

Discernment Study

Week 2: Modernism (Liberalism)

1. Intro- Review

- Just a quick recap of last week- we talked about BASIC PRINCIPLES of spiritual discernment, that we have both the RESPONSIBILITY and the ABILITY to discern between TRUTH and ERROR;
- And that we need to be CAREFUL in how we listen. We need to EXAMINE EVERYTHING that's coming in and compare it against the Scriptures;
- But we also need to EXAMINE our own CONVICTIONS. Because if we aren't allowing the truth of the Scriptures to CONSTANTLY SHAPE OUR THEOLOGY and OUR THINKING,
- Then we are LEAVING OURSELVES OPEN to having our convictions influenced by something else. Maybe a person, maybe emotions, or maybe idols of the heart.
- That's how SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY IS CULTIVATED, and in that state, the combination of WEAK doctrinal convictions and the rule of idols in our heart make us vulnerable to being DECEIVED.
- Then when FALSE IDEAS are presented that we're unprepared to REFUTE, and along with those ideas come TEMPTATIONS that promise to give us our desires, or PRESSURES that play on our fears, we are tempted to MOVE AWAY FROM the TRUTH.
- That was the CASE with many in the Church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with MODERNISM, the movement we'll be looking at this morning.
- MODERNISM was motivated by ONE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE; the idea that ALL TRUTH, anything that can be known, can only be DETERMINED by the REASON and SCIENCE of man.
- And MODERNISM had ONE OVERARCHING BELIEF: that society was PROGRESSING toward a GOLDEN AGE, or UTOPIA through the triumph of science and human reason.

- Therefore, ALL THINGS needed to be SUBORDINATED to the tenets of MODERNISM.
- Now, given Modernism's belief that man's reason was the key to knowing TRUTH, and that science would usher in a UTOPIAN future, it was inevitable that MODERNISM would eventually attempt to overthrow BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.
- And naturally, the FOCUS of the MODERINST ATTACK was the SCRIPTURES
- Specifically, the battle lines were drawn around the DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INERRANCY, which says that in their ORIGINAL manuscripts, the Scriptures are completely FREE of any ERRORS. That every statement of Scripture is absolutely TRUE.
- Faithful believers in the Church affirmed INERRANCY, while Religious Liberals claimed that the Scriptures have historical, scientific, and even spiritual errors.
- So, why are we studying MODERNISM and INERRANCY this morning? TWO REASONS.
- FIRST, because believing the DOCTRINE of BIBLICAL INERRANCY is critically important. **Psalm 19** says "The Law of the Lord is perfect", and **2 Timothy 3** says that "All Scripture is God-breathed".
- To say that the Scriptures have ERRORS is to say that they are SOMETHING LESS than the Word of God, unless you believe in a God who makes MISTAKES.
- That is a THEOLOGICALLY LIBERAL view. Religious LIBERALS won't say that the Bible IS God's Word, they say that the Bible CONTAINS God's Word. Which allows MAN to decide with parts are true, and which are not.
- SECOND, because we should take seriously the importance of CONTENDING for BIBLICAL INERRANCY.
- If you go back and read up on MODERNISM, you'll see the IMMENSE DAMAGE it did to the Church. It effectively DECIMATED biblical Christianity in Europe;

- And it spiritually devastated MOST MAINLINE CHURCH DENOMINATIONS and their SEMINARIES in America.
- In fact, by WWI, men who believed in the Doctrine of Inerrancy ALMOST DISAPPEARED from the older seminaries, with a few notable exceptions.
- And the SPIRITUAL WRECKAGE of Modernism is still with us today. It's why Christianity faces such HOSTILITY in science and academia, and even in public schools;
- It's why most mainline Christian denominations are THEOLOGICALLY LIBERAL today, and it's why so many SEMINARIES are filled with unbelieving professors.
- So given the IMPORTANCE of the Doctrine of Inerrancy, and the SHOCKING NUMBER of churches that ABANDONED that doctrine when they were TESTED;
- It's good for us to make CERTAIN of our own CONVICTIONS, and remember the Apostle Paul's warning in **1 Corinthians 12:12**, when he said "let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."
- Because to say "I BELIEVE the Bible is the Word of God", and yet think that the Apostle Paul was WRONG on some issue;
- Or that the Bible has a few scientific or historical ERRORS in it, or even to ALLEGORIZE the Creation Account, the story of the Flood, or Jonah and the whale;
- Is to put YOURSELF in the position of deciding what in the Scriptures is true, rather than allowing the Scriptures to tell YOU what is TRUE.
- So this morning, as we discuss Modernism and it's challenge to biblical Christianity, we have THREE GOALS:
- FIRST, to know the BASIS for Modernism's attacks on the Scriptures
- SECOND, to REFUTE those attacks, and DEFEND those doctrines that proclaim the AUTHORITY of the Scriptures
- THIRD, to understand the SUBTLE ways we may SUBVERT BIBLICAL INERRANCY, and INADVERTANTLY UNDERMINE the AUTHORITY of the Scriptures in our own lives.

