



Word of God — Conservative vs Liberal Approach



THEOLOGICAL TERMS

Conservative Approach

- **Inspiration** — literally “God breathed.” The process by which the Scriptures were invested with divine authority for doctrine and practice.
- **Verbal** — the very words of scripture are God’s intended words. The Holy Spirit directed the human author by using his vocabulary and style (not necessarily dictation).
- **Inerrant** — True and without error. The Bible accurately records wrong statements made by Bible characters.
- **Plenary** — idea of full. All of what the writers wrote was inspired and thus without error
- **Authoritative** — Scripture is binding on the believer for faith and practice.
- **Preservation** — God protects and preserves His Word

Liberal Approach

- **Inspiration** — The words are inspiring much like a good novel. No supernatural element. The bible was written by men of great genius.
- **Verbal** — the words are not exact, but do convey a dynamic equivalent of the original intent.
- **Inerrant** — through transmission and time errors were introduced
- **Plenary** — the bible merely *contains* the Words of God.
- **Authoritative** — Tradition or feelings determine the importance scripture may be for faith and practice.
- **Preservation** — God preserves *some* of the original concepts and principles through time. It is up to man to determine what parts are possibly from God.

EXAMPLE COMMENTS

As one reads the Bible... For example:

- 📌 I do not understand this particular passage, yet I believe God’s Word. I believe what the text says though I may not fully understand it.
- 📌 I understand this particular passage. The Holy Spirit has illuminated my understanding as to the exact meaning.
- 📌 God’s Word is precise. There is one intended meaning for any given text. It is the believer’s blessing to understand God’s intended message or meaning.

The Bible *is* the word of God regardless of man’s reception of it.

As one reads the Bible... For example:

- 📌 I do not understand this particular passage, thus this text may not actually be inspired by God.
- 📌 I understand this particular passage. It is inspiring for my life.
- 📌 There is no one correct answer or meaning to any given text. Different people read the same text and derive distinct meanings. All these meanings or understandings are good.

The Bible *becomes* the word of God when one personally encounters God through it.

