

PLENARY DISCUSSION ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY

D. A. CARSON, JOHN FRAME, AND BEN WITHERINGTON III*

Schreiner: All right, it's ten after ten, so we're going to begin our panel discussion at this time. I'm not going to reintroduce our speakers, but I want to say to those participating on the panel—of course, I invite you all as you wish to answer the question but you can also interact with one another as we proceed. So my first question is: What are the practical spiritual implications of pursuing a study of the text without an inerrantist framework? Anyone want to get us going here?

Frame: Inerrancy is a theological view, and I think that before the word “inerrancy” was commonly used, people were reading the Bible with great profit, reading parts of the Bible with great profit. The profit comes through the living word of God, which is living and powerful. It comes through the Spirit working with the word of God, and we all began our lives without a theological conception of inerrancy, but we heard Bible stories, we heard the people teaching us about Jesus, and that's a powerful influence on our lives that changes our lives, and eventually, I think it ought to lead us to ask what the Bible is, and that leads to discussions of inerrancy. But there's lots of value to be received from the Bible no matter where you are in your spiritual growth.

Carson: I think that it is almost impossible to answer that question unless we have an agreed definition of inerrancy in the first place. Ben's captivating lecture this morning insisted toward the beginning, that inerrancy is bound up with—at least in part—precisionism and exactitudes (that was your expression, I think), whereas I just don't know anybody in the circles in which I move, who would attach those words to the definition of inerrancy—I don't know *anybody*. To me that was a straw man. And so if you ask—in fact that's one of the things I said in my lecture—so that if you ask, what is the difference that it makes if you don't have *that* definition of inerrancy, then I would say that provided you bow right across the board to the authority and truthfulness of Scripture in all that it asserts, or something of that order, then it doesn't make much difference. If, on the other hand, you have a rigorous, sophisticated definition of inerrancy in line with historic usages that go back to discussions between Jerome and Augustine on whether or not there are any er-

* This panel discussion among the plenary speakers took place at the annual meeting of the ETS in Baltimore, MD on November 21, 2013. Thomas R. Schreiner, ETS president-elect and James Buchanan Harrison Professor of NT Interpretation and professor of biblical theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, served as the moderator of the panel. The panelists were D. A. Carson, research professor of NT at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL; John M. Frame, J. D. Trimble Chair of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, FL; and Ben Witherington III, Jean R. Amos Professor of NT for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, KY.

rors in Scripture, there the answer was very sharply, “no, of course not, there can’t possibly be.” And if you go back to that kind of sophisticated descent of heritage of the truthfulness of Scripture, then I would argue that if you start losing inerrancy, you will end up in one of three camps. This is something that Carl Henry said toward his latter years—his ways of putting things changed across the years. On the one hand are those who affirm a sophisticated inerrancy. On the other hand there are those who don’t bow to the authority of Scripture at all. And in the middle are people who don’t like the term for one reason or another good, bad, or indifferent, but who are supernaturalists, they are Christians, they believe in the resurrection, the deity of Christ, and all of that. But they belong to a range of positions as to whether or not they are bowing in principle to Scripture in which case *de facto* they are really functioning on the inerrantist side—whether they call it that or not—or gradually they’re slipping away to a position where they’re standing more and more over Scripture and in which case they are beginning to slip to the other side. So where you fit on that spectrum is pretty important when you try to answer the question that you asked, it seems to me.

Witherington: I guess, kind of responding to Don a little bit, here’s what I would say. I don’t know a lot of people that have a sophisticated doctrine of inerrancy; I live in the South. What they mean by inerrancy day after day, week after week, in my hearing, is not what Don just said. And I would just remind you that we have a lot of things going on in Kentucky. Here’s the problem: in a biblically illiterate age, the term “inerrancy” connotes to most modern people a modern definition of error, okay? That’s *de facto*, whatever *de jure* may be. That’s *de facto*, and therefore what happens in a discussion with laypeople or church people, or even young theological students or Christian college students, is that you spend your time explaining how this is not an error and this is not an error, because actually they didn’t mean this precisely or that precisely. And you *do* die the death of a thousand qualifications; that’s exactly what happens. And so my concern is not just, “Can we have a definition of inerrancy that does justice to the Scriptures and indeed deals with the particulars of the Scriptures?” I think you can. I happily sign the faith statement when I’ve taught at Gordon-Conwell or Ashland or Asbury and that word is in there. I don’t have a problem with that. My problem is, it puts the emphasis on the wrong syllable, and where the emphasis needs to be is on the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture. That’s where it needs to be.

Carson: And my response to that would be—in fact, this is one of the things I said in my paper, and John said something similar as well—that if one avoids a word because it needs careful definition and qualification, there are going to be few words left in theological discussions. Start with “God,” or “justification,” or “truth,” or whatever. In other words, again, I think that’s building up a straw man. Of course the issue is truthfulness, but when so many people want to avoid talk of inerrancy because, at the end of the day they also want to avoid talk about truthfulness, the number of people who hold your position, where actually how you handle Scripture on most fronts is not far removed from how I or John or others would

handle Scripture, then it becomes a picky debate. But for most people who are denying inerrancy, the weight is far more serious and I don't think that it is helpful to say that because the word has to be well-qualified and well-defined therefore it can't be used. If we use that sort of argumentation, we are going to have to stop using "justification" and "God," too.

Witherington: Okay, let's take the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy. Would you call that an inerrant statement on inerrancy?

Carson: I don't know anybody who does.

Witherington: Okay. So we don't have an inerrant statement on inerrancy.

Carson: We don't have an inerrant statement on God, either.

Witherington: That's true, because we're human beings. So I'm not opposed to clarification and qualification, but I guess my question is, do we need to have, is inerrancy a "doorstop"? Is that what it is, the term? Is it a sort of boundary marker, a shibboleth, beyond which we should not go if we are good evangelical Christians. If that's the function it has, okay, but again, it's telling us what it is not; it's not telling us what it is.

