

THE WORD OF GOD 05.08.11

LEST WE DRIFT AWAY



- Platonic Dualism – two “realms” of truth.
 - This is what Francis Schaeffer calls a “two-story” view of reality:
 - Upper Story
 - Lower Story
 - Plato: **Form** over **Matter**
 - Augustine: **City of God** over **City of Man**
 - Aquinas: **Grace** over **Nature**
 - Enlightenment: **Romanticism (religion and the humanities)** over **Enlightenment (science and reason)**
 - Descartes: **Mind (spirit, thought, emotion, will)** over **Matter (a mechanical, deterministic machine)**

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Current view of truth:

- Upper Story: Values, Private Sphere
(Personal Preferences, Nonrational, Noncognitive, Religion) **Revelation**
- Lower Story: Facts, Public Sphere
(Scientific Knowledge, Rational, Verifiable, Science) **Reason**

“Human reason was regarded as perfectly competent on its own for understanding the state, society, economics, philosophy—in fact, everything outside of theology. Thus the Christian mind itself began to be split. God’s Word was limited to the upper story, but was deemed irrelevant and unnecessary in directing the lower story.” (Pearcey)

A man of divided allegiance is unstable (**James 1:8**)

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- Liberal Theology
 - Arose as a result of the rationalism and experimentalism of the philosophers and scientists.
 - It basically states that whatever does not agree with reason and science is to be questioned or rejected. (**reason over revelation**)
 - Most students leaving universities today are skeptics – question everything, believe nothing.
 - As a result, liberal theology has rejected the historicity and scientific claims of the Special Revelation (the Word).
 - “The Bible isn’t a history book or a science textbook”
 - The orthodox view of scripture is that it is a Special revelation of the way things really are (**revelation over reason**)
 - It is **Total Truth**

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- Validation
 - How could one verify or validate the Truth claims of a religious text?
 - All religious texts, while describing how one gains access to “God” (or becomes God) also intersect two other disciplines: **history and science**.
 - The Bible:
 - Soteriology – salvation through Jesus
 - History – man in and through time
 - Science – insights into the natural world (the creation account)

Access to God	Various truth claims concerning access to God could be validated and substantiated (notice: not “proved”) based on the accuracy of its scientific and historical mentionings.
Scientific Claims	
Historicity	

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Why Liberal Theology as a background?

- The Bible claims to be God’s inspired revelation of **Total Truth** to man.
- Therefore if it is Total Truth, it must be accurate (true) when it touches on historic events and scientific insights.
- More importantly, if it is not verifiable through external sources (history and science) then the truth claims concerning salvation **are not verifiable**.

Orthodox Perspective on Scripture:	Liberal view on Scripture:
Soteriology (and Theology) was verifiable by Biblical History and Scientific Revelation	Soteriology (or Theology) Secular History and Naturalistic Science

- The fatal flaw in *Liberal Theology* is that it accepts as true the bifurcation of truth: It accepts a naturalistic account of science and history (lower story) while trying to find meaning and value in theology (upper story)
- It views the scriptures from a “salvation first” perspective.

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- The Bible:
 - Verification through history and science (archaeology):
 - Places: Eglon, Gath, Azekah, Libnah, Mareshah, Gezer, Taanach, Megiddo, Galilee, Shachem, Samaria, Beth Shemesh, Beth Shean, Mizpah, Jerico, Lachish, Hazor, etc....
 - Events: Gibeon pool, Hezekiah tunnel under Jerusalem, walls of Jericho, siege ramp of Sennacherib, pool of Siloam, Shechem temple, Nehemiah's wall, "Goliath" ostracon, etc....
- Other Holy Texts:
 - The book of Mormon:
 - Nephites and Lamanites existed in the Americas from about 600 BC to AD 400. (no verification has yet to been found)
 - The rise and fall of the Jaredite nation at the time of the Tower of Babel. (no verification has yet been found)
 - Donkey, bull, calf, cow, horse, ox, sheep, swine, goat, elephant, wheat, barley, silk, steel, bellows, brass, breast plates, iron, ore (mining), plows, chariots, etc.... (did not exist in the Americas)

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4. The Bible is Locked by History.
 - History is similar to origin science in its goal of establishing the probability of singular events from the past.
 - In Law, the trustworthiness of a witness is necessarily an important point at issue if his testimony is to be received.
 - **Time and place are crucial.**
 - "The verification process of the historical method is legal in nature in that the investigation involves establishing the truth or falsehood of eyewitness accounts." (Geisler, *UF*)
 - The Bible is based on historical evidence that can be tested and found to be true or to be false.
 - **Luke 3:1-2** – These events are open to examination.

