

1. **Verbal (Every Word), Plenary (Every Part) Inspiration vs No or Limited Inspiration**

2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matt. 5:18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

- From God, or just about God by men
- Without error, or with error
- Intended to communicate God's truth, and thus to be understood (as opposed to "to each his own")
- God has given specific, understandable truth that can be understood and known
- Affects one's view of "truth"
- Affects one's view of translating and translations
- Sub: "Literal" versus "dynamic equivalent"

2. **Transcendence of the Word vs Culturally Discounting the Word**

- Timeless in nature, or bound by time?
- 2 Tim 3:16-17
- Joshua 1:6-9
- Psalm 1:1-3
- Psalm 119
- E.g. 1 Tim 2:8-15
- If bound by time, who determines what is valid for today? What is valid for today?
- Definition of Marriage? Homosexuality?

3. **Literal vs Allegorical Interpretation**

- Historical, grammatical method vs. says one thing but means another
- Literal – read like you would any other document.
- Words have meaning on purpose (not one jot or tittle...)
- Literal Creation vs Evolution
- Real Adam? Origin of sin? Purpose of clothing? Racism?

4. **Dispensationalism vs Covenant Theology (the two main approaches)**

- Each is a framework for understanding the Bible and each has its resultant theology

- **Covenant Theology:** a system of theology which attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of two or three covenants. It represents the whole of Scripture and history as being covered by two or three covenants.

- Began as a system in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Not a concept of early church fathers, middle ages, or Reformers
- Introduced in USA by the Puritans
- Two Covenants: Covenant of Works, Covenant of Grace
- Three Covenants: Covenant of Redemption (Father/Son), Covenant of Works (God/Adam), Covenant of Grace (God/??? – sinner, elect, seed of the elect)
- NOTE: These covenants are not named or referenced in Scripture.
- Historical-grammatical AND spiritualizing/allegorizing (especially prophetic passages)
- Israel vs. Church ("Israel" can mean "church" in interpretation and application)

- **Dispensationalism:** a system of theology which attempts to develop the Bible's philosophy of history on the basis of the sovereign rule of God. It represents the whole of Scripture and history as being covered by several dispensations of God's rule.

- Eph. 3:2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
- Dispensation – oikonomia – economy – house-rule
- God works in different ways at different times (though salvation is always based upon belief in the promises of God). Most identify 7 dispensations, beginning first in the Garden of Eden (Innocence), Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Mosaic Law, Church (Grace), & Millennium.
- Each dispensation has a (1) ruling factor or factors; (2) responsibility for man; (3) new divine revelation. They may also include a test, failure of man, and divine judgment.
- Not developed as a formal system until the 17th century.
- Many principles are recognized by early church fathers.
- Historical-grammatical interpretation
- Leads to a clear distinction between Israel and the Church, and thus has major impact in interpreting the OT and prophetic passages, as well as the connection (or lack of a connection) of the church to OT Israel.

- **Impact:**

- End Times – one's view of end times is critical to one's view of life, planning, behavior, etc.
- Interpretation
- Application – OT law into Church (sabbath keeping, for example)

## 5. **Cessationism** vs Charismatic Movement

- Sign gifts have ceased, or sign gifts remain
- Sign gifts: <sup>8</sup> for to one is given the **word of wisdom** through the Spirit, to another the **word of knowledge** through the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healings** by the same Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of **miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another **discerning of spirits**, to another [different] kinds of **tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**. (1 Cor. 12:8-10)
- Temporary: Love never fails. But whether [there are] **prophecies**, they will fail; whether [there are] **tongues**, they will cease; whether [there is] **knowledge**, it will vanish away. (1 Cor. 13:8)
- This temporary nature seems to be illustrated even as the remaining portions of the NT were written:
  - Paul, one who healed many, speaks of Epaphroditus, who was sick unto death until God had mercy on him (Phil 2:25-27)
  - Paul, one who healed many, tells Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. (1 Tim 5:23)
  - Paul, one who healed many, leaves Trophimus at Miletus, sick (2 Tim 4:20)
  - The list of spiritual gifts in Romans (written towards the end of the NT era, as opposed to 1 Corinthians, written near the beginning) is much different: *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, [let us use them]: if **prophecy**, [let us prophesy] in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> or **ministry**, [let us use it] in [our] ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who **shows mercy**, with cheerfulness.* (Rom. 12:6-8 NKJ)
- Historically, the charismatic movement is non-existent until the 20<sup>th</sup> century resurgence.
- Effect on inspiration and the functional view of Scripture
- If God is still talking today (through prophecy, tongues, visions, etc.), our dependency on the Word is lessened, as it is incomplete.
- If God is still talking today (through prophecy, tongues, visions, etc.), nothing is truly concrete truth.
- Much of what is purported as spiritual gifts do not mimic the Biblical picture (tongues were actual known languages) nor the Biblical measure of validity (100% accuracy).

## Biblical Watershed Issues

**WATERSHED: a crucial dividing point, line, or factor** (Merriam-Webster.com)

*Where you come to place your belief on any these crucial doctrines as a Christian (one who believes in Jesus as Savior and seeks to follow Him) will impact and affect how you interpret and view truth, life, the home, the Church, the culture, and the future. Each view is a dividing point – a fork in the road that leads away from the opposing views and often impacts many beliefs downstream. Not having a view on any of these leads to inconsistent, ambiguous and even dangerous thinking and living about life, the home, the Church, the culture, and the future. Not having a formal view on any of these does not mean that you do not act on beliefs represented by them. We all are driven by influences of culture, fad, and fact at some level or another, consciously or unconsciously.*

*They are not opinions, but frameworks of belief. Good or bad, these can be held and embraced by a person whether one has studied them or not. If you have the time and expertise and motivation, it is imperative to understand the reasons and arguments before making up your mind. Base your conclusions on the best Biblical reasoning possible. Please be aware that popularity, tradition, and historicity are not good indicators one way or another of the validity of a given framework. (Blood letting; “ask Jesus into your heart”). Many cannot pursue the details themselves, and thus must find leaders they trust to lead them rightly, and explain truths clearly (this seems to be implied in Ephesians 4:11-16). Truthfully few can wrestle deeply with many of these issues.*

*Side Note: These are also a measure of any author or speaker. Where they land on these issues will determine how they view everything affected by that framework.*

*We will only introduce these watershed ideas with some basic comments. Each area is an area of controversy (some very long-term) and each affects you a great deal whether you have seriously studied or thought about them or not. Everything in the Christian realm that you read, hear (including music lyrics) is impacted by such watershed issues as these.*

*Past eras have focused on key topics which were doctrinal watersheds (who Jesus is, what texts comprise the true Scripture?, what does it take to be saved?, should a “lay person” have access to the Scriptures?, etc.). Many of the watershed issues I will present were assumed in former days, but many are questioned or even rejected now. Some have been ongoing controversies for long time.*

*A key to discerning the truth is not to pursue what you want to be true, but to approach the Word of God with a teachable spirit. The Bible is not a personal smorgasbord from which we pick and choose what we want to believe. The Word of God should dictate what we believe. Thus, it is essential to determine clearly what the Word of God has to say about each critical watershed truth.*

## 7 Watershed Views Which Determine Our Approach to God’s Word (Revelation and Interpretation)