

Worship services are being cancelled until further notice because of Covid-19. However, we will have worship services through the Internet Zoom platform every Sunday at 10:30 AM. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The phone number for Zoom always remains the same but the Meeting ID and password number changes every week. If you need more information, please contact Mr. Vautour. See the bottom of the bulletin the contact information.

If you have friends or acquaintances who want to join in the worship service, please do not hesitate to share with them the Zoom links to join with us in the worship our great God.

The National GCI services will be at 1:00 p.m. each Sunday. The Zoom link for this service will be sent to you by email. The phone number for Zoom and the meeting ID always remains the same for the National Worship Service.

For more information about special activities happening in GCI, please see the international website at [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org). On the left-hand upper side of the screen, you will see 3 short lines. You simply need to click on it. A drop down menu will appear. Click on **"PARTICIPATE"**.

**Please note that audio sermons are available and a PDF copy of sermons are available at [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) and video sermons are now available on YouTube – GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL-MONCTON (see link below)**

If you have a prayer requests, other events you would like to announce and/or praise to our great God you would like to share, **please try to contact Mr. Vautour by email, text or telephone no later than Saturday in the morning.**

Certainly, we all need to realize, during this time of crisis, that even if situations appear bleak and evil appears strong, God is still the ruler yet. Jesus sustains all things we are clearly told in Colossians. We could not be in more loving hands! Although we may go through temporary troubles, we have to always keep in mind the hope we have in Jesus.

We need to pray for our civil leaders, those in high positions as well as Christian religious leaders to give appropriate leadership as we traverse difficult periods. God tells us to pray for all people and to do good to everyone especially those of the household of God. (**"1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior," (1Ti 2:1-3 ESV)**

We all need to remember that this fallen world system will one day be replaced by the fullness of the kingdom of God. Only God knows when Jesus will return to the earth. (**"3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."** (Ga 1:3-5 ESV)

**For prayer requests**, please see [www.worshipim.ca](http://www.worshipim.ca) under **"Members Only"**. If you have forgotten password for this section only, please contact Mr. Vautour.

**April/May Calendar**

<b>Worship Services 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sunday</b>	<b>Bible Study</b> <b>Thursday 7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Prayer Meeting</b> <b>Thursday 7:30 p.m.</b>
Communion – May 3	April 30	
May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	May 14, 28	May 7, 21

**Offerings:** you can send your offering directly to the following address: **Grace Communion International- Canada, Suite 203A, 2121 Airport Dr., Saskatoon, SK 7S1 6W5.** If you prefer, you can also call **1-306-653-2705.** Thank you for your continued generous giving to God by giving to this part of God's church, his body.

**From Mr. Bill Hall – GCI Canadian Director** *"Our office here in Saskatoon will remain open during regular business hours. I'm self isolating for a couple of weeks, but Kathleen will be available. We will continue to process the donations we receive in Saskatoon. Members are urged to mail them directly to our office for the time-being. They can also donate via phone using a credit card, or via Canada Helps using the donate button on our website [www.gcicanada.ca](http://www.gcicanada.ca) We are waving the provision that all donations given via Canada Helps go toward national expenses for the time being. We will credit all donations received via Canada Helps to a member's local congregation, if we can identify where they attend."*

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## **Inspiration, Authority, and Reliability of the Bible, by Michael Morrison**

From: <https://www.gcs.edu/>

### **The inspiration of Scripture**

**Affirmation:** We accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The writers were inspired, moved by the Holy Spirit (**2 Peter 1:21**), and the writings are inspired, as if breathed or spoken by God (**2 Timothy 3:16**). The Bible is therefore useful as a guide to salvation through faith in Christ, and sufficient for doctrine, correction, moral and ethical instruction (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**).

