VERITAS EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

A RECONSIDERATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
METHODOLOGY, INERRANCY, AND HERMENEUTIC
IN APOLOGETICS, EVANGELISM, AND
PERSEVERANCE IN THE ORTHODOX FAITH

A RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTED TO DR. NORMAN L. GEISLER
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
TH350 PROLEGOMENA AND BIBLIOLOGY

BY

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OCTOBER 31, 2014

Norman Geisler concluded his chapter on the methodological precondition of theology with these words:

> Methodology is crucial to theology. An unorthodox method leads logically to unorthodox conclusions. An inadequate methodology will lead to an inadequate theology. Many of the methods developed to study other disciplines are not suited for theology—at least not an evangelical theology. Those that are adaptable must be stripped of their antisupernatural and unorthodox presuppositions.[1]

Many of the parameters for the recommended methodology can also be seen in the widely respected Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy[2] (CSBI) and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutic[3] (CSBH). But confusion and challenges over matters of methodology, hermeneutic, and inerrancy have arisen among some evangelicals who are favorable towards the CSBI-CSBH standards. The traditionalists (or "neo-fundamentalists") have greater continuity with the "old Princetonian" views,[4] tend to be a more conservative in their interpretation of CSBI, and tend to be more distrustful of the currency of liberal-protestant and neo-orthodox scholarship. The progressives (or "neo-evangelicals") tend to be more optimistic about the value of "Egyptian gold," seem more willing to "push the envelope" of inerrancy in ways that the originators of the CSBI-CSBH standards have disapproved of, and tend to hold the CSBI in lower regard than their traditionalist counterparts. This paper will attempt to respectfully evaluate some of the challenges the progressives[5] have been voicing.

To Whom and In Which Way is Inerrancy Important?

As one whose views on inerrancy were shaped by the writings of Francis Schaeffer, J.I. Packer, Harold Lindsell, Carl Henry, and Norman Geisler,[6] I reflexively think that the importance of inerrancy must be difficult to exaggerate. But then I'm reminded of the fact that there are hundreds of thinkers in the 20th and 21st century who have made very important contributions to the defense of our biblical-and-historical faith while caring very little about the question of whether the Bible has any factual errors or contradictions in it. While I'm reminded of Bruce Metzger, Alister E.

McGrath,[7] N.T. Wright, F.F. Bruce,[8] and dozens of others, C.S. Lewis seems like the best choice for a poster boy here.

Biblical Inerrancy was Unimportant to C.S. Lewis

Lewis is the most famous—and very likely the most influential—apologist of the 20th century.[9] His words had a tremendous impact upon thousands. His logical, eloquent prose helped kindle my love of our reasonable faith and the exercise of faithful reason. Isn't it interesting that he was able to lead many people towards a more biblical faith despite the fact that he held that the same Bible did contain some error and myth?[10] While Lewis was doing a top-notch job of warning Anglican biblical scholars that their work with higher-critical methodologies was faulty and undermining the orthodoxy in Anglicanism,[11] he also seemed to portray the four gospel accounts as "reportage—though it may no doubt contain errors—pretty close to the facts."[12]

Given the enviable "success" of Lewis as an apologist, it is then difficult to reconcile these facts with the last proposition of the CSBI, which says, "We further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the church."[13] It is difficult to imagine that Lewis' falling short of the higher standard of inerrancy will lead to "grave consequences" as he undergoes the judgment(s) described in 1st Corinthians 3:10-15[14] and 2nd Corinthians 5:10.[15] Rather, we might expect that he will receive commendation and reward from our Lord for his service. While there is room for legitimate complaints over the vagueness and ambiguity in the denial about "grave consequences," we do not necessarily conclude, as at least one inerrantist did, that the ICBI overstated the point about "grave consequences."[16]

If we factor in the expansion upon this article in the official commentary the ICBI tasked R.C. Sproul with writing, we get a helpful clue as to what the ICBI was saying. Sproul explained, "We believe that history has demonstrated again and again that there is all too often a close relationship between rejection of inerrancy and subsequent defections from matters of the Christian

faith that are essential to salvation."[17] Perhaps this is an important clarification. If anyone ever improves upon the CSBI, this point might need to be worded better. The ICBI thinkers were not saying that the rejection of the doctrine of inerrancy is itself something that necessarily incurs the disapproval of God directly; rather, the grave consequences for rejecting inerrancy are actually the consequences of defection from one or more of the propositions we sinners are commanded to assent to as an essential part of saving faith.[18] The ICBI made it clear more than once that believing that the Bible is without any error is not something we are required to believe as a condition for reception of the gift of salvation. They said, "We deny that such a confession is necessary for salvation."[19] It seems the ICBI used "grave consequences" for the same phenomena that the Apostle Paul had earlier used the ominous term "shipwreck."[20]

Their judgment about rejection and defection based on history doesn't seem contestable. There were countless cases in the late 19th and early 20th centuries where theologians infected with "Modernist" philosophies and methodologies carried their plague to almost every corner of Western Europe, the United Kingdom, and North America. As a result, numerous divinity schools, scholars, school leaders, pastors, churches—entire denominations of Protestant Christianity—succumbed to the infection and in the delirium that followed, rejected many of the most fundamental doctrines of the Bible and early Christian creeds. Their low view of the Scriptures and their high view of skeptical and critical philosophy had and will presumably have very grave consequences on the day when their graves are opened[21] and "God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (Romans 2:16 ESV).

Sproul's commentary here speaks in generalities that seem to leave room for exceptions. Where Sproul says there is "all too often a close relationship" between rejection of inerrancy and defection from orthodoxy, he is not saying there is always a necessary and inescapable relationship. He is leaving some room for the possibility of rejection not *always* leading to defection and

subsequent consequences. So it seems that even within ICBI parameters there may be room for the idea that the degree of danger of doctrinal defection might be somewhat proportional to the degree of rejection of inerrancy. If so, a view that holds the Bible is mostly devoid of error is mostly devoid of danger of defection. Perhaps then a rejection of "complete inerrancy" in favor of "limited inerrancy" or a "mostly inerrant" position does not necessarily lead to the shipwreck of doctrinal apostasy. It clearly is possible for a thinker to hold to orthodox doctrines while not holding to an orthodox bibliology.[22] It is possible—though not recommended.

Inerrancy was Important to Francis Schaeffer and Billy Graham

Although certainty is impossible here, Lewis may have had a *greater impact* for Christ's kingdom and could have received an even greater reward if he had spoken with a voice that championed the full trustworthiness of every "jot and tittle"[23] in the Bible. Consider the impact Francis Schaeffer had by being a staunch inerrantist in the right place at the right time.

After the 1940s forced most Europeans to realize that we mortals are not essentially good, many of the liberal Protestants left their failed movement and joined the neo-orthodox movement. After the Schaeffers relocated to Huémoz, Switzerland they were in the right place at the right time (1955-1974) to have a very significant impact on thousands of disillusioned Europeans and wandering seekers. If Schaeffer had been parroting the neo-orthodoxy and existentialism that was in vogue in Western Europe at the time, they would not have been helpful to those who were searching for answers and sanity. This is not to say that one of God's servants was better than another. God uses Apollos in one way, Cephas in another, and Paul in yet another. Lewis and Schaeffer were missionaries in similar climates. It's very possible that Lewis might have been even more powerful in his commendation and defense of the biblical faith if he had shared Schaeffer's view of the Scriptures.

And then there is the unprecedented impact that Billy Graham had in the same century as Lewis and Schaeffer. As Graham pioneered his way from fundamentalist to evangelical he went through intense personal struggles over the question of the degree of trustworthiness of the Bible. Although not all of his questions were answered, he was somehow able to transfer his trust in God's trustworthiness to the trustworthiness of God's written word.[24] This conviction is one of the things which allowed Graham to speak with powerful and infectious conviction. If Graham believed that the Bible did contain some human error in it, or if he didn't care one way or the other, he wouldn't have been able to speak with the power with which he spoke. And if while speaking Graham had said, "but the human side of the Bible does contain error in it," fewer people would have placed their faith into it as a revelation from God. If it is true that Graham was used as the greatest evangelist of the 20th century, or of any century so far for that matter, his view of the total trustworthiness of the scriptures was a *sine qua non* element in the equation.[25] What would have happened if Lewis had gained and spoken with that same conviction? Perhaps he would have been marginalized by the academic guild but perhaps his sword would also have pierced deeper into the world's soul.

The Time When People Won't Put up with Sound Doctrine

Long ago Paul warned his protégé Timothy that "the time will come when people won't put up with sound doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:3 NIV). Some maintain that this mega-tsunami of apostasy he spoke of hasn't hit the churches quite yet. Perhaps so. Of course it could be argued that such a time has always been here, from the time of Abel to Zechariah (Luke 11:51), in the time of Paul (2 Tim. 4:10), and in modern times. General apostasy with the exception of a faithful, repentant remnant may be an apt generalization of every century of the histories of Israel/Judah and of the professing churches. Although the tsunami that washed most of the orthodox Christology and soteriology out of most European and North American churches took much of its energy from the popular and

misguided acceptance of Darwin's theories (1860), the waves that were eroding orthodoxy were

lapping the shores before then. By 1816, for example, some of the theology students in Geneva, the

cradle of 16th century Calvinism, were "criticizing the Genevan pastors [and professors] and

accusing them of denying certain basic Christian doctrines and betraying the Reformation—

teaching."[26] Two years earlier these pastors and professors had issued a new catechism which, as

historian Timothy Stunt put it,

> effectively reaffirmed the attitudes which Rousseau had pilloried sixty years earlier. In the hope of opposing atheism and the moral revolt associated with the French Revolution, Protestant dogma was reduced still further to what was effectively little more than a conservative system of morality. Most of the pastors were reluctant to preach on subjects like the incarnation or the atonement, which they considered to be matters of peripheral importance.[27]

Around the same time New England was turning away from their Calvinist roots there were

churchmen who rejected doctrines of eternal damnation and the divinity of Christ. Kuklick attests to

this saying,

> By 1820 Boston and its locale were 'Unitarian' rather than Calvinist in religious philosophy. . . In 1838, after Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered his famous address at the bastion of Unitarianism, the Harvard Divinity School, Transcendentalism became an issue. . . liberals demanded that Christianity be made rationally credible, that its tenets conform to what the urban literate upper middle class considered believable.[28]

Clearly the forces of apostasy predate the proliferation of German philosophy and critical

methodology. So could it be that Evangelicalism in North American seminaries has been able to

adopt more and more of the higher critical methods without sacrificing the orthodoxy seen in the

old evangelical confessions of faith?

As hinted to earlier, evangelicals who hold to the inerrancy of scripture but then prove to

hold to a "limited inerrancy" view or by their hermeneutic trump inerrancy into a "limited

inerrancy" state are not likely to steer the Evangelical ship onto the rocks and reefs immediately.

But there is a big difference in saying that there is no immediate danger and there is no danger. This

is important to understand. Those who embrace limited inerrancy and the methodology of the neo-

orthodox are not necessarily going to lose their grip on orthodox doctrines right away. They might

keep them throughout their lifetime if, for example, the communities they're in provide social pressure to continue to chime in with the voices of the orthodox. Or perhaps they'll just be brave enough only to do something controversial that has less of a chance of condemnation—like arguing that Matthew judged the Apostle Peter to be an apostate.[29] We need to be thinking about the long-term that may span several generations of teachers and disciples. I think Carl Henry said as much when he wrote, "Evangelicals do not dispute the fact that for a time at least Christianity may function with an impaired doctrine of Scripture. But it does so at its own peril and inevitably must then lose much of its essential message."[30] My concern that as more and more evangelicals become "limited inerrantists" and "neo-evangelicals" and work with the methodologies of neo-orthodox thinkers, perhaps some battles can still be won for a time. But eventually the war—the battle for Bible-based faith both in the church and in the world—may be lost.

What about Fuller Seminary? This school makes a great test case because it was originally started as a bastion for the inerrancy. It was created to fight the modernist dangers on scholarly levels. Ironically it quickly became a fountainhead of neo-evangelical and neo-orthodox thought. Now, almost forty years after Lindsell made his dire warnings about Fuller Seminary,[31] don't they still maintain an orthodox doctrinal statement? Has Lindsell been proven wrong? Doesn't this prove that the ICBI was over reacting to the danger? And what about the other great evangelical Christian colleges, seminaries, and graduate schools that once had a reputation for being bastions of a high view of scripture? Aren't they still orthodox in theology years after relaxing their grip on biblical inerrancy? Doesn't that disprove the thesis that inerrancy is important to orthodoxy? Some may think so. But the problem is more subtle—a matter of interpretation.

