

Dear friends in Christ,

Lent represents the difficult times in life. And by difficult, I don't mean the fact that you decided to give up BOTH coffee and chocolate instead of one or the other. We practice sacrifice during the Lenten season to remember that our Lord's journey to the cross was also filled with sacrifice and required him to rely on the will of His Father. One of the reasons I love lent is that it teaches me of my weakness and my need to rely on the will of God for my own life. Jesus assures us that "in this world you will have tribulation" but to take heart because He "has overcome the world."¹ The Lenten encouragement to rely on the one who "has overcome the world" goes hand in hand with what we believe as church in regards to the Bible: that it is the *Infallible* word of God.

The *Infallibility* of God's Word as a concept isn't too difficult to parse out. It simply means that God's Word never fails to communicate to you exactly what He wants you to know about Him. The infallibility of Scripture, like the concept of *revelation* and *inspiration* flow from the character of God himself. We see in scripture a pattern of God's actions. It should make plain sense that a God who is All Knowing, All Good, and All Powerful simply cannot fail to make his purposes known. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and the Old and New testament point to the reliability of His nature. He keeps his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even when they break theirs. He keeps his promises to David. He keeps his promises to the apostles and to his church. And he continues to keep his promises to you today.

Even though this concept of *Infallibility* is fairly straightforward, there are several aspects to this doctrine that are worth considering. First, it's important to note that the Bible was never intended to be a scientific textbook. Our modern world tends to value scientific knowledge above other forms of knowledge and often wants to apply the rules of science to the Bible. Skeptics like to poke fun at the idea of biblical infallibility by trying to point out scientific inconsistencies in the text. Some of these inconsistencies include how premodern people observed that the sun seemed to revolve around the world rather than the other way around and that although Jesus claims that a mustard seed is the smallest seed, there are many other seeds around that are smaller than it. What these skeptics forget is that the Bible in general, and Jesus in particular both like to use analogy as a way of explanation, they aren't trying to employ the scientific method to get a point across. Not to be uncharitable to such skeptics, but their approach to Scripture is like trying to go deer hunting with a rod and fishing line, and people who take this approach are more often than not trying to discredit the idea of infallibility of the Bible because they don't want to have to conform to what it says about reality.

So if the Bible isn't a textbook, what kind of book is it? It's actually not a book at all but more like a library. It's made up of a 66 books, and each employs a different kind of literary approach. Some books are poetry, others record history, some are books of law dictating a code of justice, and others are prophecies concerning God's judgement on the nations of the world both at the time of writing of the book and in the future. But they all have one thing in common: They can be trusted to completely and accurately to communicate exactly what God wants to reveal about himself. The key phrase to remember is *God reveals what God wants*. He does not reveal everything to us. His nature is infinite and we are finite, so we will never know him in his infinite entirety. Such an idea makes my head hurt. However, He reveals exactly what we need to know about Him. And that is a comfort because what he has revealed are exactly the things that you and I need to know to get through the difficult seasons in life: He loves us, he cares for us,

¹ John 16:33

and he can be trusted. The Bible infallibly gives us these truths about God, precisely for the Lenten days of our lives.

Grace & Peace,
Blaine Davis
Your Seminarian