

It's God's True and Trustworthy Revelation

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Date: 18 October 2020

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn to our Bible reading this morning, and we're continuing our series thinking about God's Word, the Bible, and a set of readings this morning beginning in 2 Timothy.

These are all quite brief readings, so we'll turn to each one in turn. But the first comes from 2 Timothy, so please do turn there. 2 Timothy chapter 3, and just verses 16 and 17 there.

2 Timothy 3, verse 16. The Apostle Paul writes, All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

And if you turn just a few pages to 2 Timothy, and we'll read from 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 16.

Sorry, 2 Peter. 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 16. The Apostle Peter writes,

[2 : 19] As they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Let me turn back to 1 Corinthians for our final reading this morning.

1 Corinthians chapter 2 and reading from verse 9. 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and from verse 9.

1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 9.

And it says, spiritual truth to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

Amen. This is the Word of God, and may he bless it to us this morning. Perhaps you'd open your Bibles at 2 Timothy 3, and we will also be looking at these other two passages that we read earlier, and some others too. We've started to think through why it is that we so treasure the Bible. And I think already we've come to see that there are many reasons that we do, maybe already more than we'd thought of. As God's covenant revelation, the Bible is a personal word that is given to lead us into the knowledge of God so that we might know him intimately. It's a clear revelation, so it's an accessible word. It's open to all, not just the experts, not just the religious specialists. And it's a coherent revelation to be taken seriously in its completeness and in its context so that we can understand it properly and relate it to the whole of life.

[5 : 12] And we saw last time that it's a commanding revelation. It has full authority to lead us in the path of life, to show us the way of our Creator and our Sovereign Lord.

Today, though, I want to think of another attribute of the Bible, which is just as important as these others. And it's to remind us that the Bible is God's true and trustworthy revelation to us.

All Scripture is a divinely authored word, so we can trust it to lead us in truth and not ever in error. So it's often referred to as the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. And also the infallibility or the inerrancy of Scripture will come to that. I think actually it's just more helpful, more down-to-earth to use language like the truth and the trustworthiness of our Bibles as divinely authored words. The theologian John Frame has a magisterial book called *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. And in it, he defines inspiration as, quote, a divine act that creates an identity between a divine word and a human word. A divine act that creates an identity between a divine word and a human word. And it's important to note that that divine act is not just a simple dictation.

It's not just God saying, write down these words for me. That does happen, actually. Sometimes God told Moses on the mountain exactly what to write in giving the law. There isn't Jesus when he appeared to the apostle John, dictated to John exactly what to write in those letters to the seven churches in Revelation 1 to 3. But normally the process of inspiration, the process of this divine authoring, of creating this divine identity between the human words and the divine words, normally it's much more complex and nuanced than that. As John Frame likes to put it, it's multi-perspectival. That's a great word, isn't it? There are many facets, many perspectives to it. Other theologians you may have heard of, Herman Bavink and Abraham Kuiper, they like to use the word organic inspiration. Because God used the organic complexity of real human beings, their diversity of experience and situations and so on, he used that to communicate with us in a fully human and personal way.

And we spoke last time about how the Bible is a fully human book, that it's written in our language so that we can understand it. It's coherent, it's comprehensive, so that we have to engage all of our human faculties to understand it. And that's why, you see, Bible teachers must be, according to the Bible, must be gifted by God for the task, but also equipped humanly to do that task.

[8 : 24] Why Paul says to Timothy, he's got to be diligent in giving himself wholly to that task so that other people can see his progress. That's why he says to him that he's to entrust what he's learned from Paul to other faithful men who will be able also to teach others. That's why he says you have to strive to be an approved workman, someone who doesn't need to be ashamed, somebody who does rightly handle the word of truth. So that you might be rightly and fully equipped for every good work. Look at these verses in 2 Timothy 3. What is it that will equip the man of God, as verse 17 says, for every good work?