- We'll begin by understanding how Modernism rose to challenge biblical Christianity

A Brief History of Modernism

- For MOST of the 1800's, Christianity was DOMINANT in American culture. BIBLICAL IDEAS of MORALITY, CIVILITY, and HARD WORK guided everything, and the authority of the Bible was not seriously questioned.
- That's NOT to say that most people were GENUINELY BORN AGAIN, just that BIBLICAL MORALITY was the accepted FRAMEWORK OF SOCIETY in the Victorian Era, and MAJOR CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES were generally UPHELD.
- EVANGELICALS even had a SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE in SCIENCE and ACADEMIA. In fact, before 1850, most college presidents were CLERGY.
- BUT starting in the SECOND HALF of the 19th Century, especially in the period between the CIVIL WAR and the FIRST WORLD WAR, the culture went through an ENORMOUS CHANGE
- During that BRIEF PERIOD of time, the TABLES WERE TURNED and the VICTORIAN era gave way to the PROGRESSIVE era, and the RELIABILITY of the BIBLE became A HOTLY CONTESTED DEBATE among theologians.
- From there, various INFLUENTIAL and POPULAR preachers started teaching THEOLOGICALLY LIBERAL ideas from their pulpits;
- And a LIBERAL version of Christianity began spreading from the seminaries to the individual churches and missions in mainline denominations.
- So, the first QUESTION you might ask is WHY THEN? Why the SUDDEN CHANGE in the culture's opinion of the BIBLE in the late 19th Century?
- The truth is that this DIDN'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. This battle between LIBERALISM and biblical Christianity had actually had been building for decades.
- The man-exalting ideals of the ENLIGHTENMENT promoted the philosophy of RATIONALISM, which was deeply rooted in America's

founding, and all that was needed for these ideas to REPLACE Christianity as the DOMINANT INFLUENCE on the culture were TWO CONDITIONS:

- The first condition was a DOCTRINALLY WEAKENED CHURCH. And in many ways the American Church of the 19th Century after the Second Great Awakening was more EMOTIONALLY DRIVEN than THEOLOGICALLY GROUNDED.
- There were certainly faithful EXCEPTIONS, but the emphasis in much of the 1800's was on CAMP REVIVALS, MASS conversions driven by exciting speakers, and HOLINESS movements that taught PERFECTIONISM, and which eventually birthed PENTACOSTALISM.
- Whereas the earlier Puritan influences tended toward DEEP THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION and seeing God's grace in the HARD WORK of real spiritual transformation.
- And the second condition that was needed was a CATALYST. And three very powerful catalysts all appeared in the second half of the 19th Century:
- **1) Darwin published his book, "Origin of Species" in 1859-** He proposed that the THEORY OF EVOLUTION explained all life on earth. This was in DIRECT OPPOSITION to the CREATION ACCOUNT in Genesis, and it REPUDIATED the need for a Creator God.
- And Evolution gained almost IMMEDIATE WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE as a scientific theory. In fact, by the 1890's Darwin's Theory of Evolution was FIRMLY fixed in public school science curriculums.
- **2)** Just 4 months after Darwin was published, a group of LIBERAL American theologians PUBLISHED ESSAYS that DENIED major biblical DOCTRINES.

They were influenced by something called "HIGHER CRITICISM", a type of biblical scholarship that had become very popular among theologians, and which DENIED THE SUPERNATURAL and QUESTIONED the RELIABILITY of the Scriptures as actual history.

