

## **To what extent is In-errancy biblical ?**

### Introduction

In-errancy simply means “without error of any kind” , so when it comes to biblical in-errancy, it means the bible being without error in all it teaches, affirms and claims. This includes historically, geographically, archaeologically and scientifically.

It means the bible is perfect and has no fault in it. The concept and claims of biblical in-errancy is upheld regarding the non-extant autographs (original manuscripts) and not the apographs (copies of the original).

In the theological space or field, there are proponents of biblical in-errancy who hold the view of “strict in-errancy” which has been stated above while there are opponents who disagree with such view, they hold the infallibilist view of the bible which sees the bible as infallible in matters of faith and practice.

The debate for/against biblical in-errancy still goes on today, and there seems to be no end in the foreseeable future.

As the title of this work states, I seek to establish to what extent is in-errancy biblical; is it absolute or partial ? Is it in all matters or only in matters of faith ? I am asking if the bible claims to be inerrant ,and to what extent is this claim if there is any.

I will do this by referring to works of other prominent theologians as regards the scriptures and its in-errancy ; both proponents and opponents.

### The Doctrine of In-errancy

There have been a need to re-evaluate the doctrine of in-errancy as the opponents of this doctrine allude that in-errancy itself was foisted on the scripture as a result of some rational presupposition that has it's root in Martin Luther's sola scriptura. In the work of Clark H Pinnock; the scripture principle, this position was stated as follows:

“there has been emphasis by some on the continuance of a strict theory of in-errancy and a sharply contrasting emphasis by numerous others on the considerable problems of any rationalist propositionalism. For the latter group, a theory of how God must have inspired the Bible- based on rationalist presuppositions- is seen as being imposed on the Bible rather than allowing the actual phenomena of Scripture itself to guide our understanding of how God apparently did inspire the writers, the text, and now the readers.

We agree with the judgement of Alister McGrath: “There is a growing realization within evangelicalism that the Princeton position is ultimately dependent upon extra-biblical assumptions and norms [the ideas and outlooks of Enlightenment rationalism]. The commitment to biblical authority remains; it is merely the mode of its articulation which is changing.””

Even though the bible claims to have its source in the inspiration of God: the Holy Spirit in scripture (2Timothy 3: 16-17 and 2Peter 1: 20-21) and also it claims to have been tried and purified seven times (Psalms 12: 6-7 and Proverbs 30:5).

Except this claims of the bible can pass for inerrancy, I do not think the bible have any claims of inerrancy. Howbeit, it is awkward to think of the bible as non-inerrant or errant. It's like saying there are errors in the Word of God.

Another side of this debate on inerrancy is that its opponent have thought that its proponents due to rationalistic presupposition have only foisted the concept of inerrancy on the scriptures as a way of the defence of its authority, integrity, infallibility and sufficiency. To the opponents, their claims do not have sufficient scriptural roots.

It seems to me that the opponents who also uphold the authority and integrity of the scriptures have assumed a position that the scriptures should be judged on its own merit without trying to enforce on it inerrancy as this could leave those who find variations in it stranded, stopping them from being transformed into disciples of Jesus Christ which is the real goal of God for giving the scriptures. They rather advocate for simple biblicism which is letting the Holy Spirit teach and transform you through the scriptures rather than philosophical biblicism which is more academic and presuppositional according to the writing of Clark H. Pinnock:

“My journey towards renewal in the evangelical understanding of biblical authority led me from a “philosophical biblicism” to a “simple biblicism.” This postmodern-like shift had begun with an earlier preoccupation with verifiable revelational data that could speak with rational certainty to the world. I championed the assumption of divinely given propositional truths that could save humankind from relativism. The journey later moved me to a focus that I always had in an incipient way, but one that became dominant for me and now lacked the foundationalist overlay.”

1. Clark H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*, appendix, 3.

By the resulting “simple biblicism” I mean:

“the delight evangelicals experience from meditating on Scripture and submitting to it. They feel immense gratitude for this means of grace that the Spirit has bestowed on the church to equip it. Scripture is a gift of the Spirit, and evangelicals want to be open to all that God says in this text. Scripture for them is the tangible sacrament of the Word of God nourishing them like milk and honey. Not a theory about the bible, simple biblicism is the basic instinct that the Bible is supremely profitable and transforming, alive with God’s breath. Without being free of every difficulty, the bible nevertheless bears effective witness to Jesus Christ.....Although wanting a reasonable faith, simple biblicism is not overly anxious about erecting rational foundations in the modern sense. It reflects a postmodern lack of anxiety about such foundations and is content with soft rather than hard rational supports.”

## Conclusion

Having looked at the concept of biblical inerrancy, its core and the various views around it, I would like to conclude that the extent of biblical inerrancy is not fixed. To the proponents, the bible is strictly and fully inerrant; without error in all matters.

To opponents, the bible is infallible only in matters of faith and practice but not regarding concepts such as the cosmic structure and variations found in the synoptic gospels.

I believe the bible is God’s word and His word does not fail or fall to the ground. The word of God comes to pass and is fulfilled for those who know Him and trust absolutely in Him.