

# BIBLICAL TRUTH

NOVEMBER 13, 2011


# BIBLICAL TRUTH

Truth – the way things really are

- John 14:6 – “I am the Truth”
- John 1:14 & 17 – grace AND truth
- John 17:17 – Sanctify in the truth
- Ephesians 6:14 – “gird your loins with truth”

Why start with Truth?

If there is Truth, then my search for it will lead to an accurate understanding of reality and my reasoning will have grounds on which to validate various other truth claims.



# BIBLICAL TRUTH


Current view of truth:

**Upper Story: Values, Private Sphere**  
(Personal Preferences, Nonrational, Noncognitive, Religion)

**Lower Story: Facts, Public Sphere**  
(Scientific Knowledge, Rational, Verifiable, Science)

“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)



# THE WORD OF GOD

Truth – what has happened to it?

- Historically: The Bible was held to be God’s revelation of His will for mankind: *revelation over reason*
- Human reason was admitted to be fallible, the Bible was held to be infallible (or inerrant).
- Julius Wellhausen – Uncompromisingly secular approach to the Bible.
- Religious liberalism – *reason over revelation*.
  - Man’s reasoning ability was sufficient to answer the philosophical questions of life without help from revelation
- 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*

# BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Reformation – Back to the Authority of Scripture:

**Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>)**  
– *humanism reigns*

- “the genius of man ... the unique and extraordinary ability of the human mind”
- Appraise ideas through a combination of reasoning and empirical evidence.



**Reformation (1517–1648)** – *Sola Scriptura*

- Inspiration
- Divine Authority
- Clarity
- Efficacy
- Sufficiency – The Bible contains everything to obtain salvation.






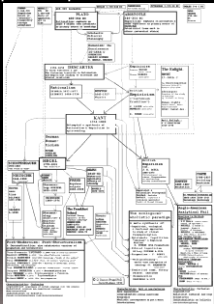
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Why not man’s philosophies?

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Orthodox view of scripture:

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Reformation (1517–1648) – *Sola Scriptura*

- Inspiration
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Access to God  
Scientific Claims  
Historicity



## BIBLICAL TRUTH

### 1. 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:
  1. Soteriology – salvation through Jesus
  2. History – man in and through time
  3. Science – insights into the natural world (the creation account)

Access to God  
Scientific Claims  
Historicity

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.

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

- 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 been found)
    - The rise and fall of the Jaredite nation at the time of the Tower of Babel. (no verification has 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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    - 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 Qur’an:
    - Jesus wasn’t crucified – Qur’an 4:15 “They slew him not nor crucified but it appeared so unto them.”
    - Mary as the sister of Moses and Aaron and the daughter of Imran – The Qur’an confuses Jesus’ mother with Aaron’s sister
    - Haman was pharaoh’s prime minister even though Haman lived in Babylon one thousand years later

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Truth claims of the Bible are validated through history and science:

- 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.

## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The importance of the written word.

### 2. 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.
- **Biblical Criticism** – “the study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning and discriminating judgments about these writings.” (Harper’s Bible Dictionary)
- **Textual Criticism** – concerned with the identification and removal of transcription errors in the texts of manuscripts

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### 2. Modern views of scripture

- **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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The importance of the written word.

### 2. 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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### 2. 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, R.C. Sproul, Norman Geisler, Gleason Archer, J.P. Moreland, etc....



## BIBLICAL TRUTH

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### 3. Inspiration – "God breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16)

- **Plenary Inspiration** – that kind of inspiration which excludes all defect in the utterance of the inspired message. (John 16:13 – the "Spirit of Truth")
- **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*)



## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The importance of the written word.

### 4. 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 importance of the written word.

### 4. Inerrancy

- **Inerrant vs. Infallible**
  - "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." (Clark H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation—The Foundation of Christian Theology*)
  - "Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth." (John Wesley's *Journal* 8/24, 1776)



## BIBLICAL TRUTH

The importance of the written word.

### 4. Inerrancy

- **Inerrant vs. Infallible**
- "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*)



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The importance of the written word.

### 5. Errors in the Word of God?

- **2 Samuel 8:4 vs. 1 Chronicles 18:4**
- 2 Samuel – 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers
- 1 Chronicles – 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers
- Using Textual Criticism:
  - In **2 Sam**, the word *rekeb* was advertently omitted by a scribe.
  - It would have made it 1000, 7000 – thus it was reduced to 1,700.
  - Using text criticism, the correct number is in **1 Chronicles**.
- **1 Samuel 17:50 vs. 2 Samuel 21:19**
- 1 Chronicles 20:5



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The importance of the written word.

### 5. Errors in the Word of God?

- "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)

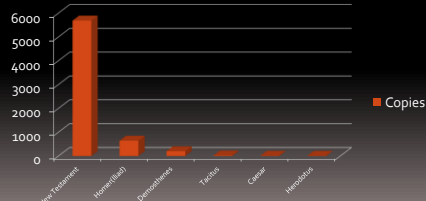


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The importance of the written word.

### 6. The evidence.

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



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The importance of the written word.

### 6. The evidence.

- 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 Geisler)



## BIBLICAL TRUTH

Why does this matter?

- The Written Word of God is the foundation of faith.
  - **Romans 10:17** – "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
  - "word" here is *rhema* – specific sayings concerning Jesus
  - *rhēma* – that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, a thing spoken, a word; a series of words joined together into a sentence.
  - A declaration of one's mind made in words. (**John 3:34**)
  - **Ephesians 6:17** – "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God"



## BIBLICAL TRUTH



Why does this matter?

- Study in order to handle accurately the word of truth.
- **2 Timothy 2:15** – “word” here is *logos* (same as John 1)
- The *rhema* reveals the *Logos* and the *Logos* illuminates the *rhema* – you can’t have one without the other!
- **Matthew 4** – Jesus’ perfect modeling of faith in action.

FAITH

TRUTH  
(*rhema* and *logos*)

Faith always stands on what we believe to be true.  
Biblical faith never acts apart from biblical Truth.