



Introduction to Bibliology: Understanding God's Written Word

In Brazil, with the advancement of theological liberalism in colleges and seminaries once orthodox, the doctrine of the Bible has never been more necessary. Many theologians no longer defend it as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. We will examine what the Bible truly is, its divine-human authorship, and other points of equal importance that help us understand why the Sacred Scriptures are the Book of books.



The Timeless Relevance of Scripture

Ancient Yet Contemporary

Despite its antiquity, the Bible continues to be as current as it was in the days of Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul. It bears witness about Christ and testifies that He is, indeed, the Son of God.

Universal Message

Although produced in the historical-cultural Jewish context, no one can deny its universality. The Bible is the only contemporary book for all humanity, across all eras.

The Origin and Meaning of "Bible"

01

Early Designations

During Christ's earthly ministry, Old Testament Scriptures were known generically as the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets. Later came the apostolic Scriptures, equally inspired by the Holy Spirit.

02

Need for Technical Term

Some church fathers called them "Divine Literature," but a technical word was needed to give an exact vision of the meaning of both Old and New Testament Scriptures.

03

The Word "Bible"

From Greek "biblia" meaning "books" or "collection of small books." John Chrysostom is credited with popularizing this term for God's Word, while Jerome introduced it to the West as "Divine Library."



Biblical Languages: Foundation of Written Communication

The languages used to record God's revelation came from Semitic and Indo-European language families. From the Semitic family originated the basic Old Testament languages: Hebrew and Aramaic. Latin and Greek represent the Indo-European family. The Phoenicians played an important role by creating the alphabet, making written language less complicated than before.

Old Testament Languages

Aramaic

Language of the Syrians, used throughout the Old Testament period. By the 6th century BC, Aramaic became the general language of the entire Near East. Its widespread use is reflected in biblical texts like Ezra 4:7–6:13; 7:12–26 and Daniel 2:4–7:23.

Hebrew

The principal Old Testament language, especially suited for creating a connection between God's people's biography and the Lord's relationship with them. Hebrew is a pictorial language, expressing itself through vivid and bold metaphors capable of challenging and dramatizing narrative events.



Hebrew: A Language of the Heart

Hebrew is a personal language. It appeals directly to the heart and emotions, not just to the mind and reason. It is a language where the message is more felt than merely thought.

This emotional quality made Hebrew perfectly suited for conveying God's intimate relationship with His people, creating narratives that touch both mind and soul with divine truth.

New Testament Languages

Semitic Influence

Jesus and His disciples spoke Aramaic as their mother tongue, the language spoken throughout Palestine at the time. While agonizing on the cross, Jesus cried in Aramaic: "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani" (Matthew 27:46).

Indo-European Impact

Latin influenced the New Testament by lending words like "centurion," "tribute," and "legion," and through the trilingual inscription on the cross (in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek).



Greek: The Language of Divine Revelation

The New Testament was written in Greek, specifically Koine Greek—the most widely known language throughout the first-century world. Until the late 19th century, it was believed that New Testament Greek was the "special language" of the Holy Spirit, but it has since been identified as one of five stages in Greek language development.



Intellectual Precision

Greek was a language of the mind with technical precision of expression not found in Hebrew, perfectly suited for interpreting Christ's revelation in theological language.



Universal Reach

Greek was almost universal, allowing Christ's complete revelation to be announced worldwide rather than restricted to one nation like the Old Testament Hebrew revelation.

The Fullness of Time

"But when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4)

The providential appearance of Greek, alongside other cultural, political, social, and religious developments during the first century BC, is implied in Paul's declaration about God's perfect timing for Christ's coming.



Development of Written Languages

Pictograms

Crude representations preceding current writing—figures representing humans or animals like ox, lion, and eagle.

Phonograms

Traces representing sounds: mouth for speaking, ear for hearing, leg for walking, lion's head for roar, bird's head for delicate sound, harp for music.

Ideograms

Figures representing ideas rather than objects: sun for heat, aged man for old age, eagle for power, ox for strength, lion for royalty.

