

Belleville First Assembly of God

Defending Your Faith - 2017

Topic 4: Bibliology – Inerrancy, Clarity, and Authority

Class Goal: Equip the believer to respond to common challenges to Christianity in order to evangelize the lost and to disciple those with doubts.

Objectives for Meeting Our Goal: Upon completing this class, the believer should be able to...

1. Recognize common challenges to Christianity, categorize them, and...
 2. Prayerfully and gently respond to these challenges (2 Tim 2:23-26; 1 Peter 3:15)
-
1. Inerrancy: Are there any errors in the Bible? Is it a truthful representation of reality?
 - a. Definition: Scripture (the original manuscripts) does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact. There may be nuances of language, numbers, literary genres, etc., but none of these affect the truthfulness of scripture.¹
 - b. Applied Meaning / Examples of Inerrancy
 1. Observational Language: Descriptions from the viewpoint of human observation. (Explanations of nature, numbering of individuals, degrees of accuracy, etc.)
 2. Direct vs. indirect quotations.
 3. Grammatical inconsistencies do not detract from truthfulness.
 - c. Denying Inerrancy:
 1. Causes one to question God's perfection.
 2. Renders the entire Bible untrustworthy.
 3. Places human mind as highest authority of truth.
 - d. Defending the inerrancy of Scripture: Hermeneutics (the methodology used for exegesis) is the most critical component in assessing and defending scripture's inerrancy. Exegesis is the interpretation of the original intent/meaning, so various contexts are critical.
 - e. Conclusion: Because Scripture is inerrant, we can trust it.
 2. Clarity: Can mere mortals really glean from the mind of God?
 - a. Definition: The Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by those who are seeking God's help and being willing to follow it (Psalm 119:130; etc.).
 - b. Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit by which he makes Scripture understandable and applicable to the believer (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Ephesians 1:17-19; etc.).
 - c. Rules of sound exegesis:
 1. Speak where scripture speaks and remain silent where scripture is silent.

¹ Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2000), 90-91.

2. Remain aware of personal barriers to proper interpretation. (pride, lack of faith, selfishness, personal/cultural agendas, wrong attitudes, etc.).
3. Interpret that which is not clear by that which is clear.

e. Conclusion: Because Scripture is clear and intended to be understood, we can trust it.

3. Authority: Inspiration, Sufficiency, Inerrancy, and Clarity all support Scripture's authority.

a. Definition: All the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

b. All the words in Scripture are God's words: Inspiration (see Lesson 3)

c. Basis of Biblical Authority

1. Scriptural: When God speaks, he announces his authority (Deuteronomy 18:18-19; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Matthew 24:35; Revelation 1:10-12; etc.)

2. Logical:

God has authority over all things (Colossians 1:16-17)

and, Scripture is God's word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

and, God's words cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; John 17:17; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18)
therefore, God's word is authoritative.

3. Spiritual: The Holy Spirit attests to its authority (1 Corinthians 2:13-14; John 10:27)

4. Experiential: Personal testimony (God's faithfulness when we obey/disobey His word)

d. Conclusion: Because Scripture is authoritative, we can trust it.

4. Apologetic Argument: (class exercise):

a. A liberal theologian claims that the Bible is full of grammatical errors and contradictions, such as Malachi 1:2-3 contrasted to 1 John 4:8. How would you respond?

Inerrancy: _____

b. A Gnostic claims that salvation comes only through secret knowledge. Your response?

Clarity: _____

c. An acquaintance agrees that your following of Jesus Christ is good for you, but that he has found his own path to heaven. How would you respond?

Authority: _____