

GOD'S WORD

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE – THE MOST INCREDIBLE BOOK IN THE WORLD!

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All the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God. ~ Wayne Grudem

But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived. But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:13-17, NLT)

Common Questions:

- How can we know the Bible is true? What does 'inspiration' mean?
- Is God really speaking to us through the Bible? Can we really have complete confidence in it? What about all the contradictions?
- Do we have the same Bible now as it was originally written?
- How do we know we have all the right books?
- Can we use the Bible to 'prove itself'?

The Meaning Of 'Inspired'

Means 'God breathed' it carries His voice through the Holy Spirit. God spoke through men to communicate with mankind.

What it is not:

- Human genius only (no supernatural content).
- Via men in a 'trance'.
- God thought only given to men to express it how they felt.
- Partially inspired.

God said.....' 'thus, says the Lord 'used 3800 times in the Bible.

The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!" Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth!" (Jeremiah 1:7-9, NLT)

Above all, you must realise that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:20-21, NLT)

How did God 'inspire'?

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. (Hebrews 1:1, NLT)

- Direct dictation. (Revelation 2, Isaiah 38:4-6)
- Historical research. (Luke 1:1-3)
- Dreams / visions.
- Men who recorded events (the gospels).

The Evidence

The unity of the Bible - Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) Written from 1500 BC to around 400 BC (not oral tradition) God attached huge importance to WRITTEN word. Moses wrote the law on tablets of stone (Exodus 31:18) which were placed in the ark of the covenant. Written word added to by Joshua (Joshua 24:26), Samuel, (1 Chronicles 29:29), Isaiah etc. Prophets over the centuries endorsed each other. Moses was quoted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Micah, and many times by Jesus Himself and the apostles. Throughout all these writings runs the unique message of the coming Messiah and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4, NLT)

'Say' = 'graphe' or written

The New Testament - These books were written over about 70 years and like the Old Testament show great unity and internal consistency. Different authors confirm each other and also frequently go back to quoting the Old Testament. i.e. 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7.

For the Scripture says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain." And in another place, "those who work deserve their pay!" (1 Timothy 5:18, NLT)

In 2 Peter 3:16, the Apostle Peter refers to the writings of Paul as already being considered part of scripture. There was therefore a very early consensus on Christian theology.

Trusted writers – the New Testament writers:

1. Were eyewitnesses.
2. They died for what they believed.
3. Their accounts all harmonise.
4. History and experience confirm the truth of their words.

Historical (and archaeological) accuracy - Example of King Belshazzar (Daniel 5). Laws of Medes and Persians (Daniel and Esther) Luke the historian 5700 partial manuscripts NT, earliest p52 papyrus 100-150 AD.

Pilate said, "So you are a king?" Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognise that what I say is true." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime." (John 18:37-38, NLT)

Prophecy - these are predictions only God could have known that tell the future and have 100% accuracy.

1. Proves the Bible is God's word.
2. Sets the Bible apart as unique.
3. Guarantees the rest of Gods promises (our inheritance Ephesians 1:11)
4. Illustrates God's sovereignty making sense of what is going on in the world around us.
5. Helps us understand the purpose and mission of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. There are 330 OT prophecies about Jesus – 100% accurate – odds too huge for this to happen by chance.
6. Prepares us for the future.
7. One really good example (out of many!) Ezekiel 26:1-21 the destruction of Tyre. The book of Daniel!

The apocrypha - 'hidden' - meaning set aside. 13 - 16 additional books which are present in Catholic/Orthodox Bibles – OT only (Tobit, first and second Esdras, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Bell and the Dragon, Wisdom of Solomon, Prayer of Manasseh, first and second Maccabees, etc).

- They were never part of the Hebrew Bible. They were part of the Septuagint (OT translated into Greek) but were carefully labelled as not part of scripture.
- They are never quoted in the New Testament.
- None of the writers claim divine inspiration and authority and some actually disclaim it.
- They contain many historical and doctrinal errors.
- They were not part of recognised canon of scripture in early centuries but were a Catholic response to the Protestant reformation and were formally included in the Catholic Bible Council of Trent 1546.

Sources: Introduction to systematic theology – Chip Kawalsingh; Doctrine – Wayne Grudem; The Bible – Youtube series by Michael Winger; New Testament manuscript blog – Nick Goffin