Carson: Well, I would hate to call it a shibboleth; again, I don't know any sophisticated thinker who thinks of it as a shibboleth. God save us from shibboleths! Moreover, I would also go further and say that some of the material that you gave about how "Word of God"—ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ and related expressions—is used in the NT as compared with the way it's used in systematic theology raises a much bigger set of issues about how the vocabulary of different scriptural writers is often a bit different from the vocabulary of systematic theology, for all kinds of reasons—good, bad, and indifferent—and has to be addressed on a much broader plane than sort of gently and humorously poking fun at it, and the way the "sanctification" word group, for example, is used in the Reformers is not consistently the way the "sanctification" word group is used in the NT. But that does not mean that there is no doctrine of sanctification in the NT. There are passages like Philippians 3, which clearly talk about progressive holiness even though none of the "holiness" word groups is used. So there is a doctrine of sanctification even where the word is not used, and yet sometimes when the word is used in the NT, it's positional sanctification and nothing like what is meant in Reformed theology. And so that kind of need to sort out how vocabulary is used in the NT versus how in syntheses in later confessions the vocabulary works a little differently—that's part of the common problem of talking about any sort of confessional Christianity.

Witherington: I agree with that—that's fine. Of course being a NT scholar, one of the problems I really have is with later systematic theology reading things back into the text or using the terms in such different ways that the NT writers wouldn't even

recognize the terms—now *that* I find problematic and needs precision and discussion. I absolutely agree with that. And for, I would reckon, all three of us here, what's primary is biblical theology. What's one step removed from that is later confessional theology or systematic theology or historical theology, etc.

Carson: Well, I'd let John go take another shot on that one.

Frame: Well, it depends on what you mean by biblical theology and so on. I understand biblical theology not quite as Ben does, I think. I think he is suggesting that biblical theology requires a kind of general grasp of the whole Bible and so on. I see that more in terms of systematic theology. Biblical theology, as I have been taught, is the tracing of the history of redemption through individual eras of biblical history. And so, is there a justification for saying that everything boils down to biblical theology? Well, you can argue that biblical theology boils down to exegetical theology, that you need to read each verse and do all the exegesis before you can tell what the biblical theology is. Of course, none of those disciplines is epistemologically neutral. We bring presuppositions and assumptions and all to them. And what that is saying is, in a way, that exegetical theology and biblical theology are subject to systematics, because it's usually in the context of systematics that we formulate what those presuppositions are. So I'm not all that keen about saying which discipline is primary. It's the word of God that's primary, it's Scripture that's primary, and the ways in which we study it are all mutually reinforcing and mutually dependent.

Schreiner: I think another issue that arose is a matter of starting points. Do we start with history, do we start with theology? Our theology comes from the text, so perhaps you could say more about how we start our understanding, or where we begin in our understanding of inerrancy. Do we begin with history, theology? How do they interface? I know that's a huge question but—maybe a few comments.

Frame: Well, I resonate with some of the things Ben said about beginning with history. But again, history is not a neutral discipline. People do history with a lot of different epistemological baggage. The way a Marxist does history is different from the way a Ritschlian does history from the way Christians from various traditions do history, and so I think that those questions have to be separated out. So again, I think when you're talking about "starting point," you can't talk about some human discipline as your starting point. You have to talk about the Word of God—and I'm sorry if that sounds too general or ahistorical or something—but you need to talk about God's word, what God says about history. The Bible says a lot about God's providence, his governing history, God coming and telling human beings what happened in history, and why it happened, and so on. And I think that revelation that we have about history is what ought to be the beginning of our theological formulations. But if you say "begin with history," and you mean *that* kind of process, I can agree.

Carson: I think that there is an ambiguity in the question; again, when you speak of “beginning point,” “starting point,” do you mean the starting point in our processes of formulating something? Or do you mean the starting point as God progressively discloses himself in the past? Or do you mean the starting point of the disciplines as you put them together? Or the starting point in my psyche—and the starting point in my psyche can be very different to me. The Lord may disclose himself to me and save me very quickly, so that my salvation that reorients all my thinking from an atheist background or something like that is really highly experiential with maybe a fairly minimal grasp of a lot of things and that becomes the beginning point for me. It’s my starting point, but that doesn’t mean that that’s the starting point I want to establish necessarily in the classroom. First of all, you have to have an experience like mine and then we’ll go from there. Again, we have to get some precision as to what we mean by “starting point.” But because these things are so entangled together, the really important thing that Ben said, it seems to me, is to repeat again and again and again and again that God is the God who has disclosed himself in space-time history. The truth is not abstract thoughts abstracted from history, nor is it historical details without entailments or anything like that, but God has disclosed himself in space-time history and has given also words, prophetic words, to explain what that history means and its significance, and has chosen to unpack these things and develop these things in lament and wisdom and oracle and apocalyptic and so on. But it is not like, let’s say, Buddhism, where you don’t have to have historical non-negotiables in order to make sense of Buddhist thought. If you get rid of Krishna in Hinduism, you haven’t destroyed Hinduism. There are literally millions of gods. Go down the street to a Shiva temple instead! You get rid of Jesus or the resurrection, you don’t have any Christianity left, and these historical non-negotiables have to be put within a framework of whole thought that includes theology and God and what we should think about ourselves and right and wrong, and goal and destination, and history going somewhere, its teleological view rather than a cyclical view—all these kinds of things. Now within that complexity I don’t know exactly what “starting point” means. I do agree that history is fundamental to the matrix in which God has disclosed himself.

Witherington: I guess part of my concern, which prompted the way I wrote this paper, is that in a postmodern and even an increasingly post-Christian situation, it seems to me that the denial of the importance of history is evermore ringing in our ears. “You ask me how I know it’s true, it’s true within my heart.” I’m sorry, but that’s just narcissism. The truth of the matter is that if Jesus did not rise from the dead on an early Easter morning, then we should all go home and there shouldn’t be an Evangelical Theological Society. There is an irreducible amount of history that is fundamental and foundational, and I’m sure we all agree at that. But when we’re talking about a starting point, I think you just have to dive in, because as Don just said, theology, ethics, history are so interwoven in the Scriptures that you can’t just neatly parse them out. I mean, I even have a somewhat allergic reaction to having a commentary series called a “theological commentary series.” Why? That’s assuming that we could do theology out of the text while ignoring the history or

other aspects of the text. I don't really think that does justice to even the theology in the text, and here's why: each of the writers of Scripture are theologizing out of a particular historical situation and into a particular historical situation. And the more we can give a thick description of the historical situation of both the author and audience the better we will understand the theologizing and ethicizing that's in the NT—it is so interwoven. But one of my real concerns in this paper was the denial of the importance of history and of doing history as part of the foundation of our faith. That was my big concern.

Frame: Could I say a word in favor of “He lives within my heart”? I hesitate to do that; I do that with fear and trembling, but I really do think that there is an inescapable subjective dimension of theology. I think the work of the Spirit on the heart of the believer enables him to have a much different way of understanding the Scriptures than people who come to the Scriptures from the standpoint of unbelief.