The Alphabet

The Phoenicians developed their greatest innovation in written communication history: the alphabet—a giant step in writing development.

The Dawn of the Written Era

Evidence of ancient writing is not abundant, but existing examples show high cultural development. Writing developed during the 4th millennium BC. By the 2nd millennium BC, various experiments led to alphabet development and written documents by the Phoenicians—all completed before Moses wrote around 1450 BC.

- Sumerians used clay tablets for cuneiform writing (c. 3500 BC)
- Egypt had hieroglyphic documents (c. 3100 BC)
- Pictographic texts used in Byblos and Syria (c. 2500 BC)



Writing Materials and Instruments



Clay Tablets

Used in ancient Sumeria from 3500 BC and referenced by Jeremiah (17:13) and Ezekiel (4:1) for recording divine messages.



Stone

Used for inscriptions including Hammurabi's Code, the Rosetta Stone, and biblical references (Exodus 24:12; 32:15,16).



Papyrus

Plant leaves pressed and glued to form scrolls, used in ancient Gebal and Egypt (c. 2100 BC). John used this material for Revelation and his letters.



Vellum & Parchment

Various stages of production from animal skins. Vellum was unknown until 200 BC. Paul refers to parchments in 2 Timothy 4:13.



Writing Instruments of Scripture

Primary Tools

- **Stylus:** Triangular pointed instrument for clay or wax tablets
- **Chisel:** For stone inscriptions, called "iron pen" by Job
- **Reed Pen:** For writing on papiro, leather, vellum, and parchment

Supporting Materials

- **Knife:** For destroying rolls and sharpening pens
- **Ink:** Accompanied the pen in the inkwell
- **Various surfaces:** Metal, wax, precious stones, pottery shards

