

What About the Bible?

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Poets and orators are sometimes said to be “inspired” when they produce a masterpiece. A sermon may have been “inspiring” to those who heard. But the inspiration claimed for the Bible is of a different character. The term used by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 (“Every scripture inspired of God . . .), means “breathed by God.” The inspiration of the Bible is unique, referring to the actual direction God gave to men at various times through his Holy Spirit, until his revealed will was complete. The following is an excellent definition of the claim for Biblical inspiration:

An extraordinary divine agency upon teachers while giving instructions, whether oral or written, by which they were taught what and how they should write or speak (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, McClintock, and Strong, v. 4, p. 612).

The men God inspired to write the Bible were told what words to write and He prevented their making errors as they wrote them.

The claims the Bible makes for its inspiration help further define what is meant by the term. Such expressions as, “Thus saith the Lord,” “Hear the word of Jehovah,” and “The word of Jehovah came unto me saying,” appear hundreds of times in the Old Testament. Peter gives the source of the Old Testament writings: “No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21).

God's Will was revealed to the apostles by the Spirit, in words which the Spirit taught them (1 Cor. 2:10, 13). Only because of this unique divine inspiration could Paul write: “If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, they are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37).

Supporting Evidence

The inquiring minds of men require more than mere claims. What evidence is there to support such claims?

Unity and Harmony: It is difficult for one author to write one book without contradictions, but the Bible was written by about forty writers over about sixteen centuries in three different languages by men of diverse backgrounds ranging from shepherds to kings. Yet, this library of 66 books has a remarkable unity of theme that defies mere human capabilities. This all argues for a master designer and revealer.

Plan and Style: Human theories of man's origin degrade him, making him no more than a graduated amoeba who has happened by blind chance and is answerable to no one. The Bible exalts man as the purposed creation of the true and living God, made in His own image. Its aim is to make man happy by making him holy. It omits that which appeals to mere curiosity, giving just such history and evidence as would introduce the Redeemer and His plan of redemption and positively identify Him when He appeared. It does not hide the sins, doubts, and fears of even its greatest heroes, which uninspired writers often do. It was not written to create a publishing sensation, yet no other book will ever equal its power and influence over mankind. Its style is so distinctive that men have not been able to counterfeit it without discovery.

Historical and Scientific Accuracy: Many places, persons, and nations are mentioned in the Bible which were otherwise unknown until the advent of modern archaeology. The pick and spade have embarrassed many a skeptic as the Bible's historical accuracy has been repeatedly verified. Such scientific principles as the roundness of the earth, the law of gravity and the sea lanes and currents have all been discovered in the last 500 years, but the Bible spoke of them centuries before.

Prophetic Utterance and Fulfillment: Modern astrologers and psychics can make some lucky guesses about near future events, and people are amazed. The Bible prophets foretold events in detail that spanned centuries. There is no natural explanation for the prophetic accuracy of the Bible.

Testimony of Jesus. Jesus claimed to be a direct messenger from God, an infallible teacher. His life, teachings, miracles, fulfillments of prophecy, birth, death, resurrection, and ascension all support His claim perfectly. What was His regard for Scripture? He referred to the creation, the death of Abel to Noah and the flood, to Sodom and Gomorrah, to Jonah and the great fish and to other Old Testament accounts as absolutely accurate. One can't believe in the Deity of Christ and doubt the Bible's inspiration!

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