

Inerrancy: Why Is It Important?

Why is it important that we affirm and embrace the doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture? This is a very important issue to me as a pastor. It is greatly relevant to my ministry and the people for whom I am responsible.

The first thing that we need to recognize is the relevance of the truthfulness of Scripture to the truthfulness of God. If Scripture is God's Word, and we have seen that is what Scripture claims to be, either God has spoken truly or He has not spoken truly. Is God true? Does God speak the truth without error? If God speaks the truth, then we can have confidence that Scripture is true and without error. If not, how great are the implications for God's people! To have a God who does not speak the truth, or is unable to communicate truth without error is certainly a diminishing of the person of God.

When we consider the fact that Scripture presents itself to us as sufficient for the growth of God's people, we understand that God's people need to read and understand the Scriptures. If, as some claim, Scripture presents us truth about God but not about other things such as history, we are left with a book that is somewhat confusing. Scriptures does not give us redemptive truth apart from a historical setting. Scripture was given in real life settings to real people. When God gave us Scripture, He spoke through men who were men of their times. They spoke about God as He interacted with them in their lives. They did not speak of God abstractly, as many theologians speak of Him. They spoke of God as acting in history and doing things that science often says cannot be done. If there are historical and scientific errors in the Scriptures, we must somehow find a way to sift through the error and get to the truth. That would be most discouraging to many people who have no training in history and science. It would create an intellectual priesthood of academics who would be necessary to explain the Scriptures to the common man. That was not, and is not, God's intent for Scripture. God intends for the Scriptures to be understood by His people. God spoke through common men in a specific time to common men in all times in language that common men can understand. Though the understanding of the common man (And I should also say that of the academics.) is not full, it is sufficient for the purpose of God in Scripture to be fulfilled. God's people will be transformed as they read, understand, and trust Him as He is revealed in Scripture. Only as we understand Scripture to be true and without error will we arrive at this conclusion.

Once we begin to assert that Scripture errs, we will also come to the point to assert that Jesus erred. There is an indissoluble connection between Christ and the Scriptures. Once admit error into Scripture, Jesus will be admitted as erring. Again, the implications are great. Though we admit the full humanity of Christ, we also embrace His Divinity. Jesus Christ is as truly God as He is human. God does not lie, does not err, and speaks truly in all things. What kind of Savior do we preach to the people? Because truth is more than an issue of correct facts, but is a moral issue as well, we must understand that the admission of error into Scripture will also admit the possibility that they are morally wrong. If we do that, we must also admit that Jesus may very well have been (or at the present, be) morally wrong. That may be very well for those who have so deeply compromised with a secular worldview, but for those of us whose presupposition is that of the truthfulness of Scripture, it will never work. Neither will we embrace a Savior who cannot save, because He is in the same predicament as we are. We embrace the truthfulness of Scripture and the perfection of Jesus our Savior, and we reject anything that compromises these things and diminishes the glory of Christ.

Because faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:14-15), we understand that we are to believe the Scriptures. An errant Bible is an untrustworthy Bible. An errant Scripture means that we have an untrustworthy God. An errant Bible means that we have a Christ who is not trustworthy. God is either not true, or unable to speak truth to us in a perfect manner. That means that we cannot trust God's words and, logically, cannot trust Him. That means that we cannot trust Jesus to speak the complete truth without error and, logically, cannot trust Him. Though we trust men who often fail to speak the complete truth, God has told us that He does not err and does not lie. If we admit error into the Scriptures, we also admit that God errs and does not always

speaking truthfully. Truthfulness being a moral quality, we find that our ability to trust God, and God as revealed in His incarnate Son, is greatly diminished.

We must also consider the fact that Scripture is given to us for our holiness. We are sanctified by the work of the Word of God (Ephesians 5:25-28; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). I am not alone in being a pastor who ministers to sinful people on a regular basis. I am also a person who struggles with sin, because I am no different from any other person. What we need is something to change us. God's Word promises to be used of God to be the instrument that changes us. If I am unsure of the truthfulness of God's Word, I will not be very trusting of God's Word and will not submit myself to the sanctifying power of God's Word as I should. My people and I need a full faith in the Word of God so that our lives will be changed by God. We struggle with sinful habits, sinful thoughts, addictions, immorality, and ungodliness. We need to be able to trust God's Word and His power to use the Scriptures to sanctify us.

Scripture is given to us for a very practical purpose. Scripture is given to us to lead us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and to guide us as we are being transformed into holy people who are pleasing to God. As a pastor, I have great faith that God will use His Word to accomplish His purposes. The reason that I have this faith is that I have faith in God's trustworthy character, and I have faith in God's speaking truthfully to us in His Word. As I stand in the pulpit, minister in homes, or wherever I may be, I am convinced that God's Word is without error and will always direct us correctly. Though we may fail in our interpretations at times, God never fails to tell us exactly what we need in His Word. I am confident that the way of salvation is truthfully presented to us in Scripture. I am confident that the way of holiness is inerrantly presented to us in God's Word. I am thankful that God's Word can be trusted as the truth so that we can have confidence in God and His power to save and sanctify.