Divine-Human Authorship

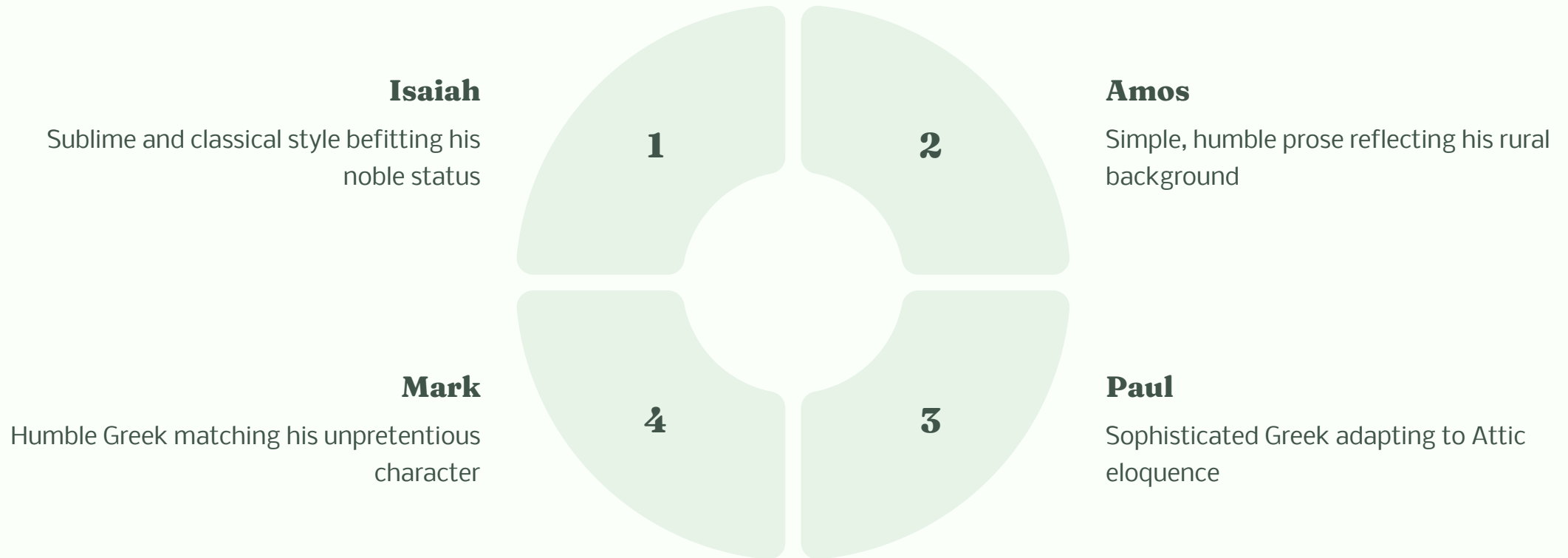
Dual Authorship

The Holy Bible is a book of dual authorship. While inspired by God, we cannot forget it was written by men under the inspiration and supervision of the Holy Spirit. As Peter testifies: "No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).



Unity in Diversity

When we read the Sacred Scriptures, we hear God speak to us uniquely through the lips of holy prophets and apostles. God's Word is truly one, but the styles are most diverse, as the Holy Spirit inspired and equipped about forty different authors over approximately 1,600 years to produce the Book of books.



Scripture as Divine Literature

Everything in Scripture is singular: style, correctness, grace, and purpose. Its uniqueness lies in being God's Word. No writer has ever produced such a rich, beautiful, and exalted literary work. Within its pages: the most sublime poems, the most electrifying stories, the most eloquent speeches, the most investigative treatises.

Though produced in the historical-cultural Jewish context, no one can deny its universality. The Bible is the only contemporary book for all humanity, across all eras.



Three Theological Positions

1

Liberal Position

Rationalism places reason as supreme arbiter over Scripture. The Bible merely contains God's Word rather than being God's Word. Some reduce it to "glorious literature" or Hebrew myths.

2

Neo-Orthodox Position

The Bible becomes God's Word when someone has an experiential encounter with the Lord while reading it. This creates dangerous speculations about Scripture's authority.

3

Conservative Position

The Bible is God's Word—our supreme and unquestionable authority in matters of faith and practice. Orthodox Christians have always been dogmatic about Scripture's divine origin.



The Danger of Theological Liberalism

Rationalism, born in the fertile territory of academic incredulity, quickly established roots in Protestant fields. Beginning in seminaries and universities once so pious, it settled in many church pulpits. Unfortunately, many theologians placed reason on an altar, making it the supreme arbiter even over God's sovereign Word.

- ❏ In Brazil, seminarians from various denominations have recently turned to liberal theologians in an insane search for affirmation, bringing the virus of theological modernism with all its inevitable consequences: incredulity, leniency toward sin, moral and ethical relativism, and relaxation toward evangelization.

The Conservative Response

We orthodox affirm that the Bible is God's Word. Thus, we place it where it must be: as our supreme and unquestionable authority in matters of faith and practice. If Scripture says it, our obligation is to obey without any questioning. It is sovereign!

Primitive Church

Based primarily on 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21, early Christians regarded Hebrew prophets as oracles of God and apostolic writings as equally inspired.

Church Fathers

Tertulliano wrote "Against Marcion," while Origen and Athanasius defended the canon's divine inspiration against heretical challenges.

Reformers

Luther and Calvin established Scripture as the sole norm for faith and practice, revolutionizing the church by placing complete trust in Old and New Testaments.



The Necessity of Sacred Scripture

Essential for Life

"Scratch the surface of Scripture wherever you want, and you will discover a slice of life," affirms Arthur Skevington Wood. The Bible is absolutely necessary for eternal life; without it, all would be condemned. God's Word is supremely important not only for our moral and spiritual growth but also for solidifying our society.

Three Dimensions of Biblical Necessity

Spiritual Necessity

When tempted by the Devil, Christ silenced him by quoting Deuteronomy: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God's mouth" (Matthew 4:4). What other book can provide eternal life to humans?

