

Introduction

It is evident, perhaps not since before the flood, that the Word of God is under attack and being rejected. Newsweek (Dec. 2014) had an article in which it indicated that Christians are a farce and the Bible is utter foolishness. When one is asked in the tone of incredibility, "Do you really believe the Bible?", there can be by some a sense of intimidation. This goes to the very root of the matter which is:

- a) "Do you really believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, or do you believe only part of it is, or the most of it, but not in its entirety?"
- b) Do you really believe the Bible is really without error in what is recorded?"

When the Holy Spirit caused Peter to write his epistle, to emphasize the fact that the scriptures are God given Peter emphatically wrote: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21). To Timothy was written: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). This leads to the following question:

What Is Meant By Inspiration?

Some would argue that "inspiration" means, "God breathed into" and to support this, speakers at times have referred it back to the account in Genesis where we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Thus it is argued that just as man became a living individual, so by God breathing into the scriptures they became the living word: "For the word of God is quick (living), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). However, it is not that simple.

"Inspiration" is a term which can be taken in two ways.

- a) Does it mean God breathed into the scriptures as He did with Adam?
- b) Or, are they "out-breathings" of God?

Are we to understand the scriptures are inspired by God breathing life into them, or are they inspired because God out breathed them. Since the word "inspired" is used in the passive tense, it is teaching that God breathed out the scriptures. We must be, in our understanding, 2 Tim. 3:16 teaching how and from whom the scriptures were given.

Plenary and Verbal Inspiration

The two words used to describe the extent of inspiration are "plenary" and "verbal". When we speak of the scriptures being "plenary" inspired, it means that from Genesis to Revelation the entire Bible is God given.

1) Plenary Inspiration

- a) I stand firm on the fact that the scriptures, in their entirety, are inspired; and reject any tint of suggestion that there are parts which God inspired and parts are the thoughts of men? There are passages which we find apparently boring, such as 1 Chron. 1-9, but God has a reason for these long genealogies. God used men to write them, but in the writing, the men were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). These men did not lose their own characteristics, nor did it mean they did not have to research and confirm that which they were aware of (Lk. 1:1-3). There are those passages which Paul states his opinion such as 1 Cor. 7:6, 8, 12, **but the fact that they are in the scriptures indicates that God has agreed with them, and endorsed them.** Paul wrote four letters to the saints at Corinth but only two of them were inspired by God. Had God not sanctioned the "suggestions" of Paul He would not have caused them to be inspired.

- b) These men were “moved”, “borne” by the Spirit of God. The Greek word indicates a ship being conveyed along by the wind (Acts 27:15, 17). That which is recorded are the teachings of the Holy Spirit: “ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13).

2) Verbal Inspiration

- a) When we speak of “verbal” inspiration, we mean that every word, tense, mood, etc., is inspired by God. This means there are no additional words and no words to be left out. There can be no modifications to any words and when translating, each word is to be given, as accurately as possible, the precise significance of the word used by God. In the original scriptures the Holy Spirit overruled every word, tone, preposition, etc., so that they were exactly what He wanted said, how it was said, and when to be said. Let it be clearly stated:
- i) The writers were not human dictation machines.
 - ii) They were not editors deciding what to write and in what form or tense.
 - iii) Inspiration was not a sudden internal impulse of a higher understanding.

Peter informs us that at times they did not understand that which they wrote: “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently . . . Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Due to being borne along in their thoughts by the Holy Spirit, these men were curtailed from writing unnecessary comments, their own ideas or interpretations, and certainly no error was permitted. They are not the mere writings of some ancient men much less a collection of fairy tales gathered from ancient myths. For error to be found would demonstrate a flaw in the knowledge of God. The God who cannot lie (Heb. 6:18) would be a deceiver and a liar perpetrating the greatest con game of eternity if He led people to believe these writings were inspired by Him and such was not the case. Being inspired there is no part of them which can be debated and modified. There can be no questioning the fact that the scriptures, as originally given, were in every way and detail the inspired Word of God, however, there is no such a thing as an inspired translation.

What Is Meant By “The Inerrancy Of The Scriptures”?

One thing is certain, only the original writings were inerrant, that is, exactly as God gave them. Due to the changes in language, the changes in the meanings of words, the virtual impossibility of translating the exact mood of words and clauses, it is, I suggest, impossible to have an inerrant translation. For instance, there are eight different words indicating a servant, the English cannot precisely translate these words. However, that which we can have today, and for the last 300 years, is an exceedingly accurate conveyance of that which was the original. The inerrancy of any article is only to the degree that its exactitude in translation is as close as possible.

Inerrancy means that everything recorded in the scriptures is true. At times there is recorded the lies of another, such as:

- a) When Satan told Eve she would not die (Gen. 3:4). That piece of information is not a fable, it is the truth of that which occurred.
- b) Abraham lied when he told Sarah to say she was his sister (Gen. 12:13; 20:5).
- c) Jacob lied when he told his father he was Esau (Gen. 27:19, 24).
- d) When Aaron told Moses the golden calf just sort of came out of the fire (Ex. 32:24).
- e) Achan took the accursed thing (Josh. 7:1).
- f) The same is true in Joshua 9:1-13 where there is the record of the Gibeonites lying (Josh. 9:3, 12). This is exactly what happened but that which they told was lies.
- g) Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts 5:1-9)

In all such cases inerrancy records the truthfulness of the happening but does not make a moral judgment.

