

Inspiration of the Scriptures

MEMORY VERSE

“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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

TEXT: Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Peter 1:16-21.

The level of confidence which every individual has in God is a direct reflection of his confidence in the Bible. Full persuasion on the genuineness of the claims of the Bible and the certainty of the rewards that it promises every faithful pilgrim at the end of life's journey makes men surrender to the Lordship of Christ, obtain salvation which is its singular goal and live by its principles and precepts which it demands. Its claims can only be held as genuine if its source is known and believed to be divine. This is why this study is of utmost importance to all.

INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

(2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Question 1: Explain the inspiration of the Bible.

Inspiration of the Bible means the inexplicable power and influence the Spirit of God exerts on writers to unerringly express what God intended them to communicate as a revelation of His mind and will. The writers' peculiar character, style, mental endowments and circumstances did not affect the message God passed through them to His people and all humanity. The Spirit's guidance in the choice of words they used preserved them from all errors of omissions and commission. The Greek word, "Theopneustic", translated inspiration in the English Bible literally means "God-breathed", which denotes the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the holy writers for exact record of the words and will of God. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the lives of these holy men qualified and enabled them to make infallible record of divine truth concerning the will of God to man. Written by divinely inspired men, the Bible therefore is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction authored by God for man's salvation. The Bible is inspired from Genesis to Revelation. It contains the principles by which God will try and judge all human conducts, creeds and opinions at the end of life. The Bible is inspired to secure truth and unity in the records of various men used in writing its different parts. It is also inspired to make men that believe wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15), to give eternal life through faith in the eternal Son (John 20:30,31), attain perfection (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Psalm 19:7) and to qualify men whose lives have been transformed by it for eternal inheritance in heaven.

FALLACIES ON BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

(Isaiah 8:20; Luke 1:1-4; Revelation 1:1,11; 1 Peter 1:11; 1 Corinthians 14:13-19; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Question 2: Mention three erroneous views people hold about inspiration of the Bible.

There are various erroneous views about Biblical inspiration. Some people hold the view that the writers of the Bible had the same natural insight into truth which all men possess to some degree and which some (like poets, philosophers, musicians and scientists) have distinguished themselves in its use. Called the Initiation Theory, they claim that inspiration is a higher development of man's natural insight into truth placing Bible writers alongside geniuses like Cicero, Caesar, Shakespeare or Newton. This is wrong, for the writings of none of these affect the lives of men to any comparable degree nor give the same hopes as the Bible. Morally depraved mortal men cannot produce an immortally purifying book as the Bible. Other people declare that the Bible is inspired in as much as the writers were believers in the true God who enjoy illumination since **“as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”** (Romans 8:14). This is called the Universal Christian Inspiration Theory. This theory puts all regenerated believers on the same plane as Bible writers but it is wrong. Advocates of Mechanical Inspiration or Dictation Theory teach that God just used the writers of the Bible as stenographers or secretary/transcribers of the words He dictated to them, not allowing them the use of their intellect and faculties. The notable observations about the personality traits of different writers like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John and others disprove this theory. Others still erroneously hold the theory of Partial Inspiration establishing that only certain parts of the scriptures are inspired while others are not. Some go further to say that only the thoughts (and ideas) of Bible writers were inspired but not their words (or writings). This is called Thought Inspiration. These theories are all wrong. The only aspect of the Bible that we cannot prove its inspiration is that which was done after the canon of the scriptures was completed. This is simply the chapter division (by Stephen Langton in 1228 A.D.) and the verse division (by Robert Stephen in 1551 A.D.). The Bible-approved view of inspiration is

that both the thoughts and the words of the writers were divinely inspired. They were not absolutely left to themselves to use the words of their choice but the words were co-ordinated and divinely directed in their selection. This view is known as Verbal, Plenary or Full Inspiration. Both the words and thoughts of the writers were influenced by the Holy Ghost. However, they still had the freedom of the exercise of their moral agency in heeding the instruction of the divine Spirit as we see in their various methods of writing. In the Holy Writ, there are different parts of our subject – Revelation and Inspiration. Revelation essentially discovers new truth while inspiration superintends (or guides) the communication and recording of that truth. There are instances of inspiration with or without revelation (Luke 1:1-4; Revelation 1:1,11) as well as inspiration with illumination (1 Peter 1:11; 1 Corinthians 14:13-19). Though every part has equal bearing to the central theme of redemption, yet, there is nothing to suggest that any part is more inspired (or superior) than others. **“All scripture is given by inspiration...”** (2 Timothy 3:16).