The New Testament affirms the inspiration of the Old Testament, including its function of pointing to Jesus Christ (**Luke 24:44; John 5:46; Acts 10:43**). Jesus used the Old Testament as thoroughly reliable words of God (**Matthew 5:18; Mark 12:35; John 10:35**). The sayings of Jesus are accepted as of divine authority (**Matthew 24:35; Mark 8:38; John 6:63**), and the letters of Paul are also considered Scripture (**2 Peter 3:15-16**). The early church quoted the New Testament in the same manner as the Old, treating all these writings as God-given words.<sup>1</sup>

Biblical authors were inspired, and the writings are inspired, but the Bible does not give many details about **how** God worked with humans to produce these documents. Numerous passages claim to be quotes directly from God (e.g., **Exodus 20:1-17**); others claim to be the result of ordinary research (**Luke 1:1-4**); some appear to be private letters (**Philemon**). Regardless of the method of inspiration, all these writings are considered canonical Scripture – an authoritative message from God to humans. The Bible reveals truths about God and about what God does so that we may know God and have a relationship with God.

But grammatical irregularities and stylistic differences indicate that God did not dictate every word. Rather, God allowed the divine message to be given in the phraseology of the human authors. Just as Jesus was God in human form, the Bible is God's word in human words.

Since the Bible is written with human words and grammar, people are able to understand much of the message. But they do not necessarily understand that the message is *true*, because spiritual truths are understood only with divine help (**1 Corinthians 2:6-16**). The objective Word of God becomes an effective Word of God only when the Holy Spirit enables a person to understand spiritual truths contained in it.<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness is not in the grammatical details – it is in the message being conveyed and the God-given willingness to submit to it.

Further details concerning the reliability of Scripture will be discussed below.

### **The authority of Scripture**

**Affirmation:** God has all authority, and we accept the Bible as the primary authority by which God communicates to us what God wants us to believe and to do. The New Testament clarifies and sometimes supersedes the Old Testament guidance on faith and life.<sup>3</sup> The primary purpose of the Bible is its message about salvation, and that is its primary sphere of authority. It is a sufficient guide that tells us how we are given eternal life with God and how we should respond. Those who believe the biblical revelation about God's grace and Jesus Christ enjoy the salvation he has given; unbelievers do not (**John 3:18; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11-12**). This message of salvation is essential.

The Bible gives commands and principles regarding the way we ought to live. Faith in Christ as Lord and Savior transforms our lives and minds, with the result that our lives are brought progressively into greater submission to the will of God. Biblical instructions give us authoritative guidance on the will of God concerning how we should live and think and interact with one another.

The Bible is an authoritative revelation of truths about God, and we want to worship our Creator with as much understanding as possible. Moreover, we want to obey God's commands, not only to honor God but also because we believe that our all-wise and perfectly loving Creator has given us the best possible commands and guidance for life. Therefore, we want to understand the written message of God as best we can. But this is not always easy.

Humans are limited beings, and our minds are corrupted by sin, so even at our best we know only in part (**1 Corinthians 13:12**). Thus we find that the authority of God in the Bible is not only mediated by human language but also by our ability to understand its truths. Our understanding is fallible, and the Bible is the standard by which our

misunderstandings are corrected. God is able to give us sufficient understanding of biblical truths for us to have a saving relationship with God.<sup>4</sup>

Biblical interpretation is complicated by the fact that the Bible is written in many literary styles. Some passages are didactic, prescriptive, and concrete; others are narrative, imaginative and poetic. To communicate one spiritual truth, figures of speech may be used that may obscure other equally important truths revealed in other passages. Some commands are historically conditioned and others are timeless. To help us understand and submit to the authority of biblical principles, we humbly seek the guidance of the Author and study the Scriptures. We use reason to understand each biblical passage and point, and to discern what teachings are normative for us today.

Our ability to understand and to reason is shaped in part by our personal experiences and the traditions that have shaped our presuppositions. Reason, tradition, and experience should be subservient to Scripture; they should not contradict biblical authority. Nevertheless, because of different traditions and experiences, equally sincere people come to different conclusions about what the Bible teaches. Therefore we confidently teach our understanding of the Bible and simultaneously respect those who submit to biblical authority in different ways.

### **The reliability of Scripture**

**Affirmation:** The Scriptures are a trustworthy guide for our relationships with God and with other humans. They give truth about faith, worship, salvation, morals and ethics (**2 Timothy 3:15-16**). But biblical commands cannot be applied simplistically, because some are superseded and some apply only in limited situations. We seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit and ask God to guide our reasoning and our use of tradition and experience so we might understand how to apply biblical principles.

The further we go from the stated purposes of the Bible, the less the Bible says about the subject and the less likely we are to have a complete statement about the subject. Statements about history and science are of special interest.