Well, the answer is there in verse 16. You see, it's the words that God himself breathes out, which will be useful, which will need to be vital for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. And where do you find those very words of God? Well, Paul says here, in all scripture, in all the sacred writings. And of course, he means not just that the prophetic writings he's referring to here particularly, but also the apostolic witness of the New Testament that Peter spoke of. They're not simply man's words about God, but they're God's own words, he says.

They're God-breathed. God breathes them out. So here's the question. How can we say that man's words, which the scriptures clearly are, they're in our language, they're clear, they're coherent to us, but how can they also be, in any sense, God's own words? Well, the answer that the Bible itself gives to us is that the words of scripture are both fully the words of man and fully the words of God.

Also, they're joined together, as John Frame says in that identity of organic inspiration. Well, how does that work? Well, the Bible tells us two clearly, two very distinct things. It tells us that the writers are fully inspired by God, that God breathes into their writing, if you like.

But also, it tells us that the words themselves are fully expired by God, you could put it. That the very words themselves are breathed out by God. Let's think about the first of these. The Bible writers are fully inspired by God. Turn over to 2 Peter chapter 1, where we read there.

[11 : 08] Verse 19, we have something, he says, more sure, says Peter, the prophetic word, which you'll do well to pay attention to as a lamp shining in a dark place. Verse 20, knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. Not just from the prophet, but no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along, as they were driven along by the Holy Spirit. The words there are used of a ship under sail being driven before a strong wind. The speed, the direction, the force is fully controlled by that prevailing wind. And that's what Peter's saying about these words of scripture. He's speaking here principally about the Old Testament, the words of the prophets. Remember in Hebrews chapter 1, many times, long ago, in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. God spoke. It was his initiative. None of it, says Peter, was the initiative of man, the inspiration of man. Men spoke from God.

And they wrote down these words, from God. And then as Hebrews 1 goes on, you remember in these last days he's spoken to us by his son. So the Old Testament and the New Testament are a unified witness from God. The Old Testament, if you like, is the father's witness to the son, promised and foreshadowed in the prophetic writings, speaking by the spirit. In the New Testament, Jesus tells us that the son's witness to the father. At last he comes and he fully reveals the father, speaking words that are spirit and life. So notice the father, the son and the spirit are united in revealing God to us.

In John 17, Jesus said, remember, I have manifested your name, for I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them. John 17, verse 8. And not only through Jesus' words is the father known, but through the words that Jesus passed on to his apostles. This is vital. He says in John 17, I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, he says, meaning after his death and resurrection. How is that going to happen? Well, he says, because people will believe in me through their word, the apostles' words. Remember, he says to them, the Holy Spirit will come upon them after Jesus ascends to glory. And he says, he will teach you, that's the apostles, all things. He'll bring to remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14, verse 26. The spirit will take from what is mine and declare it to you, says Jesus, to his chosen 12 apostles. And you will bear witness because you've been with me from the very beginning. It's very important to remember that Jesus is speaking in those words, not directly to you and me. He can't bring to our remembrance what we heard

Jesus say on earth. We weren't there, but the apostles were. He's speaking to them very specifically. So there we have it, you see, from Peter's words and from Jesus himself. Both the Old Testament writers, the prophets, the prophets, and the New Testament writers, Jesus and his own apostles, they are inspired by God. The spirit of God himself drives them along in what they say and what they write.

He took what is God's and he gave it to men so that they might speak and write from God himself for all of those who came later, that is us.

[14 : 57] But somebody might object and somebody might say, well, yeah, I can accept that these men were inspired in a sense by God, but that's very different from saying that they're actual words are actually God's words, that they're inspired words, that they're infallible words, inerrant words, words that in themselves can't contain any errors or anything misleading or mistaken. That's a different thing. And so some people say, well, I'll accept that the content, that the thoughts of scripture are somehow inspired, but the words themselves, these words written by men, they can't possibly be inspired and totally trustworthy and without error because they're human words.

