

Doctrine of the Bible

Revelation and the Authority of Scripture

1. The Bible says of itself that it is inspired. Scripture is the Word of God to men.
 - *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
2. Throughout human history, philosophers have argued, from man to God, in order to answer the great questions of life. The Bible is the answer to these questions, from God to humanity.
3. Historical thought has moved from the great epic myths of the ancient world, to philosophy, and progressed onward to Christian dogma.

Special Note.

The Roman Catholic Church helped to corrupt the truth, and suppress important ideas, which gave rise to the Renaissance, and a “rebirth” of learning. The era of the Reformation took the church back to Scripture. The Renaissance took society to science, and new forms of knowledge, including post-modernity.

4. Modernity, and post-modernity come into conflict with Scripture on the answer to the great questions of life: “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” “Where am I going?” These questions are beyond the scope of man’s own mind, and science.
5. In 1891, Joseph Henry Sayer rejected the doctrine of inspiration, in favor of the progress of science and discovery. The problem with science is that it keeps changing. Truth does not change. Sayer was one who embraced higher criticism of which Billy Sunday said, “Turn hell upside down and you will find stamped on the bottom, ‘Made in Germany.’”
6. The Higher Criticism movement, in the final analysis, declares that the Bible is not the Word of God, it is not of divine revelation.
7. Rather, the Bible is a human creation that moved from Moses to Jesus, based on flawed human authors, with an agenda.
8. Having cast doubt on the integrity of the Bible, Higher Criticism is able to boldly assert that the Pentateuch is not by Moses, Matthew is not by Matthew, John did not write his gospel, and the epistles of Paul are in question. The gospels are products of later communities, and how they understood Christ.
9. Another open assault against the authority of the Bible came in the name of scientific progress.

10. The idea of progress is an appealing concept to people. Modern Democrats like to speak of being a Progressive Democrat. In religion, there is Progressive Revelation. In science, there is said to be progress in various areas as new discoveries are made, or a cure for a sickness is found.
11. The idea of progress is that newer is better. The Bible is an ancient book. Can it really tell individuals today how to live?
12. As a person approaches Scripture, a commitment is needed. There are First Principles to embrace. Question: "Is the Bible the Word of God?" How that question is answered will determine whether or not a person submits to the Sovereign, or relegates the Bible, and God to a secondary role in life.
13. The dilemma is that the Bible is both a divine book, and a human book. Though written by men, these men were inspired by God, so that what they wrote was accurate, infallible, and binding from age to age.
14. The human authors were actively involved in the writing of their manuscripts. The New Testament writers wrote in the Koine Greek, the common Greek language, as opposed to the Attic Greek used by philosophers and poets. In Latin, the Greek word Koine is Vulgar, meaning common.
15. Because the Bible is unique, two extremes must be avoided. The first extreme is to ignore the Bible is a divine book. This is the position of the Human Secularist.
- *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
16. The second extreme is to ignore the Bible is a human book. The Bible is a human book, but is different from other human works that are made of myths.
- *2 Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*
 - *2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Special Note.

The word for "moved" means, "to be carried along." The image is that of the waves of a ship carrying the vessel along. The human authorship is preserved in the image. But the words are from God.

17. Those who wrote the Bible understood they were vessels entrusted with communicating the Word of God. Throughout his writings Paul speaks in such a manner. He makes it clear he is an apostle who speaks the Word of God. The prophets said repeatedly, "Thus saith the Lord."

18. No Biblical author claimed the authority which Christ claimed.

- *Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

19. The Bible is to be received as the Word of God, as the Thessalonians received it.

- *1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

20. As the Word of God, the Bible, and only the Bible, can answer the great questions of life. “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” “Where am I going?”

21. Different people have tried to explain the doctrine of inspiration.

- **The Liberal View:** the Bible Contains the Word of God. Harry Emerson Fosdick (May 24, 1878 – October 5, 1969), former pastor of Riverside Cathedral in New York who said we must distinguish the Shekinah from the shrine. The “shrine” was the Bible. Fosdick believed that within the Bible there were “abiding truths.” That is what is inspired. General truths are inspired, not the literal words of Scripture.

In like manner, theologian Karl Barth (May 10, 1886 – December 10, 1968) taught that God inspires His Word when it is proclaimed to His people. Inspiration is a subjective experience rather than an objective truth. God has not spoken in His Word, He speaks through His Word when it is spoken.

- **The Conservative View:** the Bible Is the full Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. This is the verbal, plenary view of inspiration.

22. Will the church say, “God has spoken and given us His word?”, or, will the church say, “The Bible contains the word of God when it is meaningful to the heart?” That is the choice.