

I. Inspiration: Is the Bible God's Word? (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

A. The Bible points to Jesus, who alone is the revelation of God.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1/1, chap. 1, §4.2-3: the Bible becomes revelation when God chooses to meet us there in a subjective, personal encounter.

B. The Bible is a human book, the God part came later.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 51-54: the Bible is "divinely appropriated human discourse."

Dictation → Deputized discourse → Appropriation

II. Authority: Is the Bible Our Rule for Life? (Ephesians 2:20)

A. Jesus > Bible

Emergent Twitter: "The Bible functions in Christianity as the Temple functions in the Gospels. Just as Jesus was greater than the temple so does Jesus have more authority than the Bible."

Cf. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (1924): "From naïve acceptance of the Bible as of equal credibility in all its parts because mechanically inerrant, I passed years ago to the shocking conviction that such traditional bibliolatry is false in fact and perilous in result. ...I saw that the new methods of study [higher criticism] were giving far more than they were taking away. They have restored to us the historic Christ. They have led us to the abiding, reproducible experiences of the soul revealed through him. They have given us his imperishable Gospel freed from its entanglements, the **Shekinah distinguished from the shrine....**"

B. Holy Spirit > Bible

Our authority is "the Spirit speaking in or through Scripture" (Stanley Grenz and John Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 65). "The ultimate authority in the church is not a particular source, be it **Scripture**, tradition, reason, or experience, but only the living God" (Franke, *The Character of Theology*, 78). The Bible is not authoritative in its own right, but only "because it is the vehicle through which the Spirit speaks" (*Beyond Foundationalism*, 114-15).

We must "listen intently for the voice of the Spirit" in "the world, bubbling to the surface through the artifacts and symbols humans construct" (*Beyond Foundationalism*, 162).

C. You and Me > Bible

Scripture is wrong about homosexuality (Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*, 104-12). Romans 5 is wrong about original sin (Tony Jones' blog, 2/18/09).

III. Inerrancy: Is the Bible True? (John 10:35; Matthew 4:4)

A. Objections to Inerrancy

1. **Unbiblical?**

The “fundamental problem with the doctrine of inerrancy...is that the Bible makes no such claim for itself” (Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical*, 110).

2. **Bibliolatry?**

“Inerrancy is an idolatry of the text. It is bibliolatry plain and simple, inasmuch as it cannot see beyond the logical lattice of the text to encounter the One who is ever calling us into his kingdom and before his throne” (Raschke, *The Next Reformation*, 135).

3. **Too Modern?**

a. Not stated until the modern period.

II London Confession (1689): Scripture is “the certain and infallible rule” for the “knowledge, faith, and obedience that constitutes salvation.”

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978): “Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching,” not only when it tells us how to be saved, but also when it addresses “God’s acts in creation,” “the events of world history,” and “its own literary origins.”

b. Compromised by modern philosophy: conservatives grasping for certainty came up with inerrancy, which enabled them to believe the Bible is God’s Word.

Major premise: The Word of God is without error.

Minor premise: The Bible is the Word of God.

Conclusion: The Bible is without error.

c. Compromised by modern science: inerrancy foists an alien, overly precise and objective standard upon the text. See Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, 175.

B. The Meaning of Inerrancy

1. Absolute (objective precision), **Full** (premodern, Eastern, commonsense view) and Limited (lesser facts may be wrong).

2. Scripture is true in whatever it affirms, whether that be higher or lower truths. God preserved his Word from the false ideas of its human authors.

3. Inerrancy is essential but not everything. The emotions, passions, commitments, attitudes, commands, questions, and wisdom sayings of Scripture are not “inerrant,” but they depend upon facts which are.