But when you begin to think about it, you see, it's quite hard. In fact, I think it's impossible to understand how thoughts and ideas that are inspired can be communicated in words that aren't similarly inspired. You can't really separate thoughts and meaning, can you, from the words that express those things, at least not in the real world. Maybe you can in the ivory towers of postmodern academics and universities and so on. But you can't do that on planet Earth, in the real world that we all live in. That's like saying, oh yes, this person is truly inspired.

And this poem, oh, it's truly inspired. It's wonderful. It's beautiful. It's enchanting. It's just the words that are uninspired and rather dull and ugly. That doesn't make sense, does it? It's the words that make the poetry. Or it's like saying to your teacher or to your lecture about the essay that you wrote. It's just the words that are, you know, a jumble of mistakes and incoherence, but the content's really brilliant. It's inspired. Well, you try that and see.

Or let's say you're a musician at the conservatoire. Try it with a piece of music. You know, this is wonderful music. It's breathtaking. It's truly inspired. It's just the notes that are all monotonous and out of harmony and a jumble. That's just ridiculous, isn't it? It's absurd. Uninspiring notes do not make inspiring music. And uninspiring words don't make inspiring poetry. You can't divorce the words of the Bible from the content, from the thoughts of the Bible. Because without words, none of those things can be adequately expressed. And nor can you divorce the words of witness to Christ from the person of Christ. Some people want to make a great show of that sort of thing. They'll say, oh, Jesus is the Word of God. He's the living Word of God. He's the infallible one. Not words about him. They can't be infallible. But that's facile because Jesus said of his own words, they are spirit and they are life. The very words he gives to his apostles to give life to others as they believe in them and as they trust in those words, that's what imparts life.

You can't separate a person from his words. It's by their words that they convey themselves to other people. And continue to do so even after they're gone. You think about it.

[18 : 36] Somebody who's a scholar can devote their life to studying Shakespeare, can't they? Or Plato or Winston Churchill or whoever it might be. And they come to know them through experiencing their words, through reading their words. That's how they come to know the person and their life. As long as they are true words, as long as they're not false words, as long as they are trustworthy words. But they will fully reveal that person. So all these kinds of objections about words themselves being somehow incapable of really being inspired, even if the speakers, even if the writers are inspired somehow.

It doesn't just work. It's unpersuasive. It's not a coherent argument. But more importantly than that, I mean, the Bible itself flatly contradicts all of these notions that often theologians come up with to deny that the Bible claims that sort of status for its own words.

So we need to be clear. Not only do the Scriptures teach that the writers were fully inspired by God himself, but Scripture itself clearly and explicitly claims and teaches that Bible words are expired, if you like, by God himself. They are breathed out by God.

And that's what theologians are talking about when they talk about the verbal inspiration of Scripture. You get all these terms. They can be confusing. Plenary inspiration. That means everything in Scripture.

All Scripture. The plenarius. The whole thing is completely inspired. It's God-breathed. And verbal inspiration means that it's not just the ideas and the thoughts of the Bible writers that are God-given, but it is the words themselves that express those thoughts exactly as God wants them to be expressed.

[20 : 34] So God never gave ideas to his prophets and apostles without giving them actual words. In fact, the only time you find the word inspiration in that sense in the Bible is here in 2 Timothy 3.16, speaking about written words.

Bible words are expired. They're given by God himself. All Scripture, says 2 Timothy 3.16, is breathed out by God.

Literally, it is God-breathed. It's not so much that God breathes in to just inspire the writers. What he's saying here is God actually breathes out the words themselves.

Various translations differ here. Some of them say all Scripture is inspired by God. But really, the ESV is just literally transliterating what is there.

These words are God-breathed words. That's about as close as you can get to expressing it in English. Scripture is breathed out from the mouth of God. Now, that's not at all to deny the human component.

[21 : 41] No more than when the Bible teaches that Jesus was fully divine, he was also fully human. There's an understandable mystery there, isn't there?

How could it be otherwise if we talk about the infinite God becoming truly one with finite humanity? But that's a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith.