Witherington: And I would certainly not disagree. As a good Wesleyan who does believe in subjective experience, I certainly would not at all disagree with that. But what I am disagreeing with is the idea that the Scripture means what it means to me and it's my personal experience by which I exegete everything, without necessarily listening to other people or reading commentaries, or whatever. It's the *radical* subjectivity of *just* emphasizing experience that I was concerned with.

Frame: Regeneration doesn't give you a complete theology ...

Witherington: No.

Frame: ... in itself, but it leads you to think about history and theology in different ways. And there's another sense of “starting point”—I was listening to Don to see if he covered it, and maybe he did—it is the question of the ultimate authority for theology, and the ultimate authority for history, and the ultimate authority for all of these disciplines. It is, of course, the regenerate person who recognizes God as the ultimate authority, recognizes God's revelation as the way he gets that authority to us. So I think that always affects the way that we carry out any of these disciplines.

Carson: Sometimes, too, our perception of the dominant dangers of our age shape the way we formulate the gospel itself. When we perceive that there are a lot of dangers in postmodern subjectivism, then we start insisting more and more on the absoluteness of non-negotiable truth that is actually there bound up with intentionalities of the writers, and this sort of thing, and then we stop to reflect on the witness of the Spirit in Romans 8:15 and 16, and the natural man doesn't understand the things of God and requires the Spirit to do so, and so on. Then we realize there's another set of dangers, too, bound up with a merely rationalistic approach to the faith, where you utter the truth but remain unconverted. So it seems to me that very often there are multiple dangers that call from us an emphasis on one part of the biblical self-disclosure of God when there are multiple dangers, in fact, and

awareness of them will help us a little more accurately put together a balanced picture on some of these matters.

Schreiner: Perhaps we could reflect a bit on the relationship between inerrancy and genre. We think back as a Society on the Gundry controversy and midrash in the '80s. So I just want to leave it general: What would you say to us regarding inerrancy and genre? How should we think about those matters?

Witherington: Well, I guess I would say first of all, we need to know what genres are in Scripture. We need to have enough literary chops and sensitivity to be able to recognize what kind of literature, kinds of literature, we're dealing with in Scripture, because different genres of literature have different conventions and should be read differently. A purely flat view of Scripture that is not literarily sensitive to different genres is not a very helpful view of Scripture and leads to trouble. So the first question I would ask is: What genres of literature do we have in Scripture? And, yes, we have fiction in Scripture: they're called parables. So the truth can be conveyed in all kinds of literary genres. Do we also have myth in Scripture? Well, some OT scholars would say we have fragments of myth about Leviathan and others in the OT as well. Can truth be conveyed through myth? I think it can. We could debate whether there is actually any myth in Scripture or not. But the first task, for me anyway as an exegete, is trying to figure out what are the different genres we have in Scripture. And therefore what are the appropriate kinds of information we would expect to get out of that genre. You don't go to the phonebook to get the definition of a word; it's a different genre of literature. So you need to know what kind of literature you're dealing with.

Frame: I think when we're talking about inerrancy, it's important—as we're trying to understand the truth that comes out of a particular text—it's important for us to ask, “What does that text claim to be true?” This is my philosophical background; we're always talking about truth claims. You have a sentence before you and that sentence—if it's an indicative sentence, at least—*claims* that certain things are true. Now, what it claims is going to be very different depending on the genre. Obviously, when Jesus tells a parable, we don't assume that that parable is making a historical claim—that the sower actually went out to sow on a particular day. You can ask, “When was that?” and “What was he growing?” and “What were the seeds?” and so on and so forth. That's entirely illegitimate; it's not making *claims* about when the sower went out or what seeds he was sowing. But there's a larger truth to be made and the parable claims to be—because Jesus claims to be—teaching that truth. So that's the way, I think, that questions about genre can affect the way we read Scripture. And, of course, inerrancy is all about the truth that comes out of Scripture, in its different segments.

Witherington: Let me tell you a quick story. It was just after Neil Armstrong had walked on the moon, and a friend and I were riding on the Blue Ridge Parkway in the mountains of North Carolina in my dad's old '55 Chevy. And the clutch blew

out. Now if you know about the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina, you know there are no gas stations of any kind. And so when the clutch blew out, my countenance fell, as the Bible would say. And we had to be pushed off the parkway into a filling station, and we decided to hitchhike back to the middle of the state—we lived in High Point. And we were picked up by a really elderly mountain couple, driving an old '48 Plymouth, and we got in the backseat. Now, my friend Doug who was with me—he's now a lawyer in North Carolina—loved to talk. His first question to the driver was, "Well, what'd you think about Neil Armstrong walking on the moon? All those beautiful pictures of the earth, blue and revolving and round," etc. And he said, "That's all fake. It was done in a TV studio. Everybody knows the world's not round." Now my friend Doug did not recognize an invincible ignorance when he saw it. So he started arguing—I kept saying, "Shut up, Doug, we need this ride," you know?—he said, "Why don't you think the world is round?" "Says in the book of Revelations"—now, beware anybody that starts a sentence like that. First of all, "Revelations" (plural) is not the name of that book, OK? "Says in the book of Revelations, the angels stand on the four corners of the earth—can't be round then, can it, mister?" Doug kept arguing; I kept hoping we'd keep getting this ride, you know? What was this man's problem? He assumed that Revelation 6 was teaching cosmology when in fact it was teaching theology. It was telling us that the angels of God will gather people from all points on the compass, not trying to teach cosmology. It was teaching us about eschatology and theology, okay? The problem is he didn't know what kind of literature apocalyptic prophecy is. He didn't know how to read it properly, and so of course he read his own modernist assumptions into the text; hence the problem. Well, I think genre sensitivity is key to knowing what kind of information you can get out of the text.

