The Purpose in Creating this Website

[TLDR] CLIFFNOTES: While many Christians *happily promote* an "all or nothing" view of scripture, many Christians also *suffer* from this view. I seek to offer an intellectually palatable model of Biblical inspiration for modern Christians in an age of science. My goal is not to prove to the world I am right or convince conservatives or liberals to turn from some imagined heresy on their part, but simply to help people struggling to make sense of the Bible as it is traditionally understood in the Church. I also have Faith in Jesus as God's Son and my Savior and pray that God may use me to plant seeds or remove some obstacles to belief. Afterall, he desires the salvation of all people and I can't help but wanting to share the Gospel with my neighbors.

While I respect the many pious evangelicals and conservative Christians who love the Lord with all their heart, and who do His work day in and day out, I do not have a fond view of the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy or some fundamentalist type thinking and theology. Reading Genesis 1-11 as literal history is really just the tip of the iceberg. I feel some conservative ideology does a disservice to the Church by misinterpreting and obfuscating the purpose and true meaning of Scripture in parts. It also puts many Christians in a precarious situation that has resulted in some rejecting their faith. Some fundamentalist positions also justifiably turn Christianity into a laughing stock in academic circles. My goal is to share my thoughts and views on faith, theology and history that I have acquired over decades of reading and research. I spent a considerable amount of time conducting personal research into field of New Testament studies and that will naturally make up the brunt of this website. Since I think the Bible is inspired by God I have always spent a lot of time studying it and reading scholarly literature about it I will offer a viable alternative to inerrancy, hopefully challenge intellectual poverty as normative for basic Christian belief and address some of the popular misconceptions about Biblical inspiration. I will examine the Bible and occasionally look at potential errors in detail and anticipate evangelical responses to them. I do this not for the sake of exposing the Bible as a skeptic might, but in an effort to emphasize how to use and interpret it in our daily lives as our Sacred Scripture. Being a Christian, to steal a line that I believe Marcus Borg borrowed from somebody else, should not mean believing forty-nine problematic statements before breakfast! We should not be forced, on intellectual grounds, to bury our heads in the sand. Ostriches don't actually do this and neither should we.

I also believe that while many Christians *happily promote* an "all or nothing" view of scripture, many Christians also *suffer* from this view. When studying science or religion or reading the Bible,

we often encounter potential errors and moral difficulties within the text. This has led many a Christian to feel that they needed to choose between their faith and their intellect at some time or another. This should not be the case and I will attempt to provide a way of looking at the Bible that is more tenable for people who both recognize there are errors and problems within but that don't wish relegate it solely to the ever-growing dustbin of other purely-human, religious writings. A lot of Christians who start out as gung-ho evangelicals, can succumb to doubts and lose their faith over the issue of inerrancy.   I hope this work helps to show struggling believers that an "all or nothing" philosophy when it comes to scripture is not the only viable option. In fact, it is not even the most reasonable when the evidence is properly assessed.

I also hope that some skeptics will read these writings and understand that the Bible does not need to be inerrant to be inspired. But alas, if anyone is looking for proof that the Bible is God's word you will not find that here. As Raymond Brown wrote, "This may disappoint those of you who think proof is needed that the Bible is the word of God—no such proof is possible beyond biblical self-claim and Church doctrine. It is a matter of faith."[1]

Even here, the phrase "biblical self-claim" must be carefully qualitied as the Bible is a collection of individual books. It is my contention that the historical-critical method *can* be applied to scripture—in fact—it *should* be. In order to fully understand what God is trying to teach us in a passage, the first step is to certainly to try to understand what the author himself was saying. This requires interpreting the work in its historical context, using all the tools available to historians.

I do also accept a canonical dimension to scripture,[2] meaning that we must look at the big picture of what it teachers (the forest over the trees) but at the same time, there is a "canon within the canon" for all practical intents and purposes. Some works of the Bible are simply far more normative and influential than others in my life and faith. The Gospels and Paul come to mind over some of the more obscure books of the Old Testament in modern Christian circles. As Christians, we do, after all, believe we are under a new dispensation.

When we debate or try to prove a point, often our pride and intellect can get in the way. Sometimes it can become about us, and our words, "words led out into battle against other words,"[3] I pray that this book serves the Lord, is an act of His will and is written strictly out of love and compassion for the Church.

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[1] Raymond E. Brown, *The Critical meaning of the Bible*, pg. 3,
[2] As an example, not all Old Testament authors believed in an afterlife, but collectively the Bible teaches one. The Bible also seems to temper itself and Christian beliefs at times (e.g. Paul and James on faith and works, the existence of a fourfold Gospel, Christian freedom from the Law and proper behavior (2 Peter 3:16-17).
[3] One of my favorite quotes from C.S. Lewis is from Till We Have Faces, "I ended my first book with the words 'no answer.' I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words."