

# Bibliology

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# 1 Revelation from God

## 1.1 General

1. God of the Bible is a God who communicates

Heb. 1:1-2. God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . .

2. Needs to distinguish between general and special revelation

3. General revelation

(a) Psalm 19 and Romans 1:18-23 attest that the author of the Bible and the creator of this universe are one and the same

Psa. 19:1-14. The heavens declare the glory of God . . . 7  
The law of the Lord is perfect

Rom. 1:18-23. . . since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made . . .

(b) God is in the center stage to show His presence. He is like a movie director, although invisible, fills the movie

(c) Bible calls atheist as fools in the sense their moral judgment is foolish

Psa. 14:1. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." . . .

(d) Creation reveals the existence of God and some His attributes (e.g. omnipotence).

(e) However, this is very very limited. It does not say who is that God and what He expect from us.

#### 4. Special revelation

(a) Reveals who is that God and what He expects from us.

(b) Reveals about sin, curse, salvation, judgment, eternity, etc.

(c) Bible claims it is the only true and accurate revelation of God.

## 1.2 Need to interpret Bible

1. Some say 'don't interpret, just read it.' This is an untenable position because translators already interpreted.

2. Purpose of interpretation is not to come up with any new meaning never found by anyone but to get the plain meaning of the scripture.

3. Then why not simply read? Answer is yes in one sense, but truly it is naive because:

(a) Nature of the books obscures the plain meaning

(b) Nature of the reader imparts bias in understanding

4. Requirement while we read the Scripture:

(a) We needs to understand its meaning

(b) We needs to ensure that we understood what the author intended

5. Reasons why we don't understand the plain author intended meaning?

(a) **The nature of the Scripture:** The biblical world is far from our world in time and space which creates barriers in understanding the meaning of what we read

(b) **The nature of Revelation:** God's word has eternal relevance, but also has a historic particularity which is conditioned by language, culture, etc.

- (c) **The nature of the reader:** We bring our background (bias) into what we read. It is impossible to read bible without any bias – possible only for an ignorant person. E.g. we already have some understanding of words like cross, church, worship, slave, flesh, etc. before we read bible which need not be what the bible intends.

## 6. Few aspects of Bible

- (a) It is written in human language
- (b) It is possible to communicate spiritual truths in human language
- (c) It is the Holy Spirit who inspires the human author
- (d) It is the same Holy Spirit who illuminates us with the truths of the scripture
- (e) We are the secondary recipients of the Bible
- (f) How the primary recipients understood is key for our understanding (Illus: Do you have paper?)

## 7. Dangerous reading of Bible: Pick and Choose/ Out of context

- (a) Woman should not wear jeans

**Duet. 22:5.** A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God

- (b) Houses should have parapets

**Duet. 22:8.** When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it

- (c) Woman should not wear ornaments

**I Pet. 3:3.** Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart

...

## 1.3 Can we know God?

1. **Incomprehensibility of God:** Man cannot know everything about God because God is infinite and we are finite

Job 11:7. Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?

Isa. 40:18.. To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?

2. **Knowability of God:** Man can know God, but not everything about God. Man can know God to the extent He reveals.

John 14:7. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also ...

John 17:3. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ ...

1. John. 5:20. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true ...

3. **God expects a relational knowledge:** This means:

- (a) Facts about God (Illus: I know lot about the President, but that is not personal)
- (b) Personal (Illus. Child know father personally, but not many facts about him)
- (c) True relationship involves both facts and personal
- (d) Cyclic nature: More the facts, better desire for personal and the more personal, the better desire for facts

4. **Knowing God is possible:**

- (a) God takes initiative and man can know God to the extend He reveals

- (b) Language of communication - Human language, part of creation is sufficient to know God
- (c) However, it has limitations (e.g. what happened at tower of Babel)
- (d) We are created in the image of God. Hence can know Him and able to relate to Him.
- (e) Illus. Camera film can respond to light, but not other objects
- (f) Man has the ability to understand meaning of words, logic, common sense etc.
- (g) Sin affects this process to some great extent
- (h) Holy Spirit indwells in us helps us to discern truth from error
- (i) Shows light on salvation (Jh. 17:3), growth (Jh. 7:17), judgment (Heb. 10:26), worship (Rom. 11:3)

## 2 Inspiration

### 2.1 Statement of faith

1. Inspiration is the faith in the verbal, plenary, infallible, unlimited, inerrant, inspiration of the Bible.
2. Verbal: all words are inspired
3. Plenary: all parts of the Bible are inspired
4. Infallible: Accurate in its spiritual claim
5. Unlimited: All aspects of including science, history, archaeology
6. Inerrant: Free from error, especially factual error
7. Inspiration: God breathed or God given