Carson: To come back a little to the question that Tom phrased. If you try to make inerrancy the scalpel by which you judge all matters, then it seems to me you're asking too much of it. In my view, a rich and sophisticated doctrine of inerrancy is part of biblical fidelity. It's bound up with the way Jesus saw Scripture, and so on. Yet, at the same time, if somebody really does—honestly, genuinely, in a godly fashion—espouse inerrancy, whether he or she would call it that or not, but then make some sort of classic genre mistake like this interesting gentleman in the Blue Mountains, or something more sophisticated about midrash, and then as a result says a lot of things that really are not very defensible, that are (from my perspective) silly, not in accordance with the truth, not in accordance with what the Scripture says, and so on, they have not thereby defied inerrancy, even though their conclusions are in fact far removed from Scripture. You can say that they're far removed from Scripture, but you can't say they've defied inerrancy. That is why a statement of faith that is finally bound up only with inerrancy is not adequate to preserve orthodoxy. Jehovah's Witnesses defend inerrancy! So it really is important to realize that inerrancy, as important as it is, is not to be wielded as the universal scalpel; it's more complicated than that.

Witherington: I agree.

Schreiner: Let me ask a somewhat related question: if someone is convinced that pseudonymous writings were accepted as authoritative in the ancient world, and say they argued that Second Peter was a transparent fiction but it was still authoritative and wholly true in its teaching, does that stance pertain to inerrancy, or would you say the kind of thing that Don just said in terms of genre?

Carson: Well, on that issue I have written fairly extensively—on the nature of pseudepigraphy—and here I am pretty largely in agreement with Ben. That is, Bart Ehrman is right in saying that pseudepigraphy/pseudonymity in the NT era is really meant to deceive. Where we would disagree with Bart is in saying that there is such pseudonymity in the NT. There have been many pious liberals who have argued that pseudonymity was recognized *as such*, and therefore if there is a pseudonymous document in the NT, because it would've been recognized as such, it was an acceptable genre, recognized as such the NT, therefore it was not being deceptive, nobody actually thought it was written by Paul or Peter or whomever, then I would argue that *if you could demonstrate that*, that could still be a legitimate form of truth-telling—if you can demonstrate that. But the evidence against it is overwhelming, that as a result I come out very, very strongly on the other side. Although there is lots of pseudonymity in Second Temple Judaism, it's bound up with certain genres. It's bound up, for example, with certain kinds of apocalyptic, and so on. To find letters in the tractate letter form or the personal letter form that are pseudonymous—it's just about impossible to find any examples. The examples that people cite, like the letter of Aristeeus, really are something else again. So I would argue that pseudonymity was in fact meant to deceive, and that there is no example of it in the NT.

Witherington: And I would agree with him.

Carson: Shocking, isn't it?

Witherington: No. We had a good education, Don.

Frame: What about the OT? We have Ecclesiastes, where the author takes the name of Solomon. At least some very conservative teachers that I had said that that was not historical attestation. Is it different in that context?

Carson: I would apply the same criteria. That is to say, if you're very conservative and hold that Solomon did write it, no problem. If you hold that Solomon did not write it, then you must adduce reasons why it would have been recognized as non-Solomonic or else you are falling into the same sort of trap. But it must be a text-based exposure of valid reasons why it would not have been recognized as such; otherwise, it seems to me, you do fall into the same sort of trap again.

Witherington: One of the traps I think we do fall into that happens regularly is, our modern assumptions about author and audience are often assumed to be the same in regard to how authorship and audience worked in antiquity. And I guess one of the growth areas in NT study is increasingly learning the role of scribes both in the Ancient Near East and in the Greco-Roman world, and the importance of scribes and the sort of spectrum of what kind of liberties they were given when they were writing for other people or people other than themselves, and the role of scribes in royal courts, for example, who would've been perhaps the compilers of documents like Proverbs, which has proverbs from a variety of persons in it. I think one of the things that we need to be cautious about when we're dealing with issues of authorship and audience is, we do need to ask the historical question, "What were the parameters of authorship and relationship between an author and a scribe?" and I think that's still in the gestation period. I think we're still learning more about that, and the role that scribes could and did play in the NT era and in the OT era. And so, just a word of caution about just assuming that when a document is ascribed to this particular person, then he was the only person that had anything to do with it. We need to be cautious about that.

Carson: I agree with that, although sometimes, for some people, that's the "nose of the camel in the tent." And it just bounds into absolutely everything. So, in the NT, "I, Tertius, who wrote these things greet you"—that's in Paul's letter to the Romans. Now, normally, when my secretary takes down one of my letters, she does not say something like, "It was really nice to talk with you again, Tim. I send my greetings as well." I mean, that just doesn't happen. And how much freedom there is in these areas; nowadays, so much stuff is done by e-mail that you use secretaries less and less and less. But I have an assistant, for example, where I will often tell him, "Write to so-and-so and tell him such-and-such": one sentence. And he writes a nice paragraph, and so on. But nevertheless, it's got to get my signature before it's mine. Once it's my signature, it *is* mine, even though in fact he wrote it. So even today, we have some things like that. But every once in a while I say, "Write so-and-so something or another, and & sign it 'PP.'" So then, he writes it, he puts it all in, and puts then "/PP" and my name. And that means I haven't seen it. And it's a recognized convention. So there might be something in there that would not be quite the way I would have said it, and I don't like to be blamed for anything that I've said even if it's said extremely well, unless in fact I actually did say it, or at least approve it. So there are conventions along these lines, and many people have remarked, for example, that some of locutions in the Pastoral Epistles sound remarkably Lukan, which has led some people to argue that Luke may have been an amanuensis, a scribe, for Paul in the writing of these things. It's not provable; the evidence isn't strong enough to be certain about these things, but one should at least be careful about overstatement of what the evidence is.

Frame: I agree with that.

Witherington: I think that's right. And, for me, the bottom line is, "Did this document come from the mind of this inspired person?" Not, "Is the verbiage exactly the verbiage of that person?" I'm okay with the idea that Luke wrote the Pastoral Epistles on behalf of Paul. But as Don says, this is not something that you could call "proved." It's a *possibility*—it may even be a probability if you do a detailed study of the vocabulary and the grammar and the syntax and all that sort of stuff—but it's not *proved*, certainly not proved. But I don't think there's a problem with Paul and Luke doing something; the point is, the Pastoral Epistles reflect the mind of Paul.

Carson: Again, I'd tighten it up a bit. I agree in general terms. But if, after Luke has done his amanuensis stuff, Paul looks over the whole thing and signs his name to it—as he does sign his name on some letters, you know, "This is my signature," you know—then that really does become the words of Paul in terms of their ownership. Something just as vague as "the mind of Paul in the words of somebody else" without any sort of connection a little more tightly than that, yes, I do begin to have some problems with that.

Witherington: I think you're right about that. The way I like to put it is in the Pastoral Epistles, the voice is the voice of Paul, but the hands are the hands of Luke. That's the way I would put it. And I assume they worked together. So, if Paul had objected to something that gets said in the Pastoral Epistles, it would've had to be redone.

