

Week Three

The Authority of Scripture

The Inerrancy of Scripture

The Authority of Scripture

- First of four chapters on the characteristics of scripture
 - **Authority**
 - Clarity
 - Necessity
 - Sufficiency
- The authority of scripture means that all the words in scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve any word of scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God



All the Words of Scripture are God's Words

- Claimed by scripture itself throughout the Old Testament
 - “Thus says the Lord”
 - They are claiming that their words are the absolutely authoritative words of God
 - Num 22:38, Deut 18:18-20, Jer 1:9; 14:14, 23:16-22, 29:31-32, Exek 2:7, 13:1-16
 - Does not directly apply to every verse
- New Testament attributes all of the Old Testament to the same level of authority
 - 2 Tim 3:16 (All scripture (*graphe*))
 - 2 Peter 1:21 (OT prophecies)
 - Matt 4:4 (from the mouth of God – Isaiah 7:14)
 - Acts 1:16 (the Holy Spirit spoke to David – Psalm 69)
 - There's many more...

What About the New Testament?

- 2 Peter 3:16
 - “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”
 - His = Paul
- 1 Timothy 5:18
 - “For the Scripture says, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”
 - See Luke 10:7 for the second quote
- 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.”
 - Paul’s writings = the Lord’s commandment
- 1 Corinthians 7:12
 - “But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.”
 - Jesus had no teaching on this subject, so Paul used his words (putting his words on the same level as Jesus’)

We are Convinced if We Want to Hear

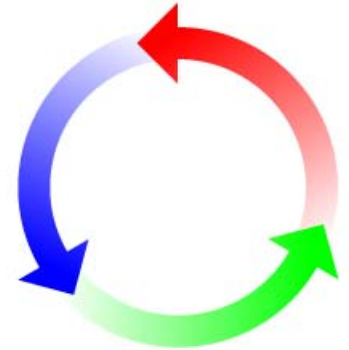
- It's one thing for the bible to claim to be God's word, but another thing to actually be God's word
- 1 Corinthians 2:14
 - “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”
- John 10:27
 - “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;”

All the Words of Scripture are God's Words

- “Other” Evidence
 - Historical accuracy
 - Internally consistent
 - Contains prophecies fulfilled hundreds of years later
 - Influenced the course of human history more than any other book
 - Continues to change the lives of millions
- Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-1646)
 - “...our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (chapter 1, paragraph 3)
- The Bible is “Self-Attesting”

Circular Argument Objection

- Example
 - Joe is always right
 - Joe says that he is always right
- Conclusion – anyone / thing that claims to be of the highest authority is automatically creating a circular argument (that does not make it untrue)
- Sin effects our logic
 - Makes us ultimately irrational
 - Distorts our perception on reality
 - Hence, we do not recognize scripture for what it really is



Does this Mean Every Word Was Dictated by God?

- God used a variety of processes
 - Revelation 2:1 – John was told to write
 - Isaiah 38:4-6 – what Isaiah heard (in a vision)
 - Hebrews 1:1 – “in many and various ways”
 - Luke 1:1-3 – Gathering historical information
- Did the author influence what was written?
 - “God’s providential oversight and direction of the life of each author...were all exactly what God wanted them to be, so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were full their own words but also fully the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as His own.” (Page 81)

Truthfulness of Scripture

- God cannot lie
 - Titus 1:2
 - Hebrews 6:18
- Conclusions
 - All scripture is completely without error
 - All scripture is the ultimate standard of truth
 - New facts will never contradict the scripture
 - Written scripture is the final authority
 - To disbelieve or disobey any word of scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God Himself

The Inerrancy of Scripture

- “Inerrancy of scripture means that scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact” (page 91)
- Or, more simply: “the Bible always tell the truth...concerning everything it talks about” (page 91)

The Inerrancy of Scripture

- The Bible can be inerrant and still speak in the ordinary language of everyday speech
 - From the standpoint of the speaker (sun rises & falls)
 - Limits on truthfulness depends on the degree of precision implied
- The Bible can be inerrant and still include loose or free quotations
 - “(in NT times) an accurate citation of another person needed to include only a correct representation of the context of what the person said” (page 92)
 - “In the ancient Middle East, anywhere from ten to forty percent of any given retelling of sacred tradition could vary from one occasion to the next.” (*The Case for Christ*, page 43)
- It is consistent with inerrancy to have unusual or uncommon grammatical constructions in the Bible

Inerrancy vs. Infallibility

- Infallibility
 - Used to mean the same as inerrant (up to about 1960)
 - Now is used in a weaker sense that the Bible will not lead us astray in matters of faith and practice
- That's not what the Bible says
 - No restrictions – 2 Tim 3:16, Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119:96
 - Affirms itself – Acts 24:14, Luke 24:25, Romans 15:4, 1 Cor 10:11
 - The Bible records instances of people reference minute details of situations (see pages 93 & 94 for numerous examples)
- Do not mistake the *major* purpose of scripture as the *total* purpose of scripture
 - Major – faith & practice
 - Total – to say everything that it does say

But “Inerrancy” Isn’t in the Bible!

- Many terms are used to describe theological situations that are not in scripture
 - Trinity
 - Incarnation
 - Transubstantiation
- No other word has ever been proposed to mean the same thing
- See for reference – “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”, Appendix 1 (pages 1203-1207)

We Have No Inerrant Manuscripts!

- We believe in the Inerrant Original Manuscripts
 - What we have are thousands of copies of the originals
 - 99% of Bible solid sets of copies
 - 1% differing variants
 - all noted in your Bible
 - No major doctrine is based on the 1%

Questions

- What are your answers to this weeks questions?
- What are the limits to Biblical Authority? Are there limits?
- What about the “jot and tiddle”?

Reading For Next Week

- Chapter 6
 - The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (2) Clarity
- Chapter 7
 - The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (3) Necessity
- Chapter 8
 - The Four Characteristics of Scripture: (4) Sufficiency