

***Infallibility and Authority of the Bible***  
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*Biblical infallibility* means that the Bible in its original autographs (original texts of which we now have only copies) is without error. (As a clarification, the Bibles we have are faithful translations of extremely well-preserved texts, which are over 99% pure copies of the original autographs. For our purposes, the variant readings in the 1000's of extant manuscripts are insignificant, so we have complete confidence in the Bible we have.) This includes science and history, though some of the expressions are just colloquialisms (e.g., the sun rose). Because God breathed and preserved it, it is without error.

*Authority* refers to the *right to rule*. Authority is the reason a subservient should obey. God expresses His authority in Isaiah 45:9: "*Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'?"* (cf., Jeremiah 18:1-6) God reminds us that He made us and has the right to command us.

The Bible says *God cannot lie* (Numbers 23:19, Titus 1:2), that no one *informs Him of anything* (Isaiah 40:12-14), and that *He declares the end from the beginning* (Isaiah 46:10). If there is nothing He does not know, if He cannot be corrected, if He cannot lie, and if the Bible is His word, then the Bible does not contain error, and that *is* infallibility. If God's word is infallible, it is the basis for all authority.

One way infallibility shows in the Bible is its foretelling of the future. Micah 5:2 says the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. *He was* (Matthew 2:1). He was to be a son of David from the root of Jesse (2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 11:10), and *He was* (Matthew 1:6, Luke 2:1-7, Romans 15:12). Psalm 22:14-18 describes the Messiah's "*bones out of joint*", "*feet and hands pierced*" and "*garments divided and lots cast for his clothing*" and *they were* (Matthew 27:35). This is all the more remarkable since Psalm 22 is written around 950 BC and crucifixion was not invented until 600 hundred years later (Wikipedia, *Crucifixion*).

Another way the Bible reveals its infallibility is its internal consistency. God uses forty authors over 2000 years, yet each of 66 books points to the redemption of sinful man through the sacrifice of His only Son. From Genesis 3:15 (*bruise him on the head*) to Isaiah 53 (*pierced for our transgressions*) to Jesus revealing Himself to Saul in Acts 9, to the glory of the Lamb in Revelation 22 (cf., Isa. 6), this book points to the glory of the Son of God who redeems men and who in turn points to the glory of the Father (John 17:4).

That mark of infallibility brings us back to the issue of authority. If what you say is without error (infallible), then you have authority. God's authority stems from His perfections. Deut. 32:4 says, "*He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*" If God is authority personified, and the Bible is *His* word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), then the Bible has authority.

Jesus displays His recognition of the Word as authoritative when He uses the Word as *His* authority when combatting temptation (Matthew 4:1-11). We see the same reliance on the Word as normative for us in Ephesians 6:14 ("*girding your loins with truth*") where we learn that truth, which is the Word (John 17:17) is the first part of our spiritual armor and Ephesians 6:17 ("*taking up the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*") where it is the final piece of armor as well as the only offensive weapon.

Though at times the Bible directly asserts its authority (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21), other times its authority is inferred. Matthew 7:28-29 tells us that when Jesus taught, the people marveled because He taught as "one having authority." Since the Bible records His words (cf., Matthew 7:24-27, *everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man...*) and is written to tell His story (cf., John 20:30-31 *these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ*), we can infer that the Bible speaks authoritatively about the One who taught authoritatively.

When the Pharisees asked Him *by what authority* He cleansed the temple, He appealed to the baptism of John (Matthew 21:23-27), at which time God affirmed Him from heaven, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.*" That He is 'God's Son' automatically conveys authority. If that wasn't enough, He adds to those words at the Mount of Transfiguration where He said, "*Hear Him!*" As a result, authority is clearly vested in the Son (Matt. 28:18 *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*; John 17:2 *You gave Him authority over all flesh*). If He has the authority, then His Word carries that authority.