Everything is a matter of interpretation! It's inescapable. In this so-called post-modern world we now live in, the propositions of a school's doctrinal statement might be meaningless. In the prevailing intellectual climate, those propositions only have the subjective, equivocal meanings that

the various communities that are reading them feel like giving to them. Your definitions are not their definitions. And can anything really be defined at all anymore? With this in mind, I'm not so sure you can judge a school by its doctrinal statement anymore. What we can be sure of is that the epistemological-hermeneutical revolution has already occurred. As a result, every Christian doctrine and concept is being loosed from its Reformation, Orthodox, and Scriptural moorings. Why would Evangelical institutions be immune? Having an orthodox doctrinal statement no longer means having orthodoxy among faculty and students. In a memorable sermon series, theologian S. Lewis Johnson took into account the evidence from a sociologist (that include polls of people at Fuller seminary) that prove the slide away from historical orthodoxy was already well underway as of 1990:

> James Davison Hunter . . . wrote *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*. Professor Hunter is assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and the author of other books on Evangelicalism. He understands Evangelicalism, I believe. In the book *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*, he mentions the fact that this book is the result of an attitudinal survey over about five years. And the object of the survey, or the sources of his conclusions are Evangelical institutions, about nine Christian colleges. . . And about seven of our Evangelical theological institutions . . . In other words, the institutions are truly Evangelical institutions and stand really at the top of Evangelical thrust at the present time. Professor Hunter, after the lengthy chapter on theology that opens the discussion, after discussing some of the ways in which Evangelicalism has been changing concludes with a comment to the effect that the tendencies that have been discovered in the survey and which have characterized Evangelicalism over the past years will probably escalate in the future. Now, for example, he discussed the Scriptures and discussed the fact that there has been a retreat from the viewpoint of Scripture that the Evangelical church has historically held. He also used as one of his tests in his survey the Evangelical Church's attitude to the Book of Genesis. Its remarkable how many people in the Evangelical camp regard Genesis and particularly its early chapters as symbolical chapters. He also quizzed the institutions that we're talking about on the doctrine of eternal torment. And again, there has been a shift away from eternal torment; that is, a shift from evangelicalism's historical position. He also discussed the exclusivism of Christianity, and by that is meant simply that Christ is the only Savior. And shockingly there has also been a drift away from that among the people who attend these sterling evangelical institutions, and finally on the social Gospel. And in the survey on the social Gospel it was very interesting to note that about one third of the people who were part of the survey believed that the social aspects of the Gospel are almost as important as the evangelism of the Gospel. So what we are seeing is a definite drift, a drift that is a retreat and a retreat that appears to be a departure from Evangelicalism's viewpoints over the past decades. In the light of that, Professor Hunter has said, the tendencies will probably escalate. What makes this also interesting to me at least is that a few months earlier in 1990 this year there was a very lengthy article in Christianity Today. Christianity Today has a hundred thousand people who read this magazine. It probably is regarded as the leading voice of Evangelical Christianity. And the title of the article was 'Evangelical Megashift'[32]. . . Mr. Brow suggests are terms that we should have different view about and discuss them. . . So in other words, we are to think of the great doctrine of Evangelicalism, the Christian doctrine of justification by faith as a doctrine that we cannot really hold in the since in which it has been held centuries. That is that by justification be faith we are given a new status before God as righteous before him. . . David Wells traces the shifts to the dismembering of the old model by the forces of modernity. Tradition and a transcendent order have lost their appeal . . . we are interesting in feelings more than we are interested in truth. And that surely is the attitude of the world about us

and it illustrates the fact that the way the world thinks has great affects upon us who are with the Evangelical body.[33] . . . a great change has been taking place, somewhat quietly perhaps, in evangelical thinking, and that terms that have had historic meanings are now being given different meanings. . . . some of the terms that are being given different meanings. . . sin, judge, wrath, and hell. . . faith, church, and Son of God.[34] . . . in his book after taking an attitudinal survey of a number of Christian colleges, among them colleges like, Wheaton, Westmont, and evangelical seminaries, like Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Fuller Seminary, Talbot Theological Seminary and others, came to the conclusion that the tendencies are moving away from evangelicalism do exist, and . . . he did feel that the tendencies that he definitely has seen from his several years of surveys will probably escalate. And so the question is the shift is here, it would seem. Does this mean a retreat, and will it ultimately mean a departure from evangelical thinking? . . . [the] new model interpretation of those terms is not all together harmonious with the Scriptures. Some things are, but some things are not, so the result is that the total picture is of that, which is not totally harmonious with the word of God. . . . so you can see that if there are things that are wrong in this we are talking about departure that perhaps may be taking place in some of our important evangelical institutions.[35]

We've been warned that the abandonment of traditional methodologies and traditional bibliology will naturally lead to the abandonment of the traditional understanding of the chief doctrines of orthodoxy. This is no longer a matter of wait-and-see but a stop-waiting-and-start-seeing.

Confusion over "Concentric Circles"

Some evangelical apologists have recently revived the objection that inerrancy is a minor doctrine and requires a proportionally minor emphasis. Part of what makes their argument sound persuasive is the use of an illustration involving concentric circles. Michael Licona, a scholar who has made several very impressive contributions to the defense of the faith, used three such circles:

Gary Habermas gave me an illustration years ago that has proven very helpful. Imagine a target. The bullseye are the Gospel essentials: deity, atoning death, [resurrection] of Jesus. . . The first circle around the bullseye contains VERY important doctrines but not necessary for salvation. . . many would place the virgin birth, the divine inspiration of Scripture and perhaps a few others in this ring. In the second ring outside the bullseye are doctrines that are largely denominational differences, tertiary differences, such as whether the gifts of the Spirit are for today, whether women should serve as senior pastors, biblical inerrancy, etc. I think the first ring outside the bullseye is important. But my work in Christian apologetics cares only about the bullseye.[36]

William Lane Craig paints the same basic picture using a spider web and its concentric circle-like pattern:

Inerrancy is a corollary of the doctrine of inspiration. As such, it is important to the Christian faith, but it doesn't stand at the center of the Christian faith. It is not one of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. If we think of our theological system of beliefs as like a spider's web, at the core of the web where the center of the web is, there will be things like belief in the existence of God. That would be absolutely central to the web of beliefs. A little further out from that would be the deity of Christ and his resurrection from the dead. A little bit further out from that perhaps would be the penal theory of the atonement – his substitutionary death for our sins. Even further out from that, somewhere near the periphery of the web, will be the belief in the inerrancy of

> Scripture. What that means is that if one of these central beliefs – like the belief in the existence of God or the resurrection of Jesus – goes, if that part of the web is plucked out, the whole web is going to collapse. Because if you take something out of the center then the rest of the web can't exist. But if you pull one of the strands out that is near the periphery, that will cause some reverberation in your web of beliefs but it is not going to destroy the whole thing. . . If inerrancy is not true, does that mean Jesus of Nazareth wasn't the second person of the Trinity? That he didn't rise from the dead? That he didn't die for our sins? Obviously not. So inerrancy is a doctrine that doesn't belong at the center of your web of beliefs. It belongs somewhere out near the periphery. . . [it is a mistake to try to] make the focus of your evangelism is inerrancy rather than Christ, as you say. It is Christ that is the center of the Gospel. He ought to be the stumbling stone, not the doctrine of inerrancy. Inerrancy is an in-house debate for someone who is already a Christian. . . It is an in-house argument about what corollaries are there to the concept of inspiration.[37]

There may be some misunderstanding about the illustration Licona, Habermas, and Craig offer. These men have devoted their lives to leading people towards faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we restrict the application of their illustration solely to that context—the arena of building belief amongst unbelievers—what they says makes good sense. For as we help an unbeliever go through the process of believing more and more about Christ, it is true that there probably will not be any need to coach them on the fine points of inerrancy during the process of evangelism; that will probably come later as part of the process of discipleship.

Think of the apologist as the spider—the master builder—who starts weaving the intricate intellectual-ideological web inside the mind of the unbeliever. Craig, for instance, begins at a starting point (the existence of a theistic God, for example) and methodically weaves viscid web segments around that that starting point. After arguing persuasively that there is a God with the *kalam* cosmological argument, for example, and debating fine points of quantum theory if needed, Craig proceeds to spin the lines of evidence that there is good historical evidence for Jesus. Going further, he argues that the gospels are reliable historical accounts of Jesus. He closes the deal by providing an argument for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. All of these are concentric rings in the web. As long as we restrict ourselves to this one, single, narrow context, as long as we're talking about the methodical, chronological the process of building faith among those who are beginning to believe, I concede the point and agree that we should not make a big deal out of inerrancy. This is also to say we should not attempt to push inerrancy upon unbelievers as a

necessary element of saving faith. And here any appearance of conflict between the view of Licona, Habermas, and Craig and the view of the staunch traditionalists disappears. Geisler,[38] Sproul,[39] and everyone who signed the CSBI (which concludes saying, "We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation") agreed that inerrancy is not and should not be made part of the gospel message.[40]

However, a word of caution is warranted here. When someone argues persuasively that inerrancy is unimportant and detrimental to faith (in this one context), the reader may be convinced that inerrancy is unimportant and detrimental to faith in the only context that apologists need to care about. I argue that there are other contexts in which inerrancy is important for apologists to hold to, operate with, and be prepared to defend. The real weakness in the concentric circle illustration is that it lacks the complexity needed to correspond to the bigger context. A more complex illustration is deserved.

To begin with, for the sake of discussion let's concede the point that inerrancy is a "peripheral" matter. Peripheral does not always means expendable, less than critical, or even less than crucial. Again it depends on the context. Consider passengers flying in airplanes. While it is true that the most precious and important cargo is inside the cabin (the bullseye); and while it is true that by comparison the fuselage (second ring), the tail, the wings, flaps, landing gear, jet engines, and other peripheral things (third ring) are unimportant, this is only true while both passengers and plane are on the ground. Once the plane is in flight at 600 miles per hour, 40,000 feet above the crust of the earth, the wellbeing of those in the core becomes inextricably linked to the integrity of the second and third rings. If there is a problem with a hydraulic oil leak in one of the lines that control the flaps on the tail or wings of the aircraft I'm scheduled to fly in, for instance, I hope the mechanic doing the pre-flight inspection doesn't shrug and say, "That's just a

peripheral thing. All that matters is what is inside the cabin." If that happens, those of us on my flight may not land quite where and how we hoped.

Targets and spider webs are stationary things. Airplanes, ships, and vehicles that must be piloted and guided through dangers are not. The Apostle Paul shows a preference for the analogy of ships on dangerous seas to describe the life of the universal church and local churches as we navigate through the currents of wind and wave in the world. And that's the context we shouldn't neglect. The decisions and teaching of evangelical theologians, apologists, scholars, and leaders are shaping and guiding traditions. Our traditions guided by faith and reason are in motion, are constantly interacting with other forces, and hopefully they're going somewhere. Where are we going?[41] In this context of motion, the peripheral matters greatly. And although being off by a mere one or two degrees may sound trivial, in the context of navigating ships and airplanes, being off one degree when plotting the course may mean missing the runway or entering enemy airspace.

With all due respect (and much is certainly due) to Dr. Craig, his spider web analogy has another weakness of oversimplification. Only in our imaginations can spider webs hover in midair without some anchor to a foundation. When I want to destroy and remove a pesky spider web in the real world, I do not poke holes at the center of the web with a stick. I take the stick and sweep around the perimeter of the web in the attempt to sever the so-called "dragline silks."[42] The anchor points of the web are peripheral, geometrically speaking; but they're still foundational and essential. What if inerrancy and/or hermeneutic are not peripheral web segments but the draglines that support the entire structure? Those of us who have begun to reorder our minds and lives around the Bible need to take seriously the invisible adversaries we are at war with.[43] For their ability to wage strategic campaigns in wars of attrition exceeds our unaided abilities. Why would they poke the middle of the web when they take the entire structure down by severing its anchor points?

While I can agree with many that inerrancy isn't a central or fundamental doctrine (in the way they mean it), it's important not to stop there. There are other adjectives, categories, and helpful complexities we need to factor in. The traditional methodology (seen in CSBI and CSBH) serves as an important guidance and navigation system. It can be crucial for defensive purposes. It is also foundational for building purposes. I agree with Geisler that inerrancy and hermeneutic are so-called *foundational* doctrines.[44] Geisler is well known for categorizing doctrines as either essential (bullseye) or non-essential (second concentric ring). But Geisler's view seems to be more far-seeing, complex, comprehensive, thoughtful, robust, and sophisticated than most. In the book *Conviction without Compromise*,[45] Geisler and Rhodes list sixteen doctrines that are essential to salvation: (1) God's unity, (2) God's tri-unity, (3) Christ's deity, (4) Christ's humanity, (5) Human depravity, (6) Christ's Virgin birth, (7) Christ's sinlessness, (8) Christ's atoning death, (9) Christ's bodily resurrection, (10) the necessity of grace, (11) the necessity of faith, (12) Christ's bodily ascension, (13) Christ's priestly intercession, (14) Christ's bodily second coming, (15) the inspiration (and by corollary inerrancy) of Scripture, (16) and the literal interpretation of the scriptures.[46] They've made a clear list of contents of their "bullseye." The surprise is at the end. Why would they add the 15th and 16th to the list?

Geisler and Rhodes can add them to the list because there are "at least three kinds of essentials [that] should be distinguished: salvation essentials, a revelational essential (the inspiration of the Bible), and an interpretation essential (the historical-grammatical method of interpreting Scripture)."[47] These distinctions complicate things in a good way. The "revelational essential" and the "interpretation essential" are the dragline silks that I added to Craig's web analogy. It is important for apologists and evangelists to see, as Geisler sees, that there is more than one type of essential expanded upon in volume I of his Systematic Theology.

This sophistication shows up not just in Geisler's theology but in his apologetic system as well. After decades of refining his apologetic method, he organized it into a 12-point framework[48] in which each point builds logically upon the point before it. Instead of saying that his work as an apologist only focuses on one or two of those points, Geisler says that his apologetic work encompasses all twelve of those points. His method is holistic, well-rounded, and all-encompassing. Whereas some apologists may focus on points 1, 3, and 12, and other apologists may focus almost exclusively on points 6-10, Geisler's apologetic framework traverses 1-12. As an aspiring apologist with choices to make, I want to try to become proficient in a system that seems well prepared to meet anyone wherever they're at.

Note also how Geisler achieves "mere Christianity" at point 10 but is not content to stop there. Why does he take it two steps further? Although he clearly wants to take the unbeliever not just to the point that they believe in Jesus as the Son of God and as their Savior, it seems he wants to bring the unbeliever to believe more. He wants the believer to share Jesus' view of the Holy Scriptures (inspired, infallible, unbreakable, inerrant, etc.) and he wants to make sure they understand that anything that contradicts those scriptures is false. Here we apologists and evangelists are faced with a choice. Do we want to specialize to the point where our work only focuses on the bullseye? How far do we need to try to take the unbeliever as we help build his/her faith? Do we want to try to take them to the point of "mere Christianity," stop there, and let some other teacher take over from there? Or should we try to pull them along a little further, to the point of becoming a Bible-believing Christian? If we settle for just making believers who believe in "mere Christianity" what is likely to happen to them? Isn't it statistically likely that a significant percent of them will end up in some pseudo-Christian cult and another percentage will end up joining a semi-Christian group of one sort or another? As evangelicals, we should seek to lead unbelievers not just to a mere, bare-bones, Christianity that consists of little more than the Apostle's

Creed but to a Christianity that embraces the *sola scriptura* principle. We shouldn't be content to leave them with a vague faith in a vague Christ. We should help them believe the texts which are our primary source of information about Him. While it may be helpful to separate pre-evangelism from evangelism and basic discipleship into different categories in our minds, it may not be good to separate them in the course of our ministry. I'll rejoice when mere believers are made. But I'm reminded that the mission our Lord gave his apostles (and indirectly those of us who wish to have continuity with their mission on earth) was not just making mere believers but "making disciples" (Matt. 28).

Inerrancy Leads to Apostasy?!

The charge that inerrancy is a catalyst for apostasy grabbed my attention. Some have said that overemphasis on inerrancy or an overly fundamentalist view of inerrancy can lead to a believer not persevering in his or her faith. If a believer believes that it is impossible for God's inspired word to have a single little error in it, and then they realize later that it sure looks like there is one single little error in it, they can no longer believe that it is God's word. Their entire faith fails. It's a little like saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. And if inerrancy is one of the top links of the chain of Christian beliefs, and it gets severed, the whole chain collapses. If inerrancy is kept at the bottom of the chain, and it is cut, however, the chain of Christian beliefs remains intact and suspended.

