

Introduction

Part 1

The Inerrancy and Accuracy of Scripture

When we think about the inerrancy of the Scriptures, we are considering the idea of the truthfulness of the Scriptures. Biblical inerrancy carries with it the idea that the pages of Scripture in their original form are without fault. Note, this is in the sense of looking at the original manuscripts, we are able to make a comparative study of the Biblical manuscripts and we find consistency among what is extant. Though there may be no extant original manuscripts of the Bible, those that exist are considered inerrant according to Evangelical Christians. The Catholic Church, as expressed by the Second Vatican Council, states that, *“The books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.”* The point we should be concerned with in regards to the inerrancy of Scripture is related to what people believe inerrancy implies. Inerrancy, is a very charged word that can arouse passion and even division amongst people. This draws out a very important concept in regard to the teachings of the Bible. The variation that we find in doctrines and theologies within Christianity are not a matter of the inerrancy of Scripture, but are a matter of interpretation.

When one reads the Scriptures, the narrative was written some 3500 - 2000 years ago. This should naturally draw in the question of the intended message that is laid out in the Scriptures. This again is related to how the Scriptures apply to us today as they did back when it was originally written. When thinking on the inerrancy of Scripture, we also think about the issue of Biblical inspiration. How we understand what “*inspiration of the Scriptures*” means also effects what we believe about inerrancy and truth. The Scriptures themselves state that the pages of the Scriptures are God-breathed and given by the Holy Spirit:

2 Timothy 3:8-16

3:8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 3:9 But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes' and Jambres' folly was also. 3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 3:11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (NASB)

2 Peter 1:16-21

1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales

when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 1:17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased' 1:18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 1:19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (NASB)

The Apostle Paul wrote that there were two men who opposed Moshe and the Torah and this was synonymous to opposing the truth. The attitude of opposition to the Scriptures was to their folly. Paul writes all of those who choose to live godly lives in Christ will be persecuted. He goes on to speak of the sacred writings, referring to the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim) and stating that *3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (NASB)* At the point of the writing of the book of Timothy, the NT had not been written yet. The significance of these things is in relation to how Paul draws in the Torah (Moshe) in parallel to the truth of God. Peter informed the people they are not following clever stories. He affirms the truth of God by stating he was an eye witness of Yeshua the Messiah and his life and teachings. Yeshua was given glory and honor from our Father in heaven, and God declared that He is well pleased with Him. Peter continues saying, *1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (NASB)* These references from 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 speak of the inspiration of Scriptures,

and that the Word of God was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

The topic of the inerrancy of Scripture is very significant since this has an impact upon our faith in the power of God. Today, scientists explanation of the universe is one that is absent of the existence of God. The observations made of the universe speak to the age of the universe as being nearly 14 billion years old. They say the universe began from a Big Bang and that evolution was God's creative process. Scientists also claim the earth is 4.5 billion years old and holds no special or unique place in the universe. The underlying reasons for believing in this is such that one does not need to believe in a Holy and Righteous God who created all that we know, and one does not need to put any weight in the biblical account of the fall of man into sin and the need for a savior. These claims are founded upon the idea that life on earth had simply evolved by random chance, and from a common ancestor over the past 4 billion years. The significance of inerrancy becomes apparent as we begin reading the opening passages of the Scriptures, the creation account, whether what we have recored in the pages of the Bible are true, or just a story, or poetic literature, etc. Some bible teachers say God could not have created the earth in its current form in a 24 hour period. Such people do not believe that God was directly involved in creation, but rather used evolution, death, and dying in His creation and creative process. (*It is important to realize how evolution, death, etc are counter intuitive to the concept of sin as we find in the lives of Adam and Eve.*) The biblical account of the perfect creation, and the fall of man into sin and disobedience are essential to the belief in the inerrancy of Scripture! For the one who does not believe the Creation account, he or she determines in his mind that the God of Israel was simply accommodating His message to the language and understanding of ancient Israel. The idea is that God was teaching a spiritual principle as opposed to the mechanism of creation. For those who do not believe in the Creation account, they focus mainly upon (i) God is the creator of all, (ii) man is the image bearer of God, and (iii) He has put all of creation under our authority as his vice-regents on earth. No mention of sin and death are mentioned. The reason being, the truth of the fall of man into sin is fundamentally counter intuitive to the teachings of evolutionary theory.

What we see happening today in the modern theologies that are being taught and developed in our modern times is how preachers and ministers are taking hold of the authority of man over the authority of Scripture. This is similar to the concept of adding to or taking away from Scripture which may ultimately lead to a falling away or falling out of fellowship with God. Take for example, the theology of Dispensationalism teaches that we do not see the power of God moving as we once did, and these theologies reason this is so because we have passed through various dispensations (i) law, (ii) grace, (iii) creation of the church, and (iv) now we are in the church age and have no need for miracles and such. What we find however while studying the Torah, the NT, and specifically in the book of Revelation is that the power of God is always present for His people. We serve a powerful God and this fact never changes! The Jewish commentator Sforno states the following concerning the verse from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 13:1* in the Hebrew Bible. (Note, this verse in the English translations is *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:32* which states “*See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.*”)

