

# Christian Doctrine

## The Inspired Word of God (Part 2)

### II Timothy 3:16-17

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# Christian Doctrine

## The Inspired Word of God (Part 2)

### II Timothy 3:16-17

#### INTRODUCTION:

In our day, to say that you believe that the Bible is inspired by God and without error in all that it affirms puts you in league with the folks in the Flat Earth Society. Especially in a university town, we expose ourselves to ridicule to go on record as saying that we believe that the Bible is completely true and without error.

Many who claim to be evangelicals will not affirm the Bible to be without error. Many professors in evangelical colleges do not accept the biblical account of creation as true. Some believe that there are historical errors in the Bible and contradictions between parallel accounts. A few have gone so far as to say that the Bible errs on doctrinal and moral issues, such as Paul's teaching on the role of women or his condemnation of homosexuality. They advocate reinterpreting these issues in light of modern knowledge.

These critics maintain that inerrancy is not all that important. The real issue is a person's relationship to Jesus Christ. They argue that to hold to inerrancy is not scholastic and it imposes the standards of accuracy on the **authors** of Scripture. They suggest that It is a standard that the authors, being human, could not accomplish.

#### All Stand and Read Scripture

##### **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB95)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

#### Prayer

Is the inerrancy of the Bible a trivial issue? **Definitely not!** If the Bible errs on some historical facts, then how do we know that it is accurate on other historical events, such as Christ's virgin birth, His death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, and His ascension? If we cannot be sure of the historical accuracy of the Bible, how can we know anything about Jesus? The Jesus of the Bible could then just be a fictional character invented by the early church.

The main problem is that if we say that there are errors in the Bible, then we set ourselves up as judges over the Bible. Thus we do not have to submit to its authority. We are free to pick and choose what we wish to obey. Over 100 years ago, the British preacher, Charles Spurgeon saw this clearly. He pointed out that faith that accepts one word of God and rejects another is not faith in God at all, but rather, faith in one's own judgment and preferences.

But must we then take a blind leap of faith with regard to biblical inerrancy? Must we refuse to recognize or wrestle with problems in the Bible? Or are there good reasons to trust the Bible? I believe that there are. I want to explore the proposition that...

You can trust the Bible because it is God's Word and it is without error in all its teaching.

## **BODY:**

### **I. The Bible is God's Word.**

"**All Scripture is inspired by God.**" As we saw last week, it is God-breathed. The phrase means breathed out by God, which is to say that...

#### **A. God is the Originator of the Bible.**

The Bible did not come from the best religious ideas of the apostles or prophets. It originated when God spoke to them and they wrote down the words of Scripture. This is not to say that God dictated the words of the Bible. Obviously, He used the personalities and styles of the various human authors. But God originated it and thus the final product is preserved from error.

There is one verse which gives us a hint on how God accomplished the process of inspiration.

#### **2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB95)**

<sup>20</sup> But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of one's own interpretation*, <sup>21</sup> for no prophecy was ever made by an **act of human will**, but men **moved** by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The word "**moved**" is used in **Acts 27:15-17** to describe the effect of strong winds upon Paul's ship. Luke says that the ship was "**driven along**" by the wind, meaning that it was no longer under the control of the sailors, but of the wind. So just as the disciples were on the lake but not in control, so the human authors of Scripture were writing using their personalities and styles, but not in control. The Holy Spirit moved the authors so that the words they wrote were the words God intended. The scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

#### **John 16:13 (NASB95)**

<sup>13</sup> 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.

The Bible **is** the Word of God. When we read the Bible, we are actually **hearing** God speak **directly** to us.

At this point a critic might accuse me of making a circular argument. I am saying that the Bible is the inspired Word of God because the Bible says so. But anybody can make a claim like that and it doesn't prove a thing. So how do we **verify** whether or not the Bible's claim is true?

#### **B. We Must Approach the Bible Properly.**

If you do not humble yourself before God and ask Him to open your spiritually blind eyes, you will not be able to understand His truth.

### **1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB95)**

<sup>14</sup> But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Another explanation is found in II Corinthians concerning **how** they are blinded.

### **2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (NASB95)**

<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> in whose case the **god of this world has blinded the minds** of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

But the good news is promised to us by Christ. Jesus said...

### **John 7:17 (NASB95)**

<sup>17</sup> If anyone is willing to **do** His will, (another reference to an active faith) **he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.**

In other words, the **real** issue is being willing to **submit** to God. If you come to the Bible to find fault with it and to provide yourself with excuses to continue in rebellion against God, you **will** find **hypothetical** errors. But if you come in submission to God, with the desire to follow His ways, you will find solutions to most of the difficulties.