## **2.2 2 Tim 3:16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**

### 1. Entire Scripture is inspired

The word Scripture is used 51 times in the Bible

It refers to entire or portions of OT/NT

Luke 24:45, John 10:35 refers to entire OT

Luke 4:21 refers to some portions of OT

1 Tim 5:18 combines NT (Lk 10:7) and OT (Deut 24:15) and refers both to Scripture

2 Pet 3:16 refers to a large portion of NT and it indicates early acceptance by church

### 2. Entire Bible is God-breathed

Greek construct indicates that God is the active agent and Bible is passive

Bible originated as an action of God

### 3. Entire Bible is profitable

Not to be kept in the book shelf

Useful in teaching, reproof, correction, restoring

## **2.3 2 Pet. 1:21. for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit**

1. Holy Spirit's role (Act 27:15): God directed and moved the human heart  
The sailors were not inactive and not asleep Human authors played an active role

**Acts 27:15.** So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let her drive

2. Note: It is not the human will that produced the Bible. Otherwise, Bible could have errors. It is the will of God that moved or used human will to produce Bible. Hence, Bible is error free.
3. It was spoken by men. It was directed by the Holy Spirit.

## 2.4 1 Cor. 2:3. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling

1. Not only the thoughts were inspired
2. Some think words could be erroneous, but the thoughts are error free
3. But, the actual words of the Bible is inspired
4. God used naturally (epistles, history, etc.) and supernaturally (Revelation)

## 2.5 Material for the Bible

1. Came directly from God. E.g. two tablets containing ten commandments
2. Research materials Luke 1:1-4
3. Prophetic (1/4th of the Bible is prophetic, some fulfilled, the rest yet to be full-filled)
4. Historical material like Acts, Joshua
5. Other sources:
  - Lies of Satan Gen 3:4-5
  - Quotes from secular poets tit 1:12
  - Personal/emotional Rom. 9:1-3
6. Note: God is the (divine) author without violating the (human) author's freedom of expression

## 2.6 Definition of Inspiration

1. 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
2. Superintend: sometime it is very direct and sometimes less, but always guarded the authors
3. Composed: Writers were not passive stenographers to whom God dictated, but they were active writers
4. Without error: Bible makes an incredible claims that it is error free. John 17:17
5. Inspiration can attributed only to the original writings, and not to the copies or translation, however accurate they may be

## 3 Wrong notions of Inspiration

### 3.1 Natural inspiration

1. The writers of the Bible were natural genius and they conceived the idea and they wrote
2. This sort of inspiration can be applied to books other than Bible (Shakespeare).
3. So, there is no qualitative difference between all the writings and every part of the Scripture.
4. Response: If Bible is like any other book, then how to claim inerrant? Further, why should subject to its authority?

### 3.2 Mystical inspiration

1. Similar to natural inspiration, but the writers were also spirit-filled

2. Inspiration apply to books written by many other Christian writers as well
3. Response: If every (Christian) book is inspired and no different from the Scripture, then Bible cannot be claimed [infallible](#).

### 3.3 Partial Inspiration

1. The whole Bible is inspired, but some part more inspired and some less
2. Deuteronomy is more inspired than Chronicles
3. Gospels are more inspired than Acts
4. Some think, there are parts in the bible that are not necessarily inspired  
Genealogy, historical accounts etc. can be inferred from other document  
Hence, those parts are not inspired  
Prophecies cannot be inferred from other sources, hence they are inspired
5. They teach Bible is inspired in its purpose, not facts  
Purpose of Bible is to lead people to God and salvation  
This purpose is inspired
6. Bible is inspired in its intent but not in the content
7. Response: Salvation concept cannot be separated from the historical facts. If historicity of crucifixion is not correct, then our salvation is false. If Jesus Christ cannot be traced as the descended of Adam, how can he be our substitute.

### 3.4 Concept Inspiration

1. God inspired the concepts, and writer chooses the words to write

2. Hence, the concepts of the Bible is inspired but not words, words can be erroneous
3. Response:  
How the concepts are expressed? Through words only  
Change the words, meanings are changed

### 3.5 Barthian Inspiration

1. Proposed by Karl Barth (1886-1968), a very influential theologian
2. His views are dangerous: for he identifies as an evangelical but speaks liberal views
3. Jesus is the center of God's circle of revelation; Bible is on the periphery of that circle
4. Bible witness to Christ, but that witness is uneven in the Scripture
5. Even the important portions of scripture may have errors
6. The verses like 2 Tim 3:14-17, 2 Pet 1:21 etc. are understood as:  
The act of revelation in which the prophets and apostles in their humanity became what they were, and in which alone they in their humanity can also become for us what they are (Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics)  
It means just like authors were imperfect, and God used them, so also the Scripture is imperfect, but God can use it teach about Christ and salvation  
Bible becomes Word of God when Christ speaks to us though its pages
7. Bible has instrumental authority and no inherent authority
8. Response:  
It is true that Word of God points to Christ.  
But, all we know about Christ is from Word of God  
If the Word of God has errors, then the Christ that it portrays is not the true Christ!

