BIBLIOLOGY: a Study of the Doctrine of Scripture

BIBLIOLOGY DEFINED: The word “bibliology” is derived from the Greek words biblos, meaning “book” or “roll” and logos, meaning “word.” Hence, bibliology is the “word” or study of the Scriptures. Bibliology is divided into six main areas of discussion: revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, authority, illumination and canonicity.

• THE REVELATION OF SCRIPTURE: How does God reveal Himself to man?

Since God is infinite and man is finite, man could not know the truth about God unless God would chose to tell man about Himself. Thus, revelation is “the unveiling of God’s truth as well as the truth unveiled. It is the act of unveiling as well as the contents unveiled.” God has revealed Himself in two ways:

• General Revelation: “Located in history, nature, providence and the conscience, general revelation is addressed to man as man and tells of God as Creator and Moral Governor of the universe.” PLEASE NOTE: general revelation will not save men. It is designed by God to lead men to special revelation.

  • Key chapter = Romans 1, which teaches: God is understood through what has been made (vv. 18-20); in fact, the attributes, power, and divine nature of God are revealed in creation (v. 20); God is the Creator and Moral Governor of the universe (vv. 25, 32); all men are accountable to what they know about God through general revelation (vv. 24, 26, 28); and, the human conscience bears witness to the Law of God (2:14-15).

  • Historically, man has suppressed and rejected God’s general revelation in favor of sin and their sinful lifestyles (cf. Rom. 1:21-23).

• Special Revelation: This revelation is distinguished from general revelation in that it is soteric — the means by which men are saved. “Special revelation is addressed to man as a sinner. Its aim is the salvation of the elect by unfolding the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.”


  • The Bible: the living, written Word. Key verse: Heb. 4:12.

  • The special revelation of God is verbal, personal and progressive. God speaks. God spoke personally to individuals. And God spoke in different times and ways to man throughout history.
• THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE: How was Scripture written?

Inspiration is the process by which Scripture was given to man through the work of the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing the accuracy of God’s revelation (the revelation of God would be of no value without such a guarantee). “The Scriptures are not the product of God and man, nor of God in a man. They are the result of God speaking through man.”

• Elements of Inspiration:
  • God: through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God superintended the writers, ensuring that the writing was accurate (2 Pt. 1:21).
  • Man: human authors wrote not mechanically, but through their own styles and personalities.
  • Extent: it is verbal (using the words and grammar of the Biblical languages to communicate God’s truth; further, every word is true—cf. Mt. 5:17-20) and plenary (that is, it includes all of Scripture).

• Key verse = 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Scriptures are “God-breathed.” That is, God exhaled or “breathed-out” the Scriptures. This draws attention to the fact that God did not merely improve something that was man-made, but that the Scriptures are fully His creation, using the lives and words of men.

• THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE: Are there errors in Scripture?

“Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines of knowledge.”

• The problems of errancy:
  • It denies what the Biblical record teaches about itself:
    1. Jesus taught that Moses’ words were from God (Mt. 19:4-6; cf. also Heb. 1:6 and 1:7)
    2. God is equated with Scripture (Rom. 9:17; Gal. 3:8)
    3. Paul’s writings were regarded as Scripture (2 Thess. 2:15; 2 Pt. 3:15-16)
    4. Jesus taught the inerrancy of even the pen-strokes of Scripture (Mt. 5:18)
  • It destroys the character of God as revealed in Scripture. If Scripture is God-breathed and in error, then God must be in error.

• Biblical (and logical) proof for the inerrancy of Scripture:
  1. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable… (2 Tim. 3:16)
  2. The Word of God is truth (Jn. 17:17; Ps. 119:160)
  3. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)

THEREFORE: the Scriptures are fully inerrant.
• THE ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE: How can I understand Scripture?

Illumination is “the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He enlightens those who are in a right relationship with Him to comprehend the written Word of God.”

• The reason the Holy Spirit is needed to interpret Scripture for us is that the fall made us unable to understand God and His Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).

• Among the things in which the Spirit illumines believers are:
  1. The person of Christ (Jn. 15:26; Acts 5:32)
  2. Sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8-11)
  3. Assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16)
  4. Assurance of eternal life (1 Jn. 5:7-12)
  5. All truth from God (1 Cor. 2:12)

• Key verses = 1 Cor. 2:12-13.

• THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE: How powerful is Scripture?

“Authority is the triune God in self-revelation who has the right and power to command compliance in thought and deed on the part of His rational creatures.”

• Why is the authority of Scripture so important? Because “once man is made fully ‘free’ to ignore general revelation, the result is a society like ours.”

• The source of authority is God the Father (Ex. 20:1-17), working through the rule of His Son (Heb. 1:2; Phil. 2:9-11) and the Spirit’s illumination (1 Cor. 2:10-16). NOTE: God (in any of His persons) cannot be separated from the authority of Scripture. To say, “I don’t need the Bible, I love Jesus,” or “I don’t need Scripture, the Holy Spirit will teach me” or “I don’t have time to study Scripture, there’s too much to do for God,” is to deny the authority of God in all His forms. The Scriptures ALONE give us the knowledge of God in all His persons and serve as the ground of our knowledge and activity.

• Key verse = 2 Pt. 1:2-3. Through God’s special revelation of Christ (and thus the Scriptures) we possess everything we need to allow us to live godly.

• THE CANONICITY OF SCRIPTURE: How was the Bible put together?

See “Canonicity of the Bible,” in Moody Handbook of Theology, pp. 170-175.
BIBLIOLOGY APPLIED:

1. Since God is revealed in Scripture, it means that God is interested in communicating with me!

2. Since the Scriptures are written by God and not men (and thus inerrant), they are fully trustworthy. Anything that God says needs to be said only once to be confessed, obeyed, trusted, or appropriated.

3. Since God has written with authority, His words are both forceful and binding.

4. Since God has used 40 writers over the span of 1000+ years to write the Bible, He will not give it to me and allow me to not understand it. If I read to discern, His Spirit will instruct me.

5. Since God is the author of the Bible, He is to be worshipped.

6. If we believe that the Bible is God’s Word, we’ll place ourselves under its authority and obey it.
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| Revelation | Revelation is the unveiling of God’s truth generally (through history, nature, providence and conscience) and specifically (through Christ and Scripture). | * Rom. 1:18-32  
* Jn. 1:15-18  
* Heb. 4:12 |
| Inspiration | Inspiration is the process by which Scripture was given to man through the work of the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing the accuracy of God’s revelation (the revelation of God would be of no value without such a guarantee). | 2 Tim. 3:16 -- “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable…” |
| Inerrancy | “Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach.” | Matt. 5:18--“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law…” |
| Illumination | Illumination is “the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He enlightens those who are in a right relationship with Him to comprehend the written Word of God.” | 1 Cor. 2:12--“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.” |
| Authority | “Authority is the triune God in self-revelation who has the right and power to command compliance in thought and deed on the part of His rational creatures.” | 2 Pet. 1:3--“His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness…” |