- **3) Progressivism-** Man's ADVANCES in knowledge, science, and industry were seen as evidence of his continuing DEVELOPMENT and IMPROVEMENT.

The SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS made it appear that man could PERFECT HIMSELF and society over time, and ASSURE HIS OWN FUTURE through social reform and scientific progress. In short, He could eventually "SAVE" himself from disease, war, poverty, etc.

What is Liberalism?

- Those THREE IDEAS (EVOLUTION, HIGHER CRITICISM, and PROGRESSIVISM) formed the CORE of Modernism's influence, and these influences rapidly overtook ACADEMIA and the CULTURE.
- And this created PRESSURE on those in the Church who desired THE RESPECT AND ACCEPTANCE of the CULTURE, especially those who considered themselves INTELLECTUALS, like theologians and professors.
- Because MODERNISM didn't just disagree with the Bible. The implication was that anyone who literally BELIEVED it was FOOLISH, or WORSE.
- So Religious Liberals in the churches and seminaries had a PROBLEM. They wanted to remain associated with Christ and the CHURCH, but they didn't want the SCORN that came with believing things that the CULTURE now found offensive.
- So their SOLUTION was not to LEAVE the CHURCH, but to CHANGE it. To MODERNIZE it.
- In their view, they would "RESCUE" Christianity from BACKWARDNESS AND IGNORANCE, and REDEFINE the Christian faith in terms of Modernism.
- So Modernism essentially REDEFINED CHRISTIANITY by REMOVING the OFFENSIVE elements. Basically, that meant removing anything MIRACULOUS, like the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, because that offended the wisdom of the age.
- And it also meant removing Christ's SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT, because that OFFENDS MAN'S PRIDE IN HIMSELF.
- And then to explain how a BIBLE they claimed was filled with MYTHS and ERRORS could still be USEFUL to LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY, they imposed an EVOLUTIONARY WORLDVIEW on the Scriptures;
- They claimed that man was evolving socially and SPIRITUALLY as well as biologically, and so MODERN MAN could better extract the TRUE

ESSENCE of Christianity from the BIBLE than the primitive men who wrote it.

- So Liberal Christianity was boiled down to these THREE IDEAS:
- **What is the BIBLE? They said:** It is a RECORD, not a REVELATION. The Bible is an ancient record of RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES with God, NOT a book of DOCTRINE for modern man.
- **What is CHRISTIANITY? They said:** Christianity is LIFE, not DOCTRINE, meaning that it's about ETHICS not obedience. They claimed that the ESSENCE of Jesus' teaching was the UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD OF GOD, and therefore the UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD of all MEN;

And therefore the primitive GOSPEL OF REPENTANCE was replaced with the progressive GOSPEL OF SOCIAL REFORM AND PROGRESS.

- **What is FAITH? They said:** Faith is about FEELINGS, not FACTS. Faith is A SUBJECTIVE and PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, not personal belief in AN OBJECTIVE body of PROPOSITIONAL TRUTH.
- So to recap: They created a PERVERSION of Christianity they claimed was its TRUE ESSENCE by REMOVING all of the doctrines that GAVE THEM TROUBLE. This allowed them to CALL THEMSELVES Christians and still retain the RESPECT of the culture.
- But THEIR SOLUTION created a PROBLEM for believers, because those troubling doctrines, like INERRANCY, the VIRGIN BIRTH, SUBSTITUTIONAL ATONEMENT, and the RESURRECTION were critical to biblical Christian faith.
- By the early 20th Century the first FUNDAMENTALISTS rose up to defend these Fundamentals of the faith. And we will get into that next week.

REFUTING MODERNISM

- But for now, we will REFUTE the charges that these RELIGIOUS LIBERALS made against the Scriptures, and wrestle with the same questions that believers had to wrestle with then:
- Are the Scriptures really the INSPIRED Word of God?
- Are they really WITHOUT ERROR and INFALLIBLE?

