

Lesson 2

“The Bible, The Inspired Word of God”

Discussion Question: What does it mean when people say “The Bible is inspired?”

1. Some people contend that the Bible is inspired in the same way that ALL GREAT LITERATURE is inspired in that it challenges the HUMAN HEART to reach new heights.
2. Some people say the Bible is inspired because it CONTAINS the Word of God along with MYTHS, LEGENDS and MISTAKES.
3. To put the above another way, people say that the Word of God can be FOUND in the Bible but the Word of God is not SYNONYMOUS with the BIBLE.
4. The Bible makes itself very clear that it is not merely INSPIRING literature but that it is the INFALLIBLE Word of God.
5. Two verses speak to the very heart of the matter: they are 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 and 2 PETER 1:21.
6. Two words used in 2 Timothy 3:16 give us the apostle’s view of the scripture. The first is GRAPHE which means WRITING and the second word is THEOPNEUSTOS which means “GOD BREATHED.”
7. The origin of scripture is not MAN but GOD.

(Special notation)

Other scriptures to consider are: Psalm 119; Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 Peter 1:23-25; and 2 Peter 1:19-21.

8. All the Bible is INSPIRED of God. More than 40 authors wrote over a period of 1,500 years as they were MOVED by the HOLY SPIRIT.

(Special Notation)

The Bible is its own witness to its inspiration. More significant verses to consider are: Psalm 119:89, 105, 152 and 160; Exodus 4:10-12; Deuteronomy 4:2; 2 Samuel 23:1&2; and Jeremiah 1:6-9

9. The Bible claims to be the Word of God. No less than 3,808 times in the Old Testament alone; i.e., “And God said ...” or “The Word of God came saying ...”

10. The Bible CLAIMS TO BE THE WORD OF GOD.
11. 2 Peter 1:21 confirms that the writers were MOVED OF GOD to record what GOD desired.
12. God did not DICTATE His Word mechanically, but used each writer and his PERSONALITY to accomplish His work.
13. The process of inspiration extended to EVERY WORD refuting the idea of myth and error.
14. God, the Holy Spirit, worked in a unique, supernatural way so that the written words of the scripture writers were also the WORDS OF GOD. The Word of God in the WORDS OF MEN.
15. The Word of God attests to one great THEME, CHRIST points to one true GOD and offers us one PLAN OF SALVATION.
16. The great theme of the Bible is Christ and that theme is what BINDS the Bible TOGETHER.
17. The theme of the Old Testament is SOMEONE IS COMING.
18. The theme of the gospels is SOMEONE HAS COME.
19. The theme of the end times is SOMEONE IS COMING again.
20. It is important to note that the men who wrote the scriptures were not inspired men. They all were human and had failings. It is the WORDS they wrote which were INSPIRED of God.
21. Two words describe the extent of the inspiration of the scriptures VERBAL and PLENARY.
22. Plenary means full, complete, extending to ALL parts. This means that the ENTIRE Bible is inspired, not just certain parts.
23. Verbal inspiration means that the inspiration extends not just to all parts of the Bible, but it also extends to the VERY WORDS. See 1 Corinthians 2:13

(Special Notation)

Be alert to those who would say the Bible CONTAINS the Word of God! That statement is not the same as the Bible IS the Word of God.

24. Three TESTS of the inspiration of scripture are FULFILLED PROPHECY, the fact that the Word of God is TRUTH, and that the Word of God ACCOMPLISHES ITS PURPOSE.

(Special Notation)

Regarding “prophecy” please see Deuteronomy 18:21&22. A true prophet must have all that he says come to pass. True prophecy is from God. Compare Micah 5:2 with Luke 2:1-7. This prophecy came true after 800 years. Compare Psalm 22:18 with Matthew 27:35. This prophecy came to pass after 1,000 years. There are literally hundreds of such fulfilled prophecies with hundreds more which are yet to be fulfilled.

Regarding “truth,” please see Psalm 119:160. The Bible is truth. It has been true from the beginning and will continue to be true from creation to the end of the ages. He knows all things and has given us His truth.

Regarding “accomplishing His purpose,” please see Isaiah 55:10&11. God’s book does for God what He has willed it to do. It delivers us from the penalty and judgment of sin and has told us all we need to know about Him.

25. The extent of inspiration includes EVERY BOOK of scripture, EVERY PART of every book, and EVERY WORD in each book as given in the original manuscripts.

Conclusion

The Bible you hold in your hand is God’s inspired Word. Be assured of that fact. Love it, study it, teach it, and live by its teachings. The longest chapter in the Bible is about the Word of God. All but a handful of verses refer directly to the Word: judgments, statutes, the law, the Word, etc.

Additional Information

Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, wrote:

The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. Therefore:

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, “Thus saith the Lord,” when it was their own invention.
2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.
3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration. (Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles, “A Compendium of Wesley’s Theology,” p. 20.)

The evidence that the very words of the Bible are God-given may be briefly summarized as follows:

- This is the claim of the classical text (2 Timothy 3:16).
- It is the emphatic testimony of Paul that he spoke in “words ... taught by the Spirit” (Corinthians 2:13).
- It is evident from the repeated formula, “It is written.”
- Jesus said that what was written in the whole Old Testament spoke of Him (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Hebrews 10:7).
- The New Testament constantly equates the Word of God with the Scripture (writings of the Old Testament; cf. Matthew 21:42; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 3:16).
- Jesus indicated that not even the smallest part of a Hebrew word or letter could be broken (Matthew 5:18).
- The New Testament refers to the written record as the “oracles of God” (Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12).
- Occasionally the writers were even told to “diminish not a word” (Jeremiah 26:2, AV). In fact, John pronounced an anathema upon all who would add to or subtract from the “words of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:18,19).