”**
 - e. He wrote to Timothy, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth”** (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - f. In the garden, Jesus prayed to God on behalf of His disciples and said, **“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”** (John 17:17)

5. Some claim that the Bible is only true when it comes to matters of faith and practice, but not science or history, but this not only ignores the nature of God, but defies what is constantly revealed in science and archeology:
 - a. The Bible made scientific statements regarding the earth, ocean, stars and planets, the universe, light, plants and animals, human biology, psychology, and behavior, health and hygiene, disease, and a host of other things long before they were proven by science
 - b. The same is true of history; over and over and over again archeology continues to prove the accuracy of the Bible in regard to historical events, times, people, and places

D. The Bible is infallible

1. Infallibility is closely related to inerrancy, and often the words are mistakenly used interchangeably, but they are not the same:
 - a. Inerrancy refers to the Bible's truthfulness (it is completely without error)
 - b. Infallibility refers to the Bible's trustworthiness (it is ***incapable*** of erring or misleading)
2. You can have inerrancy without infallibility, but not the other way around:
 - a. In other words, you can tell the truth, but still mislead
 - b. For instance, I could say my wife is a drinker; this is true but it implies she regularly consumes alcohol, which is untrue; she drinks water and carbonated beverages
 - c. So, the Bible is not only doesn't contain any errors of fact, but it doesn't mislead in any form or fashion; in fact, as God's Word it is incapable of doing so because He is
3. The Bible attests to its trustworthiness:
 - a. READ Isaiah 55:10-11
 - b. Proverbs 30:5 (ESV): **"Every word of God proves true..."**
 - c. Psalm 12:6: **"The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." (NET: **"the LORD'S words are absolutely reliable"**)**
 - d. Psalm 18:30 (ESV): **"This God-- his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true"**
 - e. 2 Samuel 22:31: **"...the word of the LORD is tested" (NKJV: **"is proven"**)**
 - f. Peter wrote, **"So, we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place..." (2 Peter 1:19)**
4. One of the greatest proofs of the infallibility of the Bible is its prediction and fulfillment of prophecy:
 - a. Depending on how you count them, there are over 1800 prophecies in the Bible (~1200 in the OT and ~600 in the NT); that's almost 30 percent of the Bible!
 - b. Over half have already been fulfilled exactly as the Bible described
 - c. There are 300 that apply to Christ alone, and most of these have been fulfilled
5. There is no question that the Scriptures are infallible; they are the most reliable source of truth ever produced

E. One final note regarding inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility

1. I alluded to this earlier but all three of these apply directly to what we call the original autographs, but only indirectly to our English translations:

- a. For instance, Paul’s original hand-written letter to the Romans was inspired, completely without errors, and infallible
 - b. However, the process of copying and translating that letter over the last 2000 years was not inspired in the same sense as the original letter, and the process was prone to human errors and mistakes
2. This does not mean that our Bible today is not the Word of God; it is because of something referred to as the preservation of the Scriptures:
- a. The Bible promises that God would preserve His Word:
 - 1) David wrote in Psalm 12:6-7 that God would preserve His Word from his generation to forever
 - 2) Isaiah 40:8 says, **“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God will stand forever”**
 - 3) Jesus said that not one jot or tittle would pass from God’s Word until everything is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18)
 - b. While we may not have Moses’ original copy of Genesis, or Paul’s original letter to the Romans, what we do have are tens of thousands of ancient manuscripts which when compared to one another reveal an incredible amount of accuracy in preserving the original text:
 - 1) There are only slight differences between the manuscripts--less than 1% of the text in the entire Bible; the other 99% of the text is identical between the manuscripts!
 - 2) Most of the differences are extremely minor—spelling, variances in words, etc.—and they almost never change the meaning or intent of the passage
 - 3) Almost all the differences can be explained, and the original text identified
 - c. So, even though the human process of copying the Bible wasn’t absolutely perfect, as R. A. Torrey wrote, the English translations we have today “are the inerrant Word of God just to that extent that they are an accurate rendering of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, and to all practical intents and purposes they are a thoroughly accurate rendering of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given.” (The Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith, 36–37)

F. Why is the topic of bibliology important to us?
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1. For one, it assures us that the Bible is God’s very Word—it’s not the word of man
2. Second, it assures us that we can trust the Bible, not just in matters of faith, doctrine, and practice, but for all of life
3. Third, it assures us that we have God’s supreme and final authority in such things
4. READ 2 Peter 1:2-8