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.
 1. Modern views of scripture
 - Approaches to the Bible have been dominated not by Truth but by the predominant philosophical views of the day.
 - Most Biblical Criticism began with the Enlightenment – reason and Baconian methodologies became the standard
 - **The Modernist (Liberal) view**
 - Typically rejects the idea that the Bible is divinely inspired in a unique way. Some go so far as to regard the Bible as purely a product of human invention.
 - Rudolf Bultmann and Walter Brueggemann

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.
 1. Modern views of scripture
 - **The Neo-orthodox view**
 - Summarized by saying that the Bible is "the word of God" but not "the words of God". It is only when one reads the text that it becomes the word of God to him or her.
 - The Bible contains demonstrable errors (in matters of history and science, at least) and therefore full inerrancy cannot be sustained with any kind of intellectual integrity.
 - Karl Barth and Emil Brunner

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.
 1. Modern views of scripture
 - **The Orthodox view**
 - The Bible as originally given by God was free from error.
 - Scripture was completely authoritative and trustworthy in all that it asserts as factual, whether in matters of theology, history, or science.
 - Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Earl Radmacher, Carl Henry, JI Packer, John Warwick Montgomery, James Montgomery Boise, Francis Schaeffer, RC Sproul, Norman Geisler, Gleason Archer, JP Moreland, etc....

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.
 2. Inspiration – "God breathed" (**2 Timothy 3:16**)
 - **Plenary Inspiration** – that kind of inspiration which excludes all defect in the utterance of the inspired message.
 - **Verbal inspiration** – that kind of inspiration which extends to the very words and forms of expression of the divine message.
 - Inerrancy – "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 the social, physical, or life sciences." (Paul D. Feinberg, *Inerrancy*)

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.

3. Inerrancy

- **Inerrant vs. Infallible** – “The Bible is inerrant if and only if it makes no false or misleading statements on any topic whatsoever. The Bible is infallible if and only if it makes no false or misleading statements on any matter of faith and practice.” (Stephen T. Davis, *The Debate about the Bible: Inerrancy versus Infallibility*)
- **Objective vs. Subjective Inerrancy**
 - Subjective inerrancy emphasizes the need to understand the text from the author’s point of view – grammatical and historical context.
 - **Matt 13:31-32** – “this is smaller than all other seeds”

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“The real question at issue in regard to scribal error is whether an accumulation of minor slips has resulted in the obscuring or perversion of the message originally intended. Well-trained textual critics operating on the basis of sound methodology are able to rectify almost all the misunderstandings that might result from manuscript error. ... The question in regard to the text of the Bible centers on the data of textual criticism. Is there objective proof from the surviving manuscripts of Scripture that these sixty-six books have been transmitted to us with such a high degree of accuracy as to assure us that the information contained in the originals has been perfectly preserved? The answer is an unqualified yes.” (Gleason Archer, fluent in Latin, Greek, French, German, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic; also studied in Syriac and Akkadian, and Egyptian)

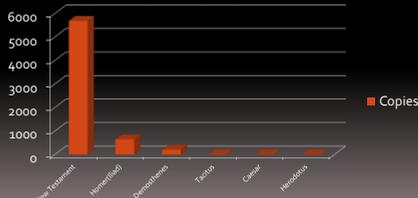
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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.

5. The evidence.

- “there is more abundant and accurate manuscript evidence for the New Testament than for any other book from the ancient world.” (Geilser, *UF*)



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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.

6. Conclusion.

- Considering all textual criticism, the vast fragments of the NT make it 98.3 to 99.9% pure!
 - “The great mass of the New Testament, in other words, has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no variations.” (Warfield)
 - “The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.” (Nix and Geilser)

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.

6. Conclusion.

- “Inerrancy is to be regarded as an essential concomitant of the doctrine of inspiration, a necessary inference drawn from the fact that Scripture is God’s Word.” (Pinnock)
- “If one believes the Scripture to be God’s Word, he cannot fail to believe it inerrant. Inerrancy has been the constant teaching of the Fathers, Protestant and Catholic theologians, and recent popes, because it is a necessary conclusion from the fact of divine authorship.” (Pinnock)

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5. A brief history on the importance of the written word.

6. Conclusion.

- Liberal theology: “It is true that no Christian who believes that the Bible errs can hold that the Bible *alone* is his authority for faith and practice. He must hold to some other authority or criterion as well. That authority, I am not embarrassed to say, is his own mind, his own ability to reason.” (Stephen T. Davis, *The Debate about the Bible: Inerrancy versus Infallibility*)
- All this to say: there is overwhelming evidence for the plenary and verbal inspiration and, by extension, the subjective inerrancy of the Word of God!