Moral Necessity

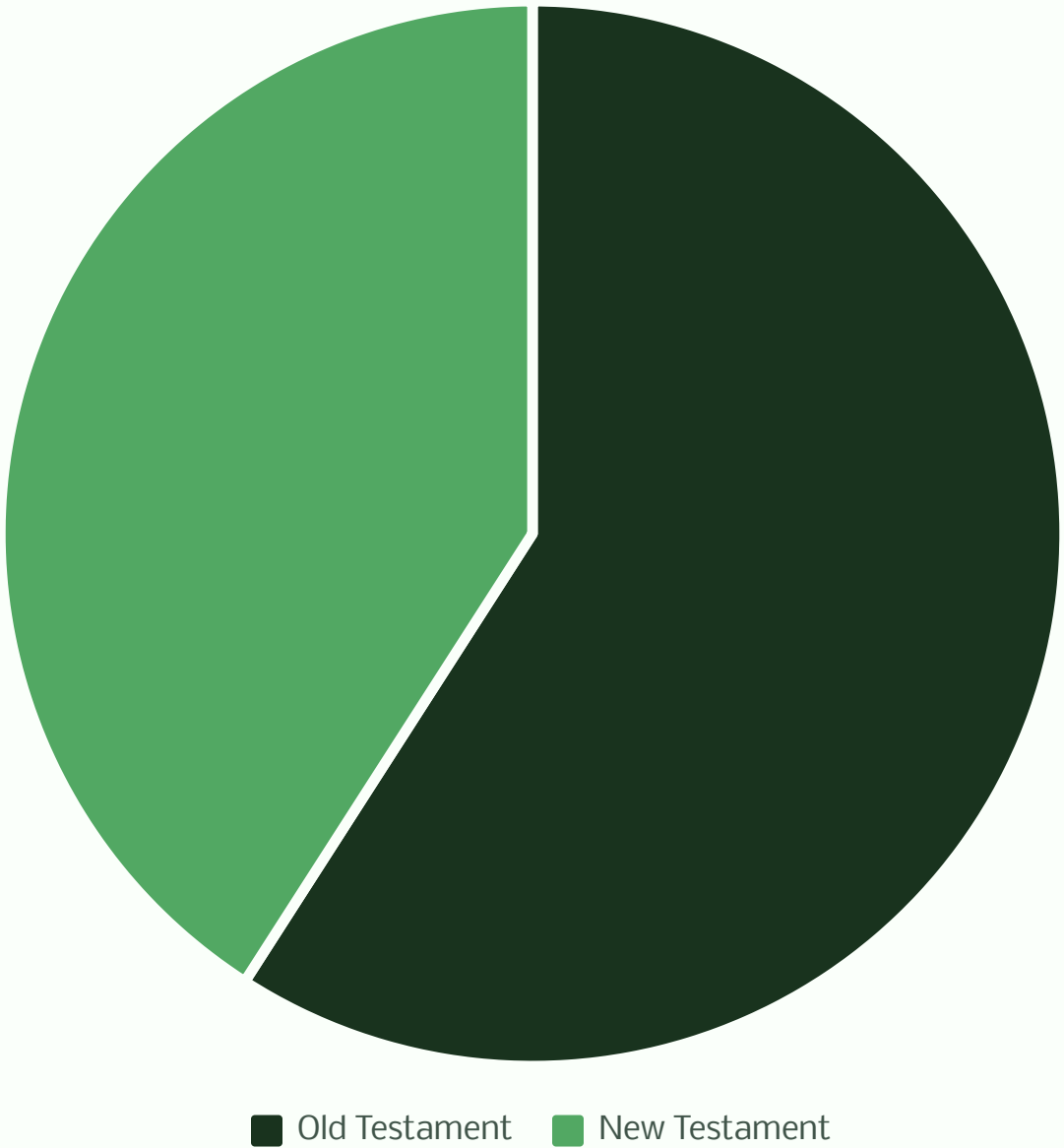
Various codes have been written throughout history—Hammurabi, Confucius, Rome's Twelve Tables. These initiatives couldn't improve human nature. God's Word prescribes laws so high and sublime that they modify not only individuals but society.

