

# Systematic Theology

*A systematic study of the major doctrines of Scripture.*

Topic 1 – The Doctrine of Scripture

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture taken from the New King James Version.

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# The Doctrine of Scripture

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# The Inerrancy of Scripture

- Inerrancy means without error. It means that the Bible is without error in its original autographs (at the time of its writing).
- Infallibility means that the Scripture is unable to fail in accomplishing its divinely intended purpose.
- The term infallible was hijacked in the 1960s to affirm that the Scripture does not teach any false or misleading doctrine, but at the same time Scripture does not have to be completely factually true and accurate.
- Those who deny inerrancy and redefine infallibility are usually trying to deny and refusing to accept something Scripture declares.

# The Inerrancy of Scripture

- The Doctrine of Inspiration requires inerrancy and infallibility, otherwise God would be responsible for giving us flawed revelation and erroneous doctrine.
- Inspiration deals with the means of revelation being given, inerrancy and infallibility deal with the quality of that revelation – it is true, absolutely and completely, without error.
- Jesus and the Apostles both held to a view of inerrancy concerning the Scripture, and while we look to the New Testament to serve as the ultimate interpretation of Old Testament passages, we never see New Testament writers correcting the Old Testament. When Jesus corrected the Jewish teachers, He was correcting their traditions and mishandling of the Scripture and not correcting the Scripture itself.

# The Inerrancy of Scripture

- Inerrancy is dependent upon inspiration and is a reasonable and necessary conclusion drawn from the character of God and the truth claims of Scripture itself.
- Inerrancy may be bolstered by empirical and external evidence, but it cannot be scientifically proven. It is a theological presumption built upon the truthfulness and knowledge of God.
- Scientific method requires duplication and we cannot duplicate inspiration today. Neither can we duplicate creation, the flood, etc.
- We trust God as an eyewitness telling us what was (and what will be).
- Every historical challenge levelled against Scripture has been proven false.

# The Inerrancy of Scripture

- Every book of the Bible was produced by means of inspiration as the authors wrote the original copies (autographs) as led by the Holy Spirit.
- These original works were completely without error.
- None of these original manuscripts are in existence today (they have not been found or authenticated as such).
- Copies and translation numbering into the thousands have been passed down from those originals. (Transmission and Preservation are another lesson).
- Manuscript evidence that is available today indicates clearly that 99% of what we have in our translations today is original Scriptural content.

# The Inerrancy of Scripture

- Inerrancy does not exclude “ordinary language.”
- This allows for idioms, estimations, etc.
- The Scripture is not intended to give us technical scientific data, and in fact, many of the things known technologically in the time of the writers would not match the technology of today. This is not an indication of error, but merely of progress.
- At times New Testament writers allude to Old Testament texts but do not quote them fully. This is not being imprecise, it is simply making an allusion. A quotation does not have to be verbatim to be accurate.
- Inerrancy also does not require perfect grammar or exhaustive detail.
- The Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God, divinely authoritative and factual, true in its accounts.



# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

The Chicago Statement was signed by nearly 300 noted evangelical scholars, including James Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, J. I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, and R. C. Sproul.

Preface: The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

<http://defendinginerrancy.com/chicago-statements/>

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article I. WE AFFIRM that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God. WE DENY that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II. WE AFFIRM that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture. WE DENY that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III. WE AFFIRM that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God. WE DENY that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article IV. WE AFFIRM that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation. WE DENY that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V. WE AFFIRM that God's revelation within the Holy Scriptures was progressive. WE DENY that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article VI. WE AFFIRM that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. WE DENY that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII. WE AFFIRM that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us. WE DENY that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article VIII. WE AFFIRM that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared. WE DENY that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX. WE AFFIRM that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write. WE DENY that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article X. WE AFFIRM that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. WE DENY that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI. WE AFFIRM that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. WE DENY that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article XII. WE AFFIRM that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit. WE DENY that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII. WE AFFIRM the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture. WE DENY that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.



# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article XIV. WE AFFIRM the unity and internal consistency of Scripture. WE DENY that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV. WE AFFIRM that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration. WE DENY that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI. WE AFFIRM that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history. WE DENY that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

# The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy (1978)

Article XVII. WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. WE DENY that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII. WE AFFIRM that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. WE DENY the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX. WE AFFIRM that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ. WE DENY that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.