

Discerning Truth in a Post Christian Culture

Lesson 2: Inerrancy & Infallibility

Our first lesson focused on what the Bible has to say about itself. Today we want to consider what that means. Bible students use several words and phrases to summarize II Timothy 3:16-17 and all of the other verses we covered in the first lesson. Those words, or terms, are:

1. inerrancy
2. infallibility
3. verbal plenary inspiration

By combining the teaching about the nature and character of God (...which God, Who cannot lie (Titus 1:2); and ...it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18) with the teaching about revelation in the Bible we derive the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy and the associated terms. Consider II Tim 3:16-17:

All Scripture is inspired-- **plenary inspiration**
by God—**divine, impossible to lie, therefore inerrant**
and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; | **infallible**
so that the follower of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. |

Let's look at each of these terms and discover what they mean and what that means for us in our daily life.

I. What does inerrancy mean?

- A. Theologically—the Bible is without error from start to finish; no misleading information
- B. Webster—without error; without deviation from truth or accuracy

II. Does inerrancy apply to everything in the Bible, or only to spiritual truths?

- A. It applies to everything in the Bible.
- B. There is a growing trend to restrict inerrancy to just spiritual truths; however, if the entire Bible is not truthful with respect to creation, history, and scientific things, how can we be sure it is true regarding unseen spiritual realities?
- C. We must believe it all, or we cannot trust any of it.

III. What does infallible mean?

- A. In the guidance and counsel of the Bible it is incapable of making an error.
- B. Webster—incapable of error, not liable to mislead, deceive, or disappoint, incapable of error in defining doctrines touching faith or morals (See II Tim 3:16b-17)

IV. What does verbal plenary inspiration mean? (three significant words):

- A. Verbal
 1. the very words of Scripture are chosen by God (2 Pet 1:21)
 2. Jesus goes so far as to say that every part of a letter is eternal (Matt 5:18)
 3. This does not mean dictation, but guidance through the personalities of the writers
- B. Plenary
 1. This means the entire Bible, the whole of Scripture
 2. It applies to the canon, both Old and New Testaments, 66 books in all
 3. It also applies to everything in each book—all the stories, events, and teachings
- B. Inspiration
 1. Literally it means "God breathed"
 2. The Spirit of God guided the writers to say what God wanted said; not just the concepts but each and every word

CONC: We have spent two lessons addressing the truthfulness of the Bible. It is important to begin with this reference point or all of our future discussions will be a matter of our own personal opinions; opinions which are only as good as the next person's. As followers of Jesus Christ we have an anchor for our reference point for all truth. The Word of God is a reliable source of inerrant, infallible truth and is verbally inspired from Genesis to Revelation in all respects.