EVIDENCE OF FULL INSPIRATION

(Luke 24:44; 11:51; Matthew 23:35; 4:1-11; 5:18; Exodus 4:10-12; 2 Samuel 23:1,2; 2 Peter 1:14-21; Psalm 119:9,11; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Question 3: Mention two “internal evidences” and three “external evidences” to prove that the Bible was authored by God.

There are various evidences that attest to the fact that the Bible is inspired of God. Examination of its internal claims (or self-evidence) as well as external claims leads any sincere seeker to the conclusion that, without doubt, the Bible has a divine origin. We shall acquaint ourselves with a number of these evidences. The testimony of Christ, the claims of the Bible writers and the observable peculiarities of its internal evidence are in agreement on this subject. The Lord Jesus Christ, second in the Godhead

and the “**express image of the invisible God**”, affirmed tenaciously that the Bible is the Word of God during His earthly ministry. He held it in high esteem and used it as a weapon to defeat the tempter (Matthew 4:1,11). He quoted from it time and again during His ministry and after His post-resurrection appearances, and declared that no jot or tittle of it would pass away unfulfilled (Matthew 5:18). In the 3,779 verses of the four gospels, out of which 1,934 were spoken by Christ, 180 verses were quotation from or references to the Old Testament. This implies that nearly one out of every ten words spoken by Jesus was taken from the then available canon of Scripture. Undoubtedly, the Saviour approved of the divine authorship of the Bible. He also promised that the Holy Spirit was to come to lead them into all truth and inspire the writing of the New Testament. Self-testimony, intellectuals believe, is valid evidence. The Bible claims divine inspiration and is replete with such expressions as, “**Thus saith the Lord**”, “**The Lord said** (or spoke) **unto me**”, “**The word of the Lord**” and so on (Exodus 4:10-12; 2 Samuel 23:1,2). For instance, the phrase “**Hear ye the word of the Lord**” occurred in the book of prophet Isaiah more than twenty times. The New Testament contains similar statements (1 Corinthians 11:23-25; 2 Peter 1:14). Every part of the Bible is inspired by God. Results follow as a man reads and obeys the instruction of the scriptures: his life is cleansed and he is kept from evil (Psalm 119:9,11; 2 Corinthians 5:17). The way the Bible teaches against and denounces sin (even in the life of some of the writers) is not known with any other book on earth. Its origin must be from above. It has never been added unto or enlarged since the last book was written, yet it is complete and applicable to every generation. Above all, the New Testament attest to the Old Testament as sacred (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54,56; Luke 24:25,26,44,46; John 5:39; 10:35; Acts 17:2,11; 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Galatians 3:8,22; 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 3:16). Moreover, its

sixty-six books written in three different languages by about forty writers over a span of more than 1,600 years all exhibit wonderful unity in their presentation and revelation. Its writers include kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, musicians, scholars and shepherds. Note also the fact that over three thousand of Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled and proves that the Bible is the word of God.

UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

(Genesis 2:7; Joshua 10:12-14; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Isaiah 40:22).

Question 4: How unique is the Bible compared with other books?

The Bible is unique in many aspects. As stated already, its wonderful unity in the face of the diversity of the background and experiences of its writers is bewildering enough to be taken as an aspect of uniqueness. No other book has been circulated or translated into as many languages as the Bible. Presently, the Bible is in print in many languages. “Pile them, if you will, on the left side” a writer highlights the difference, “but place your own Holy Bible on the right side – all alone by itself... there is a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought.” Besides, unlike many other books which get outdated (if not reviewed in a couple of years) the Bible has refused to get outdated since its over 1,800 years of existence. All these are aspects of its survival and divine preservation. Many kings and emperors, philosophers and scientists have fought against the Bible, some destroying as many copies as they felt were in existence but the Bible is still very much alive today. Voltaire predicted its extinction within a hundred years after his death but he has been proved wrong. His very house was (in less than half the time) turned into a Bible publishing house! Emperor Diocletian’s government fought much to exterminate the holy Book but divine providence had it that Constantine, his successor, ordered the printing of the same at government’s expense for people to

read and become God-fearing. No one has ever succeeded (or can ever succeed) in the fight against the Bible. Further proof of its uniqueness and inspiration is found in how it has stood through great criticisms. Like Christ's Church, the Bible is an "anvil that has worn out many hammers". It's like the bush that Moses saw burning but was not consumed.

