

"Milk & Meat" - Answering Questions on Christianity
Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Adult Sunday School

KNOWING GOD - part 9

44. What do you mean by "the Bible is Inspired?" [*Great Doctrines of the Bible*, William Evans]

- a. This question is best answered by Scripture itself.
 - i. In 2 Tim. 3:16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The word "inspiration", which means "God-breathed", comprises two Greek words: *theos*=God; and *pnein*=to breathe consciously, a forcible respiration.
 - ii. "*given by inspiration*" means that the writings of the Scripture are the result of a certain influence exerted by God upon their human authors.
 - iii. "Inspiration is that extraordinary, supernatural influence (or, passively, the result of it) exerted by the Holy Ghost on the writers of our Sacred Books, by which their words were rendered also the words of God, and therefore, perfectly infallible." - B.B Warfield
 - iv. The entire Bible was written by inspiration of God. God the Holy Spirit was the author. He used different human writers as means, prompted them to write, informed them of what to write, and perfectly guided them in the words to write.
- b. Inspiration is the strong, conscious inbreathing of God into men to give utterance to truth.
 - i. *God spoke through men, and the Old & New Testaments are therefore just as much the Word of God as though God spoke every single word of it with His own lips.* The Scriptures are the result of divine inbreathing, just as human speech is uttered by the breathing through a man's mouth.
 - ii. 2 Pet. 1:21 "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." Men of God wrote the Scripture *when* moved to do so by the Holy Spirit. The participle is passive, and denotes "to be carried along." The same Greek word for "moved" was translated as "drive" to describe the wind driving and charting the ship (Acts 27:15 "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her drive.*").
 - iii. The Scripture was written by men, prompted, controlled and driven by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to the human writers truths, and guiding them alike in their record of these truths, and of the events which they saw or heard as witnesses, and so enabled them to present it with accuracy.
 - iv. Men of God, qualified by the infusion of the breath of God, wrote in obedience to the divine command, and were kept from all error. In this sense, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," the Bible is indeed and in truth the very Word of God, and the books of the Bible are of divine origin and authority.
- c. Verbal, Plenary Inspiration.
 - Verbal means "word". Plenary means "fully, entirely, completely" i.e. all Scripture is equally and fully of divine origin (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - God inspired every thing (plenary/full) in Scriptures, and every word (verbal).

45. Did the Old Testament writers claim Inspiration? (inspiration includes revelation)

- a. Ex 4:15 "I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do."
- b. Deut. 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God ..."
- c. Jer. 1:7-9 "But the Lord said unto me, ... whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. ..."

46. Did the New Testament writers claim Inspiration?

- a. 2 Pet. 1:20, 21 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 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."

- b. Acts 1:16 "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
- c. 1 Cor. 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- d. 1 Thess. 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

47. How were the human writers under the influence of the Holy Spirit?

- a. Some words of Scripture are a record of the exact words of God.
 - i. Note Exodus 38:16 "The writing was the writing of God"; Exodus 31:18 "Written with the finger of God." Compare Deuteronomy 10:2, 4; 9:10; Exodus 24:12.
 - ii. In the New Testament God is heard speaking both at the baptism and the transfiguration of Jesus, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Mt 3:17, 17:5; Mk 1:11, 9:7)
- b. God put into the mouths of some men the words they should speak, and told them what they should write.
 - i. Exod. 34:27 "And the Lord said unto Moses, **Write thou these words**: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." Isa. 8:1, 11, 12 "Moreover the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz. **For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand**, and instructed me ..." Jer. 1:7 "But the Lord said unto me, ... **whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.**"
 - ii. Rev. 2:1, 8, 12 "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus **write**; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. ... And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna **write**; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive. ... And to the angel of the church in Pergamos **write**; ..."
- c. In parts of Scripture, the authors chose their own words to express divine truth.
 - i. *Inspiration includes personal, diligent and faithful research into the facts.* Luke 1:1-4. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."
 - ii. *It allowed the expression of the same thought in different words*, such differences between the accounts of inspired men as would be likely to arise from the different standpoint of each. Example - *institution of the Lord's Supper*:
 - Matt. 26:26, 27 "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it."
 - Luke 22:19, 20 "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."
 - 1 Cor. 11:24, 25 "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."
 - iii. "The Spirit employed the attention, the investigation, the memory, ... all the faculties of the writer ... He guided the writer to choose what narrative and materials, speeches of others, imperial decrees, genealogies, official letters, state papers or historical matters he might find necessary for the recording of the divine message of salvation. He wrought in, with, and through their spirits, so as to preserve their individuality to others. He used the men themselves, and spoke through their individualities." - W Evans.

48. God's Authorship of the Bible. [Inquirer's Bible Course]

- a. The Old Testament refers to itself as "the Word of God" 3,808 times and in the New Testament, 525 times. More than 180 prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled, some even predicted what name an individual would be given, hundreds of years before his birth. There are 73 OT prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ (*What the Bible Teaches About the Promised Messiah*, James Smith). In the Old Testament, at least 80 historical events have been corroborated by

archaeological evidence. The Bible has been shown to be accurate in its recording of historical events with no embellishments nor exaggeration.

- b. The Bible has more ancient manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined – over 14,000 copies for the New Testament alone:

Source: Christianity Explored Handbook (3rd ed.), p.63.	Date of Original Document	Date of oldest surviving copy	Time between Original & Oldest surviving copy	No. of ancient surviving copies
Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War	c. 431 - 400 BC	AD 900; fragments AD 100	1,300 yrs	73
Caesar's Gallic War	c. 58-50 BC	AD 825	875 yrs	10
Tacitus' Histories and Annals	c. AD 98-100	AD 850	750 yrs	2
The New Testament	c. AD 40-100	AD 350	310 yrs	14,000

- c. Oldest surviving copies of the New Testament were produced 310 years after its original, a comparatively short time and an astonishing 14,000 ancient copies exist today. Studies of manuscripts that are more than 2000 years old have shown that the Bible has remained virtually unchanged since it was first written.

