



BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

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Why is a High View of Scripture Important to Christianity?

Shawn Nelson

REVIEW: When we say, "The Bible is from God," we mean three things:

1. Inspiration:

- This concerns the origin of the Bible.
- We're saying it is from God or "God-breathed."
- "From God"

2. Infallibility:

- This speaks to Bible's authority & enduring nature.
- Means incapable of failing; cannot be broken; permanently binding.
- "Cannot fail"

3. Inerrancy:

- The Bible is without error.
- It's a belief the total truthfulness of God's Word.
- "Without error"

TODAY: Why is a High View of Scripture Important to Christianity?

There are 2 Starting Points

- We can approach Bible with either a **high** or **low view**; this is called our "presupposition":

Starting Point #1 Low View of Scripture	Starting Point #2 High View of Scripture
Bible guilty until proven innocent.	Innocent until proven guilty
Bible full of myths, errors.	Might have some tough passages but all have explanations.
Embraces source, form and redaction criticism (Bible stitched together and developed over time).	Trusts testimony of Jesus and early church.

- With everything Jesus and early church believed (cf., last week) why start with a low-view?
- Some tend to think there's incontrovertible evidence for a low view of the Bible, but this just is not true. Some quotes:
- **Eta Linnemann (1926-2009):** "There seems to be widespread ignorance of the fact that a hypothesis... is nothing more than an assertion, for which one must... clarify the presupposition and adduce the proof. Instead, hypotheses that have found acceptance are... circulated as facts." And "No one who reads this book should feel obligated any longer to heed the suppositions of biblical criticism... Its arguments were tested at hundreds of points, and **not one of them passed muster.**"¹
- **Norman L. Geisler (1932-):** "Having examined over the last 50 years nearly 1000 of these alleged errors in the Bible (see *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*, Baker), I can testify that **I have not found any real errors**, only difficulties with solutions..."²

Why start with a High View of Scripture?

Because a low view of Scripture logically leads to agnosticism.

We will look at three stories:

1. Story of Charles Templeton – famous evangelist turned agnostic.
2. 18th century German pietism – good intentions led to bad results.
3. Bart Ehrman – on-fire evangelical to leading Bible critic.

Story #1 – Charles Templeton (1915-2001) – famous evangelist turned agnostic

Brief Sketch:

- 1936 - converted to Christianity and became an evangelist
- 1945 - Helped form Youth For Christ with Billy Graham
- 1945+ Crusades in Europe, CA and US
 - Spoke nightly to crowds of 10,000 to 30,000
- 1950+ Had increasing doubt about validity of OT
- 1957 – Publicly declared himself an agnostic, resigned from the ministry
- 1995 – Wrote book *Farewell to God*

In Charles Templeton's own words (from *Farewell to God*):

- "I had always doubted the Genesis account of creation and could never accept the monstrous evil of an endless hell, but now other doubts were surfacing and, having no one to discuss them with, my personal devotions began to flag." (p. 6)

¹ Eta Linnemann and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Biblical Criticism On Trial: How Scientific Is Scientific Theology?*, 2001 ed. (Kregel Academic & Professional, 2001), 1845-1847; 2140-2141.

² Norman Geisler, "Biblical Inerrancy, Inductive Or Deductive Basis: A Response To William Craig," *Defending Inerrancy*, 2014, <http://defendinginerrancy.com/inductive-deductive-inerrancy/> (accessed January 20, 2018).

- Talked with friend Billy Graham. His answer basically was *just believe*. He said, "I don't have the time or the intellect to examine all sides of each theological dispute, so I've decided, once for all, to stop questioning and accept the Bible as God's Word." (pp. 7-8)
- Templeton kept working. "The old doubts were resurfacing. I would cover them over with prayer and activity but soon there would be a wisp of smoke and a flicker of flame and then a firestorm of doubt. I would banish them only to have them return. Part of the problem was that there was no one to talk to. How does a man who, each night, tells ten to twenty thousand people how to find faith confess that he is struggling with his own?" (p. 11)
- After the Harrisburg meeting (in the photo shown, described as the greatest crowd ever to gather in the history of Harrisburg): "I told my wife, during the drive back to New York City where we lived, 'I'm going to leave the ministry.'" (p. 12)

What did he Struggle With?

The cover said "My reasons for rejecting the faith." I nervously expected to find some secret, super convincing argument. Here's what it boiled down to:

- Thought science had proven evolution (and that conflicts with Bible)
- Thought was known fact that Bible contained myths and fables
For example, how could 600-year-old Noah and sons round up all the animals, feed them, where did water come from?
- Felt Bible had naïve description of reality: Heaven is up (Tower of Babel); hell below
- Problem of how can a morally good God approving of polygamy, genocide, use of plagues?
- Sending majority of people to hell (esp. those who've never heard Gospel)
- God of NT (love) seems different that God of OT (law, justice)

Sad because these have been answered well!

Find answers at geekysearch.com

What Scriptures would apply to Charles Templeton's story?

- ***There is a real downward spiral into darkness.***
Romans 1:28 – "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind..."
- ***Element of wanting to know truth.***
Matthew 7:7-8 – "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Also parable of sower (Matt. 13:1-23)
- ***Illustrates need for apologetics. Some people "just believe" but others need questions answered.***
1 Peter 3:15 – "In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Story #2 – 18th century German pietism – good intentions led to bad results

Modern liberalism comes from German pietism.

