

GW 101: The Bible—The Rule of Faith and Life

Lesson 3.2 “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” (Articles of Affirmation and Denial & Exposition)

1. How many articles are included in the Statement?

19 articles—XIX.

2. The Statement denies, or rejects, Scriptures receive their authority from what three sources?

The church, tradition, or any other human source.

3. The Statement denies what three sources have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible?

Church creeds, councils, or declarations.

4. How much of the written Word is given by God?

The written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

5. Article V states that God’s revelation within Holy Scripture was progressive. Does that mean later revelation corrects or contradicts earlier revelation?

Since God is Truth, all revelation given by God is true and never corrects or contradicts previous revelation.

6. What part(s) of Scripture were given by divine inspiration?

The whole of Scripture in all its parts, down to the words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

7. Did God override the personalities of the human authors of Scripture?

God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

8. According to the Statement, does inspiration apply to translations of the Bible?

Inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture (i.e., the original texts), which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy.¹

9. Is Scripture only infallible (incapable of being untrue) and inerrant (free from any errors) only when speaking of spiritual or religious themes?

Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are just not limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes but includes all matters it addresses (including the fields of history and science).

10. How do we know the Scriptures are true?

The Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

11. How are we to interpret Scripture?

The text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis,² taking into account literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

12. According to the "Exposition" (subsection: "Authority: Christ and the Bible"), what was the church's role in the canon of Scripture?

The Church's part was to discern the canon which God had created, not to devise one of its own.

¹ Though inspiration applies to the original texts, the same God who inspired the originals likewise providentially preserved the text faithfully for His people. It is inconceivable to think God would give revelation about Himself and then let that artifact of revelation disappear or be corrupted. A study of textual transmission of the Bible reveals the great accuracy of the text throughout the ages. In other words, the translations we have today are nearly identical to the autographs.

² This hermeneutic, or way of interpreting the text, assumes each bible passage has a basic meaning that is rooted in the grammar and language of each author that communicates real, logical thought and that the Biblical writers wrote according to their own historical setting. To accurately understand the basic meaning of the Bible, then, is to understand the language and historical milieu of the author.