

Week 4: The Inerrancy of the Bible

Grudem_{ST} 5; Grudem_{BD} 2; Ryrie 12-14

Bible difficulties, or apparent Bible contradictions, exist. The opponents of Christianity often use them in their attempts to discredit Christianity. Sometimes these attacks undermine the faith of Christians who either don't understand the issues or don't have the resources to deal with them. (www.carm.org)

The Meaning of Inerrancy:

1. *Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact (Grudem, 91).*
2. *Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching (Ryrie, 92).*

“Truth can and does include approximations, free quotations, language of appearances, and different accounts of the same event as long as these do not contradict.” (Ryrie, 93)

- The Bible can be inerrant and still speak in the ordinary language of everyday speech.
 - Especially true in “scientific” or “historical” descriptions of facts or events (e.g. the sun rising - Matt. 5:45; sand by the sea - Gen. 22:17; 1Kings 4:20)
- The Bible can be inerrant and still include loose or free quotations (e.g. Rom. 9:33 & 1Pet. 2:6 from Is. 28:16; cf. Matt. 21:16 from Ps. 8:2 (LXX))
- The Bible can be inerrant and contain unusual or uncommon grammatical constructions
 - God uniquely inspired over 40 different biblical authors with different levels of education and writing styles (even spelling mistakes? Matt 1:7-8 – “Asaph”)

“Inerrancy has to do with *truthfulness*, not with the degree of precision with which events are reported.” (Grudem, 92)

“Problem” Passages: How can we explain these often-used arguments against inerrancy?

1. Do you answer a fool (Prov. 26:4-5)?
2. Who caused David to number Israel (2Sam. 24:1; 1Chr. 21:1)?
3. The death of Judas (Matt. 27:5; Acts 1:18)
4. Did the plague kill 24,000 or 23,000 (Num. 25:9; 1Cor. 10:8)?
5. Does God tempt (Gen. 22:1; Jas. 1:13)?
6. Do the “two accounts” of Creation differ and contradict each other (Gen 1-2)?
7. Zechariah vs. Jeremiah (Matt. 27:9-10)
8. Taking a staff (Matt. 10:9-10; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3)
9. By what are we justified, faith or works (Rom. 3:28; Jas. 2:24)? **extra credit**
10. How does the Lord’s Prayer end in Matthew 6:13 (ESV vs. KJV)? **extra credit**

Problems with Denying Inerrancy:

- A. If we deny inerrancy, we may imitate God and intentionally lie in small matters also (Eph. 5:1).
- B. We may begin to wonder if we can trust God in anything He says.
- C. We essentially make our own human minds a higher standard of truth than God’s Word (Is. 55:9).
- D. Then we must also say that the Bible may be wrong in some doctrinal issues as well.

*****“Every word of God proves true”*** (Prov. 30:5a)**

Questions: (Grudem, 100-101)

1. Is it possible to be a Christian and believe the Bible contains errors?
2. Is the English Bible you’re reading right now inerrant? Why or why not?
3. If you thought there were some small errors affirmed by Scripture, how do you think that would affect the way you read Scripture?
4. How would you handle a situation in which you are unable to find a satisfactory solution to a “problem” passage?
5. Does belief in inerrancy guarantee sound doctrine and a sound Christian life?
6. Should belief in inerrancy be required for church membership? For teaching Sunday school? For holding a church office? For being a pastor?
7. How can cults say they believe the Bible is inerrant and still come up with so many false teachings?