Historical Necessity

Contrary to philosopher Auguste Comte's belief, history is not cyclical but linear—it doesn't repeat. It moves toward a climax when Christ will establish God's Kingdom on Earth. Without the Bible, we could never properly understand history.

Biblical Composition: Divine Architecture

The Bible divides into two main parts: Old and New Testament, containing 66 books total—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. These 66 books were written over 16 centuries by approximately 40 writers from various professions, countries, and conditions, yet their writings form perfect harmony.



Old Testament Structure

1

Law (Torah)

5 books: Genesis to Deuteronomy, commonly called the Pentateuch. Foundation of divine revelation and moral law.

2

History

12 books: Joshua to Esther. Chronicle Israel's history through theocracy under judges, monarchy under kings, kingdom division and captivity, and post-exile restoration.

3

Poetry

5 books: Job to Song of Solomon. Called poetic not for imagination but for devotional genre and content style.

4

Prophecy

17 books: Isaiah to Malachi. Subdivided into Major Prophets (5 books) and Minor Prophets (12 books) based on book length, not prophetic importance.



New Testament Structure



Biography (4 books)

The four Gospels describe Jesus' earthly life and ministry. The first three are called Synoptics due to their parallel structure. These are the Bible's most important books.



History (1 book)

Acts records primitive church history, Christian living, and Gospel propagation through the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised.



Epistles (21 books)

Romans to Jude contain church doctrine: 9 to churches, 4 to individuals, 1 to Hebrew Christians, 7 to all Christians universally.



Prophecy (1 book)

Revelation treats Christ's personal return to Earth and events preceding this glorious event.

Canon Formation: Divine Recognition

In our creeds, we peremptorily affirm the Bible as inspired, inerrant, infallible, sovereign, and complete Word of God. This non-negotiable dogma forms the basis of Scripture's canon. The books are not considered God's Word because church doctors endorsed them; they were sanctioned because they are, in fact, God's inspired Word.

Books of the Bible are not valuable because some worth was discovered in them; they are valuable because they came from God—Source of all good.



Canonization Process

From Greek "kanonizein" meaning "to make holy," canonization is the process leading to recognition of Bible books as uniquely God-inspired. This centuries-long process shows how carefully church doctors examined Scripture books to verify divine origin versus human imagination.

01

Sacred Text Examination

Scholars examined content, doctrinal correctness, edifying character, harmony with the whole, and intellectual/spiritual assent through which readers sense God speaking clearly.

02

Sacred Author Examination

Was the writer truly trustworthy? For Old Testament: Did authors maintain intimate communion with God? For New Testament: Did writers belong to apostolic circle or have privileged relationships?

03

Community Acceptance

How did ancient Israel and the primitive church relate to Bible books? This demonstrated widespread recognition of divine authority.

Old Testament Canon

Old Testament books were never disputed in ancient Israel's community. According to Ezra and Jewish traditions, after the last prophet proclaimed the Lord's words, there was nothing more to discuss—the Old Testament canon was definitively closed, awaiting the New Testament's first chords.

The Jewish Council of Jamnia (90-118 AD) near modern Jaffa had more formal than dogmatic character, since diaspora Jews always regarded the Masoretic text as their Sacred Scripture canon.



New Testament Canon

Due to the Christian church's complexity, the New Testament canon took longer to establish definitively. Books were written in diverse places from Israel to Rome's capital, showing Christianity's universal message.

367 AD - Athanasius List

Bishop Athanasius, known as the father of Christian orthodoxy, listed the 27 New Testament books in one of his letters.

1

2

393 AD - Council of Hippo

North African council ratified Athanasius's list, providing formal ecclesiastical recognition.

397 AD - Council of Carthage

Final ratification of the 27-book New Testament canon, establishing the complete biblical collection.