Carson: Well, I mean, you could say that much about Romans and Tertius.

Witherington: Sure. Exactly, exactly. So, the question is, "What is the spectrum or scope of freedom that an amanuensis had working with a biblical author in producing a document?" and different persons will have different opinions about that.

Carson: May I add one more thing to that? I think that it is really important to remember the multiplicity of modes of inspiration in Scripture.

Witherington: Right.

Carson: So that God gives Jeremiah words which he then dictates to Baruch and they get written down. So here you have virtual dictation form; and so, when in fact the scroll is destroyed by the enemy, you as the reader are supposed to laugh, because—does that destroy the message, has God forgotten what he said? So, in fact, God gives it to Jeremiah again, Jeremiah gives it to Baruch, Baruch writes it down. I mean, God has a pretty good memory! You haven't lost anything. The only person who has lost anything is dear old Baruch who's got to write this stuff down again. On the other hand, that does not mean that the way that David wrote Psalm 23 is he came in one night really, really tired, and was going to bed, and a voice came to him and said, "Not yet, David, I want you to take down some dictation."

“All right, all right.” “The Lord” (“the Lord”), “is my” (“is my”), “shepherd” (“shepherd”), “I shall” (“I shall”), “lack nothing.” I mean, there were different modes of inspiration, and some of them are in highly apocalyptic terms that the human author didn’t even understand: ask Daniel! So that when he’s asked, God says, “Actually, Daniel, it’s none of your business; this is for a later generation.” So there are different modes of inspiration, but we still want to insist that at the end result, it’s the word that is God-breathed by whatever mode it came through.

Witherington: It’s not the process, it’s the final product that’s the issue.

Carson: That’s correct.

Witherington: I would especially stress that when you read something like Luke 1:1–4, we are told that Luke did research. He consulted eyewitnesses, and the early preachers of the Word. He didn’t just sit in his study and say, “Come on, Lord, give me Luke-Acts; I know you can do it.” That didn’t happen. He went out and consulted eyewitnesses because he wasn’t one. He consulted apostles; he consulted early preachers of the Word; he did research. This is my favorite text when I tell students they actually need to study.

Schreiner: Let me return to the question again from this perspective to say, “All right, I hear you saying pseudonymity is not historically plausible or persuasive.” Let’s say, however, we have someone in our community or institution who disagrees with that judgment. They think it *is* historically plausible and yet what is written is true. Does such a judgment itself impinge upon inerrancy at all? Or is that a different question? Do you see what I’m saying?

Witherington: I think this illustrates what I’m pointing out. Different people have different definitions of what counts as inerrancy, and what doesn’t count as inerrancy, and literary genre is one of the areas where this definitely happens—without question. It’s a step to go even further than that and say, “No you have to accept *my* reading on what the nature of pseudepigrapha is, and if you don’t agree with *me* about whether pseudepigrapha intended to deceive or didn’t intend to deceive, then you’re out—you no longer are an inerrantist, and you couldn’t sign an inerrancy faith statement. See, that’s a third-order question, it seems to me. The historical question came first, then there’s some theological deduction about it, then you’re going to have different people with different definitions of what counts as inerrancy. Me, personally, if I run across a person who says, “Yes, there is pseudepigrapha in the NT, but it tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” then we are going to disagree on the literary issue and the genre issue. Do I have to right to say to that person, “You’re wrong about inerrancy; your definition is too broad, and not narrow enough”? Well, I think reasonable persons can debate that.

Carson: I’m a little tighter than that. 2 Peter places the author within the experience of the Transfiguration and so on, and avows again and again to be telling the

truth. If a person says that this is a recognized literary genre of pseudonymity and nobody would have believed that this was making a claim of that order—that it was written in Peter’s name even though Peter didn’t write it and everybody would’ve recognized it—then I would’ve said that there is no entailment for inerrancy at all. But, on the other hand, I don’t want him teaching on my faculty because he is a lousy historian! So, in other words, you don’t use the inerrancy scalpel to get rid of the bloke. He just has not done his homework on the nature of first-century literature. So, you don’t want to use inerrancy as the only scalpel, it seems to me.

Witherington: I think it’s one thing to talk about who you want on a faculty at a seminary or divinity school. It’s another thing to talk about who can be member of a Society like this, which includes laypeople and clergy, and professors as well. I think those are two different issues on something like this.

Carson: True, but unless you have a detailed statement of faith, at the end of the day, the leadership of the organization has got to decide where you draw those functional lines. And in principle it’s the same thing.

Schreiner: Do you want to add anything to that, John?

Frame: Well, I don’t feel competent to add very much to these scholars who have studied this matter, but I think when you talk about pseudepigraphy or anything else, it tends to provoke a broader discussion of other things. Why is it that you have this view of pseudepigraphy? What kinds of arguments do you have? What are your standards for evaluating evidence? What evidence do you appeal to? For me, it would depend on how he argues his case, whether his argument is compatible with inerrancy or not.

Carson: I think that’s right.

Schreiner: A broader question: is inerrancy still important today? Instead of defending the Bible, should we just proclaim the Bible and let the Bible defend itself?

Witherington: I’m clear on defending the *faith*. I remember what Jerome said about defending the Bible. He said “Defend the Bible? That’s about like defending a lion.” I’m clear about the defense of the faith, and I think there’s plenty of times where there’s a kind of defending of the Bible when it’s being badly misrepresented in various ways. I think if you want to call that a defense of the Bible, that’s fine. The Bible itself doesn’t talk about defending the *Bible*; it does talk about defending the *faith*—which I would see as a broader category.

Carson: I would argue that one of the elements of the faith is in fact what the faith says about the Bible. And the Bible itself then does become the “norming norm,” to use the category of the Reformers, so that there is a place for a sophisticated, coherent doctrine of Scripture precisely because Scripture is, finally, the locus of

God's self-disclosure as it has come down. We have no access to that oral declaration of God given to Jeremiah or to Isaiah, other than the biblical witness, and that is the norming norm. So, I agree that one should not become *defensive* about the Bible and cast that *over against* proclamation, but there are many contexts in which faithful proclamation will include some information, and so on, to people who are pretty skeptical about the trustworthiness of the Bible, and so on. Especially if you live in a culture like ours where there are many, many, many voices that are tearing down the faith. If you are on the campus of the University of North Carolina, then one of the things you have to do when you're speaking to students there—as I have done—is to address some of things that Bart Ehrman has raised.