Historians find the Bible to be an accurate record of many ancient events, more reliable than other ancient writings. But its standard of accuracy is not as precise as the expectations of modern science and history, as can be discerned from parallel accounts in Scripture. The same event can be attributed to Satan or to God (**2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1**), to Jesus in vision or to Ananias (**Acts 22:14-15; 26:16-18**). Paul's companions stood and heard, but they also fell down and did not hear (**Acts 9:7; 22:7, 9**).

Even one of the most conservative statements about Scripture admits that the Bible contains grammatical irregularities, exaggerations, imprecise descriptions, inexact quotations, variant selections, observations based on limited viewpoint, and loose quotes of the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup> When Scripture talks about the sun rising (**Matthew 5:45**), for example, its purpose is not to make a statement about astrophysics. When it calls a mustard seed the smallest seed (**Matthew 13:31-32**), it is not making a botanical claim. Genealogical lists may be incomplete (**Matthew 1:8; 2 Chronicles 22-24**), the length of kings' reigns may be misinterpreted due to co-regencies,<sup>7</sup> narrated events may be out of sequence (**Matthew 4:18-22; 8:14; Luke 4:38-5:11**), predicted events may not be fulfilled in every detail (**Acts 21:11, 32-33; 27:10, 22**), etc. Such irregularities encourage us to focus on the broad picture and the overall meaning, not tangential details.<sup>8</sup>

Most alleged discrepancies in the Bible are easily resolved, but these parallel accounts show that we must be cautious about taking biblical statements at face value. Even if we do not have a parallel account, it is hazardous to assume that unnamed intermediaries, for example, were not involved. Some biblical statements are true, but imprecise and incomplete, and therefore not a basis for a modern history. They may be used only with caution. Although biblical comments about salvation require the historical truth of certain events, such as the resurrection of Jesus, our faith does not require that we accept every biblical comment as historically or scientifically precise.<sup>5</sup>

The truthfulness of the Bible should be evaluated according to its own "usage and purpose."<sup>9</sup> Yet its purpose rarely includes details of history and science,<sup>10</sup> and its demonstrable flexibility in word usage makes it unwise for us to insist on one meaning of a word when other meanings are possible. God inspired the ambiguities as well as the clear statements. Some things we need to know, and others we do not. God is not primarily concerned with whether we understand astrophysics, botany, and chronology.

We err if we try to use his inspired book for purposes it was not designed for. Christians come to different conclusions about the reliability of the Bible. Many insist that the Bible is more reliable in history and science than this position paper describes. We respect that view, for it is close to our own, but we do not think it theologically or biblically required. Other Christians insist that the Bible is less reliable than described herein. We respect their faith in Christ, but we repeat our belief, in summary, that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, authoritative and reliable in matters of faith, worship, morals, and ethics. We encourage all Christians to focus on these central and stated purposes of the Scriptures we have in common.

### **Endnotes**

1 The testimony of the Bible to itself is summarized in I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982, pages 19-30.

2 Revelation is both propositional and personal. See Marshall, pages 12-15.

3 Some parts of the Bible are more authoritative than others (e.g., circumcision and holy kisses) and do not function as a word of God in the same way other verses do. "The Bible... presents a progressive revelation, parts of which are now superseded in the light of what followed" (Marshall, page 58). The Old Testament must be used on the basis of general principles, which suggests a similar approach for the New Testament.

4 William Hordern presents a neo-orthodox position in "The Nature of Revelation," in Millard Erickson, editor, *Readings in Christian Theology, Volume 1: The Living God*, 1973, pages 180-182. I will not argue against the details of Hordern's view, but will say that any attempt to know God or Christ without reliance on scriptural propositions is subjective. "In subjectivism each man is his own authority, and if each man is his own authority there is neither truth nor authority" (Bernard Ramm, "The Pattern of Religious Authority," in Erickson, *Readings*, page 260).

