

This now is the second of three posts by Mike Licona, Associate Professor of Theology at Houston Baptist University. Mike has a PhD in New Testament studies and is a committed evangelical apologist, who has written a recent book, [Why Are There Differences in the Gospels](#) (Oxford University Press, 2016), and is also the author of [Evidence for God](#). He does indeed admit there are differences in the Gospels, which some people would claim are actually contradictions; but he continues to believe the Bible is “inerrant.” What does he mean then? In this clear and lucid post, he explains his views.

NOTE: Mike’s first post generated lots of comments, and it was a bit overwhelming. He will be willing to answer questions/comments over the next four days, but not afterward. That in itself is amazingly generous. Please don’t ask tons of questions in one comment — that (I can say from experience) is hard to deal with! Moreover, he and I both know that many people on the blog have a different perspective from his. But please be respectful and courteous, even in your disagreements. .

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## Is the Bible Inerrant?

Just as the term “divine inspiration” needs clarification, so does the term “inerrant.” “Inerrant” means without error. So, a simple way of explaining what it means to say the Bible is inerrant is to assert that it contains no errors of any kind. One can imagine a preacher holding up his Bible during his Sunday morning sermon and saying, “This is God’s inerrant Word. Every word in it’s true!” For that, the argument is given, “If the Bible is divinely inspired, it must be inerrant, since God cannot err.” However, as I noted in my previous post, that argument only works if either (a) God dictated the words to the biblical writers who acted merely as scribes or (b) God, in a manner unknown to us, used their personalities and various writing styles to pen every word as He desired. As we observed, neither are likely, given the Bible that we have.

If by divine inspiration we mean that God actuated circumstances whereby the authors of the biblical literature wrote what they did using their own words, arguments, and logic, and that God ultimately approved what they wrote, despite the presence of human imperfections, then the doctrine of biblical inerrancy may be understood in a number of ways.

For example, Vatican II views inerrancy as follows: “the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings *for the sake of salvation* [emphasis mine]” (*Dei Verbum* 11). In other words, the Bible is inerrant in everything it teaches pertaining to salvation.

Perhaps the definition most commonly accepted by evangelicals around the world is ...

**This is an intriguing post with a view that will strike many of you as unusual. If you want to read the rest, you will need to belong to the blog. So why not join? It doesn't cost much, and every nickel goes to those in need.**

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