***SFORNO ON DEVARIM / DEUTERONOMY 13:1
PART 1***

לֹא תוֹסֵף עָלָיו, *FOR YOU MIGHT ADD SOMETHING WHICH IS DESPICABLE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. IF, PERCHANCE, YOU WOULD ADD NEW WAYS OF SERVING THE LORD, YOU HAVE NO ASSURANCE THAT SUCH INNOVATION IS ACCEPTABLE TO G'D, FOR INSTANCE THE BURNING OF ONE'S CHILDREN IN G'D'S HONOUR.*

***SFORNO ON DEVARIM / DEUTERONOMY 13:1
PART 2***

וְלֹא תִגְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ, *EVEN IF, IN YOUR JUDGMENT, THE RATIONALE FOR OBSERVING THE COMMANDMENT IN QUESTION NO LONGER APPLIES, IS NO LONGER RELEVANT. AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE SOLOMON'S REASONING THAT THE*

RESTRICTIONS PLACED BY THE TORAH ON THE NUMBER OF WIVES A KING MAY HAVE DID NOT APPLY TO HIM AS NONE OF THESE WIVES COULD POSSIBLY INCITE HIM TO TURN AWAY FROM G'D. (COMPARE SANHEDRIN 21).

Sforno writes concerning adding to the Word of God that by doing so what was added will not be accepted by God. He uses the extreme example of burning one's children to Molech, a false god of the Sidonians. He also writes about taking away from the Word of God and makes the comparison to the one who considered a particular scripture no longer be relevant. Sforno references the *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 21a* and the rabbinic discussion on taking many wives which leads to one turning away from God's ways as was the case for King Solomon. The major point Sforno is making is in relation to what happened to Solomon, a man blessed with great wisdom and yet being deceived due to his political alliances through marriage. These things teach us an important principle about trusting in the flesh as opposed to trusting in the Lord God of Israel to protect the nation. These things were written so long ago, yet they remain relevant for us today in relation to modern science and the Word of God!

The example that speaks the most to us is what we find being taught in the nondenominational churches, i.e. Dispensationalism or the "law vs grace" arguments that are made at the pulpit. I know Pastors who openly teach God used evolution in His creative process. This demonstrates to us the challenge that we have facing us today living in a culture that does not consider all of God's word as relevant for our lives. Our culture has a significant influence upon what we believe and certainly have influenced the doctrines and theologies which minimize or marginalize the Torah. The very act of considering the Torah to be irrelevant is the very same thing as adding to and taking away from God's Word. The Lord God has told us that we will one day have to give an account of our lives before Him, but many Bible teachers seem to want to leave that part of the message out of fear of offending followers. How much better it would be if they would communicate the life-changing truths that God has given us!

The Torah is a text that was written by the hand of Moshe who spoke to God face to face. No other man in all of history ever spoke to God face to face as we read Moshe did in the Torah. It can be said with certainty, the Torah is the word of God that was dictated directly from the mouth of God Himself. This is why the Torah is the foundation stone of all of Scripture. God has given us the exact, precise message that we need for life and to live as His children. Because of this, it is impressed upon us to know and to heed every word of the Bible! The Rambam wrote saying, *“Everyone who trusts has faith, but not everyone who has faith trusts.”* This is a significant point because one may say they have faith or that they believe God’s Word, but it is only when faith is put into practice (when we are being faithful) that one’s faith becomes evident. When we delight in the Lord by seeking to make His will our highest priority, then our requests will be fulfilled. This is what Yeshua was teaching us when he said *“If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* (John 15:7) The essential command that we are given is to *“trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”* (Mishley / Proverbs 3:5-6, הַבְּטַח אֶל-יְהוָה בְּכָל-לִבְךָ וְאֶל-בֵּינֹתָיִךְ אַל-תִּשְׁעֶן: וּבְכָל-דַּרְכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ וְהוּא יִנְשֵׂר: (אֲרָחֹתֶיךָ: Trusting in God involves translating faith into the realm of action. In every aspect of human life, religious, moral, social, civil, environmental, agricultural, dietary, sexual, and so on, the Torah has a voice on the matter. In the scope of the commandments of God, there is no dividing line between the sacred and the profane in the life of the tzaddik (the righteous one). The various commands given to us in the Torah were given because the spiritual realm was intended to permeate every aspect of our lives (1 Corinthians 10:31). The Torah helps us to be mindful of these things, and walking in the ways of the Messiah Yeshua, the Torah commands helps to *“wake up”* the divine presence in our lives regarding every practical decision that we make. This teaches us how the Scriptures, the Word of God, is intended to awaken us to the reality of God’s immanent presence, He is present, here, now, and tangible in our lives. When Yeshua was here on earth, he studied the Torah, read the Torah, and clearly taught us to keep the ways of the Lord God (Luke 4:16, Matthew 7:12) accord-

Digging Deeper into Torah

ing to the Torah! The inerrancy of Scripture causes us to understand the purpose of the Torah. That we need the power of God in our lives and how the Lord God and His Messiah will set us free from sin and bondage. We are no longer enslaved to the power of sin but have a new principle that leads to true freedom, being able to walk in God's ways by the indwelling of His Spirit. This is why studying the Torah and all of Scripture is so important! This transforming power of God in the Messiah Yeshua is the Gospel Message that we are being taught in the Torah, and in all of Scripture.