At first I took this claim very seriously. I have struggled more than once with the temptation to leave Jesus and the faith he deposited to the saints. Also, most of my opportunities as a "lay minister" have been so far to the "lost sheep"—people who grew up in a Christian tradition of one sort or another, received emotional scars and intellectual doubts along the way, began to hate the picture of God their subculture painted for them, and departed from their church and respective faith. I think of apologetics not just in terms of *pre-evangelism* and *evangelism* but also in terms of

re-evangelism. In a climate where 60-70% of church going youth supposedly leave the churches and 10% leave the faith entirely, this challenges seems worthy of consideration. I think apologetics should not just be about removing the obstacles to faith that nonbelievers have but also should be about resolving the intellectual problems that Bible-believers (and ex-Bible-believers) encounter.

But if we are to take this claim seriously, we need the anecdotal evidence to be made available for analysis. So far these claims are about "lots" of unnamed people. The names are withheld and we're expected to trust the claimant's own understanding of their deconversions. Here's one example: "I get countless emails from people who have either jettisoned their beliefs (or have friends or family members who have) because their starting presupposition was that it's inerrancy or nothing." Here's another example: "I have interacted with several ex-Christian atheists that lead me to this conclusion." Like any good social scientist, I think that the plural of "anecdote" is "data." But also as a scientific-minded person here I have to complain that they're not offering me any tangible data to work with. Perhaps case studies from Kinnaman's *You Lost Me*,[49] for example, could be used to test their theory. For now the *only* name I've seen offered is that of Bart Ehrman. So let's start there. William Lane Craig says:

> Bart Ehrman's own evangelical faith was undermined, initially at least he claims, by his abandonment of the belief in inerrancy. He had a strong view of inerrancy as a student at Moody Bible Institute and then Wheaton College. And when he went to Princeton to do his graduate work, apparently he was doing the exegesis of a certain passage that looked to have an error in it. He tried to think of all sorts of ways to interpret the passage so as to explain away this mistake. Apparently, his professor returned the paper to him and [wrote] on it, "Maybe Mark just made a mistake." Ehrman says this was like the scales falling from his eyes. With that simple comment his belief in inerrancy just began to collapse and he thought yeah, maybe the author just made a mistake. The problem for Ehrman was that once inerrancy went it was like the finger in the dyke being released and the whole of his faith disintegrated. The problem with a person like Bart Ehrman, and I think many people today, is that they have at the very center of their web of their theological beliefs, the belief in inerrancy. So if that belief goes, the rest collapses and they are really in danger of committing apostasy. They are teetering on the brink by having this belief be at the very center of their web of beliefs. That, I think, is just clearly mistaken. If inerrancy isn't true, that doesn't mean that God doesn't exist obviously. . . If inerrancy is not true, does that mean Jesus of Nazareth wasn't the second person of the Trinity? That he didn't rise from the dead? That he didn't die for our sins? Obviously not. So inerrancy is a doctrine that doesn't belong at the center of your web of beliefs. It belongs somewhere out near the periphery. Therefore, what happened to a person like Bart Ehrman is the result of a misconstruction of his theological system.[50]

Bart Ehrman certainly does make for an interesting case study. I remember once hearing him talk about attending a Plymouth Brethren church "where people really believed!" in his younger days.

Having sojourned with the open brethren myself, I think it is very feasible that he absorbed a fundamentalist view of inerrancy. But I have to challenge the idea that Ehrman's faith disintegrated into agnosticism immediately after coming to believe that the Bible had at least one human error in it. The opposite is true. The moment Ehrman began to think, "Maybe the Bible contains errors," was not the moment his faith totally unraveled; that was rather the point where it began to begin to unravel. Those doubts led him to become a liberal Christian. He remained a liberal Christian for fifteen years before a grief observed nudged him over the edge into agnosticism. Therefore the Ehrman paradigm fits better with the inerrancy-is-important view than the inerrancy-is-detrimental view. Absorbing methodology from liberal professors who are not inerrantists (including Bruce Metzger) at new Princeton Divinity School leads to the erosion of orthodox bibliology and the erosion of orthodox doctrine. One liberal Christian referred to his view as Christian Agnosticism.[51] It's not a big leap from there to anti-theistic agnosticism.

For a second case study, I'll recommend the case of Charles Templeton. There was a time when Chuck Templeton was a greater, more famous, more promising evangelistic campaigner than his lesser-known colleague Billy Graham. What derailed his ascent? Templeton ended up going to Princeton to study in 1948, traded his evangelical faith for a liberal protestant non-faith, lost his evangelistic zeal, and admitted to having become an agnostic in 1957.[52] This case parallels Ehrman's case and supports the traditionalist view that erosion of one's doctrine of biblical inerrancy leads to deepening degrees of liberalism, erosion of orthodoxy (shipwreck of faith), and even deeper apostasy of agnosticism (obliteration of faith).

I offer myself as a third case study. I grew up with a very conservative bibliology. My grandfather was an elder in a church pastored exclusively by old-school Dallas Theological Seminary graduates.[53] He passed along his copies of Chafer's *Major Bible Themes*, Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible,* and *Biblioteca Sacra* journals for me to cut my theological teeth on. One of the

other elders from my church signed the CSBI in 1978. The first "error" in the Bible that gave my faith a memorable shake was archaeologist John Romer insisting that archaeologists have found many Bedouin campfires that date to over a thousand years old in the wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula but they have found absolutely no trace (no bones, no fires, nothing) of the hundreds of thousands of Israelites who according to Exodus sojourned together there for forty years over 3,500 years ago.[54] This is no small "error." A teenager at the time, I began to wonder if the book of Exodus and the entire Bible was pseudo-historical historiography. It left a splinter that would fester in my mind but it didn't cause me to immediately chuck the faith.[55] The second "error" that shook my faith was hearing that whales, having vestigial hip bones, proved that the evolutionary ancestors that walked on land in the past. This being the case, they weren't a direct creation of God and that therefore the Genesis creation story must be in serious error.[56] This injured my grip on faith in the Bible but didn't cause me to let go of it. In my first semester at an evangelical college as a biblical studies major I did become rather agitated over the unexpected way the NT writers often used the word "fulfilled" before quoting a passage from the Old Testament. That did seem like a suspicious candidate for errors to me at the time. This too wasn't enough to make me chuck the faith. There were dozens of other uncertainties of a totally different ilk (abuse of quantum theory suggesting that subatomic particles can cause themselves, disappointment with my experiments in Christian mysticism, wondering if God is a sadist) that were far more prominent than my concerns about biblical errors in leading me to spend the next four years very unsure of everything. Yet despite my immaturity, the elements of my faith were not like one long chain that was only as strong as its weakest link.

As my fourth and final case study, is the first deconversion testimony I happened upon without any intensive or selective searching. His story also seems to damage the inerrancy-causes-apostasy hypothesis.

> I was a fundamentalist Christian who thought that the bible was God's inerrant word, until I came across a bible difficulty/contradiction that I could not reconcile. So I dropped the full inerrancy and tried to grab hold of new type of inerrancy like infallibility and limited inerrancy. Yet even in that I found the defining of infallibility and practicability of infallibility too theologically shallow. It made everything in the bible sound relative and subject to opinion of what is and is not essential. So in that I had to start from scratch, and study the true definition in inspired and the historical context. In that I had learned that in way can we apply the term inerrant, infallible, or divinely inspired to the man-made bible we have today. I found it [too] subjective and fallible to apply any of those terms to the bible we have today.[57]

He had enough sense to know that he shouldn't just chuck the whole faith immediately after becoming convinced the Bible had an error. His immediate response was to shift gears to limited inerrancy. Interestingly, he had enough sensibility to see that he couldn't sustain a limited inerrancy viewpoint for long because it was an illegitimate halting place.[58]

The idea that people lost their faith in the errorlessness of the Bible and immediately chucked the entire faith smacks of causal oversimplification. In the data I am familiar with, thinking people don't by nature make such drastic leaps. If they do, I would sooner suspect the problem of unbelief rather than doubt. Sometimes the rebellious heart will use any intellectual smokescreen to mask the decision of the will to turn away from God. If there are dozens who dismissed their faith prematurely at the first sign of contention, I imagine there are hundreds more who adjust their expectations as they encounter challenges to their faith. Their challenge does incline me more to prepare my disciples for the likelihood that they're not going to be able to figure out every bible difficulty or be able to stand up against all the arguments of skeptics and critics. But now I wonder seriously if this challenge amounts to little more than sensationalism.

Is It Just an Outdated Scottish Realism Thing?

Since 1979 some of the progressives have challenged the traditional view by arguing that the Old Princetonian view on inerrancy and the ICBI view of inerrancy were influenced by Aristotle, Aquinas, Thomas Reid, and/or the Scottish school of Common Sense Realism. As such the view is an innovation, not the historic view of the evangelical movement, alien, and/or a product of an embarrassingly outdated and problematic epistemology. This jab continues to be recycled

occasionally.[59] I'm not averse to conceding the point that the ICBI/Old-Princetonian view of

inerrancy is in some important way philosophically tied to Aquinas and Reid. Let's not forget that

theology isn't done in a philosophically neutral vacuum. So if you're not operating on Thomistic,

neo-thomistic, and/or realism philosophies, just which philosophies are you operating on?

Bruce Kuklick traced the intellectual history of New England's "dispute over the new

German speculation" in the nineteenth century. He says that,

> in the [nineteen] thirties, forties, and fifties the allegiance of many thinkers switched from Scottish to German thought [and tracks] the transforming changes of this era from the hegemony of Scottish Realism in the colleges, at roughly the turn of the nineteenth century, to 1867, when the first volume of William Torry Harris's Hegelian *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* appeared in the United States.[60]

In no uncertain terms he says,

> From the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries American ignored German speculation. Instead they sought an answer to the skeptical empiricism [of David Hume] in the Scottish Enlightenment. The realism of the Princeton philosophers and theologians typified the initial response to the dead end of British empiricism. Kant offered another way out. . . Kant argued that ways of understanding the world were justified because a world existed only because the modes of understanding were what they were. Realism became incoherent. To speak of objects exterior to the mind was without meaning. . . While insides slowly made their way to German thought in the 1850s, outsiders hastened toward Kant and Hegel in the 1930s. . . Marginal philosophers both in and out of institutions often rejected individualism. Scottish ideas, they believed, were inherently skeptical. The Scottish position assumed that the single mind was competent to know a physical world outside and completely distinct from it. . . The marginal philosophers recast epistemology.[61]

Assuming Kuklick's view of history is right, if you're not operating on a realist epistemology in line

with Aquinas and Reid, are you operating on the fumes of the neo-kantian revolution? We need to

be both aware of and wary of the philosophies which shape the methodologies that shape our

theology.[62]

The Fuzzy Challenge of Orality-Prevalent versus Literature-Prevalent

Another recent challenge to inerrancy comes from Walton and Sandy,[63] who claim to

support biblical inerrancy, but prefer the concept of biblical authority over it. The basic flow of their

argument seems to go something like this:

1) The revelation of God to Israel and/or the Church was communicated orally/mystically from God to prophets and apostles.
2) Revelation was primarily shared orally in a hearing-prevalent society.
3) The writings were produced somewhat incidentally later by that hearing-prevalent society.

4) The writings produced were not concerned about reporting the details of historical events like we moderns are interested in hearing them.
5) Therefore we should talk about the authority of the Bible rather than the inerrancy of the Bible.

This argument received glowing reviews from the revolutionaries fomenting the *coup d'état* against the incumbent standards.[64]   The same (or very similar) argument is looked upon favorably by William Lane Craig who came across it in the work of non-inerrantist scholars Bailey and Dunn.[65] Craig cautiously says,

> Now if Dunn is right, this has enormous implications for one's doctrine of biblical inerrancy, for it means that the Evangelists had no intention that their stories should be taken like police reports, accurate in every detail. What we in a non-oral culture might regard as an error would not be taken by them to be erroneous at all.

The first problem I see here is that it is contingent upon speculations about what the author supposedly intended his original readers to understand. These speculations are not verifiable because the authors—the gospel writers in particular—are not available for comment. This then amounts to a form of psychoanalysis. I'm not comfortable basing viewpoints on inerrancy on such things.

The second problem I see is that it's not really a problem. Their challenge seems to be a logical (or possibly illogical) extension of the *ipsissima verba* versus *ipsissima vox* debate. If so, there really isn't a problem here for the inerrantists who accept *ipsissima verba*, as I do. This has been addressed well in other places.[66]

Third, the logic is so sloppy that it defies attempts to put it into a clear, syllogistic form for proper scrutiny. As I ponder different permutations of premises to distill their argument, I keep coming back to the idea that are arguing that God inspired the prophet/apostle's spoken words but not his written words. But they don't say it in obvious terms. So either I am misunderstanding them or they're very clever about saying something that should elicit great controversy in a noncontroversial way. If I'm understanding their argument properly—and here I actually hope I am misunderstanding it—they're saying that the mystical/oral form of revelation from the God who

speaks is the only God-breathed revelation and the written form based on the oral traditions is sort of not. Such a view will undermine not just inerrancy but inspiration, overall reliability, overall relevancy, and authority of the *written* scriptures. The fact is that all we have of that revelation of God that remains for us today is the written form. The oral forms may have made it into the writings of some Mishna or Church Fathers in legitimate ways, but we are unable to know what was and wasn't actually from God. When the receivers of revealed truth and the eyewitnesses of historical truth reported their truths in propositional form back in the days when paper was very expensive and illiteracy rates were high, it is true that a lot of details that could have been included get excluded. But it is also true that the attempt to distill the truth into written form (in an *ipsissima verba* way) is a very adequate way to convey truth very well. That distillation process may mean its more pithy. It is also, in the long run, the only reliable way to preserve the truth. Oral tradition can be tremendously reliable and impressive over one, two, or three generations. But myths and accretions do creep in to oral traditions. There is no guarantee of reliability in the dynamism of oral tradition if it isn't captured in static writing quickly, as the books of the Bible were.

The cultures of ancient Israel, Second-Temple Judaism (both Palestinian and Hellenic), and the early Jewish and Gentile churches were very much an oral or "hearing dominant" culture on the grass-roots level, But the challengers are downplaying the importance of the Hebrew tradition to commit to writing the prophetic revelation of God. Moses probably was able to commit to memory 613 laws of Yahweh on Mount Sinai and communicate them orally to the stiff-necked tribesmen of Jacob. And he did. But he also set the Jewish precedent of writing the revelation down so that it could become a static, reliable witness of what God communicated. It wasn't someone like Ezra a few generations later who decided to write it down before the fading oral tradition was lost forever. It was actually God who told Moses to write. "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel" (Exod.