Witherington: Absolutely.

Carson: You just have to do it as part of your proclamation of the gospel. Whereas in some contexts that might not be quite so urgent a matter. So, one has to remember that a faithful doctrine of Scripture is not only part of the heritage of Christian confessionalism, but it also is access to the norming norm, and one can't duck that.

Witherington: Well, I agree with you. I've had the same debate at my alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with Mr. Ehrman, and I agree with that. There are contexts where you absolutely have to hold up the veracity of Scripture in various ways; I think that's exactly right. Because what's happening is deconstruction from the other side and attempts of whittling away at any kind of truth claim or veracity in the Scripture, and so there are certain contexts where you have to deal with the deconstruction; I think that's right.

Frame: There is a broader sense in which any preaching of the Bible is a defense of its truth because the Bible presents what it presents with its rationale. It presents the truth in such a way as to be persuasive. I think when we preach it, whatever we're preaching about, whether we're preaching about ethics, or whether we're preaching about justification or sanctification, we ought to be setting forth that truth in a way that convinces people just as Scripture itself does. That is, of course, if we do that enough, on a broad enough basis, that is a definition of the Bible's truth, or if we choose to use the term, the Bible's inerrancy.

Carson: And along the lines of what John has said, I think that it is a weakness of certain forms of a so-called apologetic evangelism where you go in and spend so much time trying to do what used to be called pre-evangelism, that, at the end of the day, you never actually proclaim the God of the Bible and the gospel of God. That's a huge mistake.

Witherington: I agree.

Carson: It's within that heritage that the old utterance that came from Jerome and came down through Spurgeon (and a whole lot of others, I would assume)—"defend a lion"—makes a great deal of sense. The Bible is powerful to persuade. God has ordained through the foolishness of the Word *proclaimed* to save those who believe. And that really is an important complementary thing to say.

Witherington: Which is what I was talking about before, so, yes.

Schreiner: Let's come back to the word "inerrancy." Some say that the word is rationalistic, modernist, and negative, that perhaps we should use another term instead of using the word "inerrancy." Any response?

Witherington: Is there a difference in the minds of any of you all on this panel between talking about the total truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture, and using the term "inerrancy"? Or are those simply synonyms?

Frame: To me those are synonyms, but in the current theological discussion the term "truth" can sometimes be removed from the idea of correctness and setting forth the facts as they really happened. And "truth" can become a big metaphysical concept, it can become a very broad thing. I think the term "inerrancy" has the benefit of making it more precise in saying that the Scripture doesn't make mistakes and Scripture doesn't deceive. Those are the two things that are perhaps better expressed by the term "inerrancy," but I think we can do without it, to tell you the truth. I think it's the modern debates that keep us from using the term "truth" in such an obvious way, and we have to retreat to more technical terms like "infallibility" and "inerrancy." But, you know, given a different context of debate and discussion, we could do away with the term "inerrancy."

Witherington: What Don said at the very beginning seems to me to make sense in this particular situation, namely, we need precise definitions of what we mean, carefully articulated definitions of what we mean. And we need that just as much for the word "truth" as we need it for the word "inerrancy." Okay? Okay. So I would much prefer to put the em-PHA-sis on the "truth" syllable. Whereas I don't object to the use of the term "inerrancy," I just don't see it as carrying the same freight, at least in some of the circles I am—and that's a purely subjective judgment, an anecdotal judgment. If I tell people, "This book tells us the truth, and it's trustworthy about matters of history and theology and ethics, and that's what you need to know about this book." And I'm happy to go on and define what I mean by "truth" and "trustworthiness" and "reliability" and all of that sort of stuff. For me, that's where we ought to put the emphasis.

Carson: In large measure I agree. And I agree with John that it is possible to articulate a faithful doctrine of Scripture without using the word "inerrant," of course. On the other hand, I would also want to argue that it is the responsibility of every theologian-preacher—theologian, now, in the broad sense, including biblical schol-

ars and so on, not just systematicians—not only to be faithful to Scripture in his own time, but also to be aware of the heritage of Christian confessionalism which comes from the early church right through generation after generation after generation, ultimately through the Reformation, the evangelical awakenings and whatever, with various creedal heritages, and so on. So when people within that framework want to say, “I want to defend the truthfulness of Scripture, but I’m not too comfortable with inerrancy,” and then write a lot of books trying to argue that inerrancy is a late addition, it came about in the 1860s or it came about in the 1920s or whatever. Many, many books taking pot-shots like that all the time. I want to say, number one, that’s bad history. There’s just too much really good research out there that says, “That’s bad history.” And number two, I want to belong to the heritage of Christian confessionalism that uses terms *of* Christian confessionalism in an historical confessional context—and one of them is “without error” and so on that really came up again and again and again and again. And—without using the English word “inerrant”—but “without errors” is there in Jerome.

Witherington: It’s there in John Wesley. John Wesley himself said that “there are those who think there are errors in Scripture but I for my part think there are none.” That’s exactly what John Wesley said. So, let me tell you what this should not be. This should not be a Reformed evangelical versus an Arminian evangelical dispute.

Carson: I agree with that, too; it should not be. Now, how we do our epistemology in that regard might be little bit different, but nevertheless in terms of the formulation, I agree with that entirely. Although there are a lot of Wesleyans who don’t agree. You are probably a minority voice in some Wesleyan circles on that account. So in the two-volume work that I mentioned before, we have one essay, a long essay, by Tom McCall, arguing the point that Ben just made, namely, that the best of the Wesleyan heritage is itself also strongly inerrantist. So, in other words, I don’t like to shy too far away from the terminology that has been used. It might have to be explained. It’s for that reason that when you even come to something like “the eternal generation of the Son,” or something like that, I know that can be abused in all kinds of ways. I know it’s got problematics when you try to tie it to *μωυοενής* and things like that. But I think there’s a place for retaining it, provided it’s defined pretty carefully, partly because you want to tie yourself back to the confessional struggles of the third and fourth century and see what is actually affirmed by it, and so on. In other words, there is a confessionalism that belongs to “the church of the living God,” which arises out of Scripture and its proclamation of the gospel of God, and I’m not eager to start avoiding the things that our fathers have used.

Schreiner: What positive contributions does inerrancy make to the academy?