3



Divine Inspiration: God's Breath

Theopneustos

What other book has brought as much change to humanity as the Holy Bible? The word "inspiration" comes from two Greek words: "theo" (God) and "pneustos" (breath), literally meaning "that which is given by God's breath."

Supernatural action of the Holy Spirit upon sacred writers, leading them to produce God's Word—the Holy Bible—in an inerrant, infallible, unique, and supernatural manner.

Verbal and Plenary Inspiration

This doctrine assures that the Bible, in its entirety, is the product of divine inspiration. Plenary inspiration means all Bible books, without exception, were equally inspired by God. Verbal inspiration means the Holy Spirit guided authors not only in ideas but also in the words of the Almighty's mysteries (2 Timothy 3:16).

Plenary Aspect

All 66 books of Scripture are equally inspired—no hierarchical difference in divine authority between books.

Verbal Aspect

The Holy Spirit guided not just concepts but specific words, ensuring precise communication of divine truth.

Human Participation

Inspiration didn't eliminate authors' participation—they were used according to personal traits, experiences, and literary styles.

Divine Exactness

Whether in Isaiah's sublime style or Amos's simple prose, Paul's sophisticated Greek or Mark's humble language—all maintain inspired accuracy.

Evidence of Divine Inspiration



Life Transformation

What other book besides the Bible can radically transform humans? We have moving testimonies of men, women, youth, and children who became new creatures through contact with God's Word.



Historical Influence

Surpassing Israel's borders, the Bible directly created Western culture. Its influence extends beyond the West—even China, Japan, and Arab countries show Scripture's notable impact.



Moral Elevation

Without the Holy Bible, humanity would be plunged into dense spiritual and moral darkness. Biblical morality has elevated humanity to the highest ideals, preventing degeneration.

Theories of Inspiration

While Scripture uniformly testifies that the Bible originated from God as His message to humanity, differences of opinion arise regarding the means of inspiration.

1

Intuition Theory

Makes inspiration primarily a high degree of perception—a special talent like artistic capacity. Authors were religious geniuses essentially no different from Plato or Buddha.

2

Illumination Theory

Holy Spirit influence merely reinforced normal capacities—increased sensitivity and perception in spiritual matters, different only in degree from the Spirit's work in all believers.

3

Dynamic Theory

Emphasizes divine-human combination—God's Spirit directed thoughts/concepts while allowing writers' personalities to participate in word choice and expression.

4

Verbal Theory

Holy Spirit influence extended beyond thought direction to word selection—each word used is exactly what God desired at that point to express His message.

5

Dictation Theory

God actually dictated the Bible to writers. This means no style diversity attributable to different authors. Fewer people actually hold this view than commonly claimed.

The Extent of Inspiration

Must the entire Bible be considered inspired or only certain parts? While 2 Timothy 3:16 could be translated two ways, context suggests Paul had in mind a defined body of writings known to Timothy from childhood. It's unlikely Paul was distinguishing between inspired and non-inspired Scriptures within this collection.

Supporting evidence from 2 Peter 1:19-21 and John 10:34-35 suggests "law" and "prophets" were often used to designate the complete Hebrew Scriptures. New Testament writers understood that Scripture was being extended from the prophetic period to their era.



Biblical Inerrancy: The Great Debate

Inerrancy of Scripture has been the topic of heated discussions among conservative Christians. This doctrine teaches that the Bible is completely trustworthy in all its teachings. For many evangelicals, this is an extremely important, even crucial issue, as it represents the conclusion of Scripture doctrine.

Without this doctrine, Christianity would be impossible; its truths, based on the Holy Bible, require Scripture to be not only divinely inspired but equally infallible, complete, and inerrant.



Defining Inerrancy

Etymological Definition

From Latin "inerrantia" meaning literally "quality of that which has no error; infallible."

Theological Definition

Biblical inerrancy is the doctrine that Sacred Scriptures contain no errors whatsoever, being the inspired, infallible, and complete Word of God. The Bible is inerrant in the information it transmits, purposes it exposes, and claims it presents.

