

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE? Part 3 – Inspired, Inerrant and Infallible Principle

Foundation: A) We do not worship the Bible but the One who wrote the Bible. B) 3 important words: a) Observation (what the text says). b) Interpretation (what the text meant when it was written to whom it was written). c) Application – (what I can learn from the text). C) We must be a Christian seeking the Lord or the Holy Spirit must be at work in us. D) We must want to grow.

G.L.I.T.C.H. G – Grammar; L – Literal; I – Inspired, Inerrant and Infallible; T – Time and Prayer; C – Context; and H – History and Culture. Everything is about context.

G – rammar – 1) Words and Sentence Structure. 2) Written Languages – A) Hebrew (OT), B) Aramaic (OT), C) Greek (NT).3) Styles of Languages – Genre. A) Historic Narrative – Genesis-Esther, Gospels, Acts. B) Poetry – Job-Song of Solomon. C) Prophetic (Prophecy) – Isaiah-Malachi, Revelation (Apocalyptic). D) General Letters –Epistles, Romans-Jude.

L – iteral –1) Interpret a text in its Normal, Natural Sense – face value. Take the regular meaning of words, knowing there may be symbols, history, figures of speech, etc. and put it in the context in which it was written.2) The Bible often explains and interprets itself. Ask questions. What does this word mean? What is the main idea? Who wrote this? To whom was this written? Is this historical narrative or figurative language?

The “I” in our acronym GLITCH stands for:

I – nspired, Inerrant, Infallible – This refers to what the Bible says about itself and how we view it. How we view Scripture partly determines how we interpret it. God’s word is God’s word whether we believe it or not. His word is powerful.

Examples: 1. Some believe the sign gifts of the spiritual gifts are no longer around. Others say they are around. Some questions must be asked. Why do some believe one way and some believe the other way? When did these beliefs come into being? When did these things start? What is the foundation of each view?

2. There are different forms of church government. Some churches are elder led, that is multiple leaders who share responsibilities. The Presbyterian Church and some Baptist churches are like this. Others are congregation led, where everyone decides on what to do. Some churches are pastor led. That is one person has all of the authority, responsibilities and challenges. Bishops lead some, and the Pope is the leader in Catholicism, with priests under him. Some churches have a mixture.

In every topic, we all have biases and assumptions. We cannot escape this. Everyone has a bias. One of the hardest, but wisest things you can do as an individual and particularly as a Christian, is to ask yourself what presuppositions you have and if they are true or just opinion.

This means you need to ask yourself some hard questions:

1. Why do I believe what I believe?
2. Who influenced my beliefs and me?
3. Are my beliefs from the Bible, or from popular culture?
4. Are my beliefs based in the objective truth of the Bible, or subjective experiences?
5. When I was learning the Bible, was I taught based on the context of Scripture, or was something taken out of context?
6. How do I know if I am really a Christian?

Ask God to take away your presuppositions, false beliefs and assumptions you have about the Bible, yourself, others, the world and Himself. This does not mean that all of our assumptions are wrong. But it does mean that all of them cannot be right.

How we view one thing will affect our view of other things. My view of God's forgiveness affects my willingness to forgive others. My view of the Bible affects my view of God, the world, sin and myself. How I view my sin, God's grace and forgiveness will affect my love. My view of God's holiness impacts how I should act. My view of end times impacts my desire to live a holy life. My view of hell influences my willingness to share the gospel with others.

A) Inspired – God breathed, from God through man, written by men, Authored by God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Where does Paul take Christians to as the authority?
_____ Peter calls Paul's writings "Scripture" in 2 Peter 3:15-16.

2 Peter 1:19-21 - The Greek word for "carried along," or "moved" is like being carried on the sea on a ship to a destination. The Holy Spirit carried along, moved or borne along the people and this was not something they did themselves. He moved them along to write what He wanted.

The Bible's continuity: Over 40 human writers from different backgrounds with different levels of education, in 3 languages, on 3 continents, over a 1500-year period, wrote the Bible. With all of these differences, there is remarkable continuity, both historically and theologically.

