

THE BIBLE: GOD'S WORD

Its Authority, Inspiration and Innerrancy

By Steve Thurman



Life Perspectives from Fellowship Bible Church

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

"All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished"

Matthew 5:18

WHAT DOES "INSPIRATION" MEAN?

In 2 Timothy 3:16 the phrase "inspired by God" is only one word in the Greek (theopneustos). It means "breathed out by God" or "God-breathed." Therefore, the Apostle Paul is declaring, "All scripture is breathed out by God." In other words, the words that you read in the Bible are *His* words! This is the reason the Bible is called the *Word of God*, because it is His word *written*.

Many people consider the works of Shakespeare to be "inspired." This may be true in the *natural* realm, but *supernaturally* only one such Book can be considered truly inspired--the Holy Word of God.

HOW DID "INSPIRATION" OCCUR?

The apostle Peter tells us that "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21).

Very simply, the prophets were men whose message did not originate with themselves but were "Spirit-moved." *God* is the prime mover in the inspiration of Scripture. He revealed the truths, and men of God recorded them. He therefore, is the ultimate source and original cause of biblical truth.

The Greek word for "moved" (pheromenoi) is illustrated by a ship that is out on the water "borne along" by the wind. That ships will go exactly where the wind determines. Likewise, the writers of Scripture were individuals "borne along" by the power of God. What is written is exactly what God determined!

It is important to note that although the Bible is the *Word of God*, it is also the words *of men*. God used

their personalities, vocabularies, and distinctive literary styles to convey (without compromise!) His exact Word to us. What an amazing Book!

Q. WHAT IS INSPIRED?

ANSWER: *Every word in the Bible is inspired... every one!*

- ♦ "Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Ex. 24:4)
- ♦ Jeremiah was told to "not omit a word!" (Jer. 26:2)
- ♦ John was warned not to subtract from the "words of" the prophecy of his revelation (Rev. 22:19)
- ♦ "All Scripture is inspired by God..." (2 Tim 3:16)

Every word! Every spiritual, historical, geographical, scientific word . . . every one!

Today, some are saying that only the "spiritual" or "supernatural" portions of the Bible are inspired, but not necessarily the "historical" or scientific." To that we say, rubbish! The resurrection of Jesus Christ, for instance, was *both* supernatural *and* historical. Take away the miraculous, historical event of the resurrection, and the apostle Paul tells us that our "faith is worthless" and that we are "still in (our) sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Simply put, the entire Bible is inspired by God--every word--no matter how those words may be categorized.

WHAT ARE SOME EVIDENCES FOR "INSPIRATION"?

1. The Bible **claims** that it is inspired.

"All Scripture is inspired by God. . . " (2 Tim. 3:16)

2. The Bible **transforms lives** like no other book in history.

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, . . . and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12)

3. The Bible has perfect **unity of theme and purpose**, pointing to one Author.

"And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He (Jesus) explained to them the things

concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27)

4. The Bible has the *testimony of Christ* behind it.

5. The Bible is *indestructible*, despite man's efforts to destroy it.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

INSPIRATION GIVES AUTHORITY TO THE SCRIPTURES

Simply put, because the Bible *is* God's written Word, "breathed-out" by Him, it has AUTHORITY. Just as a personal letter from the President of the United States would have a ring of authority, so much more is God's perfect and true Word recognized as authoritative.

Jesus said, *"The scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35), and on numerous occasions He appealed to the written Word of God as *final* arbitrator for faith and practice. Even Satan was resisted by Christ on the authority of the written Word: *"It is written . . . It is written . . . It is written"* (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

Paul stated, *"For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus"* (I Thessalonians 4:2).

John Calvin, one of the greatest theologians of church history, put it bluntly: "The Bible has come down to us from the mouth of God" (Institutes, 1.18.4)

APPLICATION

1. Because our Bible is the written Word of God there ought to exist on our part **a humble respect toward it**.

John Calvin: "For our wisdom ought to consist in embracing with gentle docility, and without any exceptions, all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures ."

2. Because our Bible is the written Word of God there ought to be a **determined and dedicated response to it**.

"Prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God . . . holding fast the word of life, . . ." (Phillipians 2:15-16).

"Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

THE INERRANCY OF THE WORD OF GOD

"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail."

Jesus of Nazareth, Luke 16:17

WHAT DOES THE TERM "INERRANCY" MEAN?

To say that the Bible is "inerrant" is to say that it is WHOLLY TRUE, true in whole and in part, without error in everything affirmed.

The Bible may use such things as figures of speech and round numbers, but it is nevertheless truthful and accurate.

IS THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY IMPORTANT?

Francis Schaeffer, in his book The Great Evangelical Disaster, has written: "Here is the great evangelical disaster - the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth. There is only one word for this - namely *accommodation*: the evangelical church has accommodated to the world spirit of the age . . . so that many who call themselves evangelicals hold a weakened view of the Bible and no longer affirm the truth of all the Bible teaches . . ."

WHAT IS THE BASIS OF INERRANCY?

Answer: *"All Scripture is inspired by God . . ."* (2 Timothy 3:16)

The doctrine of inspiration teaches that the Bible is the word of God "breathed-out" onto the pages of Scripture (see related pamphlet).

The apostle Paul stated: "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it *not as the word of men*, but for what it *really is, the word of God*, which also performs its work in you who believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Think about it . . . if the Bible is "the word of God . . . breathed-out" . . . HOW COULD IT HAVE ANY ERROR WHATSOEVER? It is impossible.

WHAT DO INERRANTISTS CLAIM TO BE INERRANT IN THE BIBLE?

Answer: Every word of the Bible down to the smallest parts of the letters!

• **The words** - "Now the promises were spoken to

Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'AND TO SEEDS,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'AND TO SEED,' that is, Christ" (Gal. 3:16)

Note: Here Paul makes an argument based not only on a *single word*, but also on the difference between a *plural* and *singular* word!

• **The parts of letters** - "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-18).

Note: According to Christ, even the smallest letter is without error and will be accomplished!

SOME ARGUMENTS FOR INERRANCY

1. A **Logical, Theological** argument

- a. God cannot utter falsehood – (Rom 3:4)
- b. The Bible is God's utterance – (John 10:35)
- c. Therefore, the Bible is without falsehood.

Note: With this argument there exists only two ways to deny inerrancy:

1. claim God *can* err, or
2. claim that the Bible is not God's Word.

2. A **Scriptural** argument

• "The sum of Thy Word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting" (Psalm 119:160).

• Jesus, speaking to His Father, declared: "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Note: Can *truth* have error?

3. Arguments from **Church History**

• **St. Augustine** (A.D. 354-430) - "For it seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books: that is to say, that the men by whom the Scripture has been given to us and committed to writing, did put down in these books anything false . . ." (Letters 23.3.3).

• **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-74) - "It is *heretical* to say that any falsehood whatever is contained either in the Gospels or in any canonical Scripture" (In Job 13, Lect.1).

• **Martin Luther** (1485-1546) - "The Scriptures have never erred . . . It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it only appears so to *senseless* and obstinate *hypocrites*."

IS THE COPY OF THE BIBLE YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS "INERRANT"?

NO, it is a translation of a copy of the original writings of the prophets and apostles. Inerrantists claim that only the original manuscripts are without error.

However, your English Bible can be trusted without reservation because it is a faithful copy and translation of the original autographs. Just as you would trust a copy of the Constitution of the United States and do not need to see the original to know what it says, so you can trust your English translation.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS APPARENT "CONTRADICTIONS"?

First, remember that if the Bible is the Word of God it is impossible for there to exist any contradiction, for God cannot make a mistake. Is it *His* Word or not? If it is, then no error, mistake, or contradictions is possible.

Secondly, study the APPARENT "contradiction" and ask yourself who you will ultimately declare as confused: yourself or the Word of God?

Thirdly, take hold of the attitude of St. Augustine who said: "If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, the author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have misunderstood" (Against Faustus 11.5).

At Fellowship Bible Church we declare that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative WORD OF GOD . . . and nothing less! If you have any questions about this pamphlet and what has been said about the doctrine of inspiration and authority please feel free to call any of the staff or elders.

5/93



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