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

There was an article written in *Christianity Today* on 10/7/88, p. 23 from a late theologian named Kenneth Kantzer.

He had a friend whose mother was killed. Kantzer first heard about her death through a trusted mutual friend who reported that the woman had been standing on the street corner, was hit by a bus, was fatally injured and died a few minutes later. A short time later he heard from the dead woman's grandson that she was riding in a car that was in a collision, she was thrown from the car and killed instantly. The boy was quite certain of his facts. Which story was correct?

If you did not like or trust the grandson, you would conclude that the boy was confused and that the first account was the correct one. Or, if you had a problem with the first man, you could believe the boy's account. Or, you could scoff at both accounts and say that obviously they contradict one another, so neither story is true. Your approach to the credibility of the witnesses would greatly affect your conclusion.

Dr. Kantzer later learned from the dead woman's daughter that her mother had been waiting for a bus, was hit by another bus and critically injured. A passing motorist put her in his car and sped off to the hospital. En route, he was in a collision in which the injured woman was thrown from the car and killed instantly. Both accounts were literally true!

Let's apply that story to the problem of harmonizing some of the seeming contradictions in the gospel accounts, such as Peter's denials or the resurrection narratives. If you approach the problems as a skeptic, you may quickly conclude, "There are errors in the

Bible." I think that is an unscholarly and arrogant approach for several reasons. First, the different accounts make it obvious that the various authors were not fabricating a story in collusion with one another, or they would have ironed out these apparent differences. Second, we have no reason to doubt the integrity of these eyewitness accounts. Third, since they were there and I was not and since they are truthful men of integrity (as the totality of their writings shows), I would need strong, compelling evidence to say that they are in error, even if I cannot harmonize the accounts.

The proper approach does not make all the difficulties in the Bible disappear. There are some issues that arise because of translation issues and there are some other tough problems to resolve, however, there are not nearly as many as critics allege. But the crucial issue is how you approach those problems. You do not come to the holy God of the universe as a scoffer or skeptic and expect for Him to meet you on your terms. You must come acknowledging your need for understanding of spiritual truth. If you come to Him with a submissive, obedient spirit of faith in Jesus Christ, He will reveal to you the truth of His Word. You will grow to discover that...

## II. The Bible is Without Error in All Its Teaching

This is the heart of the issue. If there are errors in the Bible, then how can we trust it? How can we be sure that the Bible is without error? There are two ways to reason:

### A. Deductive Evidence:

One can make the conclusion that the God of truth would not inspire **error** by **deductive** reasoning. A **deductive argument** consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion that stems from the two premises. Any deductive argument is only as good as its premises. If a premise is faulty, then the conclusion is invalid. This argument would not prove anything to a skeptic, but it ought to carry some weight with those who agree that the Bible is inspired by God.

It goes like this: **Major premise:** God is a God of truth. **Minor premise:** All of the scriptures were inspired by God. **Conclusion:** The Scriptures are God's truth.

A second line of deductive reasoning goes as follows: **Major premise:** Jesus Christ believed and taught that the Bible is trustworthy and without error. **Minor premise:** I believe in and follow Jesus Christ. **Conclusion:** I must believe that the Bible is trustworthy and without error. To me, this is one of the strongest arguments for the total reliability of the Bible. Everything that Jesus Christ said with reference to the Scriptures shows that He had implicit trust in the totality of Scripture as the authoritative and reliable Word of God.

Often Jesus referred to the Scriptures as the authority for His actions. He assumed that if Scripture said it, that settled it. In His temptation by Satan, Jesus responded each time with, "It is written" and then quoted Scripture. He often refuted the Jewish leaders by referring to Scripture. He also said that all the Scriptures bore witness to Him.

Do you remember the story of the two men on the road to Emmaus? This was after Jesus had risen from the dead and "He approached and began traveling with them".

### **Luke 24:25-27 (NASB95)**

**25** 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?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Wouldn't it have been fun to have accompanied them and heard the entire conversation?

Jesus also believed in the factual **historicity** of the Scriptures. He acknowledged that Adam and Eve **were** created and referred to them as real people, not myths. He also made many other references to Old Testament people and events. Clearly, He saw them as true history, not as fiction.

Jesus also believed the very words and even letters of Scripture to be authoritative, reliable, and significant. He upheld the Law and Prophets, which is a reference to the entire Old Testament, and said that it will all be fulfilled, down to the smallest letter or stroke.

