

Short essay on inspiration and inerrancy of the bible essay



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The inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible is a critical topic to our Christian faith. If we are to understand the Bible and its commands on how to live and be saved through faith, we need to be sure that we know how the Bible was written and whether or not the Bible is authoritative. To say that the Bible has authority is to claim that the Bible is the very word of God. The Bible is the revelation of the Creator to His creation.

In this sense, the authority of the Bible comes from God Himself. The word of God came to His people through the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and ultimately, the life of Jesus Christ. The prophets would regularly claim the authority of God, as did Jesus. Therefore, the authority of the Bible comes from the fact that it is God's own words. To understand this, we must first examine the inspiration of the Bible.

The question of the inspiration of the Bible is akin to asking whether the Bible is just a collection of stories by human authors, or if God was involved in the writing. The inspiration of the Bible can be understood as the Spirit of God influencing and guiding the writers, sovereignly chosen by God, into putting the words of God into writing. 1 The Bible itself supports this claim, in 2 Timothy 3: 16, " All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

We can see that the Bible is therefore written by man, but through the inspiration of the Spirit, the true author of all Scripture is actually God Himself. One can naturally deduce that if the authorship of the Bible belongs to God, then the Bible should be completely dependable and authoritative.

The inerrancy of the Bible can also be proven by the inspiration of the

Scripture. God, and the word of God, is without fault, as seen in Psalm 33: 4, " For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does."

Therefore, if God is infallible, and Scripture is inspired and authored by God, then it stands to reason that Scripture is also without error. Four main arguments are used to validate the inerrancy of the Bible. The first is the biblical argument. This maintains that the Bible itself implies that Scripture is inerrant and infallible.

This is probably the strongest of the arguments; however it relies on the understanding of the divine inspiration of Scripture. Jesus argues in John 10: 34-35 that Scripture cannot be broken. In this, He is emphasizing the authority of Scripture, but as Feinberg points out, " Something that contains errors cannot be absolutely authoritative." 2 Here again we see that if we accept that God inspired every word in the Bible, and ultimate authority belongs to Him, then the Scriptures must be inerrant.

The second argument is the historical argument. This argument claims that throughout history the church understood that the Bible was infallible. The early church fathers did not see this as something that needed to be defended. It was simply assumed. The people nearest to the events, and in every period since, have asserted the absolute authority and infallibility of the Bible. This argument is not as strong as the first, but still very influential.

The major argument against this idea is that it is a modern invention, but there is clear evidence to the contrary. 2 The third argument is known as the epistemological argument. This basically claims that " if the Bible is not inerrant, then any claim it makes may be false." 2 Therefore, no claim the
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Bible makes could be considered authoritative because anything it says could be false. While this is not the strongest argument for inerrancy, it is important.

This line of thinking allows the reader to be able to discount any portion of the Bible as error, and therefore the Bible loses its authority. The final argument is called the slippery slope argument. This argument is given by those who view the inerrancy of the Bible to be a fundamental truth of the Christian faith. If someone believes that the Bible is not inerrant, then it could lead to turning away from other doctrines of the faith.

This is perhaps the weakest argument, as there are examples of theologians who do not consider the Bible to be inerrant, but have not given up on other doctrines. ² It is very important to understand that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. As such it has complete authority and infallibility. With this assurance, a Christian can live his life in such a way as to be confident of following God's will. Not only that, but he or she can know, with full confidence, the path to salvation.

Word count: # 798

Bibliography¹C. F. H. Henry, "Bible, Inspiration of" from "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology" pp. 159-163

²P. D. Feinberg, "Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of" from "Evangelical Dictionary of Theology" pp. 156-159

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