5 I am not addressing the question whether all historical and scientific statements are true. I do not yet see a resolution for several passages. One may wish to suspend judgment, which is a perfectly legitimate thing to do.... The Bible does contain what may be regarded as error and contradictions by modern standards but which are not in fact contrary to its own standards and purpose. (Marshall, 89, 71)

"Inerrancy" can never be demonstrated with a cogency which entitles it to rank as the foundation of a belief in inspiration. It must remain to those who hold it a doctrine of faith; a deduction from what they deem to be implied..." (James Orr, "Revelation and Inspiration," in Millard Erickson, editor, *Readings in Christian Theology, Volume 1: The Living God*, 1973, page 245)

6 International Conference on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," Article XIII. Printed in Norman L. Geisler, editor. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, page 496.

The analogy of Jesus, the Word made flesh, may offer a parallel. We accept his statements about God and salvation as completely true, and his life as perfectly sinless, but this does not mean that he never made a measurement mistake in his carpentry work. Likewise, the Bible may contain grammatical and other irregularities.

7 Dewey Beegle, "Inerrancy and the Phenomena of Scripture," in Millard Erickson, editor, *Readings in Christian Theology, Volume 1*, pages 297-299, citing Edwin Thiele.

8 "One practical purpose for allowing the differences in parallel passages may be to give us a subtle clue that those are the kinds of things not worth quarrelling over!" (Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991, page 70). Free citations of the Old Testament suggest that meaning is more important than individual words, but a problem arises when the New Testament gives a different meaning to an Old Testament passage.

9 ICBI, Article XIII. The qualifications in Article XIII make it difficult to accept some of the other articles, such as XI and XII, which say that Scripture never misleads us in matters of history and science. Galileo would disagree! "Having recognized that God's honour is not compromised by use of irregular grammar, etc., why is it so difficult to accept that his honour can be equally unaffected if he chooses to use equivalent irregularities in historical and scientific detail?" (James D.G. Dunn, "The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," *Churchman* 96 (1982) 120.

10 "The Bible...nowhere claims to give instruction in (for instance) any of the natural sciences...and it would be an improper use of Scripture to treat it as making pronouncements on these matters" (J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958, page 96). Perhaps all biblical statements about the natural world are phenomenological and therefore the concept of inerrancy is irrelevant for them.



**Michael Morrison** received a PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2006. He is Dean of Faculty and Professor of New Testament at Grace Communion Seminary.



### We Were There

Study by James Henderson, Superintendent of Europe (*from gci.org under update*)

**"Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury." [John 19:40 NKJV](#)**

This poignant account from John's Gospel of Jesus is beautiful in its simplicity.

Johnny Cash famously sang an old spiritual: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" One of the lines is, "Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?" Imagine.

Let's go back to that moment. What if you or I had to take care of the dead body of a

loved one? What if it were battered and bloodied? Where would you start?

How did Joseph and Nicodemus feel as they took Jesus' body down? Did the centurion, who had witnessed the crucifixion, help them? Was the cross lowered first, and then, gently, with tears in their eyes, did they extract the nails from the flesh and pry the crown of thorns from his head? What next? Did they take some clean cloth, to wash away the blood and dirt from his body, and, with tenderness, pat it dry in preparation for the first embalming? Was this followed by

wrapping the strips of linen, infused with sweet-smelling, preserving spices, around his lifeless body before laying Jesus respectfully in the tomb?

How did the women react as they watched on? What emotions gripped them as they followed the men carrying him to the tomb, and watched as the stone closed its entrance? The song continues, "*Ohh, sometimes it causes me to tremble...tremble.*"

In a sense, we were there.

The Jesus story goes from sadness to elation, from sorrow to joy, from weeping to singing, because, you remember what happens...three days later the stone is rolled away! *Well, were you there when the stone was rolled away?* Johnny Cash goes on to sing. We all – each of us, everyone who has ever lived and who will live in the future – participate in all that Jesus is and in the key events of his ministry.

Jesus' story becomes our story. Jesus is no longer nailed to that cross or dead in the grave. "Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" ([Romans 6:4 NIV](#)).

### **Prayer**

*Thank you, Father, for your son, Jesus, who died for us and was raised from the dead for us that we might live a new life in him. In Jesus' name.*

*Amen*

**GCI principle website and Moncton Websites**—a) [www.gci.org](http://www.gci.org) , b) [www.worshiphim.ca](http://www.worshiphim.ca) , c)

[www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton](https://www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton) ; d) <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmdZy69vJcFfPg>

*For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website.*

*Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email— [evatour47@outlook.com](mailto:evatour47@outlook.com)*