34:27). It wasn't just the summarized ten-commandment form written on stone tablets but the entire Torah written on parchment, vellum, or whatever it was they used in Moses' day. The Jews simultaneously had an oral culture and one of the most highly sophisticated written cultures of their day. The ancient Hebrew attitude about the written scriptures was of course partially fashioned by Yahweh's attitude towards writing. The revolutionaries are focusing on what the human attitudes (of not just the writers but even of the hearers!) were towards the writings. The traditionalists focus instead on what God's attitude was about having the prophets and apostles commit his revealed word to writing. Sometimes God insisted that the prophet receiving the revelation write it down for others. Consider Habakkuk 2 to see this along with strong hints of perspicacity, inerrancy, apocalyptic verbage, and the expectation of literal fulfilment in history:

> Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision and make *it* plain on tablets,That he may run who reads it. For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

God also took the initiative to tell Jeremiah to write down the apocalyptic vision per Jeremiah 30 so that future readers could know what God had spoken earlier:

> Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. [3] For behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah, says the LORD, and I will bring them back to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall take possession of it."

This understanding about the nature of written scripture carried over into the Apostolic era. This plays into why Paul's would charge to Timothy to ". . . give attention to the public reading of scripture" to his hearers who were accustomed to audible vectors. Arguably, the primary purpose of attending either synagogues or church meetings in the first century was to hear the scriptures being read aloud.

The Challenge of Hermeneutics and Genre Criticism

At the beginning of his essay *Legitimate Hermeneutics*, which was presented to the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, Walter Kaiser said,

> Much of the current debate over the Scriptures is, at its core, a result of failure on the part of evangelicals to come to terms with the issue of hermeneutics. . . The hermeneutical debate outside [evangelical] circles has grown so prolific and vigorous that at times it threatens to be, for some, the only issue. Yet this discussion may be 'not less serious than that of the Reformation' itself. Indeed, we [the ICBI] believe something comparable to a hermeneutical reformation[67] is needed in our day[68]. . . . I affirm, with all the forcefulness I can muster, that our generation needs a whole new hermeneutical reformation. The current crisis regarding the doctrine of Scripture is directly linked to poor procedures and methods of handling scripture. . . As a partial corrective for this astonishing situation, I urge that talk *about* the Bible be modified to this extent: that evangelicals in particular get equally busy identifying the *meaning* of the text itself—the meaning the original writer of Scripture intended.[69]

This call for reformation is one thing that I expect the traditionalists and progressives both agree upon. The progressives also see a need for hermeneutical reformation—or perhaps the word revolution might be more apt—within evangelicalism.

The best way for a progressive evangelical scholar to challenge, bypass, trump, and nullify inerrancy is through the hermeneutical vector. If he can say, "My interpretation of biblical passage *E* is *F* for reason *G*" and in the process defies article XVIII of the CSBI[70] and Article XIII of CSBH,[71] he's probably still going to get away with it. His peers will actually champion his right to espouse that interpretation regardless of the fact that they have signed their agreement with CSBI. Perhaps his view will win some friction from one of the authors at DefendingInerrancy.com. But, as it stands now, the majority of card-carrying evangelicals are probably going to turn a blind eye to it and say nothing. When they do talk about it, they dismiss it as an inconsequential matter of interpretation rather than of inerrancy. *After all, he's not really saying the Bible contains an error, he's just saying we should take it in a non-literal fashion like we do other passages of Scripture.*

Are evangelical scholars signing their agreement with the CSBI while not understanding it in the light of Sproul's commentary on CSBI, Geisler's commentary on CSBH,[72] and the rest of the ICBI corpus? Or do they agree with the progressives in thinking that some of the CSBI-CSBH articles are too stodgy and stale? Or do they not place much care about the relationship between inerrancy and hermeneutic?

The ICBI think tank rightly saw a huge and inescapable overlap between inerrancy and hermeneutic. That's why they produced the CSBI to begin with, touching briefly on hermeneutical

matters there, and then proceeded to go to the trouble to have a second summit devoted to

hermeneutics. CSBH should be seen as an extension and expansion of the CSBI! One could say that

the ICBI were the engineers who fortified the main gate of the city walls with the CSBI and then

fortified the back entrance with the CSBH. To encourage scholars to trump inerrancy with

interpretation, in my judgment, is tantamount to saying, "Don't worry about the city. The enemy

isn't charging across the draw bridge and through the front gate *en masse*. They're just coming in a

few at a time through the small openings in the back side of the city wall."[73] And this is what many

evangelical apologists, philosophers, and biblical scholars seem willing to say these days. But the

ICBI thinkers saw it very differently. R.C. Sproul wrote,

> "Inspiration without inerrancy is an empty term. . . They may be distinguished but not separated. So it is with hermeneutics. We can easily distinguish between the inspiration and interpretation of the Bible, but we cannot separate them."[74]

J.I. Packer explained the work of the second ICBI summit this way:

> The work of Summit I had hardly been completed when it became evident that there was yet another major task to be tackled. While we recognize that belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is basic to maintaining its authority, the values of that commitment are only as real as one's understanding of the meaning of Scripture. Thus, the need for Summit II. For two years plans were laid and papers were written on themes relating to hermeneutical principles and practices. The culmination of this effort has been a meeting in Chicago on November 10-13, 1982 at which we, the undersigned, have participated.[75]

Examples of Interpretation Trumping Inerrancy

What did the ICBI thinkers mean by "the values of that commitment are only as real as one's

understanding of the meaning of Scripture?" Has this danger ever manifested itself? Here are two

related examples from the twentieth century. First:

> Perhaps the matter of hermeneutics can be summarized by a statement Harry Emerson Fosdick made some decades ago: "This, then, is the conclusion of the matter. It is impossible that a Book written two or three thousand years ago should be used in the twentieth century A.D. without having some of its forms of thought and speech translated into modern categories. When, therefore a man says, I believe in the immortality of the soul but not in the resurrection of the flesh, I believe in the victory of God on earth but not in the physical return of Jesus, I believe in the reality of sin and evil but not in the visitation of demons, I believe in the nearness and friendship of the divine Spirit but I do not think of that experience in terms of individual angels, only superficial dogmatism can deny that the man believes the Bible." This quotation perfectly illustrates the hermeneutical problem. Fosdick reinterprets what he admits the scriptures clearly teach. But he does so because his hermeneutical presupposition is that the thought forms of yesteryear tell us something the writers did not know then but which we know now. He superimposes on Scripture his own thought forms, assuming that they are correct and the thought forms of Scripture incorrect. He ends up with interpretations that do violence to the Bible . . . His views are not tested by Scripture. Rather they replace Scripture and, in making

this choice, his notions reverse the process so that his norms become the test for Scripture. This is arrogant, to say the least.[76]

Second, Singer here provides a poignant example of how the pandemic of theological liberalism triumphed over a denomination that had been very serious about the Bible, their tradition, and their confession of faith:

> Perhaps the most dramatic event in this liberal march to victory was the appearance of the Auburn Affirmation in the Presbyterian Church USA in 1924. This document, signed by 1,274 ministers of that church, was put forward as a protest against certain actions of the General Assembly of 1923, and the action of the General Assembly of 1910, which declared that there were five necessary doctrines to which all ministerial candidates must give their assent for ordination in that church. In its narrow construction the Auburn Affirmation was a complaint against the action of an assembly in amending the Westminster Confession of Faith, but in its broader scope it was a protest against the historic interpretation of the Scriptures required of Presbyterian ministers. The signers of the Affirmation claimed that they did not deny the facts or doctrines which the previous assembly had declared to be necessary, but that they were not to be bound by the interpretation of the doctrines as it had been set forth by that assembly. The five doctrines, or interpretations, in question concerned the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ upon the cross, the literal resurrection of Christ from the dead on the third day and the miracles which He wrought while on earth.[77]

If I interpret the resurrection of Christ to not be a bodily resurrection, but a spiritual resurrection, and teach as much, my teaching should be censured. If I somehow begin to believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, for example, didn't really mean for the audience to which they wrote to take the resurrection of Jesus literally, and that therefore we moderns should not take his raising literally,[78] what have I just done to the doctrine of the resurrection? Have I not shipwrecked it and the entire faith along with it? But never once in the process did I say that the gospel writers were in error. Should I still be called an inerrantist? If we're not willing to say it's technically a denial of inerrancy we should at least concede that it is a betrayal of inerrancy. The CSBI-CSBH standards do.

Genre Criticism's Chicken and Egg Dilemma

It's trendy to emphasize the importance of genre in interpretation. Schreiner wrote:

> Perhaps the most important issue in interpretation is the issue of genre. If we misunderstand the genre of a test, the rest of our analysis will be askew. If we interpret a fairy tale as a historical report, the interpretation may be profound and insightful in many ways, but the interpretation will be fatally flawed from the beginning because of a misreading of the genre of the text.[79]

His allusion to a fairy tale here may very possibly shed some light on his view of apocalyptic genre

since in the New Testament he recognizes the gospels as one type of historical genre, the book of

Acts as another variety of historical genre, the Epistles as a third genre set in a precise historical

context, and the book of Revelation as a fourth and presumably not-so-historical genre. Robert Stein

argued that "the first task of the exegete is in the study of the Gospels [is] . . . literary criticism

[that] involves form-criticism [the predecessor of genre criticism] and [redaction criticism]

investigation."[80] Elliot Johnson states it more cautiously:

> . . . when the interpreter seeks to discover what a texts means by what it says, questions do arise. The task is easer with the author speaks straightforwardly. For this reason literal interpreters have enjoyed the greatest agreement among themselves when the literary genre involves direct statements, such as in epistolatry literature. But when an author says something indirectly (as in narrative literature) or metaphorically (as in parabolic literature), the interpreter has greater difficulty not only in recognizing what the author means but also in seeing all that he means. A consideration of literary genre helps with both of these issues. This is particularly true in the case of apocalyptic literature, for it often contains nondirect statements of meaning (e.g., in the description of a vision) and metaphorical communication (through symbolism). Thus a consideration of the interpretation of apocalyptic literature is important to those who employ the literal method.[81]

In the CSBH the ICBI agreed to genre criticism being valuable[82] but also put one important limit on

it. Norman Geisler was one of the framers of the CSBI and CSBH. In 1983 he wrote the official

ICBI commentary on the CSBH. After thirty years of seeing how the CSBI-CSBH standards had

been used, abused, and misunderstood, the function of genre stood was given prominence.[83] Geisler

also pointed out a problem that hasn't been addressed by the progressives:

> . . . the view that genre determines meaning is not only contrary to what the ICBI framers meant, but it also suffers from a logical mistake. In order to discover the genre of a particular text, one must already have a developed a genre theory. But a genre theory comes from studying and comparing individual texts of the Bible. . . But if externally determined genre governs the meaning of the biblical text, then this scenario is impossible. The interpreter must know the genre before he knows the text. But this is tantamount to imposing genre expectations upon the text.

The idea that we must establish what kind of genre category a text belongs in before we can

even begin to understand what it means deserves to be challenged. One must begin to read and

understand a text—any text—and get a basic understanding of it before one can know which

categories it belongs to. If I'm reading an ancient Hittite treaty for the first time, I don't need

someone to tell me it is a treaty. The text will teach me what it is. I read it, I understand it, and I

recognize the obvious elements of a treaty, and I realize that it is a treaty. And I don't need to read Hittite treaties before I can understand the book of Deuteronomy. Reading Hittite treaties may be helpful and enrich my understanding of the biblical covenants, but it's not necessary for me to gain a good understanding of the Torah.[84]

The likely solution to the chicken-or-egg dilemma here is to say that after the reader has become aware of the basic and obvious meaning of a given text, genre studies may be valuable for deepening and double-checking our understanding. Genre criticism is useful not in the first phase of the "hermeneutical spiral" but in some subsequent stage. Dozens of other caveats could follow. The genre of international treaties in the ancient near-east was straightforward and universally accepted. The apocalyptic genre is so diverse and chaotic that it may not offer the same degree of potential insights as other genres.[85]

The Generic Problem of "Jewish Zombies" in Matthew 27:51-53

The "zombie challenge"[86] of Matthew 27:51-53[87] provides an important test case here for questions of genre criticism. Those who question the literalness of the account of the Jewish saints being raised back to life and appearing to many people in Jerusalem do not seem to be using neo-orthodox prejudices when they do so. If they are influenced by neo-orthodox attitudes, the influence is so subtle to make it difficult to detect. Using the same tools and methods as the neo-orthodox use is another matter. Since they're suggesting that Matthew originally intended for his audience to understand what he wrote in a non-literal way, it's not surprising that many evangelical thinkers—some who were among the original signers of CSBI—have voiced their approval of this being a legitimate hermeneutical viewpoint and not an actual violation of inerrancy.[88]

If the Jerusalem Saints were Hyperbolic Rhetoric, What else is Hyperbole?

The first of many problems I have with the non-literal option for dealing with the zombie problem is that of stepping onto a slippery slope. It really is hard to figure out where to stop. If we

are to doubt the literalness/historicity of the bit about the saints being raised and appearing in Jerusalem (which only Matthew reports) and the earthquake and rocks/tombs breaking (which only Matthew reports) is it not an illegitimate halting place to stop there? Isn't doing so going to break the unity of the immediate pericope.[89] To be methodologically consistent, shouldn't we continue to explain away the three hours of darkness? Is that not also inextricably woven into the same narrative that is being reported by Matthew (27:45) as well as Mark (15:33) and Luke (23:44–45)? Also should we not proceed to spiritualize the bit about the temple curtain being torn (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45)? These events are all one cohesive cluster of unusual events. Thus it seems like unwarranted exegetical violence to separate them. Especially when, as a whole, they all contribute to Licona's abduction about a possible parallel with Virgil's account of the unusual events revolving around the assassination of Caesar. (By my count four of the unusual events in Matt 27/Mark 15/Luke 23 have a resemblance to the sixteen unusual events mentioned by Virgil in connection to Caesar's assassination.) If casting doubt upon Matt. 27:51-53 is warranted, it should be extended at least to Matt 27:45-54, to Mark 15:33-39, and to Luke 23:44-48. Everything in and around these passages looks like historical narrative. Why not extend it to the rest of the historical narratives in the same chapter? I have written elsewhere about my reservation to adopt this way of dealing with the problem because it seems like an unlikely innovation in the history of gospel interpretation.[90]

When I am encouraged to doubt the historicity of the raising of the saints, I am encouraged to doubt the other events clustered around it, as well as the resurrection story itself. It should not be surprising that traditionalist evangelicals get nervous when a scholar interprets his way into doubting the resurrection of the Jerusalem saints in Matt. 27. William Craig sees it differently. He says that the raising of the Jerusalem saints is a tangential point in the crucifixion narrative and, unconnected to the resurrection narrative as it is, is no threat to the resurrection of Christ.[91] His

assurance makes sense to me. But I don't trust others to be as granular and surgically technical with the narratives as Craig. My concern is that with no signs inside the text to help us distinguish the historical reporting that Matthew seems to have intended for us to interpret literally from that which he intended for us to take non-literally,[92] there is no discernible brake lever to step on when wondering why we shouldn't extend the non-literal interpretation further. Matthew 27's report of the raising of the saints immediately precedes Matthew 28's report of Christ's rising from the dead. For reason of proximity between the two chapters and for reason of continuity in the type of miracle (raising of the dead flesh to new life; firstfruits of the resurrection), I don't see a logical levy inside the gospel accounts that can or should hold back the non-literalizing surge. One would have to invoke the support of extra-biblical, secondary sources to do this. This may be enough for history conscious believers. But for the person who is interested in the primary eyewitness accounts, a big seed of doubt may be planted by this type of handling of the text.