Intellectuals from various disciplines have advanced many arguments against the facts of the Bible but one by one, they have all (by later discoveries) been proved wrong. Only a book with an origin greater than man can withstand such criticisms. History and Archaeology also prove the historicity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The fact that most men of renown that have made impact in world history have either been people who had their faith in Christ and the Bible or had great respect for the same also prove that the Bible has a divine origin. A British Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone once remarked: "I have known 95 of the world's great men in my time, and of these, 87 were followers of the Bible."

Abraham Lincoln, John Bacon and Isaac Newton and a number of others are believed to have professed belief in the word of God. Men like Napoleon Bonaparte, Lord Tennyson, Francis Bacon, Mahatma Gandhi and George Washington and many others (from their statements), are known to have great respect for the Bible even though they do not profess genuine faith in the Saviour. Scientific discoveries have always proved that the Bible is full of divine inspiration. Comparative anatomy supports the fact that man is a special class of the vertebrate creation (being) so far in "intelligence quotient" from the nearest species. Chemical analysis of the components of the body reveal that at least fourteen of the elements in man are found in the soil proving man's creation "**out of the dust of the earth**" as the Genesis account reads (Genesis 2:7). Computerized calculation of the number of days that have transpired since the creation of the earth have also confirmed the fact of a "missing link" as recorded in the accounts of Joshua

10:12-14 and 2 Kings 20:8-11. It took a long time before geographers came to agree that the earth was spherical, a fact that had been penned down by the instruction of the Creator Himself in Isaiah 40:22, years before the research. All these and an almost innumerable others prove the fact that the Bible is inspired of God and make us to say with the thoughtful writer who advised: “Never compare this Book with other books. Comparisons are dangerous. Never think or never say that this book just contains the Word of God. It is the Word of God – Supernatural in origin, eternal in duration Inexpressible in value, infinite in scope, Regenerating in power, infallible in authority, Universal in interest, personal in application INSPIRED IN TOTALITY.

“Read it through. Write it down. Pray it in. Work it out. And then pass it on.”

BENEFITING FROM THE BIBLE

(Romans 10:17; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 1:8).

Question 5: How can the believer maximally benefit from the word of God?

Many do not want to accept that the Bible is the word of God because of the consequences of such profession of faith in it. They would be bound by its principles and precepts that spell doom for the fleshly and careless. They do not want to obey the laws of God that charts a restricted path for the godly and prescribes unpopular, holy lifestyle for heavenly pilgrims. Others profess faith in the Bible but live without its precepts. This is as damnable as the attitude of those who reject it as the word of God. “A man that is endued with the powers of reason, by which he is capable of knowing, serving, glorifying, and enjoying his Maker, and yet lives without God in the world, is certainly the most despicable and the most miserable animal under the sun”, a writer decried. Unbelief in or rejection of the

word of God is as sinful as wilful disobedience of its known precepts. **“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them”** (2 Peter 2:21). God relates with people on the basis of their attitude to His word because He honours His word more than His name. His words reveal His Person, character, desire, dislike, demands, condition of relationship with Him, His expectations of man, promises and blessings for those who enter into relationship with Him and punishment for the obstinate. He does not listen to the prayers of those who do not listen to the preaching or reading of His words. **“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination”** (Proverbs 28:9). So, God expects everyone to cultivate the attitude of hearing, reading, studying, delighting or meditating on His words and obeying its precepts (Romans 10:17; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 1:8). Everyone who allows the word of God to affect his life will be convicted, cleansed and saved from sin (Psalm 19:7-11; John 15:3); enabled to live a victorious life over sin, self, the flesh, the world and Satan; equipped for holy, fruitful service; helped to obtain all the inheritance of saints through the promises of God and preserved to make heaven in the end. Since **“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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (2 Timothy 3:16,17), we must approach the word with reverence and openness of mind to derive the stated benefits from it.