He used different means to communicate with His servants. Numbers 12:1-9 gives some guidelines about how God communicated with the prophets in the Old Testament.

As you go through the Old Testament, you read that God did use dreams, visions, and direct communication at times. One source I read said the phrase "God said" or "Thus says the Lord" in some form in the Old Testament occurs about 3800 times! If someone doesn't believe the Bible is from God it is not for lack of evidence.

B) Inerrant – without error in the original documents and we have very accurate copies.

There are NO original copies of any ancient document. Tacitus, Caesar's Gaelic Wars, and every other ancient document do not exist. We have copies of those too. Likewise we don't have any original Biblical manuscripts. We have about 5400 Biblical Greek manuscripts, partial or full. There are more manuscripts for the New Testament than for ALL other ancient documents combined. The *Dead Sea Scrolls* were a major find in 1947-1956, with every Old Testament book except for Esther. They were written between 250BC-68AD. These were compared with another group of manuscripts called the *Masoretic Texts*, dated about 900AD. There was amazing agreement. Most errors, additions or subtractions in the 5400 manuscripts are spelling, punctuation (if any), word order or other minor things.

There are many other languages Scripture was translated into, such as Syrian, Coptic, Aramaic and more. We have over 19,000 copies of these and that doesn't include the numerous quotes of Scripture from church fathers that prove we have a reliable Bible! The Rylands Fragment, and is dated around 100AD, containing John 18:31-33. The writer that comes closest to the New Testament manuscripts, is Homer's Iliad. There are about 643 copies, with a 500-year difference between when he wrote and the extant or available manuscripts.

2 questions:

1. How did we get the Bible? Moses wrote the first 5 books of the Bible between 1450-1400BC. There was writing before Moses, but every ancient culture was oral. From Moses, Joshua wrote, then Samuel, David, the prophets and others wrote until around 400BC. About 250/200BC, the Jews translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, called the *Septuagint*. The New Testament was written between 45-95AD.

There was discussion, debate and questions about some New Testament books in the second and third centuries. The earliest list of New Testament writings is the *Muratorian Canon*, dated between 170-200AD. Canon means, "*measure*." It lists all of the books except Hebrews, James and 2 Peter. Others like Iranaeus, Tertullian go with this, though there were questions about a handful of books.

The New Testament was based on *3 criteria*: **1.** A book had to be written by an apostle or one closely associated with the apostles. **2.** It could not contradict previously revealed Scripture. **3.** It had to have been used widely among the churches in the Roman Empire at the time. The earliest complete New Testament is *Codex Siniaticus*, dated about 360AD. A codex means "book." There is also the *Codex Vaticanus*, dated about 350AD and has more Old Testament books, though it is missing part of the New Testament.

2. What about the Apocryphal books? They were written between about 200BC-100AD. The Jews respected them and there is important information in them. But they never considered them Scripture. Jerome lived around 400AD and translated the Greek New Testament into Latin. He did not believe the apocryphal books should be included, but included them. Jerome's Latin Vulgate became the foundation for Catholicism. After the Reformation, the Counsel of Trent declared the Apocrypha was part of Scripture in 1546, and pronounced an anathema (or curse) on those who disagreed.

C) Infallible – incapable of being wrong, because it's from God.

If God wrote the Bible, we would assume it is accurate, true, understandable, reliable, honest and historically and scientifically reliable as well. If we say the Bible has errors, inaccuracies and is not reliable or is such an old book that has no relevance today, then we show our ignorance. For some it is willing ignorance. For others, they merely believe what they have been told by others and to justify their own sin, they latch on to those beliefs.

Every major book in each religion claims some kind of authority, some from a deity or from the founder of that particular religion. The Quran, book of Mormon, and others, claim to be from God, because their book says it's from a god or from someone who wrote it associated with their god. The Bible can be shown to be reliable, with fulfilled prophecy. We discussed the manuscripts, and there is also science and life change, which only God's word can do by His Spirit. He cannot lie, nor make a mistake and is sovereign over all things and is infallible Himself, and therefore His word is infallible and incapable of being wrong.