- Does the Bible really speak AUTHORITATIVELY to us today?
- But BEFORE we answer THOSE QUESTIONS, I'll make one COMMENT and ask you one QUESTION. First, the comment:
- The charges that LIBERALS made against the Bible were from SECULAR science and Liberal religious SCHOLARSHIP. In REFUTING their IDEAS, we are going to point out some of the fatal FLAWS in their THEORIES;
- And THEN we will see what the SCRIPTURES PLAINLY TEACH about the Bible's reliability and authority.
- But just so we are CLEAR on one important point, HERE'S my question to you: If we REFUTED these charges against the Bible with **RATIONAL EVIDENCES ONLY**, such as demonstrating the scientific PROBLEMS with EVOLUTION, or PROVING the HISTORICAL RELIABILITY of the Scriptures;
- Could those evidences bring them to FAITH in Christ? Let me clarify: If a man WILL NOT BELIEVE the GOSPEL when it is explained to him, will these rational evidences PERSUADE him to believe it?
- Answer #1: **Turn to 1 Corinthians 2:14** says the natural man CANNOT ACCEPT the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him. And he CANNOT UNDERSTAND them because they are SPIRITUALLY appraised.
- To understand spiritual truth, a man must BE spiritually alive.
- Answer #2: **Turn to Ephesians 2:5** says that we were DEAD in our transgressions and sins, but that God MADE US ALIVE.
- Salvation, SPIRITUAL LIFE, comes through the power of the GOSPEL, not the power of our LOGIC. Logic might persuade someone to agree that there must be A GOD, and even admit that the Bible is free of historical or scientific errors;
- But IT WILL NEVER cause someone to see their need for a SAVIOR and EMBRACE CHRIST as LORD. Only the GOSPEL can do that.
- And if you're STILL tempted to believe that some kind of really AMAZING EVIDENCE could CHANGE someone's heart toward Christ, like seeing someone RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD;

- Then **Luke 16:31** should give you something to think about. In that passage, it says that if a man REFUSES TO BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD, then he WON'T BELIEVE even if someone RISES FROM THE DEAD.
- So, why did I make that point? TWO REASONS. First, because I want you to understand that when someone DOUBTS GOD'S EXISTENCE, or DOESN'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE is the Word of God, you won't lead them to faith in Christ by giving rational evidences alone.
- Man's problem isn't LACK OF EVIDENCE. **Romans 1:19-20** clearly says that man has ALL OF THE EVIDENCE HE NEEDS to know that God exists.
- Only the SPIRIT OF GOD working through the WORD OF GOD can convict a man of sin and bring him to FAITH in Christ. **Romans 10** says it all: "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ."
- But the second reason I bring that up is because demonstrating the FOOLISHNESS of evolution or the MOUNTAIN of physical and rational evidences for the reliability of the Scriptures can be helpful in a few ways.
- First, though no genuine believer is going to fall away from the faith because of these lies about the Scriptures, they can still shake immature believers.
- It can be helpful to demonstrate that these LIES CAN BE COUNTERED from both Scripture and PLAIN REASON.
- And it also leads to PRAISE as we see how ALL CREATION gives evidence of God's handiwork, and how the Scriptures PASS EVERY TEST OF RELIABILITY that man can devise.
- So we're going to take just a FEW MINUTES and remove the obstacles put in place by EVOLUTION, the HIGHER CRITICS, and the PROGRESSIVES. We'll start with Darwin.

2. Refuting Darwin

- **First of all**, when Darwin formulated his theories about evolution, he thought that simple single-celled creatures were LITERALLY SIMPLE. He DID NOT KNOW about DNA.