When the zombie controversy became reanimated in 2011, I became extremely concerned about the potential danger of setting a precedent for dehistoricizing something in the gospel accounts based on a perceived resemblance to pagan historiography. Upon being encouraged to consider that Matthew was emulating pagan myths, the scab on an old doubt that I used to struggle with is ripped open. There are a few persuasive pundits who deceive people into believing that the story of Jesus' incarnation, life, death, and resurrection is nothing more than a retelling of an old archetypical dying-rising fertility god myth that has been recycled and rebranded dozens of times by different pagan peoples all over the Mediterranean-rimmed world.[93] Licona has already done a superb job of refuting this modern myth about ancient myths.[94] He points out that the "scholarship" behind it is both shoddy and deceptive. It is a modern myth that has been recycled many times in the last two centuries. Licona knows that. I know that. You know that. But most people haven't been inoculated to this doubt. It would be a small step to take Licona's zombie theory precedent and

use it to question whether Matthew also didn't really intend for his readers to take his dying-rising god myth literally. Anyone who might try this argument would be a pseudo-scholar and not a real scholar. But since pseudo-scholars (like D.M. Murdoch and Joseph Campbell) and non-scholarly popularizers (like Bill Maher and Bill Moyers) do abound, the threat seems possible. However, having found no actual use of this vector so far,[95] I am now rather unconcerned about the possibility.

What are the Proper Limits of Speculation Anyway*?*

Christian apologists may need to be prepared to answer questions about Matthew's story about the raising of the saints. Examples: *So do you really believe in Jewish zombies?! Who were these saints? Were they hundreds of years dead or were they freshly dead? What happened to them afterwards? Did they just die again later like Lazarus? Or do you really think that they still among us today like the "immortals" in the old Highlander films or in some vampire films? When they were raised back to life, were they just resuscitated or did they receive their eternal resurrection bodies like Jesus did? If Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection, why does it seem like these saints were raised three days before Jesus was? What were the zombies doing for the three days between Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection—just pacing about in their tombs and trying to wiggle out of their wraps of their grave clothes?*

Unfortunately Matthew doesn't give us many details to work with. Perhaps we would be wise to "remain silent where the Bible is silent" and "not go beyond what is written," as Paul phrased it.[96] But sometimes it is good for the apologist to stretch the thinking of a doubter who may be struggling sincerely over what could legitimately be an intellectual obstacle to faith. It may be good to be able to humble the gadfly who is poisoning the well by mocking the ludicrousness of the zombie problem. As someone who wants to be ready to give an answer for the hope I have in the resurrection of our bodies, I don't want to be limited to the unhelpful answer of, "Sorry, but I can't

help you make better sense out of it. I am silent where the Bible is silent. I just believe it." But I

don't want to suggest this option either: "Well maybe Matthew wasn't serious about that part and

didn't intend for you to take it seriously either." Both answers are likely to increase a doubter's

doubts.

Answering a question of an unbeliever is one thing. An esteemed biblical scholar writing a

book to help believers share their faith with unbelievers is different. When I see speculations in

such a book about which genres a gospel writer was probably aware of and possibly emulating, and

what he probably intended his reader to hear, it is difficult for me to respect the high degree of

speculation that is at play. But I understand that some of us just have to think about everything,

question everything, and speculate about everything under the sun (and everything above the sun).

Speculating silently is one thing. But shouldn't the responsibility increase[97] when the esteemed

scholar writes or speaks to his/her audience? Shouldn't he/she either just not speak at all about their

speculations? Or, if they just cannot help but give their half-baked speculations voice, shouldn't

they emphasize to their impressionable hearers that it's just pure speculation that should not be

adopted?

Franz's Constructive Theory as a Speculative Alternative

Lest we think that the non-literal interpretation is the only solution to the zombie problem, I

commend the speculative musings of archaeologist Gordon Franz on Matt. 27 as a healthier, literal

alternative. If we must speculate, let's do so in a constructive way like Franz does. Franz makes it

clear that he's just speculating. But what a delightful job he does of it! He doesn't dismiss anything

presented by Matthew as historical as being non-historical. The picture he paints helps me imagine

possibilities that seem feasible and good. They actually bolster my faith in the fine details of

Matthew's account. Franz comes to his ideas from his exceptionally high degree of understanding

of the cultural and liturgical milieu of second temple Judaism in Jesus' day. He sheds light on the

vague, sketchy part of the gospel with his knowledge of the Old Testament (thus fulfilling the

"scripture interpreting scripture" principle that Protestants used to be so very keen on), nuances of

Second Temple Judaism traditions and festivals (such as when the Sadducees would have gone out

to gather the omer), the layout of first-century Jerusalem. He doesn't see any need to emulate

something non-literal from the Mishnah (which I suspect he's more familiar with than most) and

certainly doesn't waste time making connections with pagan historiography.[98] Although there is

probably no way to confirm whether Franz's theories are right or not, he provides the type of

possible answers I'd like to use to stretch the mind of a person who is shielding their unbelief with

the zombie problem. I can imagine Franz's answers shutting the mouths of the presumptuous

doubters, humbling them by helping them to realize just how ignorant they are about Jewish-

Christian studies, and how little mental effort they've given to solve the problem. It should also

force them to take more seriously the idea that there may be some profound reasons for this

historical event. If I were writing a novel or movie script about the life of Jesus, and encouraged to

use some artistic license to fill in the gaps, I would be far more tempted to work with Franz's

speculative narrative than the speculative subtractions from the narrative recommended to us by

Gundry, Licona, and Craig.

Apocalyptic Imagery Shouldn't Always be Interpreted in a Non-Literal Way

Common place in evangelicalism is the equation of words that are prophetic (or apocalyptic

or eschatological) in genre with that which is exaggerated, non-literal, and not quite true. As Robert

Stein put it,

> Another form inclined toward the use of exaggeration is prophecy. This does not mean that all of the details of
> prophetic literature are exaggerated. Rather, it means that some prophecy is not so much concerned with an
> exact literal description of future events as with a picturesque portrayal of those events. Some prophetic
> literature is not so much a photographic picture of what is to occur as an impressionistic painting.[99]

The notion of "apocalyptic imagery" and "apocalyptic genre" is at the heart of the

discussions about how to interpret the Matt. 27 zombie problem. When Michael Licona made his

case before the Evangelical Philosophical Society for the view of Matt. 27:51-53 being non-literal, non-historical, apocalyptic imagery[100], he began by pointing out that Matt. 24:29-30 ("the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken") is clearly apocalyptic imagery. He seems to indicate that the prophetic events of Matt. 24 already happened (totally fulfilled) in the past and in an obviously non-literal way. Next he made the similar point that in Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy about how God would pour his Spirit upon men and women, how the sun shall be darkened, and the moon would be turned to blood. Licona said that Peter believed that Joel's prophecy[101] was completely fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. And while perhaps the twelve apostles might have literally spoken in different languages, isn't it obvious that the sun wasn't darkened that day and the moon was not turned to blood? And so there are two precedents in the New Testament for apocalyptic events to happen in a non-literal, merely rhetorical sort of way. This sets the stage for making it seem reasonable that Matt. 27's zombies can be interpreted in a non-literal sort of way. He then goes on to talk about Josephus' use of Jewish apocalyptic imagery—about which I will gladly agree were probably not literal happenings in 70 AD.

As a futurist and premillenialist, I interpret Matt. 24 and Acts 2 very differently than Licona does. While I'm open to the idea that some of the events in Matt. 24 were fulfilled in 70 AD with the destruction of the temple, I still expect that some of the things in Matt. 24 that haven't literally happened yet will literally happen someday. Likewise, I don't think Peter was saying that the outpouring of God's Spirit on the twelve was the complete and final fulfillment of Joel's prophecy; it was just the foretaste of how God promised to pour his Spirit out on the repenting remnant. There are other views of Peter's use of Joel's prophecy that Licona didn't mention. J.D. Pentecost, for example, offers three alternatives to Licona's view.[102]

This is not exactly a problem with semi-preterists and amillenialists. Brilliant men like R.C. Sproul and JI Packer, for example, are able to hold an amillenialist hermeneutic, take some prophetic passages less literally than I prefer, and interpret the non-prophetic passages with a consistent grammatical-historical hermeneutic that is fully in line with the CSBI-CSBH parameters. (Sproul and Packer were major contributors to the CSBI and both have agreed that Licona's zombie theory is not harmonious with CSBI-CSBH.) However, there may still be a natural connection between the amillenial penchant for de-literalizing eschatological passages and the way the controversy over interpretation of the zombie problem, which some speculate to be also eschatological in genre. Once the interpreter has become accustomed to interpreting eschatological/prophetic/apocalyptic passages as purely symbolic, non-literal things that have already occurred in a non-literal fashion, any story that begins to seem classifiable as apocalyptic in genre would need to have its literalness doubted. I expect semi-preterist-amillenialists will generally be more uncertain about how to interpret Matthew's zombie passage and less likely to condemn it than most than futurists.

When it comes to non-biblical (be it non-inspired Jewish or non-inspired Pagan in source) apocalyptic writings, I agree that it's probably best to take it as symbolic, poetic, figurative language that may not need to be taken seriously. I don't care much about the odd phenomena that Josephus reports in apocalyptic fashion around 70 AD or the odd phenomena that Virgil reports about the death of Julius Caesar, for instance. I don't care about the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. All that is just human talk without an iota of divine inspiration behind it. But when it comes to the writings of the prophets and apostles, whom God's Spirit actually revealed truth to in an intelligible way, it's not just big talk. It's going to happen in reality. We should classify inspired Bible prophecy (which by the sovereignty of the God who spoke it will come true) differently than texts by authors who are not divinely inspired but write with apocalyptic imagery anyway. They are

different genres. One is inspired apocalyptic imagery (that will prove true) and the other is uninspired apocalyptic imagery (that only corresponds to the future in so far as it echoes inspired apocalyptic imagery). The literal fulfillment of Bible prophecies in the past is arguably the most powerful reason for us to believe that the Bible is inspired by God.

When we doubt that the prophecies of the past were fulfilled literally or perfectly and expect that future prophecies will be fulfilled in some underwhelming way, are we not guilty of the charge that "you do err not knowing the scriptures or the power of God!"?[103] The dictum "when the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest you end up with nonsense. And when the plain sense does not make good sense, seek another sense lest you end up in nonsense,"[104] makes good sense to apply even to the eschatological passages of the Bible. This doesn't answer all hermeneutical questions but it does give a good general bearing. And while it is the majority view for inerrantists on non-eschatological passages in the bible, it is not the majority view on eschatological passages.

Interpreting Matthew 27 versus Interpreting Genesis 1

Another challenge from some of the progressives that seemed necessary to reckon is the idea that it might be inconsistent for Geisler to complain about someone not taking the zombies of Matt. 27 literally while he himself does not take the days/yoms of Genesis 1 literally. I've talked to Geisler about this personally more than once in the last two years. To set things straight, Geisler has never taken a dogmatic stance on the question of young-earth versus old-earth creationism. He is a friend to both positions. He has been very open over the years with his students about saying that he sees good arguments for both—sometimes leaning one way, sometimes the other. More than once he has told me that he hopes that there might be some theory of time that might somehow help reconcile the two views.[105] He has published an article arguing that from the standpoint of ICBI styled inerrancy, it does not matter whether you believe in old-earth theory or young-earth theory.[106]

Similarly, neither Craig nor Licona seems to take an official stance regarding the Matt. 27 zombie problem. Neither says they are sure the nonliteral interpretation is the right or best interpretation. Rather they both seem to say they think the nonliteral interpretation of it is very possibly true, and tempting.

Since I do presently lean (in a very non-dogmatic way) towards a non-literal interpretation of the "days" in Genesis 1, and since I have no mercy on the non-literal interpretation of Matt. 27's zombies, I have to ask myself if I am internally inconsistent in my hermeneutic. Do I have a double-standard? There are at least two differences. I am not denying the historicity of the events in Genesis 1. And I believe I see things *in the text* of Genesis 1[107] and in other biblical passages that warrant interpreting "days" as something other than literal 24-hour periods. I lean towards a non-literal take on the "yoms" not just because the leading consensus of scientists about this history of our solar system tends to make the literal 24-hour day view seem unlikely.

Conclusion

"Would you rather become a Billy Graham or a Charles Templeton?" This is how my Uncle Roy began his counsel to me. Roy Knuteson[108] was a seasoned pastor, a graduate of the old Dallas Theological Seminary, and a staunch defender of biblical inerrancy. I was eighteen at the time—asking him to share his wisdom about the pesky accumulation of doubts I had collected about our Bible-based faith. I really didn't know what to make of his answer. With the retrospective advantage of two additional decades, my old doubts seem immature while his response seems rather profound. There are difficult sayings in the Bible that our finite twenty-first-century minds may not be able to unravel perfectly. When we begin to presume that these difficulties are errors, we start down the path of agnosticism along with Kant, Templeton, and Ehrman. If our methodology allows "God be true and every man a liar," we can, just as Billy Graham, Norm Geisler, and many other

inerrantists, wield the sword of the word with a confident grip and strong swings. I'd much rather set course for becoming more like Billy Graham than Chuck Templeton.

We evangelicals have choices to make. If we seek a middle-road between the Billy Graham road and the Chuck Templeton road, it is difficult to know whether we will do more harm than good as defenders of the faith. At what point do we need to say the professor is no longer a defender of the faith but an attacker thereof? When he begins to teach that only 99% of the four gospels is truly true? Or is it 90%? Perhaps 85%? 70%? 51%? What is your threshold for tolerating skeptical or destructive methodologies among those who try to bolster faith? Where will we draw the line? If we settle for 98%, perhaps, if it pleases the Lord to do so, we still may be used to have an impact upon the world like C.S. Lewis had. But, humanly speaking, perhaps the impact could have been greater had we not settled.

A sub-orthodox view of inerrancy may not lead to doctrinal shipwreck immediately but in general it does lead there ultimately. If the front door of inerrancy is barred, expect the robber to sneak in the back door of hermeneutics. The adversary has from the beginning asked mankind, "Did God really say…?" Inerrancy is the tip of this big iceberg floating in these deep waters. The challenges to inerrancy bubble up from the depths of hermeneutics, methodology, logic, and epistemology. How do we know what meaners mean? How do we know anything at all? The philosophies of Aquinas and Reid may offer alternative and antidote to the philosophies that show markers of Kant in their DNA. How much of the worldly philosophy and the worldly attitudes can we operate with before our salt loses its saltiness?