- Emphasized personal experience over Bible doctrine.
- Reaction to Scholastic Lutheranism in Germany after Reformation and rejection of miracles in Age of Enlightenment.

Central figures:

- **Philipp Jacob Spener (1635-1705)**
“We may safely assure those who read the word with devotion and simplicity, that they will derive more light and profit from such a practice, and from connecting meditation with it... than can ever be acquired from drudging through an infinite variety of unimportant minutiae.”³
i.e., we just need to focus on Christ; character more important than doctrinal details.
- **Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791)**
 - Father of rationalism and historical critical theology
 - Said Word of God and Holy Scriptures are not identical (must find Word of God *within* the Bible)
 - First to question how NT formed; said each gospel developed over time from their historical context; must investigate Bible same as any other book.
 - Prepared way for “free investigation” into Scripture.
- **Johann Jacob Griesbach (1745-1812)**
 - Lived with Semler while student
 - Belonged to “neologie” – a new way of look at Scripture
 - Accommodation theory (Jesus deliberately accommodated his teaching to false beliefs of hearers; i.e., taught things that weren’t true)
 - Bible authors erred because of primitive/limited worldview
 - Not all authors inspired (Matt/John more reliable)
 - Said Mark took his material from Matt/Luke (Two-Gospel Hypothesis)

CONCLUSION:

- **This has led to the modern historical-critical landscape mess today.**
- **Starting Goal:** “Doctrines like inerrancy don’t really matter; what’s important is character!”
- **End Result (per Eta Linnemann):** “In Germany, preaching based on biblical criticism has emptied the churches!”⁴

What Scriptural thoughts would apply to German pietism?

- Character *and* intellect are important. BOTH! Groups get into trouble when they focus on one to the exclusion of the other. Christians are commanded to have their minds renewed inasmuch as this is part of the sanctification process. We cannot just emphasize character over doctrine:

³ Norman L. Geisler and F. David Farnell, eds., *The Jesus Quest: the Danger from Within*, ed. Norman L. Geisler and F. David Farnell (Xulon Press, 2014), loc. 3973-3976

⁴ Eta Linnemann. *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific Is Scientific Theology?* (Kindle Locations 59-60). Kindle Edition.

- Romans 12:2 – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”
- John 17:17 – “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
- The goal is that “we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Story #3 – Bart Ehrman – on-fire evangelical to leading Bible critic.

Brief sketch:

- Saved in high school at Campus Life Youth for Christ club.
- Displayed passion and zeal for God; dedicated life to serving Lord.
- Studied at Moody Bible Institute, went on to Wheaton College. Heard Princeton Theological School was a “prestigious” school so enrolled there for higher education.
- At Princeton, wrote paper on a challenging passage in Mark 2: In the passage where Jesus says David went in and ate the showbread, Mark says Abiathar was high priest (Mark 2:26) while the verse Mark was quoting from (1 Samuel 21:1-6) seems to suggest that Ahimelech was high priest—how can this be if the Bible is without error?
- Wrote “a long a complicated argument” on how to resolve. Assumed teacher would appreciate all his hard work. Instead his teacher wrote one line: “Maybe Mark just made a mistake.”
- Here’s what happened next: “Once I made that admission, the floodgates opened. For if there could be one little, picayune mistake in Mark 2, maybe there could be mistakes in other places as well... Mark 4 that the mustard seed is “the smallest of all seeds on the earth,” maybe I don’t need to come up with a fancy explanation for how the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds when I know full well it isn’t. And maybe these “mistakes” apply to bigger issues...”⁵
- The concession that there might be one little error in Mark 2 turned Ehrman into a full-fledged agnostic!

What Scriptures would apply to the Bart Ehrman story?

- Maybe James 3:1 – “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”
- Perhaps Mark 9:42 – “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”
- **Reminder we need to be praying for our leaders.**
Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

⁵ Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (HarperOne, 2007), 9-10.

Why does any other view of Scripture (besides a high view) logically lead to agnosticism?

Answer: Because inerrancy is fundamental to all other doctrines.

“To reduce inerrancy to the level of non-essential or even ‘incidental’ to the Christian Faith, reveals ignorance of its theological and historical roots, and is an offense to its ‘watershed’ importance to a consistent and healthy Christianity. Inerrancy simply cannot be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.”⁶

Class Schedule

Title: Are There Errors in The Bible? How to Answer “Problem Passages”

DONE Understanding biblical inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy

DONE: Why is a high view of Scripture important to Christianity?

Jan. 28: Common Bible difficulties with resolutions (Part 1)

Feb. 4: Common Bible Difficulties with resolutions (Part 2)

If you know somebody who would be blessed by this class, feel free to invite them; visitors welcome at any time!

Class description: Critics argue that the bible is filled with myths, legends and errors. Is there any way to defend a high-view of Scripture in the modern age? Yes! This four-week class will present a defense of the Bible as the true Word of God which cannot err. Dates are Sundays Jan. 14, 21, 28 and Feb. 4 during second service (10:45AM) in the upstairs chapel building room C-205B. Biblical Training Center classes are geared for the average church-goer who is interested in learning more about the Bible, theology and the Christian worldview. Visitors are invited to attend all or individual Sundays of interest.

Where: Sundays second service (10:45AM) in the upstairs chapel building room C-205B

⁶ “Why is Inerrancy Important?” Defending Inerrancy, <http://defendinginerrancy.com/why-is-inerrancy-important/> (accessed January 20, 2018).