Carson: Well, if we forgo saying again that we’ve got to have the right definitions of inerrancy in the first place, then I would refer you both to John’s lecture where

he speaks of inerrancy as making a godly, safe, confessional place to live; and to Bob Yarbrough's lecture last night, put within the framework not only of the academy, but also of mission work and the way third-world Christians view these things, and his ministry in Muslim countries where it is the safeguard for believers. There is a frame of reference that has to do with confidence, truth-telling, the non-negotiabilities of God's self-disclosure, what you can rely upon even when you're being persecuted and burned to death, and so on. There is a broader heritage, and it even gives you the courage to stand over against those who want to whittle away all the time. And that, in addition to its *norma normans* function. It is, at the end of the day—after we've talked about how all of these disciplines get rolled up together and they reinforce one another, at the end of the day, it's not *just* that they all reinforce one another. There is a final note of authority, and that final authority is God's self-disclosure in Scripture. That's the way we have access to the mind of God. And that, it seems to me, is another way of saying, once again, that God has disclosed himself, and I want to treat that self-disclosure with the reverence and fear and love for the truth that it itself calls for.

Witherington: It's the truth that is the final norm, the truth which is enshrined in Scripture, but is certainly much larger than Scripture: the truth about God and Christ and the Spirit, the truth about the work of redemption. It's not our definition of inerrancy that is the final norm, it's the truth that is the final norm, and I don't see that as antagonistic to a definition of inerrancy. I don't think that needs to be the case, but if I'm dealing in the academy with someone like Bart Ehrman, which I have to do fairly regularly, what I'm going to do is hold up what John talked about, the truth claims of the Scripture, and say, "Bart, at the end of the day you can't get around this." For example, if I'm debating him on the issue of the virginal conception, I'm going to say, "Bart, this is not an idea that early Christians would make up about Jesus, because they knew perfectly well about these other stories about miraculous births of emperors and this, that, and the other. This idea itself would immediately raise objections from Jews who would simply accuse Jesus of being illegitimate, and we know that that happened. So the question is, in truth, why exactly are two different authors of Scripture independently of one another insisting on a virginal conception of Jesus? Why is that so? It can't simply be dismissed on the basis of anti-supernaturalism or other kinds of things." So what happens in a debate like that is, he is forced to give a historical answer, why would they have insisted on this when they knew immediately it could be problematic. Well, there must've been something that actually happened that produced these kinds of accounts. And at the end of the day, then he's forced up against the wall in regard to even just the history of the situation, and I see that as a good thing.

Carson: But I don't know any well-informed inerrantist who would say to Bart, "Hey, I believe the Scriptures are inerrant, therefore it's true." They *would* incorporate all kinds of things you said.

Witherington: Sure, right, but that's not how I'm going to approach the discussion with somebody like him.

Frame: There is a place for saying that, though.

Carson: There *is* a place for saying that.

Frame: The Bible is inerrant, therefore it's true. And that may... I think what, Tom, your question originally was, "How can inerrantism contribute to the larger theological discussion?" It may just be rejected by the larger academic community on that account, but that doesn't prevent us—I was saying this a little bit last night—this doesn't prevent us from developing our own academic culture using arguments exactly like that.

Witherington: But it can be a conversation stopper if we're not dealing with "us." It's not the place to start in a conversation like that.

Frame: You just have to know who you are talking to.

Witherington: Exactly.

Schreiner: What is the role of harmonization with respect to inerrancy? Is harmonizing a legitimate enterprise, and if so, when do we go too far, or what are the boundaries in harmonizing Scripture?

Witherington: I suggested one criterion; I'm sure we could come up with a lot. But one criterion absolutely is, if you make the Scriptures say something that no witness of Scripture says, you've made a mistake. I use the example of the six denials of Christ by Peter in Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible*. When you make Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John say something that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John said, then you've made a mistake.

Carson: In addition to some really good work by Craig Blomberg and so on, that circulated for some time, there've recently been one or two works that have tried to think through the—Vern Poythress has come up with a manuscript in this regard that tries to think through what he calls—I think his terminology is a "God-centered approach to harmonization." You can mean a lot of different things by that. In other words, you can approach some of these things at the level of data in history, and care in comparison, and that's legitimate. Yet at the same time, to remember that on any high view of Scripture there is, finally, one God, one mind, behind the whole thing. So that at some level, unless you are so foolish as to think of God as schizophrenic or something, then this one mind integrates these texts in some ways, so that there is a theological rationale and commitment to think through, within the diversity of genres and all the rest, exactly what is going on in these texts out of a God-centered set of presuppositions and their entailments. So

in addition to the technical work of Craig Blomberg, I do recommend the little book by Vern Poythress on the subject.

Witherington: Let's take one more example. This is one we might disagree on, I don't know. The Gospels all agree that Jesus cleansed the Temple how many times? Once. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this story is told in connection with the passion narrative and not before. In the Gospel of John it comes up front. Now what I would say about that is Jesus cleansed the Temple once, not twice. As a historian I would say, if he went and cleansed the Temple at the beginning of his ministry, they were *not* letting him into the Temple again later. Okay? As a historian that's what I would say. But, secondly, I would say the placement of this historical story in John is theological, not chronological. And see, certain assumptions are made about doing history our way, in a chronological order, and we assume that's how they did history in the first century AD. Well, they didn't always do history that way in the first century AD. So, I would call it a false harmonizing to suggest that there were two cleansings of the temple, which no Gospel says, not even the gospel of John.

Carson: And I would say by way of rebuttal that the first five chapters of John deal with elements of Jesus' ministry in the Jerusalem area before the Galilean ministry that is recorded and opens up all the ministry of Jesus and the Synoptics, and refers to a block of ministry that is a little earlier. And so it should not be too surprising if there are some events that take place there that are not recorded in the Synoptics. And I would say further that when you do detailed comparison of that cleansing in John's Gospel with the accounts of cleansing in the Synoptics, there are so many differences in purpose and quotation of Scripture and this sort of thing, that it's far more likely that there are two cleansings. And as for the so-called historical argument that they wouldn't have allowed him back in again—after all, depending on your chronology, two to three years have elapsed. Moreover, I think there's another little bit; it's only in John's Gospel that Jesus says, "Destroy this temple and in three days." But in Matthew's synoptic account, Matthew chapter 26, in part of the passion narrative, they look for witnesses to try to get him on a capital charge of destruction of temple, or blasphemy, or desecration of the temple, and this sort of thing, and the witnesses can't remember what he said. Well, that's interesting. I can believe that they didn't remember; it was two or three years earlier and they couldn't get their story straight, whereas if it happened three *days* earlier, they were pretty slow! In other words, I think there are lots of historical arguments for saying that there are two cleansings of the temple. In fact, I think it's a bit of a reductionistic history not to see it. Sorry about that.

