

The Inspiration of Scripture

INTRODUCTION:

What does the word, "Postmodern" mean?

We live in what is sometimes called a "postmodern world."

Our society at one time was one that presupposed an objective standard called "truth", and was defined by the belief in and search for truth.

But today we are living under the banner of subjectivism, where there are no standards of belief or practice.

If it feels good, and doesn't seem to harm others, then do it. The truth is what you "feel" it is.

Recognize first that this viewpoint runs counter to all that we observe in the natural world around us.

Science (zoology, astronomy, botany, physiology, and mathematics) is all controlled by objective, fixed principles.

Just as in the natural world, so in the spiritual world, when one ignores or violates objective truth it does not nullify that truth. Nor does it eliminate the negative consequences of disobedience to truth.

As Christians we know better. We understand that God has revealed truth to us, so as to allow us to be saved through obedience to it.

God expects us to know the truth and obey it.

But how can we know the truth, and where should we point our unsaved friends so they can be saved?

The answer is, to the Scriptures -- The Bible.

Let's begin with a scripture about scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

I. THE BIBLE IS A DIVINELY INSPIRED BOOK.

Inspiration was God's way of making known to us the truth.

The word translated "inspired" literally means "God-breathed" (in fact, several translations say that).

It signifies that scripture is the product of God alone.

As He breathed into existence the material world, so He created Scripture as the revelation of truth.

In some passages the term Scripture is synonymous with the person of God Himself.

Galatians 3:8: *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, (saying,) in thee shall all the nations be blessed."* (ASV)

Galatians 3:22: *"But the scriptures shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."*

So in these verses Paul tells us that Scripture was God's own voice and action.

In Romans 9:17, Paul says that scripture spoke to Pharaoh, when we recognize that God Himself was the one speaking.

What do we mean by inspiration?

B.B. Warfield defines inspiration as ... *"A supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness."* (B. B. Warfield, "Inspiration," Int. Stand. Bible Ency., p. 1473)

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary states ... *"In defining scriptural inspiration three factors must be kept in mind: first, the primary efficient Cause, the Holy Spirit, who acts upon man; second, the subject of inspiration, man, the agent upon whom the Holy Spirit acts directly; third, the result of inspiration, a written revelation, given once for all, thoroughly accredited and tested by miracle and fulfilled prophecy."*

2 Peter 1:20-21-20: *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* (NKJV)

The extent of inspiration is contained in the word ALL.

It is ALL God- breathed. We are not in a position to assign truth to certain parts of scripture that we deem important. Every single word and line is equal in its authenticity and force.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"The scriptures cannot be broken"*(John 10:35), indicating that none of the Bible can be nullified because they are ALL the words of God.

Jesus also attested to the inspiration of all scripture when he said in Matthew 5:17-19: *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* (NIV)

II. WHAT IS THE FINAL PRODUCT OF INSPIRATION?

The Bible is not a collection of various writers' insights or opinions. It is more.

It is not just a very old, revered document, which describes the religious thinking of the past. It is much more.

Consider these qualities of scripture that are naturally derived from inspiration:

The Bible is Infallible and inerrant.

Infallibility signifies the quality of being free from mistake or falsehood. It declares the Scriptures ability to be a sure and safe guide in all matters.

The argument for infallibility is very logical: If a perfect God with perfect character is the author (inspiration), then the product is perfect, and will continue to be perfect.

Psalm 19:7: *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."*

Isaiah calls God the <"God of truth" (65:16).

Scripture must be inerrant because it comes from an inerrant God.

Proverbs 30:5: *"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."*

The Bible is Authoritative.

If the Bible is from God, and therefore perfect, it must be authoritative.

It demands that we respond to its truth. God is speaking -- we must listen and obey.

The Bible is Effective.

God's word has always been able to accomplish its purposes -- from creation to redemption to judgment.

Isaiah 55:10-11: *"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."*

Truth by its nature is powerful. As light effectively destroys darkness, we need never doubt the power of God's Word to accomplish His purposes.

C.H. Spurgeon once said about the power of God's Word: *"There is no need for you to defend a lion that is being attacked. All you need to do is open the gate and let him out."*

III. WE NEED TO STAND READY TO PROCLAIM THE SUFFICIENCY AND TRUTHFULNESS OF THE BIBLE.

God provides us with ample testimony to His inerrant word in the word itself. Consider some unshakable testimonies:

The Testimony of the Biblical Writers.

The human writers who wrote scripture came from diverse backgrounds (priests, kings, shepherds, fisherman, a tax collector, a physician, etc.) over a period of 1600 years.

Yet they uniformly affirmed that they were writing the words of God.

They told a single story from the same authority.

Their testimony is unprejudiced and objective, without contradiction among them.

They made historical statements that can be verified. They made correct scientific observations before they were discovered.

None of this would be possible without the supernatural assistance of God.

The Biblical writers consistently affirmed that they were revealing the words of God.

More than 3,800 times in the Old Testament, the writers state that they are writing under God's directions.

Amos 3:7: *"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."*

In the New Testament there is a continual conviction that the Old Testament scriptures were from God - (they quote it more than 300 times).

Paul stated in Romans 15:4: *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."*

2 Peter 1:21: *"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

The Testimony of Jesus Christ.

Jesus stands as the greatest defender of the authenticity of Scripture.

Jesus declared Himself as the central theme of the entire Bible.

John 5:39: *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*

He claimed to come to fulfill all Scripture through His life, death, and resurrection.

If the scriptures are not reliable, then neither is Jesus' own testimony about Himself.

Jesus used the Old Testament scriptures to support His own teaching, and never allowed the religious leaders of His day to pervert its original authority as God's word.

The Testimony of God's Changed People -- the Church.

Does the word accomplish what it claims?

It claims to be the power of God unto salvation.

It claims to be able to create a new heart within those who follow it.

It claims to turn uncaring and selfish people into compassionate followers willing to sacrifice even their own lives for Jesus.

Can it really do that?

In Acts 2 Peter preached God's inspired word and identified those present as murderers of the Son of God.

He called upon them to obey that same word, and as many as gladly received it were baptized.

Did this word change them? Acts 2:42-47: *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all*

who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

Those changed people went about proclaiming the integrity and authority of that same word to others.

They understood that the Scriptures and the words of the apostles were indispensable to evangelism and accomplishing God's purposes.

Are we the same changed people who stand as a witness to the power of God's inspired word?

Does the word of Christ dwell in us?

Do we continually bear the fruit of the Spirit?

CONCLUSION:

We cannot abandon the inspired word of God.

We must obey it and teach it to others.