49. Is the Old Testament relevant for me today? [RC Sproul, *Now That's a Good Question!*]

- a. Some churches teach that the Old Testament is not relevant to us today; you only need to know and obey the New Testament. Many believers are ignorant of God the Father as we walk with Lord Jesus as Saviour and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Some say the God of the Old Testament (angry, just and holy) is different from the God of the New Testament (loving, merciful and gracious).
- b. The Old Testament from Genesis 11 covers a period of a few thousand years of redemptive history, and describes how God has loved and was faithful to His covenant people through His love, mighty works, signs and providence. While the bulk of the New Testament covers only about 35 years in human history, it records the life and ministry of Jesus (fulfillment of OT prophecies of the coming of the Messiah) and the expansion of the early church.
- c. There is continuity between the two testaments. The same God is revealed to us both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Saint Augustine said,

*"The Old is in the New revealed; the New is in the Old concealed.
The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained."*
- d. A fundamental distinction between the two testaments is that the Old is embodied in a nation (Israel), and the New is embodied in a church. The nation was exclusive (Dt 7:7-8), while the Church was inclusive (Gal 3:28; Rom 10:12). The Old Testament prepares men for the coming of the Messiah and the revelation in the New Testament.
- e. "Is the foundation of a house important? Is it relevant to the house?" Of course, it is absolutely essential to the house. The structure stands upon that foundation, and that's what the Old Testament does for our faith.
- f. We cannot fully understand the New Testament or Jesus Christ and His ministry unless we have understood the Old Testament. The history of the Old Testament foretells the Messiah to come, and constantly reveals the character of God the Father, the One who sends Jesus into the world, the one whom Jesus calls Father, to whom we are being reconciled and redeemed. Many elements of Old Testament are not to be applied directly to our Christian life today, such as the sacrificial system. But even the bulls and goats enrich our understanding of what was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross. About 75% of the New Testament verses either quotes the Old Testament or alludes to it, or is a fulfillment of, the Old Testament prophecies.
- g. The moral law (eg. the Ten Commandments) is still relevant to us today - as Jesus Himself said He had come to fulfill the Law, not abolish it. He said the Ten Commandments can be summarised in the two great commandments: Love God with

all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus corrected the wrong teaching, understanding and application of the moral law by the Pharisees. The Ten Commandments help us to grow in holiness to be more like Christ.

50. How did the Bible come to us? How were they preserved? [Beeke, *Bible Doctrine*]

- a. After the completion of God's word, the Bible was passed down from generation to generation by faithful carefully-trained and accurately-working scribes who hand copied the original scrolls until they were worn out. Hence, no original written copies of any Bible books have been preserved. Scribes, who devoted their lives to precise copying work, reproduced exact handwritten copies from generation to generation, until the printing press was invented in the 15th century.
- b. Thousands of partial copies, written in the original languages of both Testaments have been found, carefully studied and preserved. The 3 most famous and ancient Bible manuscripts containing all or most of the books of the Old and New Testament are:
 - i. Codex Alexandrinus Manuscript (Codex "A", A-02)
 - Written in the 5th century A.D., this was obtained by the Patriarch of Constantinople in Alexandria, who presented it to King Charles I of England in 1627. This manuscript is also displayed in the British Museum.
 - ii. Codex Sinaiticus Manuscript (Codex "Aleph", A-01)
 - Written in the 4th Century AD, it contains many changes made by later scribes. In 1844, some pages of the codex were discovered by Constantine Tischendorf in a waste basket in St Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai. He finally secured the entire codex in 1859, transferred it to Cairo in 1862, and through the generosity of Alexander II, the Russian Emperor, he published an edition of the manuscript. It was sold to the British Museum, London in 1933. In 1975, more pages of the manuscript was discovered in St Catherine's monastery, and photographed. Now the complete Sinaiticus A-01 can be viewed digitally at www.codexsinaiticus.org/
 - iii. Codex Vaticanus Manuscript (Codex "B", B-03)
 - The Vatican manuscript is the oldest, complete manuscript of the Bible. Written in the mid 4th century A.D., it also includes several apocryphal books. This codex has been known to be stored in the Vatican library in Rome since 1481.

51. How different are the Old Testament manuscripts? [Beeke, *Bible Doctrine*]

- a. The Old Testament manuscripts are almost identical. There is little controversy concerning the original Old Testament text of the Bible for there is nearly identical wording in all ancient manuscript copies.
- b. A fairly recent discovery of several very ancient Old Testament scrolls - the "Dead Sea Scrolls" - illustrates this.
 - i. In March 1948, an Arab shepherd boy looking for his lost goat, stumbled into one of the Qumran caves (seven miles south of Jericho, near the Dead Sea), and discovered large clay jars containing more than 350 ancient leather scrolls and fragments. These scrolls date back approximately to 50 - 200 years before Christ, when a deeply religious community of Essene Jews lived there. It contains almost all the Old Testament books except Esther.
 - ii. The most famous find was a complete Hebrew manuscript of the entire book of Isaiah. Copied in around 125-100 B.C., it was one thousand years older than the oldest previously discovered Hebrew manuscript (A.D. 900). After careful comparison of the texts in these two manuscripts dated 1,000 years apart, only 13 very minor differences were found, not one change of meaning was found after 1,000 years of hand copying by ancient scribes! This type of accurate copying was also observed when comparing other scrolls and fragments.
- c. How did we get the Old Testament? - see Chart 1 [Old Testament].