

“A Survey of Bible Doctrine”
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Chapter 2: Is the Bible Inspired?
Lesson 1

I. Is the Bible Inspired?

A. Bible comes from the Greek word "biblos" that means "roll," "book" or scroll; actually, a roll of papyrus (Luke 4:17; Daniel 9:2). The word "Scripture" is used in the New Testament of the sacred books of the Old Testament which were regarded as inspired (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 3:2) and of other parts of the New Testament (1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16).

B. The Bible is unique

1. Written over a 1500 year span, written over 40 generations.
2. Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life: Moses - political leader, trained in universities of Egypt; Peter – fisherman; Amos – herdsman; Joshua - military general; Nehemiah – cupbearer; Daniel - prime minister; Luke – doctor; Solomon – king; Matthew- tax collector; Paul - rabbi
3. Written in different places: Moses in the wilderness; Jeremiah in a dungeon; Daniel on a hillside and in a palace; Paul inside prison; Luke while travelling; John in exile on the Isle of Patmos
4. Written at different times: David in times of war, Solomon in times of peace
5. Written during different moods: Some writing from the heights of joy others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair
6. Written on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe
7. Written in three languages: Hebrew - Language of the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 18:26-28 it was called "the language of Judah." In Isaiah 19:18 it was called "the language of Canaan." Aramaic was the "common language" of the Near East until the time of Alexander the Great (6th - 4th century B.C.). Greek is the language of the New Testament, it was the international language at the time of Christ.
8. Includes a great variety of literary types: History, Law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), Religious poetry, Didactic treatises, Lyric poetry, Parable and allegory, Biography, Personal correspondence, Personal memoirs and diaries, Prophecy, Apocalyptic
9. Subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects (one which would create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed). The biblical authors spoke on these subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one predominant unfolding story: "God's redemption of man."

C. Revelation

1. Meaning of Revelation: The word simply means "unveiling." It is often defined in relation to the Bible as God making known to men what otherwise would be unknown. Even more simply stated, it is "what God says to us."

2. Means of Revelation

a. General (in the world)

- (1) Through nature (Romans 1:18-21)
- (2) Through God's providential dealings with man (Romans 8:28)
- (3) Through His preservation of the universe (Colossians 1:17)
- (4) Through man's moral nature (Genesis 1:26; Acts 17:29)

b. Special (in the Bible)

- (1) Through Christ (John 1:18)
- (2) Through the Bible (1 John 5:9-12)

General revelation is sufficient to alert a man to his need of God and to condemn him if he rejects what he can learn through nature, but only faith in Christ is sufficient to save (Acts 4:12). If general revelation is accepted, God will bring the further necessary message of the Gospel in order that a person might be saved (Acts 10:3-6).

D. Inspiration

1. Definition of inspiration: Inspiration is God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the original manuscripts.

Note that (1) God superintended but did not dictate the material, (2) He used human authors and their own individual styles and nevertheless, (3) the product was without error.

2. Incorrect views of inspiration

- a. Natural inspiration: Biblical authors were men of great genius, but their writings were no more inspired than those of other geniuses throughout history. No supernatural dimension.
- b. Dynamic or Mystical: Biblical authors were Spirit-filled and guided like Christians are today. The logical extension of this view is that any Spirit-filled Christian could write Scripture today.
- c. Dictation: writers were completely passive God simply dictated to them what was to be recorded. Note that some parts were dictated (Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law.)
- d. Partial Inspiration: Only certain parts of the Bible were supernaturally inspired, i.e., the portions which would have otherwise been unknowable (accounts of creation, prophecies, etc.).
- e. Concepts: Concepts were inspired but not the words themselves.
- f. Neoorthodox or Barthian: Christ is ultimate; that which points to Christ is inspired but that which does not point to Christ is not. The Bible is a witness to the Word of God, but the Bible is full of errors because it is the product of fallible human writers.
- g. Inspired Purpose: The Bible contains factual errors and unsolvable discrepancies in its content, but it does have "doctrinal integrity" and thus perfectly accomplishes God's purpose for it, which is to lead men to salvation.

3. The Biblical testimony

- a. All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). God, Who is true (Romans 3:4), breathed-out truth.
- b. Man did not corrupt the truth in the process of recording it because the Holy Spirit is the Co-author with each human writer of the Bible (2 Peter 1:21). Dual authorship is shown in Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 4:24, 25; Hebrews 3:7; 10:15-16 quoting Jeremiah 31:33).
- c. Sometimes the record reflects the styles and expressions of the human authors (Romans 9:1-3).
- d. The Bible claims inerrancy for itself.
 - (1) Matthew 5:18: Jesus said that every letter of every word is important and that the Old Testament would be fulfilled exactly as spelled out letter by letter and word by word.
 - (2) Matthew 22:32: Jesus quoted Exodus 3:6, 15 to the Sadducees to reinforce the truth of resurrection. His proof is based on the present tense of the verb "to be." God said "I am," not "I was."
 - (3) Galatians 3:16: Paul, quoting Genesis 13:15 and 24:7, insisted on the importance of a singular "seed" versus a plural "seeds."

If the Scriptures were not inerrant, all of these arguments would be meaningless.

- e. The Bible uses ordinary figures of speech ("corners of the earth" in Revelation 7:1), but they are accurately used.
- f. Authors sometimes researched their facts before writing (Luke 1:1-4), but the product was kept from error by the superintending work of the Holy Spirit.
- g. There are problems in the Bible, but no errors. These problems are usually due to man's limited knowledge and/or misunderstanding.