It's undeniable biblical truth. The word became flesh. And Christ had two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. Not confused, not intermingled, but both of these wholly true.

And it's really exactly the same with the two natures of the written word of God. It's both fully human and fully divine words that we're reading. Turn to 1 Corinthians 2, that other passage that we read, because this, I think, lays it out with absolute clarity for us.

1 Corinthians 2, verse 9. What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him, those things God has revealed to us, us apostles, says Paul, through the Spirit.

[22 : 57] The secrets of God's plan and purposes, revealed to the apostles through the Holy Spirit, so that, look at verse 12, so that we, that is the apostles, might understand the things freely given us by God.

That's very clear, isn't it? Just as Jesus promised in the upper room, the Holy Spirit has come and led them into all truth. But now look on to verse 13.

What do the apostles, what do the apostles do through their words, which are spoken and written to the church? We impart this, he says, the things that are given by God, in words, their own words, of course, the apostles speaking, but notice, words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit.

That's so clear, isn't it? Not just thoughts from the Spirit we put into words, not just ideas and general content from the Spirit that we put into words. No, we impart this God-given truth in words not taught by human wisdom, but words taught by the Spirit.

Not their own words, but the words of God, the Holy Spirit. That could not be clearer, could it? And it's worth reading on to verses 14 and 15 here.

[24 : 19] A natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, their folly to him. He's not able to understand them because they're spiritually discerned. A spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

You see, Paul's alluding here to what the reformer Martin Luther called the external clarity and the internal clarity of the words of Scripture.

There is external clarity. There is objective clarity in the words of Scripture. They are the words taught by God, clearly passed on to us. Not by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit.

That's the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture when we properly understand it. But also, there must be internal clarity if these words are to be received by us and understood by us and give life to us as human beings.

And so God's Spirit must also illumine our hearts so that we can see clearly and understand clearly. Because by nature, our hearts are darkened.

[25 : 24] They're unspiritual. And that means that God's clear words appear foolish to the darkened human heart because we're blind to the truth because of our sin.

Remember, Paul says later on in 2 Corinthians that the God of this world, the evil one, has blinded the eyes of unbelievers. That means eyes and hearts have to be opened by the Spirit so there's an internal clarity so that we can actually see the objective external clarity of God's Word of truth.

It's not that the words in the Bible somehow becomes God's Word through the inspiration of the Spirit when it's preached so that we can then understand it. That's how some theologians like to talk.

But that contradicts what Paul says here very, very clearly. That it is God's words all of the time. But what happens, thank God, when the Bible is proclaimed, when God's words are spoken, is that the Holy Spirit opens hearts, illumines hearts so that they can begin to hear God's voice and discern those words are God's words, that they are living and true words always.

You can't separate the living Word of God from the written Word that contains it. My father used to use an illustration to try and illustrate this of a gramophone record.

[26 : 54] Most of you are too young to even remember what that is. Although I think they're coming back into fashion. But a CD, at least you can probably remember those. That disc contains, if it's got somebody speaking on it, it contains the voice within it.

And when you play that disc, you'll hear the voice. You can't separate the voice from the disc. Once it's been recorded on the disc, it's there permanently. And every part of that disc contains the voice.

But of course, that voice won't be heard unless the pickup, in the case of an old gramophone record, or the laser, I suppose, for a CD, unless it's applied. But that voice is there in the disc, whether it's being played or not, whether the pickup is on the record or not.

And it's the same way with the Bible. You can't separate the living Word from the written Word. Every verse of Scripture contains that voice. It's not that the voice of God is there somewhere.

We have to search around for it. No, apply the pickup of faith, and the voice of God in the Scripture everywhere will be surely heard. Now, sometimes you try and play a record, your equipment's faulty, or it's damaged, or you don't have the volume turned up enough so you can't hear it.

[28 : 09] That's not the fault of the disc. That's the fault of the receiver. It doesn't mean that that disc hasn't become a true recording of that voice just because it hasn't been played or just because it hasn't been played properly.