### **Matthew 5:17-18 (NASB95)**

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest **letter** or **stroke** shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

The smallest Hebrew **letter** is **yod**, which looks like an English apostrophe. The **stroke** is in reference to a small extension that distinguishes the 4<sup>th</sup> Hebrew letter of the alphabet named "**daleth**" from the 20<sup>th</sup> letter named "**resh**". His point is that even the most minute details of God's Word are reliable and accurate.

Jesus also taught that His own words were the authoritative, trustworthy word of God. Listen to what He told His disciples in Jerusalem just before the last supper.

### **John 12:49-50 (NASB95)**

<sup>49</sup> For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment *as to* what to say and what to speak. <sup>50</sup> I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

Obviously, Jesus affirmed all of the Old Testament and His own words as being the word of God, totally reliable and accurate not only in spiritual matters, but in factual and historical matters as well. If we claim to be followers of Christ, we must follow Him in affirming the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

## **B. Inductive Evidence:**

One can make the conclusion that the Bible has been authenticated as accurate **prophetically**, **historically**, and **scientifically** by deductive reasoning.

Whole books have been written on each of these points, so I can only skim the surface. There are hundreds of **prophecies** in the Bible that were made, in some cases hundreds of years before they were fulfilled, with too much specific detail to be mere coincidence. For example, **Daniel 11** reads like a history of the 300 years that followed Daniel's lifetime. He also predicted the succession of four great world powers: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The stunning precision of these prophecies has led liberal critics, who disregard the miraculous to be fiction, say that Daniel had to be written after the fact. However, there are solid, scholarly reasons for believing that the book was written in the sixth century B.C. as claimed.



But the most amazing prophecies are those relating to Christ. As Jesus, Himself, said, the Scriptures bear witness of Him. Scholars say that there are over 300 specific Old Testament prophecies relating to the person of Christ such as where He would be born, that He would enter Jerusalem riding on a colt of a donkey, His death by crucifixion hundreds of years before that was known as a means of execution, that He would raise from the dead after three days, and many, many others,

## ILLUSTRATION:

A math professor Peter Stoner took just eight of the prophecies that Christ fulfilled and calculated conservatively that the odds of these prophecies being fulfilled in one man just by chance would be one in 10 to the 17th power! He illustrated this number by saying that if you took that many silver dollars, they would cover the state of Texas two feet deep. Mark one, stir it thoroughly into the whole mass, blindfold a man and let him travel as far and long over the state as he wishes. He must, in one try, pick that **one** silver dollar. Those are the odds that Jesus could, by chance, have fulfilled **just eight** of the prophecies made about Him. And there are over 300!

In spite of numerous critical scholars who have attempted to disprove the **historical** accuracy of the Bible, none have succeeded. One familiar example concerns the Hittite people, mentioned often in the Old Testament. Skeptics in the 19th century scoffed at the Bible's mentioning this race, since there was no corroborating evidence that such a people existed in history. Then, in 1906, the Hittite capital was uncovered about 90 miles east of Ankara, Turkey, silencing the critics on that point.

Although the Bible is not a science textbook and should not be pushed beyond its intended purpose, there are no **proven scientific** inaccuracies in the Bible. Obviously, the Bible sometimes uses poetic language and figures of speech that are not intended to be taken literally. We need to be careful **not** to lean on the current understanding of modern science as if it were inerrant since it consistently has been proven wrong only to be revised once again. The Bible, rightly interpreted, is inerrant. What the scientists are **actually** doing is looking at God's creation and making scientific conclusions. They just will not accept that **reality**. We can rest in the fact that there are no proven scientific inaccuracies in the Bible, even though it was written thousands of years before modern science.

## CONCLUSION:

Jesus and the apostles did not regard Scripture as erroneous or self-contradictory. **Neither can we!** They took its miracles and prophecies as literal fact. **So must we!** They regarded Scripture written by Moses, David, and all the other inspired writers as coming from God. **We must follow their lead!** They believed that the events recorded in the Bible happened as real history. We can do no less!

These are solid reasons why you can trust the Bible. You must read with a willingness to follow Christ. When you do, you will find that Jesus **is** who He claimed to be, God in human flesh, who gave Himself as the penalty for our sins.

If you are a Christian struggling with doubts, you can trust the Bible over and above all modern claims to truth. It speaks accurately and authoritatively to the problems we all grapple with. The Bible is a life-changing book. I invite you to commit yourself afresh to read it, study it, and apply its teachings to your life. **You can count your life on it!**

**What a Day That Will Be.**