Scholars with traditionalist views shouldn't rest and rust thinking that the meaning of the Holy Scriptures has been adequately explored, systematized, and articulated. There is plenty of room to seek greater and deeper understanding of them. What if they are like an ocean where the

young find delight in the shallows and the mature explore with scuba gear? Are there not additional depths to go to? If we traditionalists let the liberals, the neo-orthodox, and the neo-evangelicals do all the exploring and make all the great discoveries, we may lose relevancy. I'm not saying we should embrace innovation and revolution. I'm encouraging further exploration. The Bible is a collection of books that is written not just by God but by human authors. Thus constructive criticism that is legitimate for unholy scripture can also be used for Holy Scriptures. For example, the insight that Kenneth Bailey's "rhetorical criticism" (very similar to genre criticism) produced about 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:2 sharing uncanny similarity to both Isaiah 50:5-11 and to the famous funeral oration of Pericles, was, for example, persuasive, enriching, constructive, enlightening, delightful, and quite in harmony with the parameters of CSBI-CSBH.[109] But if we start to see the scriptures primarily as the words of men, and equally the oracles of God, we have lost the awe that should permeate our studies and, therefore may lose the favor of God. "These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word" (Isaiah 66).

Literary criticism definitely shouldn't be done haphazardly. As Geisler said not all of the methods can be applied to the Bible properly and, for those that can, we need to guard against the antisupernatural presuppositions that are often packaged together with the tools. Moreover, the goal of shedding light on the meaning of the scriptures is not a scholarly game of seeing what is possible for the thrill of it. We shouldn't be trying to derive hidden *gnosis* about a dead author's intended meanings by comparing his writings with writings by other minds that he may or may not have had any awareness of, drawing lines between vague similarities, and super-imposing the resultant speculations over the first author's meaning. When evangelical scholars use critical methods there is a heightened need to proactively and humbly exercise the willingness to seek the critique of other scholars—not just any scholar but those who can be trusted to give a ruthlessly honest, positive and negative critique (Prov. 15:22). Instead of ignoring and dishonoring a fellow scholar who sounds a

warning about where our methods have lead us, we should hear them out. We should be thankful for their willingness to help us test and improve our thinking. We should meet with them, talk it over, try to see it from their viewpoint, and use their input to fine-tune our theories. We need scholars who are not just knowledgeable and intelligent but wise as well.

If evangelicalism is defined simply as those who are passionate about "Jesus Christ and him crucified" we should expect it to include a variety of opinions about the nature of the scriptures which are inconsistent with the historic evangelical viewpoint. This complicates things. We shouldn't be using a single, simple illustration for complex topics. The analogies favored by the Apostle Paul were complex and manly: participating in warfare as soldiers,[110] building a large temple of stones, timbers, precious metals and jewels, running a grueling race, piloting ships through hazardous waters. He also spoke of the nasty metaphor of gangrene's spread on the human body. Paul said that "the teaching" inside the ecclesiastical network of those who have "departed from the truth" will "spread like gangrene" and "destroy the faith of some."[111] Once gangrene sets in on human tissue, one option is to let the infection spread to more and more living cells until death ensues from organ failure. Antiseptics and antibiotics aren't enough. Surgical amputation of necrotic flesh from the body was and is the only option. How will we deal with the spread of infection in the body when we see it? And will we even be able to detect it? Hopefully the choices we are making today will thwart the gangrene before it starts.

Endnotes

[1] Norman L. Geisler. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2002), 225.

[2] Ibid, 418-419.

[3] Norman L. Geisler. *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy* (Charlotte, NC: Bastion Books, 2013)

[4] In the discussion of the views on biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and hermeneutic in the theological history of the United States it is helpful to understand the difference between "Old Princeton" and "New Princeton." Princeton was an institution that has gave leadership mainly to Calvinistic Congregationalists, to a lesser degree to Calvinistic Presbyterians, and to a lesser degree many other protestant traditions. They had a very "high" view of the Bible while under the leadership of men like Alexander, Machen, Warfield, and Hodges. But at some point in time the liberals began pulling the strings, defrocked Machen, and "reorganized" Princeton Divinity School. It became a bastion for Unitarian-Universalist and theologically liberal thought (very low view of the Bible) from that time onward. In response to the capitulation of Princeton, other seminaries (such as Westminster Seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary) were created to serve as bastions of theology that used a high view of biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and hermeneutic.

[5] I don't mean to make it seem like all evangelicals can be divided neatly into traditionalist and progressive camps. There are some traditionalists who may be calling for one or two of the things that the progressives are known for.

[6] Norman L. Geisler, "The Basis for Inerrancy" or "Christ's view of the Bible" mp3 lecture available at http://normangeisler.net/mp3s/BasisForInerrancy.htm

[7] When asked what advice he would give evangelicals in the USA, McGrath replied, "Some modern American evangelicals do seem very anti-intellectual. I'd like to see a greater academic awareness on the part of some. They are hot on piety and politics, but on matters of theology they sometimes seems unnecessarily hostile to *critical exploration* of the Christian faith. For me, Christianity is perfectly capable of standing up to such investigation." Baumann, *Roundtable*, 124. Technically this attitude is not at odds with the ICBI. But practically it usually is.

[8] F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 5th rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960). As a thousand footnotes prove, this book occupied an important place in the apologetic effort of American Evangelicals. And yet Bruce preferred to simply say that the Bible is true while avoiding entirely the matters of infallibility and inerrancy. Quoting an interview now: The term 'biblical criticism' normally has a positive connotation in your writings, in spite of the negative connotation it has in some circles. Why is this? Because biblical criticism is the study of the biblical text. It involves the establishing of a reliable text on the basis of manuscripts and other early witnesses: this is the work of 'textual criticism.' And when that is done it involves the interpretation of the text, what is technically called 'exegesis.' And this requires the study of such matters as the structure of individual books, a consideration of the dates at which they were written, how they fit into their contemporary setting, and then the question of authorship. It is in these three areas—structure, date and authorship—that we have the group of studies that used to be summarized in the single term 'higher criticism.' Thus biblical criticism is a very positive study. Its aim is to help people to understand the Bible better. . . criticism for its own sake has never interested me. The important thing is to pierce to the core of the meaning.' And any technique that enables us to penetrate to the central meaning of scripture is helpful. In North American there has been a lot of debate concerning the 'inerrancy' of the Bible, and 'inerrancy' has often been viewed as a touchstone of evangelical orthodoxy. What do you think about this concept? Happily, from my point of view, that is a North American phenomenon which one does not find very much in Britain. The term that has been traditionally used to describe a high view of the authority of scripture in this country is 'infallibility.' . . When one looks at the words themselves, there is no difference! 'Inerrancy' means 'not going wrong' and 'infallibility' means 'incapable of going wrong' or 'incapable of leading astray.' But the infallibility of scripture as traditionally defined relates to its function as 'the rule of faith and practice.' Inerrancy seems to imply more than this. What term would you prefer to use in describing the Bible? Truth. What's wrong with that word? The truth of scripture is what we're talking about. Or, if one says that the scripture is the Word of God, why bother about terms like 'infallibility' or 'inerrancy'? . . .Conservatism is not of the essence of my position. If many of my critical conclusions, for example, are described as being conservative, they are so not because they are conservative, nor because I am conservative, but because I believe them to be the conclusions to which the evidence points. If they are conservative, then none the worse for that. And what do you mean by 'evangelical'? An evangelical is someone who believes in the God who justifies the ungodly [Romans 4:5]. To believe in Him, and nothing more nor less, is to be evangelical. From Ward & Laurel Gasque, "An Interview with F.F. Bruce," St Mark's Review 139 (Spring 1989): 4-10. http://www.theologicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ffb/interview_bruce.pdf. Others have suggested that "on the front cover of Dewey M. Beegle's book *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility*, Bruce also rejects the "domino" theory and writes that he endorses "as emphatically as I can Beegle's deprecating of a Maginot-line mentality where the doctrine of Scripture is concerned." When he did speak directly about inerrancy he did so to try to influence others such that they would not make a big deal ("draw a Maginot line") out of the matter.

[9] In the first lecture for this course Dr. Geisler cast his vote for CS Lewis as the most influential apologist of the 20th century. Geisler has always been quick to acknowledge his own debt to Lewis and has always been quick to recommend Lewis's Mere Christianity, Miracles, The Problem of Pain, The Great Divorce, and God in the Dock.

[10] Norman L. Geisler. *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2002), 397-398. Geisler gives a very substantial treatment of Lewis' bibliology. I think Geisler depicts Lewis view of biblical inerrancy aptly as: ". . . clearly neither an evangelical nor a liberal model, it is listed here with neo-evangelical views. . . Like those who maintain neo-orthodoxy, Lewis believed that the voice of God could be heard through the errant record of the Old Testament. The origin of the message was divine, but the human pipeline by which it got here was often terribly polluted."

[11] Clive Staples Lewis, "Fern-seed and Elephants." http://www.samizdat.qc.ca/vc/pdfs/Fernseeds.pdf, Page 16 (accessed on 8/21/2014). In saying to them that being a "[m]issionary to the priests of one's own church is an embarrassing role; though I have a horrid feeling that if such mission work is not soon undertaken the future history of the Church of England is likely to be short," he was warning them they were already well on its way to undermining all that remained of orthodoxy in the Anglican Church. This same essay was also titled "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism" in the book *Christian Reflections*. It was also included as an appendix in Josh McDowell *Evidence that Demands a Verdict: Volume II* (Thomas Nelson: 1993) 375-379.

[12] Ibid, p 4

[13] R.C. Sproul, *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy* (Charlotte, NC: Bastion Books, 2013) 61.

[14] "[10] According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. [11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— [13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. [14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." (ESV)

[15] "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." (ESV)

[16] Michael C. Patton. "Is Inerrancy the Linchpin of Evangelicalism?" Reclaiming the Mind, (accessed October 22, 2014) http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2011/12/is-inerrancy-the-linchpen-of-evangelicalism.

[17] RC Sproul. *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy: Official Commentary on the ICBI Statements* (Charlotte, NC: BastionBooks,2013) 61-62

> The denial in Article XIX is very important. The framers of the confession are saying unambiguously that confession of belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is not an essential of the Christian faith necessary for salvation. We gladly acknowledge that people who do not hold to this doctrine may be earnest and genuine, zealous and in many ways dedicated Christians. We do not regard acceptance of inerrancy to be a test for salvation. However, we urge as a committee and as an assembly that people consider the severe consequences that may befall the individual or church which casually and easily rejects inerrancy. We believe that history has demonstrated again and again that there is all too often a close relationship between rejection of inerrancy and subsequent defections from matters of the Christian faith that are essential to salvation. When the church loses its confidence in the authority of sacred Scripture the church inevitably looks to human opinion as its guiding light. When that happens, the purity of the church is direly threatened. Thus, we urge upon our Christian brothers and sisters of all professions and denominations to join with us in a reaffirmation of the full authority, integrity, infallibility and inerrancy of sacred Scripture to the end that our lives may be brought under the authority of God's Word, that we may glorify Christ in our lives, individually and corporately as the church.

[18] "Saving faith" is more than the intellectual assent to the facts that comprise the bad news and the good news but it is not less than that.

[19] R.C. Sproul, *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy*. 61.

[20] Shipwreck? The Apostle Paul used sailing and shipwreck as analogs of the journey of faith and apostasy. Having travelled the seas a few times in his career as Jesus' ambassador to the Gentiles, he knew about the treacherousness of being on small boats in big seas. He reported having been adrift at sea and having been shipwrecked more than once (2 Cor 11:25; Acts 27). He urged Timothy to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths . . . which promote speculations" (1 Ti 1:3-4), he described "certain persons" who had swerved and wandered (v6) from a "pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (v. 5) and away from "sound doctrine in accordance with the gospel" (vv.10-11) as having "made shipwreck of their faith" (v.19, emphasis added). Earlier Paul indicated that Jesus gave the church "apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith. . . so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every

wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." (Ephesians 4:11-13.) Similarly James, a leader in the first church, compared doubting and doubters as being "like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." (James 1:6) Jude, another leader in the first church, "found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed. . ." (Jude 3-4) and posed the danger of being "hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear" (12). These people "reject authority" (8) and follow the ways, errors, and rebellions of other men (11).

[21] It's not just the graves of the righteous that will be opened.   John 5:26-29 (NIV): ". . . the Father. . . has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. . . a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." Also "[T]here will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15 ESV).

[22] Geisler makes the same point here: "The Objection That Inerrancy Should Not Be a Test for Orthodoxy. This objection follows from the one before it. If inerrancy is not a major doctrine, then it should not be a test for orthodoxy. However, as shown, it *is* a major teaching of Scripture, and, thus, it is a test of orthodoxy. Of course, inerrancy is not a test of salvation—one can deny inerrancy and still be saved. Salvation depends on believing certain soteriological truths, such as the death and resurrection of Christ for our sins (see 1 Cor. 15:1–4; Rom. 10:9), and not on accepting all fundamental doctrines (e.g., the inspiration of Scripture and the second coming of Christ). One can be saved without believing in all doctrines essential to orthodoxy, but he cannot be a *consistent* evangelical without embracing all of them. One other distinction is important here. A person can be evangelical or orthodox on all other fundamentals of the faith and still be unorthodox on this one, as inconsistent as it may be. For example, the neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth affirmed the Virgin Birth, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and Christ's bodily resurrection, yet he denied the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Thus, he was orthodox on the rest of these fundamentals but unorthodox on his view of Scripture."

[23] David N. Blivin, "Matthew 5:17: 'Destroy' the Law." http://www.jerusalemperspective.com/2062/. (Published March 31st, 1988. Accessed October 23rd, 2014). What is a jot and tittle? It touches upon the level of granularity of the divine inspiration of the writings created by one of God's prophets. The following definition from Blivin is helpful:

> The *yod* was usually written with a tiny horizontal line on the top left, the ornamental spur added to some Hebrew letters. This decoration was called a *kots*, which means "thorn." In Greek *kots* was translated by the word *keraia*, literally, "horn," which was in turn rendered "tittle" by the translators of the King James Version. In Jesus' day, the *kots* was not horizontal, as in printed modern scripts, but angled down and to the left like a fishhook or the barb of a thorn—for this reason it was called a thorn in Hebrew. The *kots* often was as long as the *yod* itself. See illustrations [below] of the *yod* and the *lamed*, with and without a *kotz*.
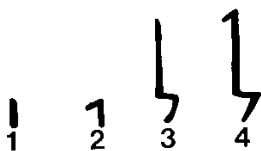
> Picture of a *yod* (with and without a *kots*) and a *lamed* (with and without a *kots*). The "tittle" of the jot (*yod*) is the small decorative spur projecting from the jot's upper edge. Other letters, for instance, the *lamed*, can also have a "tittle." (1. *yod*; 2. *yod* with tittle; 3. *lamed*; 4. *lamed* with tittle)

[24] Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (San Francisco: Harper-SanFrancisco, 1997), 139. Cited in Woodbridge, p136. The exact wording of my prayer is beyond recall, but it must have echoed my thoughts: "O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. . . . I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Chuck [Templeton] and others are raising." I was trying to be on the level with God, but something remained unspoken. At last the Holy Spirit freed me to say it: "Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by *faith!*" . . . I sensed the presence and power of God as I had not sensed it in months.

