**The Inerrancy of The Holy Bible**

Based on [2 Timothy 2:8-13](https://biblia.com/books/esv/2Ti2.8) and [Hebrews 6:13-20](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Heb6.13)

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Lenten Midweek 2

Pastor Nathan Fuehrer

The bible teaches the church that there are many spirits in the world and we have a responsibility to test them. Today you might talk about following your heart, or sensing something in your gut, or maybe something just feels right or wrong. Or maybe you are following “the science”, or “the lessons of history”...you know “the facts.” At any rate there are many influences upon our daily beliefs and perceptions, many “spirits.”

Now the bible doesn’t say that such “facts” or such “feelings” are always wrong, only that there are spirits that put pressure towards your convictions. And they can be right, but they can also be wrong. So we are to test the spirits to see if they are from God…for there are many spirits…and not all are holy, and only One Spirit is imminently so. Therefore we must test our sources of information, our facts and our feelings with reference to the Holy Bible.

“The Holy Bible” is a phrase used for the compilation of 66 writings that were written by men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit. In that title “The - Holy - Bible”......“Bible” simply means book. “Holy” means special, such that it should not be treated like a normal book. And “The” means ***only***. It is not “A” holy bible…one among many, but it is the one and only ***holy*** book.

Holy means it is to be treated as holy. Moses was told to treat certain ground as holy by removing his sandals. You are called to treat the bible as holy too. You can leave your shoes on, but you are to remove your pride and other such fetters of the flesh. You do that by treating the bible as 1) Authoritative, 2) Inerrant, 3) Inspired, 4) Sufficient for salvation and 5) Doctrinally Clear.

Last week, we considered how The Holy Bible is Authoritative. There is no higher authority by which to judge the word of God than the word of God itself. As Hebrews says, since God had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself. God’s word doesn’t swear by scientific investigation, historiographical deductions, archaeological finds, it swears by God himself. No earthly authority can trump the heavenly authority of the Bible. Even if the bible contained errors, that wouldn’t dethrone its divine authority. We would be obliged to abide by those errors and submit to them as truths.

For instance, in Canada we have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is the highest authority in the land. However, it isn’t inerrant. It could have errors. I think that the idea of collective rights…that a group of people should have rights based on their group identity and heritage…I think it is wrong. But it is clearly taught in the Charter, and must be obeyed.

Holy Bible is inerrant. It not only is the highest authority for the christian, but also contains no errors or mistakes. The Charter might have gotten some things wrong, but God’s Word didn’t get anything wrong. It didn’t get six day creation wrong, or the virgin birth wrong, or male and female wrong, or male only clergy wrong, or the end of the world, judgement day and hell wrong.

And it’s not just that the Bible ***didn’t*** get these things wrong…it is that it ***cannot*** get this or anything wrong…any more than God can deny Himself. There might be many books that contain no errors. Maybe your phone book is 100% accurate. But it is not incapable of error, it is not inerrant. But the Bible cannot err, God cannot deny himself. There is only one holy book that cannot contain errors…and that is the Holy Bible.

But someone might say “how can this be”, the bible is full of errors. One passage says God told David to take a census, the other says Satan provoked him. Matthew says they went to the mount of Transfiguration after six days, Luke says on the eighth day. One gives a different genealogy for Jesus than another. One says there was one angel at the tomb, another says two…

Inerrancy does not mean we can perfectly reconcile everything in the bible to our understanding. Indeed, we cannot. Inerrancy just means it is never wrong in what it is plainly saying. Matthew didn’t miscount the days or the number of angels, neither did Luke. Somehow they are both literally right. Somehow it’s true that both God and Satan provoked David to take a census. And somehow God is three persons in one God.

In many cases such contradictions can be reconciled easily. But if they can’t, that doesn’t mean the bible is just another book. It is a feature of holiness to bow the knee of our understanding, and we treat the Bible that way. When we come to what we would normally call an error, we do what Martin Luther counsels. We say a prayer thanking God for his revealing this to us in his Holy word and move on. Contradictions that we cannot reconcile are not called errors…they are called mysteries. And our confessions tell us that the mysteries of God are not to be understood or explained, but adored.

There’s a parable I’ve told before that shows nicely how we are to approach the inerrancy of the bible dogmatically, and what we are to do when confronted with evidence of error. There was a man who went to the doctor believing he was dead. The doctor told him that is preposterous, but the man insisted he felt dead. The doctor thought of a test…a touchstone that would help the man escape his delusion. “Do you agree that dead men don’t bleed? The man says “of course”. The doctor grabbed the man’s hand, pricked his finger and out burst blood. The doctor said, “Now do you see”? The man said, “Yes, I see now the truth more clearly…dead men do bleed.”

This is kind of an unflattering parable, like the dishonest manager. This is likewise the parable of the delusional patient. He is to be commended, not for his delusion, but for his faith. But the sons of this world are more shrewd in doubling down on their faith than the sons of light. We are tossed about by so many spirits of doctrine in this world…and we trust the news, our neighbors, leaders almost implicitly. They have all lied, but we forget and proudly press on in our confident assertions as if we could not be wrong. But when it comes to the Holy Bible, we are expected to shrink back from our assertions of infallibility as if it is the only thing we shouldn’t believe by faith. But the delusional man, though not commended for his delusion, is a model for holding fast to the inerrency of his core belief. His believing “I am dead” was a creed, his faith that was not altered by his experience, but his experience was altered by it.

So we know that the Holy Bible is not something to be tested for error…it is the test which we are to administer upon the world. God tests Abraham, but you are not to put the Lord your God to the test. And there is nothing in the world that you can use to test the accuracy of the Holy Bible anyway…it is the standard of accuracy the mint of truth.

If you bump into an experience that contradicts the bible, you stand corrected…not in your faith but in your experience. You say…like the walking dead man, ‘WOW, I guess dead men do bleed.” Only your faith…and it is faith…your faith is not grounded in an irrational delusion, but in the Word of God spoken by the prophets, authorized by God’s son, built on the apostles and which cannot change and will never pass away. The Rich Man had moses and the prophets, we also have Jesus and the apostles who inform our faith to interpret the world we see. That’s the holiness of inerrancy.

So when you see wars, famines, pestilences and natural disasters; when you see Ukraine, COVID and climate change…the world will say, “You believe your God will save you, but see that is preposterous. The world is falling apart and he is doing nothing to stop it.” We say yes, thank you. Now I see the truth more clearly. Once I thought that God’s promise to save the world meant he wouldn’t destroy it. I once thought that God’s promise to save his church meant it would visibly grow and prosper here. Now I see God is saving the world precisely by first destroying it, as Scripture long has warned us. I see he is saving the church by smelting away the dross and preserving a remnant under the cross. So I will straighten up and raise my head, because I know what it means…not that God has forsaken me, but it is the true and infallible sign that my redemption draws near.