I have a box set of CDs of Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and I always get it out at the beginning of December, and I start listening to it through December.

But that doesn't become a recording of Bach's Oratorio when I start to play it. It always is and always has been and always will be.

And that means that I can trust, I can be sure that when I take it out and put it in the player and press the button, I will hear the music of Bach every single time. It's impossible for that not to happen unless my equipment has become faulty.

And you see, that's exactly how it is with the Bible. It's a true and trustworthy word. It's a divinely authored revelation so you can be sure that when the Bible is opened and taught, properly of course, responsibly, with the right equipment, as it were, that when that happens, God's word will be heard.

[29 : 25] And if the pickup of obedient faith, as it were, is placed upon that record, then you will hear the voice of God. The very words of God himself will be heard.

The words that give spirit and life itself. The Bible writers impart the things given by God in words taught by the spirit.

And they impart and interpret spiritual truth in those who are spiritual, who listen with the pickup of faith. So the Bible is a trustworthy word for us.

It will and it always does impart truth and not error to our lives. And that's the third thing, really, the implication of all of this.

The Bible writers are truly inspired by God. The Bible's words are truly inspired, or expired, if you like, breathed out by God. And that means that we can be confident that the Bible's witness to us through its words is infallible for us.

[30 : 35] The Bible does not err. Unlike us, who are merely human and who do err, the Bible is infallible. It does not err. The Bible does not err because God cannot err.

That's what we mean by the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture, or indeed the inerrancy of Scripture. The problem with this kind of discussion is that often the definition of these terms can be a bit confusing.

And actually, they can mean really quite different things to different people. Some people would say that the term inerrancy means utter, hard and fast literality and even minutiae of matters, of things like scientific detail and geographic detail and all that sort of thing.

And so because of that, because they want to avoid that, they talk of limited inerrancy. What they mean is that the Bible is totally without error in matters that are related to salvation.

So there can be other errors in lesser matters like numbers or like geographical details or things that perhaps seem to contradict, but they're not really important for the main thing of salvation.

[31 : 59] So that doesn't matter. That's what some people would want to argue. And so some people who argue that actually use the word infallible in preference to inerrancy because they say, well, the Bible's infallible in what it's teaching us to do about our salvation.

But it can err in some of these other things. So people can use these words in different ways. It can be a bit confusing. And sometimes then people are talking past each other and misunderstanding each other.

So let me just try and help us get clear on this. Again, I find John Frame very helpful on this. And I think he's right to point out that we should see the Bible as both inerrant and infallible.

In fact, that it's inerrant because it's infallible. And he points us to the dictionary definitions of these words. Inerrant simply means containing no errors.

But infallible actually means incapable of erring. Words with an ending like ible are what philosophers call modal terms.

[33 : 03] And the word infallible is dealing not with the presence of errant words but of the possibility even of that kind of error. So if I can quote John Frame, to say that a text is inerrant is to say that there are no errors in it.

To say that a text is infallible is to say that there can be no errors in it, that it's impossible for that text to contain errors. And so he concludes that the Bible is both inerrant and infallible.

It's inerrant, he says, because it's infallible. There are no errors because there can be no errors in divine speech. I think when you think about that, it's obvious, isn't it?

Because as John Frame says, when you think about it, error has two sources. Either it's deceit or it's ignorance. And God does not lie and God is not ignorant of anything.

So if the scriptures are God's word, they must be inerrant. It can't be with errors. In a way, I think it's maybe just more simple and straightforward to just say the Bible is true and the Bible is always trustworthy.

[34 : 15] Because that's all that these words are really trying to convey. We can be confident that the Bible will always lead us in what is true and not in what is false.

And the Bible will always lead us into truth and not into error and lies. The Bible is true. Full stop. But on the other hand, we need to remember that truth and precision are not exactly the same things, are they?

They're not synonymous. They overlap, but they're not exactly the same. And so we've got to recognize that when we're reading the Bible. We've got to not demand levels of precision that might be quite unnecessary in certain contexts.

