

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Our Statement of Faith

The Holy Scriptures are a revelation of God, coming from God, and flowing through and to man. They are the only inspired and infallible divine revelation ever given to man and are the supreme authority in all matters of faith and morals. The Scriptures were plenary-verbally inspired. The Holy Spirit breathed upon the human vessels the very thoughts and words He wanted written. This word flowed through the human channels involving their emotions, personalities and frames of reference, without violating such. Yet the Holy Spirit guarded and preserved each thought, phrase and word from any error, omission or inaccuracy.

The Names and Titles of the Inspired Book

1. The Bible

The Greek word "*Biblios*" simply means "Book" and from it is derived our English word "Bible". Though the word "Bible" is not used in Scripture, the Greek word "*Biblios*" is used often. There are many books referred to as "*Biblios*" in the Scripture. (Mark 12:26; Luke 3:4; 4:17-18; Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20 etc). The Bible is the Divine Library, consisting of sixty-six separate yet related books. Though a compilation of sixty-six books it is really one unified book.

2. The Word of God

Though written by men, the Scriptures are God's Word to man. Over two-thousand times they are spoken of or alluded to as "the Word of God".

3. The Scriptures

The word "Scripture" means "a writing" or "writings". It is in contrast with all of the uninspired writings of men. This word is used over fifty times.

4. The Oracles of God

The word "oracle" literally means "the speaking place". Christianity arises out of a faith in an infinite personal God who has not been silent but has spoken. The Bible is indeed the Oracle of God, His speaking place.

5. The Old and New Testaments

The word "Testament" simply means "Covenant". The Bible is divided into two sections relative to the two major covenants, the Covenant of Law (The Old Testament), and the Covenant of Grace (The New Testament).

The Definition of Inspiration

II Timothy 3:16-17 "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" In this verse the Greek word "*Theopneustos*", translated "inspiration" means "divinely breathed in" or "God-breathed". God breathed into Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7).

The Mode of Inspiration

1. Revelation

Revelation is the communication of truth which could not be discovered by natural reason. It is God unveiling His person and purpose to man. E.H. Bancroft says:

- a. A Divine Revelation is possible.
- b. A Divine Revelation is probable.
- c. A Divine Revelation is credible.
- d. A Divine Revelation is necessary.

The Bible is not man's thoughts about God, but primarily
God revealing Himself and His purposes to man.

2. Inspiration

Inspiration describes the process by which the revelation was recorded. While revelation has to do with the impartation of Divine truth, inspiration has to do with the recording of the truth. The Scriptures are an infallible revelation because of inspiration. Inspiration was the power which enabled the men to write things in a Book.

3. Illumination

Illumination describes the process of the Holy Spirit enlightening man's understanding to be able to receive God's revelation. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring revelation, inspiration and illumination. Revelation is the reception of truth. Inspiration is the recording of truth. Illumination is the the perception of truth, brought about by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Plenary-Verbal Inspiration

The word "plenary" means "full, complete in every part" and the word "verbal" means "by means of words". Plenary-Verbal inspiration states that the Bible writers were fully inspired even as to their choice of words; that the Bible is completely the Word of God including each and every word.

II Peter 1:20-21 "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."

There are two key elements that must be kept in balance to arrive at a Biblical view of inspiration: God's involvement through the Holy Spirit and man's involvement.

Kevin Conner communicates it this way: "The Bible has a Divine touch making it infallible and a human touch making it understandable. It is God's Word written by man."

According to Jesus, even the smallest letter within a word and the slightest pen stroke within a letter are God's design and will be fulfilled. Matthew 5:18-19, *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

Plenary-Verbal inspiration applies to the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible. The Bible translations we have today are the works of scholars who have studied copies of the original manuscripts, but the doctrine of inspiration does not extend to translations. Most modern translations are trustworthy, but no one translation is divinely inspired in the way the original manuscripts are.

The Proofs of Inspiration

1. The Miracles of the Bible

The word “miracle” means “an act of power; a supernatural deed wrought by the power of God”. Most of the sixty-six books either record or refer to some miracle. The majority of these miracles were confirmed by eyewitnesses.

2. Prophecy and Fulfillment

While miracles are an evidence of Divine power, prophecy is evidence of Divine knowledge. The study of Bible prophecies and their fulfillment provides some of the greatest proofs of the inspiration of Scripture. That God could cause men to accurately predict events generations before they occurred proves He was involved in their writings.

3. The Unity of the Bible

Along with a great diversity the Bible possesses a marvelous unity. Its diversity is plainly evident in that it is composed of sixty-six different books written over a period of 1600 years. These books were written by approximately 40 different authors living in different cultures and countries. There were kings, statesmen, prophets, peasants, fishermen, herdsmen, priests, tradesmen and prisoners who wrote the Bible in three languages. Their writings include almost every kind of literature including history, law, poetry, prophecy, biography, songs, letters, parables and proverbs. The miracle of this is that they produced an amazingly unified book.

4. The Miraculous Preservation of the Bible

Over the last 3500 years it has not only been the most loved but also the most hated book in existence. No book has ever suffered the persistent opposition that the Bible has. It's infallibility and authority have been attacked from every angle. The Bible has survived and triumphed over every attack and remains the most significant book in human history.

5. The Influence of the Bible

The worldwide influence of the Bible is unmatched by any other book. It has touched every nation on the earth and influenced countless cultures.

The Results of Inspiration

1. Genuineness

It is really what it claims to be, something that is really true.

2. Credibility

A book is considered credible if it is entirely truthful on the matter it treats.

3. Infallibility

By “infallibility” is meant “incapable of error, exemption from any liability to make mistakes.

4. Authority

Authority arises out of infallibility.