Free from doctrinal, cultural, and scientific errors, Scripture inspires complete confidence in its content. In this sense, biblical inerrancy can also be understood as synonymous with infallibility.

The Chicago Declaration

In 1978, scholars from various Christian confessions met in Chicago to discuss Scripture's supernatural inspiration and consequent inerrancy. The Chicago Declaration on Biblical Inerrancy affirms Scripture's authority as key to the Christian church throughout all centuries.

1 Divine Truth

God, being truth itself and speaking only truth, inspired Sacred Scriptures to reveal Himself to fallen humanity through Jesus Christ as Creator, Lord, Redeemer, and Judge.

2 Divine Word

Sacred Scriptures, being God's own Word written by properly prepared men inspired and superintended by the Holy Spirit, are divinely infallible in all matters they address.

3 Spirit's Authentication

The Holy Spirit, as Scripture's author, both authenticates His internal testimony and opens our minds to understand Scripture.

4 Complete Truthfulness

Being totally and fully given by God Himself, Scriptures are free from errors in all teachings, declarations about God's acts in creation, world history events, and statements about individual salvation.

5 Authority's Foundation

Scripture's authority will be fatally weakened if its absolute inerrancy is somehow despised, neglected, or connected to a view of truth contrary to the Bible itself.

Inerrancy and Human Knowledge

Biblical inerrancy doctrine is coherent and doesn't wound reason, though it stands far above it. Inerrancy is reasonable and credible, requiring mature questioning precisely because it is absolute and unquestionable.

1

Philosophy

The Bible doesn't oppose true philosophy but stands infinitely above it. If philosophy merely raises life's problems, Scripture provides solutions.

2

Science

The Bible contains no scientific errors. When scientists accuse Scripture of scientific incoherence, they often leave experimentation to palmwalk speculatively on shifting ground.

3

Archaeology

Archaeology has been widely used to highlight biblical inerrancy's firmness, though due to limitations, it cannot always gather evidence demanded by skeptics about biblical events.



Biblical Testimonies to Inerrancy

Reading Scripture with sincerity and simplicity of heart, we're immediately convinced it is indeed God's inspired and inerrant Word. Its claims regarding its own inerrancy are irrefutable.

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Prophetic Exordium

"Thus says the Lord" - Through this classic formula, Jehovah's prophets presented themselves to Israel as messengers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's God, demonstrating the Word they announced contained no error.

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God's Word is Right

"For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is faithful" (Psalm 33:4). The psalmist knew God is present in all His Word—the shortest path to understanding Scripture is accepting that God speaks in every line.

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God's Word is Pure

"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him" (Proverbs 30:5). The wise man trusted in Scripture's inerrancy, affirming they contained no error as the highest expression of truth.

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God's Word is Eternal

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). The Bible never ages—before its perennial nature, all other documents become obsolete.

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The Sufficiency of Scripture

There are two truths about Sacred Scriptures that go hand in hand: authority and completeness. The first is the final word in matters of faith and practice; the second admits no authorities contradicting Scripture, whether diminishing its revelation or adding other data beyond what the Lord presented through Holy Spirit inspiration.

The Bible contains all divine words God wanted to give His people at each stage of redemption history and today contains all God's words we need for salvation, so we may perfectly trust and obey Him.



Conclusion: Our Relationship with Scripture

As God's children, we can never depart from Sacred Scriptures; we all depend vitally on them. The more we read them, the more intimate we become with their Author. Scripture must always occupy the first place both in Christ's church and in our lives.

There was a time in our homeland when believers were so identified with the Holy Bible that unbelievers labeled them "the Bibles." Mocking the saints who proudly went to temple carrying their Bible close to their chest, those scoffers didn't imagine their words, rather than constituting an affront, were singular praise. If we are truly God's people, we must be identified with God's Book.

We too, like the Israelites, are the people of the Book. As we conclude this study of Bibliology, may we embrace Scripture not merely as ancient literature but as our living, breathing, eternal guide—the very voice of God speaking to our hearts today.