So again, John Frame very helpfully points out rightly that in something like maths, in the language of maths, precision is vitally important. 5 plus 5 equals 10, not sort of about 10.

You need that precision. But in ordinary language, that's very often not the case, is it? If I say, actually, you should read John Frame's book, it's a great book, but by the way, it's a big book, it's 700 pages long, you're probably not going to come to me and say, you lied about that book because it's only 684 pages long.

[35 : 37] that you know and you understand that, you know, that's a normal way to speak. And actually, to communicate efficiently, we all need to use ordinary language most of the time, don't we?

Don't use technical language with maximal precision. All we need, actually, is to be sufficiently precise for the context that we're speaking in.

And that's what you find in the Bible. It doesn't have to be maximally precise to 10 decimal places in everything that it's talking about. Actually, that would hinder the communication of the Bible.

And so, the Bible has sufficient precision to communicate what it intends to communicate to it, to us. And that's true, even if it might seem to be insufficiently precise for what some readers of the Bible might want to use it for.

But that's a fault in them. That's not a fault in the Bible itself. The Bible teaches the truth. It teaches the propositional truth that it intends to convey to us.

[36 : 45] And that kind of language, propositional language, truth-conveying language, that kind of language always makes claims upon the hearer. And those claims are either true or false. So if I say to you, my Bible is on the lectern.

Well, it is precisely there, isn't it? It's not just roughly there or somewhere else. It's there. It's on the lectern. If I say to you, I'm 53 years old, I'm not saying I'm 53 years exactly and zero days.

You understand that what I'm saying is I was 53 on my last birthday. I'll be 54 on my next birthday. I'm somewhere in between there. And you understand that's sufficiently precise. You don't expect different.

You don't expect the number of days to be quoted. Now, that might not be quite sufficient for some situations. You're filling in a form of your age and you might ask for the years and the months.

That's what you put. It all depends on the context, doesn't it? The degree of precision that's required. And that degree of precision can either be explicit or very often it's just implicit. as it is with the example of asking somebody's age.

[37 : 58] You ask me how old I am. You don't expect me to say, do you, I'm 53, but that's actually just approximate, not giving it to the exact month and days. You understand that? Of course you understand it. I don't have to say that.

We know the convention. We understand that's normal use of language. True, but not as precise as a mathematical equation. Sometimes, though, and you sometimes come across this, for example, maybe with a child who's got severe autism.

It doesn't grasp the social context. Sometimes you ask a child like that, how old are you? And they get in a terrible tangle adding up the exact number of days and even hours because they want to tell you with absolute maximal precision.

And actually, that hinders the communication of the truth, doesn't it? Somebody needs to take half an hour to work out exactly how many hours old they are, for example. So when we read the Bible together, we need to understand the actual claim that's being made.

And we tend to do that. When you read a parable, it's implicit, isn't it, that it needn't actually be a historical story that's being told. It can be just an illustration, a fictional story.

[39 : 15] If you read in the Bible a passage that speaks about the sun rising, you don't say, well, there you go, you see, the Bible's full of errors because we know that the earth revolves around the sun. It's not the sun that revolves around the earth.

The sun doesn't rise, it's just that the earth moves. See, the Bible's false. We don't say that, do we? Well, a silly person might say that. But I expect that silly person who's criticizing the Bible that way speaks exactly the same way.

Oh, what a beautiful sunrise. You don't say to them, you liar. The sun isn't moving, it's the earth moving around the sun. That's normal human language, isn't it?

So John Frame puts it very well when he says that inerrant language is simply, quote, language that makes good on its own claims, not on those of thoughtless readers trying to make different claims on it.

So you see, for example, the Bible doesn't usually claim that when it relays the words that somebody spoke that it's doing it absolutely verbatim.

[40 : 21] Well, just as we don't do that, if I said to you, oh, Edward told me his chickens aren't laying many eggs at the moment, you wouldn't say I've erred or I've lied if Edward's actual words were, my hens don't produce a lot of eggs from now until the beginning of the new year.