- **DNA is essentially INFORMATION.** All living creatures have it, and a pinhead-sized amount has a BILLION TIMES more information than a 4-gigabit hard drive, and is SELF-REPLICATING.
- **The capacity of DNA** to STORE and ORGANIZE complex information is far GREATER and MORE ADVANCED than any software or computer ever created. And science has NO EXPLANATION for where all of this information even CAME FROM in the first place.
- Second, Evolutionists claim that **MUTATIONS or changes in DNA information are the DRIVING PRINCIPLE of evolution**, and that mutations caused DINOSAURS to evolve into BIRDS, and AMOEBAS to morph into MEN.
- But the FACT is that the mutations necessary to CHANGE one species into another would require the addition of NEW DNA INFORMATION.
- And yet AGAIN, evolutionists have NO WAY of explaining where this NEW DNA information might come from.
- DNA information can be DELETED, CORRUPTED, MOVED AROUND, or REPLICATED. There's plenty of evidence for that. But there is ZERO credible evidence for the creation of NEW information.
- Thirdly, if all the species on earth were descended from SIMPLER species over millions of years, then **the fossil record should show NUMEROUS examples** of these SPECIES IN TRANSITION.
- The fossil record DOES CLEARLY SHOW many VARIETIES of horses or dogs...but all are STILL clearly horses or dogs. The same goes for humans. **There is NOT ONE verifiable example of a species in transition.**
- So evolution CAN'T EXPLAIN where life came from, CAN'T PROVE it's own theory of how one species CHANGES into another, and ALL of its proposed missing links...are STILL missing.
- Sir Isaac Newton said it well long ago. "One can NEVER unlock the secrets of the universe until they come to realize that there was a DESIGNER of that expanse."
- And the writer of Hebrews said it even better, and he said it first. **Hebrews 11:3**, "By FAITH we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God, so that WHAT IS SEEN was NOT made out of things which are visible."

- And there's the indisputable fact of creation: Matter is CREATED, not ETERNAL, therefore it had to be made out of NOTHING, and ONLY an eternal GOD could do that. He spoke it into existence, and we believe this by FAITH.
- Let's move on to HIGHER CRITICISM

3. Refuting Higher Criticism

- HIGHER CRITICISM claims that the Bible is an historically and factually UNRELIABLE text. But when we put Higher Criticism to the test, we see its own glaring flaws.
- HIGHER CRITICISM is based on an EVOLUTIONARY VIEW of religion and literature, which led these liberal scholars to PRESUME that since the Bible was written over many centuries, that it must demonstrate an EVOLVING, CHANGING, increasingly more intellectually sophisticated view of God.
- For example, they might claim that the God of the Old Testament is ANGRY and VENGEFUL, and that Jesus is COMPASSIONATE, and so this represents evidence of an EVOLVING view of God.
- To that I would say: Have you read the account of Ananias and Sapphira? And I would also say that if you don't see God's COMPASSION and PATIENCE in the Old Testament, you haven't read the Old Testament.
- From GENESIS TO REVELATION, God's redemptive plan is NEVER changed, NOR has the Bible's view of God's NATURE AND CHARACTER ever changed.
- Higher Criticism also begins with the ASSUMPTION that the Bible is NOT the inspired Word of God, but just the product of MEN.
- This DESPITE the fact that the Bible continually claims to be the Word of God.
- So beginning with this BIAS as its FOUNDATION, Higher Criticism REJECTS supernatural miracles like the VIRGIN BIRTH or the RESURRECTION, or FULFILLED PROPHECIES;
- And it INVENTS natural explanations instead, with no corroborating evidence AT ALL on which to base those explanations.

- We could spend WEEKS going over the evidence for the PERFECT RELIABILITY of the Scriptures. But that's NOT OUR AIM this morning, so you can do that ON YOUR OWN if you're so inclined. But let me just give you a few of those evidences very briefly.
- **Archaeology.** The Bible contains COUNTLESS, DETAILED HISTORICAL REFERENCES about Israel and the surrounding region. Dynasties, decrees of kings, wars, destruction of cities, historical persons, etc.
- In NOT A SINGLE DETAIL has archaeology found the Bible to be wrong. Quite the OPPOSITE. The Bible has time and again PROVEN ITSELF to be factually accurate.
- **Prophecy.** The Bible contains MANY HUNDREDS OF FULFILLED PROPHECIES about historical events and the coming of the Messiah. Daniel 9 gives a prophecy hundreds of years before Christ, and accurately predicts the exact time of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.
- **Isaiah 44** prophesies the actions of the PERSIAN KING CYCRUS, and even gives his NAME, almost 200 years before he was EVEN BORN! The Bible proves itself to know what only GOD could know- the end from the beginning.
- **Manuscripts.** If anyone would QUESTION whether or not the Bible in your hand is what the ORIGINAL AUTHORS WROTE, he would have to deny an ABSOLUTE MOUNTAIN of manuscript evidence.
- The evidence for the New Testament FAR EXCEEDS any other ancient book in HUMAN HISTORY. We have over 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament, many dating within 200 years of the date they were written, some much earlier.
- In comparison, OTHER ancient documents accepted as reliable by historians have on average only DOZENS of copies, and those average 1000 years from the actual date they were written.
- On top of THAT from the works of the early church fathers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries you could RECONSTRUCT THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT, and it's the same as the one we're reading from this morning.

