

The Four Characteristics of Scripture

We believe in the divine inspiration, authority, clarity, necessity and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as originally given, without error in their original manuscripts. Properly interpreted, they are wholly true in all they affirm (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:19; 1 John 5:9).

The Authority of Scripture

The authority of Scripture derives from its nature as God's inspired word (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Thess 2:13).

The Spirit who inspires the Scriptures is the Spirit of truth (John 15:26). God is truthful in everything he says, and the Scriptures are truthful in their entirety (Ps 19:7-8). In all that they assert in the original autographs, they are without error - they are inerrant. Because of this they are completely trustworthy and will not lead us astray - they are infallible. God's word judges us, we are not to sit in judgment upon it, but rather humbly allow it to convict us of sin and bring us to repentance (Heb 4:12).

(Note, the doctrine of inerrancy does not require our contemporary view of exact quotations or exactness of numbers, for example.)

The Clarity (perspicuity) of Scripture

God's word is understandable. He has spoken through his word in such a way as to be understood, believed and obeyed.

God is a speaking God (Gen 1). When he speaks, his words always accomplish what he intends (Is 55:11). When Jesus says, "it is written..." or asks, "Have you not read...?" The implication is that God's word can be read and understood.

As a result, God's word is a source of encouragement and hope (Rom 15:4). It is profitable in multiple areas and is able to make us wise to salvation (2 Tim 3:15-16). As a result the Bereans could study God's word to check that what they were being taught was correct (Acts 17:11).

This does not mean that some passages are not harder to understand or more obscure than others (2 Pet 3:16), but that by considering the whole of Scripture, and by interpreting harder passages with more simpler ones, we can understand it.

The Necessity of Scripture

We are totally dependent on God's special revelation, through Scripture, (as opposed to general revelation, through creation) to know and understand the gospel: our situation before God - that we are alienated from him; and his plan of redemption to bring us back to him (Ps 19; Heb 1:1-2; Rom 10:13-17; Matt 4:4 (Deut 8:3); Rom 1:18-23, 2:14).

The Sufficiency of Scripture

The Bible is sufficient to equip us to live a life of faith, godliness and service to God. It teaches us all we need to know about God and about ourselves. All other authorities or communication, written or otherwise, are subservient to Scripture (Ps 19:7-14; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Gal 1:18; Col 2:8; Jude 1:3).