You would say, yeah. you're telling us exactly what Edward told you. You understand, don't you, that I've recounted to you what he said accurately enough, precisely enough for the context.

And similarly, if I wrote that, although our convention is if we see quotation marks, we understand that something verbatim is being given. Well, the Bible doesn't use quotation marks.

Sometimes it does quote verbatim. But sometimes Jesus will quote Moses or some other part of the prophets or something. And there's no reason to demand absolute precision of verbatim quotations.

We say he's quoting truly. It can be true, it can be accurate nonetheless. Sufficiently so for his purpose. And that's the key thing.

[41 : 28] So you see, scripture speaks truth in ordinary language so that it can communicate efficiently to ordinary people.

And it imparts its truth with sufficient precision for the purpose of that communication in every place. So just if some people think that there's a lack of precision as to how that is done at times, that does not mean that the Bible is erring.

It just means that God has a different intention from what that person wants him to have. God wants to use the kinds of words he is using to convey truth maximally to the people he wants to understand them in the best way that that can possibly be done.

God's not erring, God's not lying when he does that. He's just imparting truth in the way that he knows is best for us to understand. And he often accommodates himself to us in doing that just as parents do to their own children so they can understand.

John Calvin says he lisps to us. And he can therefore use all sorts of different human communication.

[42 : 40] He can use the very polished Greek language style of Luke the physician just as he can use the much less polished language style of Peter the fisherman. And we often sing, don't we, God in his wisdom, his wisdom and for our learning gave his inspired and holy words.

symbol and story and song and saying. Life-bearing truths for heart and mind in exactly the way he intends to communicate, to open our eyes so that we'll seek him and find him.

So for example he chose to teach us about the creation of all things and about the purpose for all creation at the beginning of Genesis. He chose to teach us that not in the precision language of a scientific paper, not with statistics and p-values and decimal places, but with the timeless language that can and indeed has transcended all cultures and all centuries to speak unerring truth about the created order.

Nature is to teach us all kinds of wisdom for life and pithy proverbs instead of in long boring lists of how-to instructions about life and so on. Symbol and story, song and saying, and much more to give us these life bearing truths for heart and mind.

So in the end we must say that the Bible is inerrant, that it has no errors because it is infallible. It can't err because it is the personal God-breathed words of God.

[44 : 16] God cannot err. God does not deceive and God is not ignorant of anything. So his words will never deceive and cannot be ignorant and erroneous.

The Bible, as the word of this God, cannot be other than true and trustworthy. The writers are God-inspired, the words are God-inspired, and so it's witness to us is infallible.

So let me finish by saying this. If you're not a Christian believer, believer, let me just tell you, this book is true and trustworthy. If you'll let it, it will give you a revelation of God.

It'll give you the revelation of God that can make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Open it. Read it. Listen to it being opened and explained, and you will hear the voice in his word.

The voice that can alone impart life in all its fullness, real life, life eternal. You can suppress it by refusing to listen, by making noise, by blocking your ears, by keeping the record on the shelf away from the player, keeping it unplayed and unheard and ignored.

[45 : 37] word. But if you do that, it'll just remain folly to you. It'll remain darkness to you. It'll be like an unplayed record or a CD.

You'll never hear the beauty of its music. But if you trust it, even enough to just open it, to explore it, you will hear the true and the trustworthy words of God himself.

And I promise you, you'll be glad that you did. God's word is a treasure for us because it's true and it's trustworthy revelation.

These are divinely authored words. And they'll lead us in truth, never in error. Well, let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have opened your mouth and given your words, words taught not by human wisdom, but by your own Holy Spirit.

And yet you've given them in an ordinary language that we can understand that will never deceive us, never leave us ignorant.

[46 : 53] Lead us always into true paths, not false ones, and into true life, not into error and folly.
Help us, we pray, to trust you as true.

And so to open these words, that you might open them to our hearts so that we might love
you, honor you, follow you, and serve you all the days of our lives.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.