- Therefore, if you were going to reject the Bible on THESE grounds you would also have to reject EVERY OTHER WORK OF ANTIQUITY.
- I could also go on to explain how the BIBLICAL CANNON, the books that make up the Bible, were RECOGNIZED,
- And also how we know that the copies of the MANUSCRIPTS we have are faithful to what was in the ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPHS or documents, but we don't have time to dig into all of that. If you have questions about those things, I can direct you to good resources.
- Finally, there's PROGRESSIVISM. This will take literally 10 seconds.

Refuting Progressivism

- If you want to evaluate the CREDIBILITY OF PROGRESSIVISM, which claimed that mankind was improving, you only have to think through 20th Century history, or just take a GOOD LOOK AROUND you today, to dispel that notion.
- Even the current generation of RELIGIOUS LIBERALS has rejected the Modernist form of Progressivism. How do I know? One word: post-modernism.
- Of course they've concocted new forms of Progressivism, but those will also fail soon enough.
- So let's move on to examining the Scriptures

Examining the Scriptures

- And I'll start with a QUESTION: **To be the Word of GOD, what MUST be true about the ORIGINAL COPIES of the Scriptures?**
- **Well, if it's the WORD OF GOD, that means that GOD must be the AUTHOR, right? SO they must be Inspired, "breathed out" by God Himself.**
 - **Also, the Scriptures MUST be Inerrant, or without error.** Because God cannot lie or make errors.
 - **They must also be INFALLIBLE.** For every purpose that God has in giving His Word, THE SCRIPTURES cannot fail, because God cannot fail.

Inspiration

- We'll begin with INSPIRATION. If you look at Saving Grace's doctrinal statement, you'll see that we believe the Scriptures to be the VERBAL, PLENARY, INSPIRED Word of God. We'll make the GENERAL case for inspiration FIRST.
- **Turn to 1 Corinthians 14:37.** "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are THE LORD'S COMMANDMENT. But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized."
- **Turn to John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
- The **1 Corinthians 14** passage makes it clear that the apostles KNEW they were writing God's Word. In **2 Peter 3:16**, Peter identifies Paul's writings as Scripture.
- And the **John 14** passage makes clear that it was Jesus' INTENTION that the Spirit would so work in the apostles as to later WRITE the Word of God.
- Then there are passages that actually reference the process of inspiration.
- **2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is INSPIRED by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"
- The word for INSPIRED is "theopneustos" which means "breathed out by God". So when it says "ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED", it literally means all in the sense of each and every part of it, finds its source in God.
- And **2 Peter 1:21** says "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT spoke from God."
- So the PROCESS of inspiration clearly involves the Spirit of God MOVING the human writer. But it's not a process of DICTATION, as if they listened to God speak and just wrote down what He said.
- Each author has his OWN STYLE and VOCABULARY, and writes in the first person, as you normally would in writing a letter from yourself to someone else.

- Yet the Word of God is NOT written by an act of human will, but of God's will. And the divine source of the Scriptures is evidenced in its PERFECTION.
- It is without contradiction and without error from beginning to end, and GENUINE BELIEVERS have always recognized it as God's Word.
- So the Scriptures claim to be the INSPIRED Word of God, their PERFECTION evidences that they are INSPIRED, and believers testify they are INSPIRED by the fruit in their lives from believing and obeying it.