Inerrancy does not mean there are not apparent contradictions in the texts, and the key word is “apparent”. Matthew will refer to John “bearing/carrying” the sandals of the Lord (Matt. 3:11), but in John it refers to him undoing them (Jn. 1:27). Surely it is evident that John was preaching over time and what preacher has not said the same idea in different ways? The attitude John was showing was that of total humility before the greater, and since he said in so many words: “I am not worthy to carry or undo His shoes”, there is not a contradiction but a demonstration of inerrancy accurately reporting what John said while doing the same work, but at different times.

Why mention this and state it so emphatically? The reason is because today there is a new movement called “progressive Christianity” which focuses on social justice and environmentalism. The folk who follow this believe in “collective salvation” in which salvation is not that of the individual but of the culture or society, and tends to a Marxist economic philosophy. Progressive Christianity does not accept the inerrancy of Scripture.

Do The Scriptures Teach Their Inerrancy and Inspiration?

1) The writers of the Old Testament

- a) It is so easy to read: “The Lord spake” (144 times); “The Lord called” (9 times); “Thus saith the Lord” (413 times); and “The Lord said” (219 times); that we can miss the wonder of this fact. The writer to the Hebrews quotes the Old Testament approximately seventy times, and only on one occasion does he attribute the quotation to a human being. All other times it is to one of the divine persons. God promised Moses He would raise up a prophet like him: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deut. 18:18). These men recorded that the words they spoke were the words of God, and God when speaking to Jeremiah confirmed that understanding when He said: “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:9).

2) The writers and speakers of the New Testament

a) Speakers

- i) The Lord Jesus said that the words spoken by the Psalmist were the words of God (Psa. 82:6 quoted as the words of God in Jn. 10:34). Again in Matthew 22:31-32 the Lord said that the words of Exodus 3:6 were given by God.
- ii) After Peter and John had been let go by the religious leaders and meeting with the saints, they praised God and said: “Lord, Thou art God . . . Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage” (Acts 4:24-25). They attributed the words of David to God.
- iii) When Paul was speaking to the chief of the Jews he said: “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias” (Acts 28:25), that is, Paul is stating that the words Esaias spoke were the words of the Holy Ghost.
- iv) In both these cases there was being stated the inspiration of the words spoken and their inerrancy.

b) Writers

- i) The writers of the New Testament had no doubts about the inspiration and inerrancy of the scriptures because they attributed them directly to God. Note the following expressions:
 1. “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh” and then it is personified because then it says: “I raised thee up, that I might shew my power” (Rom. 9:17).
 2. “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith”. It was God who foresaw the future, and speaking to Abraham saying: “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8), so the scriptures are the revelation of the purposes of God and demonstrate their inspiration and inerrancy.

The Bible The Inspiration Of The Scriptures - Part 2

While this sounds good and is true, the questions are, “Do I believe the scriptures are inspired and inerrant because they say so? Is their self authentication reliable?” The answer is “Yes”, and the reasons are numerable. I believe the scriptures are inspired and inerrant because:

- a) It contains truths that only God could have known and revealed.
 - i) When considering the scientific statements of the scriptures we soon realize that they cover many aspects of science. That which we speak of are statements which were totally contrary to the thinking of the day and were not discovered by man for centuries later. The following are a couple of them. The decision one has to make is, “Did God reveal the following truths or did the ancient writers have great imaginations?” Interestingly, no other “holy books” make such statements nor do they give any prophetic statements. Some of the areas of science are that the earth is not flat! There was a time when it was an accepted “fact” that the earth was flat, but some 2600 years ago Isaiah wrote: “It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa. 40:22). The exactness of the scripture is that the word for “circle” is sphere, for the earth is not a perfect circle. This was a fact only God knew and which He revealed to man. Scientists used to believe that everything physical could be seen with the naked eye, but God revealed that: “the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3).
- b) Its prophecies have been fulfilled to perfection.
 - i) “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Psa. 41:9). This was fulfilled by Judas: “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me”(Jn. 13:18);
 - ii) “False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not” (Psa. 35:11); Matthew records how this was fulfilled: “Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses” (Matt. 26:59-60);
 - iii) “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isa. 50:6) which was fulfilled when the Lord was being judged: “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands” (Matt. 26:67).
- c) The effect it has on the lives of people:
 - i) The Holy Spirit caused Paul to write: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). The world and sin degrades humanity, he becomes a slave to it’s vices and lusts, but when God saved a man through the message of the gospel lives are changed, not just in outward appearance but inwardly. The things which once gave pleasure are found to be boring and uninteresting. That which held like a death grip no longer has that control, new interests are found, not by a new mindset but by the effects of the word of God.

These show how the scriptures can be trusted for their own inspiration and inerrancy.

The Importance of Holding The Truths of The Inspiration and Inerrancy of The Scriptures

Since the scriptures are inspired by God and are inerrant, then they are absolute in their authority. To disagree with them or set any part of them aside, then we are setting ourselves above God and standing in rebellion against Him. It is the acceptance of the scriptures as God’s authoritatively inspired word and inerrant which gives the assurance we can have in:

- a) The message of the gospel and its verities.
- b) Its truths concerning every aspect it presents of the Lord.
- c) Its fidelity in agreement or contrast to the teachings man puts forward as science.

d) Our confidence in the promises of God.

Any church which fails to be in alignment with the scriptures is taking a stand against God. His word is to be the final authority, consequently, it is irrelevant what an individual or multiples of people think or say, whither one is in a position of authority in the church or a “commoner”. Every degree of variance from the scriptures is to stand in opposition to God. When such is tolerated in a church the consequences are disastrous. Another has said, “A church without the authority of Scripture is like a crocodile without teeth; it can open its mouth as wide and as often as it likes—but who cares?” Thankfully God has given us His inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word. His people can speak with authority and boldness, and we can be confident we have His instructions for our lives.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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