[25] Billy Graham, "Biblical Authority in Evangelism," *Christianity Today* 1, no. 1 (1956) cited in Woodbridge. Billy Graham also said: The people were not coming to hear great oratory, nor were they interested merely in my ideas. I found they were desperately hungry to hear what God had to say through His Holy Word. I felt as though I had a rapier in my hand, and through the power of the Bible was slashing deeply into men's consciences, leading them to surrender to God. Does not the Bible say of itself, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of souls and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12)? I found that the Bible became a flame in my hands. That flame melted away unbelief in the hearts of people and moved them to decide for Christ. The Word became a hammer breaking up stony hearts and shaping them into the likeness of God. Did not God say, "I will make my words in thy mouth fire" (Jer. 5:14) and "is not my word like as a fire? . . . and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29)?

[26] Timothy Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain 1815-35*. (T&T Clark: Edinburgh, 2000) 25.

[27] Ibid, 25-26

[28] Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University. 1985)81.

[29] David F. Farnel, "Robert Gundry, Gaining Renewed Support from ETS, Declares Peter an Apostate in Matthew's Gospel" http://defendinginerrancy.com/robert-gundry-declares-peter-apostate/ (accessed October 15, 2014).

[30] Carl Henry, *Carl Henry at his Best: A Lifetime of Quotable Thoughts*. (Portland:OR Multnomah Press: 1989), p. 61.

[31] Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976).

[32] Robert Brow. "Evangelical Megashift: Why You may not have Heard about Wrath, Sin, and Hell Recently." Christianity Today [February 19, 1990], pp. 12-14. Also reproduced at http://www.brow.on.ca/Articles/Megashift.html

[33] S. Lewis Johnson, "Ancient Terms with Modern Accents." Sermon, (Dallas, TX: sljinstitute.com) http://sljinstitute.net/new-time-religion/ancient-terms-with-modern-accents (accessed October 4, 2014).

[34] S. Lewis Johnson, "New Time Religion: Old Words but New Meanings." Sermon, (Dallas, TX: sljinstitute.com) http://sljinstitute.net/new-time-religion/old-words-but-new-meanings/ (accessed October 4, 2014).

[35] S. Lewis Johnson, "Ancient Terms with Modern Accents." Sermon, (Dallas, TX: sljinstitute.com) http://sljinstitute.net/new-time-religion/ancient-terms-with-modern-accents/ (accessed October 4, 2014).

[36] Michael Licona March 11 at 2:59pm https://www.facebook.com/michael.licona?fref=ts (accessed October 28, 2014).

[37] William Lane Craig, "What is Inerrancy?" *Reasonable Faith.* http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-is-inerrancy

[38] Norman L. Geisler. *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1, 505. Quote:

> Of course, inerrancy is not a test of salvation—one can deny inerrancy and still be saved. Salvation depends on believing certain soteriological truths, such as the death and resurrection of Christ for our sins (see 1 Cor. 15:1–4; Rom. 10:9), and not on accepting all fundamental doctrines (e.g., the inspiration of Scripture and the second coming of Christ). One can be saved without believing in all doctrines essential to orthodoxy, but he cannot be a *consistent* evangelical without embracing all of them. One other distinction is important here. A person can be evangelical or orthodox on all other fundamentals of the faith and still be unorthodox on this one, as inconsistent as it may be. For example, the neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth affirmed the Virgin Birth, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and Christ's bodily resurrection, yet he denied the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Thus, he was orthodox on the rest of these fundamentals but unorthodox on his view of Scripture.

[39] RC Sproul. *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy*, 61-62:

> The framers of the [ICBI] confession are saying unambiguously that confession of belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is not an essential of the Christian faith necessary for salvation. We gladly acknowledge that people who do not hold to this doctrine may be earnest and genuine, zealous and in many ways dedicated Christians. We do not regard acceptance of inerrancy to be a test for salvation. However, we urge as a committee and as an assembly that people consider the severe consequences that may befall the individual or church which casually and easily rejects inerrancy. When the church loses its confidence in the authority of sacred Scripture the church inevitably looks to human opinion as its guiding light. When that happens, the purity of the church is direly threatened. Thus, we urge upon our Christian brothers and sisters of all professions and denominations to join with us in a reaffirmation of the full authority, integrity, infallibility and inerrancy of sacred Scripture to the end that our lives may be brought under the authority of God's Word, that we may glorify Christ in our lives, individually and corporately as the church.

[40] Norman L. Geisler, "Biblical Inerrancy: Inductive or Deductive Basis?" *Defending Inerrancy*. http://defendinginerrancy.com/inductive-deductive-inerrancy/. (accessed October 23rd, 2014). In the same way, restricting the context to that of building belief also helps solve what might be a misunderstanding about Craig's position that arriving at inerrancy through deductive logic somehow makes it superfluous. Geisler challenged Craig's words (at http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-price-biblical-errancy) on this matter recently. Craig and Geisler here is that while they agree that inerrancy is a deductive conclusion the doctrine of inspiration. Does that somehow make it less important? It appears that Craig seems to think that the process of deduction somehow makes inerrancy less important than inspiration. (He wrote, "Inerrancy is a corollary of the doctrine of inspiration. As such, it is important to the Christian faith, but it doesn't stand at the center of the Christian faith.") For Geisler, however, the process of deduction seems to make inerrancy equally important to inspiration. If the syllogism is valid and if the premises that lead to inerrancy are true, then I don't see why inerrancy would need to be set on a different tier of importance than inerrancy. Both Geisler and Craig hold deductive logic in very high esteem in their methodologies. Perhaps there is some difference in their methodologies. For the moment, however, I'm inclined to give Craig the benefit the doubt here and suggest that inerrancy as a deduction from inspiration makes it even further removed than inspiration in the methodical process of building belief among unbelievers. Craig does, after all, continue to insist that inerrancy is still important in other arenas.

[41] Where are we going with our traditions of faith and practice? Hopefully we're headed in the direction that Paul laid out in Ephesians 4:12-16:

> … to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (ESV)

Note how Paul also uses the motif of small water craft in motion amidst powerful currents in wind and water.

[42] Trent Nouveau, "The Art of Spider Web Design." Tech Guru Daily. http://www.tgdaily.com/general-sciences-features/61178-the-art-of-spider-web-design (accessed October 23rd, 2014). Quote:

> Spider webs are not as complex as we might think. ". . . the spider webs located in gardens and garages are made from multiple silk types, but viscid silk and dragline silk are most critical to the integrity of the web. Viscid silk - stretchy, wet and sticky - is the silk that winds out in increasing spirals from the web center. Its primary function is to capture prey. In contrast, dragline silk is stiff and dry, and serves as the threads that radiate out from a web's center, providing structural support. Dragline silk is crucial to the mechanical behavior of the web. Some of Buehler's earlier work indicated that dragline silk is composed of a suite of proteins with a unique molecular structure that lends both strength and flexibility. While the strength and toughness of silk has been touted before - it is stronger than steel and tougher than Kevlar by weight - the advantages of silk within a web, beyond such measures, has been unknown. . ."

[43] Who are apologists really at war with? Paul answered this in Ephesians 6:11-13 (ESV):

> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

[44] Norman L. Geisler. *Systematic Theology,* Vol I*, 505:*

> It has also been objected that the doctrine of inerrancy is not a fundamental truth of the Christian faith; hence, even if true, its importance is overestimated. Being a minor truth, supposedly, it should not be given major importance. For one thing, by way of response, by almost any count of fundamentals of the faith, the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture is to be included, as it is the foundation of all other doctrines. Every other fundamental of the Christian faith is based on the Scripture—if it does not have divine authority, then we have no divine authority for any doctrine to which we adhere. As the basis of all other doctrines, the inerrancy of the Bible is a fundamental of the Fundamentals, and if a fundamental of the Fundamentals is not fundamental, then what is fundamental? The answer is: fundamentally nothing. In addition, the doctrine of inerrancy was not only affirmed by virtually all the great Fathers of the church (see chapters 16 and 17), it is also the foundation of all churches' creeds, councils, and confessions. Inasmuch as the teachings of the church were the basis for what we call orthodoxy, so must be the authority of Scripture, on which the Fathers of the church based their pronouncements.

[45] Norman L. Geisler and Ron Rhodes. *Conviction without Compromise* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2008) 7.

[46] Ibid, 8

[47] Ibid, 9

[48] Norman Geisler. *Twelve Points that Show Christianity is True* (Charlotte, NC: Bastion Books, 2012).

[49] David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

[50] William Lane Craig, http://www.reasonablefaith.org/what-is-inerrancy

[51] Leslie Weatherhead, *The Christian Agnostic*.

[52] D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *"If I Had to Do It Again." In God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 392-393. http://tgcc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/UnderstandingTheTimesChapter4.pdf (accessed July 29th, 2014).

[53] Dallas Theological Seminary originally was started as a bastion of conservative evangelical protestant theology, scholarship, and training after Princeton was "reorganized."

[54] *Testament*. Film. Directed by John Romer. (Princeton, N.J.: Films for the Humanities & Science, 1988).

[55] This gave me reason to be intrigued by the idea that the Israelites sojourned in the Arabian Peninsula rather than the Sinai Peninsula. Other good answers may be more plausible. See Gordon Franz. http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2009/06/18/Where-are-the-Israelite-Burials-From-the-Wilderness-

Wanderings.aspx or http://www.lifeandland.org/2009/06/where-are-the-israelite-burials-from-the-wilderness-wanderings/.

[56] Years later this festering mind-splinter was removed by Hugh Ross' tweezers. See Hugh Ross. "Thank God for Whales: Paleontologists observe multiple 'transitional forms' for whales in the fossil record." http://www.reasons.org/articles/thank-god-for-whales. August 23, 2010.

> "Evolutionary models prove that, of all animals, whales manifest the highest probability for rapid extinction and the lowest probability for evolutionary advance. (This is due to a number of factors, including whales' huge body sizes, low population levels, long generation times, low number of progeny birthed per adult, and sensitivity to environmental stress.) So from an evolutionary perspective, whales have the least likelihood of producing transitional forms. Yet the evidence defies this conclusion. According to the fossil record, at least once every few million years a whale species disappeared only to be rapidly followed up by the appearance of a new and different species. In other words, whales have the greatest, not lowest, number of "transitions" in the fossil record. And these fossils provide evidence for a Creator, specifically for the idea that God created and designed life, rather than simply permitting natural processes to evolve them. I believe that all these "transitional forms" for whales show up in the fossil record because God likes whales. Knowing their propensity for rapid extinction, He kept on making new ones."

Also recently I was pleased recently to see that this proposed error was itself in error. http://www.evolutionnews.org/2014/09/whales_hips_ano089811.html

> "Our research really changes the way we think about the evolution of whale pelvic bones in particular, but more generally about structures we call 'vestigial.' As a parallel, we are now learning that our appendix is actually quite important in several immune processes, not a functionally useless structure."

[57] M. Rodriquez, The Bittersweet End: Taking a Scalpel to my Faith, http://bittersweetend.wordpress.com/a-study-on-biblical-inerrancy-infallibility-and-inspiration/ (accessed October 4, 2014).

[58] Illegitimate halting place? Harold Lindsell put it well in his *The Battle for the Bible*, 203:

> This term [limited inerrancy] is meaningless; it is nonsense. The sooner we realize this, the sooner we will see the issue of inerrancy in its proper perspective. And, at last, every deviation away from inerrancy ends up by casting a vote in favor of limited inerrancy. Once limited inerrancy is accepted, it places the Bible in the same category with every other book that has ever been written. Every book contains in it some things that are true. And what is true is inerrant. Only two things remain to be determined once this position is acknowledged. The first is what proportion of the book is true and what proportion false. It may be 90 percent false and 10 percent true; or it may be 90 percent true and 10 percent false. The second thing that needs to be determined is what parts of the book are true. Since the book contains both error and falsehood, of necessity, other criteria outside of the book [such as genre] must be brought to bear upon it to determine what is false and what is true. Whatever the source of the other criteria, that becomes the judge of the book in question. Thus the book becomes subordinated to the standard against which its truth is determined and measured. If inspiration means anything, and if inspiration pertains to the totality of the Bible, then we must see what limited inerrancy means. First, it means that something outside of and above the Bible becomes its judge. There is something that is truer and more sure than Scripture and whatever it is has not been inspired by God. So a noninspired source takes precedence over an inspire Bible. Second, it leaves us in a vacuum without any basis for determining what parts of the Bible tell the truth and what parts do not. For the evangelical, the genius of inspiration lies in the fact that it disposes of these problems and provides for us a book that we can trust so that when we come to it, we do not need to do so with suspicion nor do we need to ask the question: "Is this part to be trusted?" This does not deliver us from the need to examine Scripture and to determine what it teaches. But it does give us a word we can trust, and leaves us with the assurance that once we have gotten its true meaning, we can test every other book against the Bible and not let other books determine the truth of Scripture.

[59] See chiefly John D. Woodbridge. *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal*. 1982. http://books.google.com/books?id=27RCqVaSi-MC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false. Also see Carl Henry, "If I Had to Do It Again." In *God and Culture: Essays in Honor of Carl F. H. Henry, edited by* D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., 392-393. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.), http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/UnderstandingTheTimesChapter4.pdf (accessed July 29th, 2014). Also see http://defendinginerrancy.com/resurgence-neo-evangelicalism/. Note also Smith, David. B. B. Warfields Scientifically Constructive Theological Scholarship. Wipf & Stock. 2011. There is some attempt at rebuttal here: "INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY." N. F. Gier, God, Reason, and the Evangelicals (University Press of America, 1987), chapter 6. http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ngier/gre6.htm. Another counterpoint can be found here: Dissolving the Inerrancy Debate: How Modern Philosophy Shaped the Evangelical View of Scripture. Author: John Perry. Quodlibet Journal: Volume 3 Number 4, Fall 2001. ISSN: 1526-6575. http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/perry-inerrancy.shtml

[60] Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey*. (New Have, CT: Yale,1985) 117

[61] Ibid, 122-123

[62] Geisler has a short book on this topic at http://bastionbooks.com/shop/beware-of-philosophy-a-warning-to-biblical-scholars/. Also see Geisler, Norman. *A History of Western Philosophy, Volume II: Modern and Post-Modern: From Descartes to Derrida.* (Bastion Books | 2012) p.10. (http://bastionbooks.com/shop/hopv2-2/)

[63] John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy. The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority. InterVarsity Press Academic. 2013

[64] See Peter Enns review at http://www.patheos.com/blogs/peterenns/2014/01/review-of-the-lost-world-of-scripture-walton-and-sandy-by-carlos-bovell/. See positive reviews by Michael R. Licona, Tremper Longman III, Craig A. Evans, and others at http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/book.pl/review/code=4032.