Witherington: Reasonable historians will disagree on this subject. Unreasonable ones won't.

Frame: Well, I always think in real broad terms, and I just think that we need to harmonize as much as possible because God is one God and has one mind, but we

also need to recognize our own limitations, of course, realize that there will be many situations in which we just have to throw up our hands and say, “I don’t know how these should be combined.”

Schreiner: What are the most significant challenges to inerrancy that must be addressed in the coming years? Are you prophets?

Witherington: Well, I’m not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I did sleep at a Holiday Inn Express recently, so I guess I will say something. I honestly think that it is time for us as evangelicals to get our act together. And what I mean by that is, in an increasingly postmodern, post-Christian culture, it is time for us to say together what we can in good faith say together, and stand together against the deterioration of our Judeo-Christian heritage in the culture at large, and allow that whatever differences we may have, we can agree to disagree on those things but affirm the things we can solidly affirm together and be of one voice with those things, because one of the things that is deadly to the church in a skeptical age is speaking with a forked tongue or shooting at each other. Shooting at each other, killing each other off as devout Christian persons, that’s just what the world would like to see, and they love to put up the word “hypocrisy.” So I think it’s time going forward, in terms of the importance of discussions like this, that we be univocal where we can be univocal, and disagree where we *have* to disagree, but let’s not do that before an audience of a world that is looking for reasons to disbelieve the gospel.

Carson: I would say that anyone who has a massive view of the church of the living God and the importance in Scripture of unity amongst brothers and sisters in Christ wants to say “Amen” to that. But a Christian will also want to say “Amen” to a few other emphases, too. It is not only a world in which there is rising opposition from a secular world that is increasingly biblically illiterate and wants to take “pot shots” at Christians. All that’s true, but it’s also a world in which there is so much relativism; where it is increasingly wrong to say that anybody is wrong, the thing over which you must be least tolerant is perception of intolerance; where entire generations of young people in our churches have bought into a kind of distant, deistic, tolerant God, far removed from the God of the Scriptures; where preachers often look for lowest common denominator theology because they’re trying not to offend anybody; and on and on and on and on and on. And that kind of approach to proclaiming the gospel, it seems to me, is weak, it’s anemic, it does not see conversions, it does not glorify God, it is not powerful. And over against that, there needs to be, at the same time as this commitment to loving brothers and sisters in Christ, there needs to be a boldness and a commitment to the God who speaks the truth and whose gospel is the power of God to salvation to those who believe; to articulate boldly, and so on, precisely because we have confidence in the truth. And this confidence in the truth thus really is another way speaking of our commitments to inerrancy, whether you use that term or not, and if you sacrifice that in an increasingly mushy view of things, you will ultimately vitiate the heart out

of confessional evangelicalism, out of the gospel, out of proclamation, out of conversion, and so on. You don't stand up against totalitarian regimes of the left or the right in the two-thirds world by having a mushy view of Christian truth. You just don't do it. Insofar as increasing opposition is likely to arise in the West, that axiom is going to be worked out in our lives, too. So this is an era in which we need to have more thoughtful commitment to the non-negotiability of God's self-disclosure rather than a decreased one. In other words, we must not pit commitment to loving one another over against commitment to the truth. In these cases, it is like Francis Schaeffer's old thing: which do you want to get rid of, the left wing of the airplane or the right?

Frame: Maybe putting the same thing in somewhat different terms, and again, somewhat broader terms; in a way, more abstract terms, if you prefer. I think the challenge for us is to formulate the role that Scripture plays in epistemology, in knowledge in general, not only theological knowledge, not only knowledge of the gospel, but knowledge of anything. The Scripture presents us with an idea of a God who made us to know things, giving us sense organs, giving us brains to reason things out, giving us various means to try to understand what's going on, but his own Word in some sense takes precedence over all of that. There's this wonderful renaissance of Christian philosophy over the last fifty years or so, but I don't hear very many of them talking about that. I think that if you are interested in epistemology and knowledge in general, you would want to ask, if you are a believing Christian, you want to ask what role the Scripture plays in all of that. And then we can not only more accurately teach one another, but we can say to the world, "Look, we're operating on a different basis here, and we look at Scripture as setting forth our non-negotiables," and we'll just have to talk back and forth with that understanding.

Schreiner: I think our last question, obviously there are many books you could mention, but if you were just to say—and, of course, Don, you gave us many books and articles—but if you were to say two, three, four books on the truthfulness of Scripture that you would particularly recommend for us, what would they be?

Frame: Anything by Vern Poythress; *Inerrancy and Worldview* is one.

Witherington: Well, I will offer you *The Living Word of God*, which I wrote. But I'll tell you what, some of the books that have helped me the most on this subject are Don's dealing with scriptural fallacies. I think they're terrific and really helpful on specific issues and specific texts, and I appreciated what Don's done in this way.

Carson: I really don't know how to answer that question. I'd find it easier to suggest thirty or forty books than just one or two, and I think it's partly because the objections or the problems that people have come out of different matrices. If you have somebody doing historical theology who really has come to the conclusion that the Princetonians invented inerrancy, boy, have I got some books for you! If,

on the other hand, they are coming out of an epistemological quagmire, or if they're coming out of a course under Bart Ehrman, then there are other books I'd recommend. It's one of those areas where people are not being addressed *tabula rasa*; they are coming of a framework, and what you said to rectify that framework is going to be a wee bit different. To use the old Puritan category, pastors are concerned with the cure of souls, and in the cure of souls part of a good cure is diagnosis. So I don't mean to "duck it," but I probably just have.

Witherington: One thing I would say, if you want to understand the sort of trajectory in history of the modern discussion—in particular, in evangelical Protestantism—absolutely you need to read B. B. Warfield's book on the inspiration and the authority of the Bible, because that's not the only source of this modern discussion, but it's one importance source which I was required to read at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and I think it will help you understand at least part of the stream of the modern discussion of why it's gone the way it has.

Schreiner: Well, may I say that I would recommend reading the writings on Scripture by the men of this panel, and we are so grateful for your addresses and your participation in the panel. Let's thank Professors Carson, Witherington, and Frame.