## 3.6 Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

1. Verbal inspiration: In the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used and the human writers' characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error.
2. Plenary inspiration: Accuracy is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority
3. This preserves the dual authorship in a perfect balance
  - (a) God commanded in Matthew 15:4 is same as Moses said in Mark 7:10
  - (b) God said in Psalm 110:1 compared with David said in Mark 12:36, 37
  - (c) God said in Isaiah 6:9, 10 compared with Acts 28:25

# 4 The Inerrancy of the Bible

## 4.1 Importance

1. Is it possible to be a believer and believe that Bible has error? Answer is yes, because many are so. Response: However, the question to such is: if Bible contains some errors, however few or many, how can one be sure that his understanding of Christ is correct?
2. Some say Bible do not have any major errors and only some minor errors. Response: First, who decides something is minor or major? Second, if one admit minor error, then it creates suspicion about even the major. (Ills: Husband says only one lie in an year)
3. Examples of so called errors in the Bible
  - (a) Denial of historical fall of Adam

- (b) Denial of Jonah in the belly of this fish
- (c) Denial of Mosaic authorship of Pentateuch
- (d) Denial of single authorship of the Isaiah
- (e) Denial of personal sin (liberation theology)

4. Lifestyle errors that follow denial of inerrancy

- (a) Loose view of adultery
- (b) Loose view of homosexuality
- (c) Loose view of divorce
- (d) Loose view of the role of woman

5. Some say inerrancy is unimportant, irrelevant, or unnecessary to the faith because bible does not teach it clearly:

Response: What you mean by 'clearly'? Does bible teach the doctrine of trinity or doctrine the deity and humanity of Jesus clearly? If so, to that extend, Bible also teaches its inerrancy.

Note: Bible teaches doctrines clearly by means of proof texts, deduction, induction, implication, logic, or principles

6. Since inerrancy is attributed to the original manuscript, and since we do not have any original manuscript, the doctrine of inerrancy is only theoretical.

Response: But all cardinal doctrines are derived from the copies only and hence if the copies are erroneous then any doctrine could be erroneous

7. Some say, it is a very recent doctrine (Warfield in last century) and the early church was not concerned and so we need not be concerned about it, Response:

- (a) First, truth is truth, whether it was stated early or not
- (b) Second, Jesus and Paul stated them in the NT
- (c) Third, many church fathers and reformers believed it, for example:

- i. Augustine: most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books
- ii. Aquinas: nothing false can underlie the literal sense of the Scripture
- iii. Luther: The scriptures have never erred
- iv. Wesley: if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may well be a thousand. If there is one falsehood in that Book it did not come from the God of truth

## 4.2 Meaning of inerrancy

1. Those who believe bible has error will say like this: Bible is infallible, but not inerrant. That is there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible, but I have found none on the matters of faith and practice.
2. But, inerrancy means Bible is without error or fault in all its teaching
3. It is important to define error here. (Ills. Two people telling travel time from home of church)
4. Inerrancy of the Bible means simply that Bible tells the truth. Truth can and does include:
  - (a) Language of appearance
  - (b) Language of approximation
  - (c) Different, but non-contradictory account of the same event
    - Num. 25:9. those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand
    - 1 Cor. 10:8. in one day twenty-three thousand fell
  - (d) Free quotations

## 4.3 Incarnation and Inerrancy

1. Some think, imperfection is expected for anything to do with humanity. So, Bible written by human may contain errors.

2. But we say exception is possible: Jesus was fully human, but without any imperfection.
3. Jesus was God-man: His humanity did not involve sin. His deity involved full and divine perfection.
4. Similarly, Bible is a divine book for God is the author. But it was actually written by man, but without error.
5. This dual nature of Christ was constantly challenged in the church history
6. So divine must not be so emphasized as to eliminate for all practical purpose the human, and the human nature must not be allowed to be so human as to permit errors in the text
7. There is an orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ and there is an orthodox doctrine of the Bible: both involve God and man and each results in a sinless product