[65] Quote: The prominent New Testament scholar Jimmy Dunn, prompted by the work of Ken Bailey on the transmission of oral tradition in Middle Eastern cultures, has sharply criticized what he calls the "stratigraphic model" of the Gospels, which views them as composed of different layers laid one upon another on top of a primitive tradition. (See James D. G. Dunn, Jesus Remembered [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2003].) http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5717

[66] Norman L. Geisler. Were the Gospel Writers Reporting or Creating the Words of Christ? http://normangeisler.net/articles/Bible/Difficulties/GospelsPhotoOrPortrait.htm. 2014. Also see Norman L. Geisler "Do We Have the Exact Words of Jesus in the Gospels?" 2013 http://www.normangeisler.net/articles/Bible/Reliability/ExactWordsOfJesus.htm.

[67] It is only a partial coincidence that I am submitting this paper for grading on October 31st, 2014. October 31st happens to be Reformation Day, the day commemorating the day Martin Luther supposedly nailed 95 theses for debate onto the door of the church in Wittenberg.

[68] Walter Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics" *Inerrancy,* Edited by Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980) 117.

[69] Ibid, 147.

[70] Article XVIII of the CSBI says: We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

[71] Article XIII of CSBH says: WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study. WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual

[72] For a free copy of the e-book titled *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy: Official Commentary on the ICBI Statements*, please visit http://bastionbooks.com/shop/explainingicbi/ and use this coupon code: **Free-EBI**. Note that the code is case sensitive. Feel free to pass this coupon along to others.

[73] The most strategic way to attack orthodoxy would be to do it in a subtle, indirect, unexpected way. A direct assault is a feign that desensitizes the defenders to the flank around the side or back. I'm reminded of the Chinese general (Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*) who wrote:

> In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and **the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities**. **The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided.** The preparation of mantlets, movable shelters, and various implements of war, will take up three whole months; and the piling up of mounds over against the walls will take three months more. The general, unable to control his irritation, will launch his men to the assault like swarming ants, with the result that one-third of his men are slain, while the town still remains untaken. Such are the disastrous effects of a siege. Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting; he captures their cities without laying siege to them; he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field. With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.

[74] Roger R. Nicole, et al. "Biblical Interpretation and the Analogy of Faith," in Inerrancy and Common Sense (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980) 134.

[75] See http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_2.pdf, paragraph 2.

[76] Harold Lindsell, The Battle for the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976) 40.

[77] Gregg C. Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1975) 184-185.

[78] This example is not unrealistic. It has been voiced by more than one scholar at more than one evangelical graduate school. See Norman Geisler's books *In Defense of the Resurrection* and *The Battle for the Resurrection*.

[79] Thomas Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990) 23. The quote in full is:

> One of the distinguishing features of Pauline literature is the difference in genre. Paul did not write Gospels, nor did he write a history of the early church in Acts, nor did he write an apocalyptic work like Revelation. He wrote letters to specific communities and individuals. The exegete must take into account the difference in genre when he or she interprets the Pauline letters. To interpret letters as we do narrative or apocalyptic literature would be to miss the genius of what is involved in the letters. . . Perhaps the most important issue in interpretation is the issue of genre. If we misunderstand the genre of a test, the rest of our analysis will be askew. If we interpret a fairy tale as a historical report, the interpretation may be profound and insightful in many ways, but the interpretation will be fatally flawed from the beginning because of a misreading of the genre of the text. . . It is important to discern the nature of the Pauline letters before interpreting them, and in contemporary scholarship the relationship between Pauline letters and other letters that were written in the ancient Greco-Roman world is being keenly studied. . . The student must understand the nature of letters before he or she begins to interpret the Pauline letters. The literary form of the letter in general should be identified and any particular literary features should be observed.

Ibid, pp 14, 23-24, 161.

[80] Robert Stein. *Gospels and Tradition: Studies on Redaction Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991).

[81] Elliot E. Johnson, "Apocalyptic Genre in Literal Interpretation," *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*. Eds Toussaint and Dyer (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986) 198.

[82] The fact that ICBI does not make higher criticism into the enemy is one thing that separates evangelicalism from fundamentalism. I admit that for years I assumed that higher criticism or any *geshichte* coming from Germany was wholly destructive. I have begun to see more clearly in this investigation that higher criticism is not in and of itself the enemy any more than the Kalashnikov rifle—or any other firearm—is necessarily a tool that only rebels and terrorists use. As many gun owners put it today in their debate, "Guns don't kill people; People kill people." Similarly, in the inerrancy debates, higher criticism is a tool box full of tools that have been used in very destructive ways. But they could be used for constructive knowledge too. The methodologies that drive people to either destructive or constructive criticism extend beyond the higher critical methods devised in Germany and so esteemed across academia today.

[83] Geisler wrote in *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy*, 8-9:

> The second major misinterpretation of the ICBI statements centers on the use of genre in the interpretation of Scripture. Article XVIII of The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) reads: "We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture" (emphasis added). Likewise, Article XIII asserts, "We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study" (emphasis added). Article XV adds, "We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal sense…. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text" (emphasis added). From these statements some evangelical scholars have claimed ICBI blessing on the view that one can determine the meaning of a biblical text by first making a list of the kinds of genre from external sources and then applying what they believe is the appropriate genre to the Scriptures. However, the view that genre determines meaning is not only contrary to what the ICBI framers meant, but it also suffers from a logical mistake. In order to discover the genre of a particular text, one must already have a developed a genre theory. But a genre theory comes from studying and comparing individual texts of the Bible by means of the "grammatico-historical" method of interpretation which the ICBI framers were committed to from the beginning (see Article XVIII) of the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy. But if externally determined genre governs the meaning of the biblical text, then this scenario is impossible. The interpreter must know the genre before he knows the text. But this is tantamount to imposing genre expectations upon the text."

[84] To push my point further, I'm tempted to add this: Similarly, if I am reading the plays of Shakespeare for the first time I don't actually need to be coached on the nuances of tragedies and comedies before I am able to get the gist of the play. Even if we pluck a stone-tool wielding tribesman out of a jungle, sit him down in a theater, give his some

popcorn, show him his first action-adventure movie, and then show him his first romantic-comedy movie, he's going to understand the movies surprisingly well.

[85] Elliott E. Johnson, 199: … unlike the study of Hittite treaties, there is little evidence that an apocalyptic literary form existed and was adopted because it was shared by the ancient world: An extraordinary amount of the scholarly literature has been devoted to the quest for the 'origins of apocalyptic.' . . . much of this quest must be considered misdirected and counterproductive. Any given apocalypse combines allusions to a wide range of sources. . . I hold to a view of special revelation that identifies biblical apocalyptic as distinct from other instances of apocalyptic literature referred to by [Leon] Morris." Also see Howe, Thomas. "Does Genre Determine Meaning?" *The Christian Apologetics Journal*, Volume 6, No. 1, Spring 2007. Southern Evangelical Seminary. 2007. Geisler recommends "Genre Criticism," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and The Bible*. Eds. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984)

[86] The zombie tradition originated in folklore of animistic tribespeople in West and Central Africa. The idea was that a human corpse could be reanimated and controlled by a witch/warlock. The idea was carried by the slave trade to Haiti and other Caribbean islands and wasn't forgotten by Voodoo traditions. Today the myth of zombies has become popular enough to have own classification of horror movie genre. Most zombie myths today involve humans being infected with a microbe that transmogrifies them from living people to "the living dead" monsters who feed on human brains. The fictitious nature of this genre in modern American film culture can make the acceptance of the story of the raising of Jewish saints from Judean graves more difficult to accept as factual.

[87] Matthew 27:51-53: "At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split [52] and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. [53] They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

[88] Examples of those side this way include W. David Beck, Craig Blomberg, James Chancellor, William Lane Craig, Jeremy A. Evans, Gary R. Habermas, Craig S. Keener, Douglas J. Moo, J. P. Moreland, Heath A. Thomas, Daniel B. Wallace, William Warren, Edwin M. Yamauchi. (Reference: http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2011/09/press-release-michael-licona-response-to-norm-geisler/.) It is possible that this list of impressive thinkers—some of which actually signed the CSBI statement—may have given me the reason to reconsider this issue and ultimately to write this paper.

[89] I don't mean here to lend credence to the theory that the gospel accounts are just a collection of pericopes that are somewhat independent and were arranged by communities of writers and later redactors like puzzle pieces to form the gospel accounts.   I just mean that there is a unit here and I thought the word pericope would be a meaningful term for a small unit of scripture.

[90] Haun, Christopher. "Historical Testing for the Genre Theories" *Defending Inerrancy*. http://defendinginerrancy.com/historical-testing-for-the-genre-theories/ Posted April 30, 2014. Accessed October 25th, 2014.

[91] Craig, for example, quite granularly sees the zombie problem as part of the crucifixion narrative rather than as part of Jesus' resurrection narrative.

[92] An example of a sign to interpret something nonliterally I offer Jesus' statement "these words of mine are spirit" in his discussion in John 6 about the need to eat his flesh and drink his blood.

[93] I first encountered this shoddy theory in one of the volumes of *The Jewish Book of Why* as the Jewish author explained why Jews do not accept Jesus as their messiah. The popularity of the ideas of mythologist Joseph Campbell and his theories based on Jungian archetypes brought the doubt back to the forefront of my thinking in the early 1990s. C.S. Lewis' tidbits in his writings about "good dreams" had a strange effect of partially soothing and partially exacerbating this doubt. But the most helpful breakthrough came when Norman Geisler was lecturing on "higher criticism's philosophical root and theological fruit" at the Bible school I was attending in 1997. He told me to look up Edwin Yaumachi's essay "Easter: Myth, Hallucination, or History?" http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/yama.html. The theory it turns out is a fine case of revisionist history.

[94] See http://www.risenjesus.com/a-refutation-of-acharya-ss-book-the-christ-conspiracy

[95] The only attempts I've seen so far by nonChristians to use this theory as anti-Christian propaganda are on youtube: http://youtu.be/3SNuhjRZZI4 "Dr. Craig acknowledges that the Resurrection of the Saints in Matthew 27 is a LEGENDARY STORY!!" Published on Dec 19, 2012. Only 1,047 views as of October 18th, 2014. http://youtu.be/RwtO_FJpuVc "Christian NT Scholar and Apologist Michael Licona Loses Job After Questioning Matthew 27:51-53!!" Published on Dec 18, 2012. Only 2,501 views as of October 18th, 2014.

[96] 1 Cor 4:6

[97] Responsibility increases? I'm reminded of Matthew 18 where Jesus warns, "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

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[98] The likelihood of Matthew trying to emulate the rhetorical style of pagan authors seems highly unlikely. I'd be more open to the possibility if the theory were applied to Luke, the Greek. But it is commonly agreed that Matthew was writing to a Palestinian-Jewish audience (not a Hellenic Jewish audience).   There are also some tantalizing hints that Matthew may have originally written his gospel in either Hebrew or Aramaic—but until we find manuscript fragments that prove this I will leave it as speculation.

[99] Robert Stein, *Difficult Passages in the New Testament*. 184

[100] See http://www.risenjesus.com/when-the-saints-go-marching-in

[101] Acts 14. But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.[b] 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

[102] Quote: Peter, in stating, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel' (Acts 2:16 KJV), is referring to the essential fact that Joel predicted—namely, the advent of the Spirit to indwell believers. Peter is not asserting that on the day of Pentecost the signs of Joel 2:28b-31 were present and that the signs the multitude had witnessed were the signs of Joel. Rather, Peter is emphasizing that the Spirit's indwelling would have manifestations and that the audible, visible signs given, accompanied speaking in known, discernible languages, are evidence that the Spirit had come to indwell believers as had been promised.   Three major views explain how these events relate to the prophecy of Joel. They depend on interpretations of the phrase 'this is that.' The first view interprets Peter's statement as saying, 'This is similar to, or like, what Joel predicted but is not in fact the actual fulfillment of the prophecy.' . . . A second view sees a double reference, or a near and far view.   An event in the near future may bear such a resemblance to an event in the far future that the two may be viewed as one. . . A third view holds that the fact predicted by Joel—namely that the Holy Spirit would be sent into the world to baptize believers, that is, to indwell believers as His tabernacle—actually took place. The accompanying signs did not follow because of Israel's unbelief. Israel did not enter into the advent of the Spirit. . . Thus we conclude that Peter was not mistaken when he affirmed 'this is that.' J. Dwight Pentecost. *New Wine: A Study of Transition in the Book of Acts*. Kregel. Grand Rapids. MI. 2010. Pp 49-54. Also see J.D. Pentecost *Thy Kingdom Come*. p 270-272

[103] Mt 22:29; Mk 12:24

[104] Norman L. Geisler, *How To Interpret the Bible (and Bible Prophecy)* http://youtu.be/tXHqOstJD9Y

[105] Geisler does not say that he believes Gerald L. Schroeder's view necessarily but is intrigued by it and is encouraged to hope that perhaps someday a theory might reconcile the two views. For a critique of Schroeder's view here, see http://www.reasons.org/articles/response-to-genesis-and-the-big-bang.

[106] http://normangeisler.net/articles/Bible/Inspiration-Inerrancy/DoesInerrancyRequireBelieveInYoungEarth.htm

[107] In Genesis 1, for example, it seems like the sun is created on day 3. If we interpret it that way, how can we have a "day" without a sun by which to reckon days with? Also the 7th day clearly is not a 24-hour day because it continues to this present time.

[108] Roy E. Knuteson (1929-2012) has an excellent eulogy here: http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/wisconsinrapidstribune/obituary.aspx?pid=155779583

[109] Kenneth E. Bailey. *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*. IVP Academic. 2011. p.85-98.

[110] Many examples from Paul could be cited here. 2nd Corinthians 10:2-5 (NIV) describes the mission of the apostles in militant terms: . . . some people who [wrongly] think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

[111] 2 Timothy 2:16-18. ESV. 16 But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.

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