VERBAL means every word in the original autographs is inspired by God

- Okay, so now let's talk about what it means when we talk about VERBAL inspiration.
- **Turn to Matthew 5:18** "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, NOT THE SMALLEST LETTER OR STROKE shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."
- God did not inspire GENERAL IDEAS about Himself and His will. God inspired EVERY WORD that the authors of Scripture wrote. Every JOT and TITTLE. Every letter, and every stroke of the pen is inspired by God.
- Question: Why is the Doctrine of VERBAL Inspiration important? How does it affect how we read, study, and interpret the Bible?
- Answer: It should cause us to be very CAREFUL INTERPRETERS, EXAMINING EVERY WORD, TENSES of verbs, TONE, VOICE, etc. to tell us what it means.
- This is why TRAINED EXPOSITORS study the original GREEK, and pay close attention to EVERY NUANCE of grammar to get the CLEAREST meaning of the passage.
- BTW it should also keep you from buying a PARAPHRASE BIBLE. Why? Because you are getting someone's INTERPRETATION of the Bible, NOT the Bible itself.

Now let's talk about the Doctrine of PLENARY Inspiration.

- PLENARY means that every word of Scripture is EQUALLY authoritative.
- **Romans 15:4** “For WHATEVER WAS WRITTEN in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”
- **Luke 16:17** “ But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for ONE STROKE of a letter of the Law to fail.”
- Question: If we don't hold to or understand the Doctrine of PLENARY Inspiration, what kind of theological trouble can we get into?
- Answer: We may put GREATER EMPHASIS on one part of Scripture over another, or just CLING TO PASSAGES that we prefer, or interpret everything through a few FAVORITE PASSAGES.
- For example, you can't PIT PAUL against JAMES, or place a greater importance on what Jesus said in the gospels over what is taught in the epistles. All of it is God's Word.
- **And Inerrancy means that the Bible is truthful and factual in all of its statements**
- **John 17:17** “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”
- **Proverbs 30:5-6.** “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.”
- Inerrancy doesn't mean that there haven't been errors made when SCRIBES MADE COPIES of the original documents. The WRITING of the Scriptures was inspired, not the COPYING.
- But thankfully, God has PRESERVED His Word down through the centuries and millennia, and we know from manuscript evidence that better than 99% of what we have is correct.
- And we know about the FEW copy errors that there are from variants between manuscripts, and NONE affect any biblical doctrine.
- Critics have tried to play games with inerrancy, saying that the Bible is inaccurate because it rounded up large numbers or used an imprecise

phrase.

- But it is perfectly reasonable that Scripture can use idioms, like **Revelation 7:1**, which says “four angels were standing at the FOUR CORNERS of the earth” without being accused of saying that the earth is FLAT. Some have actually tried to make that charge, ignoring that in **Isaiah 40:22** it references the earth as a circle.

Infallibility

- Then there’s the Doctrine of INFALLIBILITY. This means that God’s Word will not fail in any of its intended purposes.
- **Turn to Isaiah 55:11** “So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”
- And we can go back to **2 Timothy 3:16-17** yet again. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
- God’s Word always accomplished its intended purpose.
- **Conclusion- our own practices**
 - **QUESTION:** We can say that we believe in the authority of Scripture because it is the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

But what are some ways we might approach the Scriptures that can undermine biblical authority in our lives?

- **We don’t read them with the RIGHT HERMENEUTIC, the right INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE.** Since it is the plenary, verbal inspired Word of God, we cannot:
 - Approach it casually
 - Force our own ideas on it
 - Allegorize or spiritualize what is literal
 - Use one passage to interpret others
 - Appropriate approach is LITERAL (plain meaning), GRAMMATICAL (language structure), HISTORICAL (original audience). That’s how we get to Authorial intent.
- **QUESTION:** Some have tried to find a compromise on Inerrancy, saying that the Bible is accurate in matters of salvation, but can have

scientific errors, historical errors, etc. **Why is this an illogical and unfaithful position?**

Because the book reflects its Author. If the book has errors, the Author is prone to mistakes.

AND because it puts YOU in charge of deciding what is TRUE and FALSE.

- **QUESTION:** Can a Christian believe that Genesis is an allegory, and not literal history?

Salvation is granted by God's grace through FAITH in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. HOWEVER, I am concerned for anyone who believes in an allegorical approach because:

They are rejecting the plain and clear meaning of the Genesis account of Creation, and they are doing so NOT because of the biblical testimony, but because they are being influenced by an EXTRA-BIBLICAL SOURCE.

They are rejecting a literal ADAM. If Adam did not exist, how did sin enter the world? Also, DEATH entered through sin, right? And since there was no death until Adam sinned, how do you explain the death of creatures over billions of years?