

Inspiration

A great many doctrines I have begun from scratch, consulting several books for additional information, but primarily leaning upon the original languages, context and *Strong's Concordance* (or a Greek or Hebrew concordance). However, Thieme, Chafer and Geisler and Nix have all done better jobs than I have ever done, so I will use their writings in order to put this together.

1. I doubt that I could come up with a better definition than Thieme did (although he relied heavily upon Chafer for this): **The human writers of Scripture so wrote that without waiving their human intelligence, their vocabulary, their personal feelings, their literary style, their personality or individuality, God's complete message to man was permanently recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture.** Chafer wrote: **It is by the divine controlling influence of God over the human authors that the Old and New Testaments were written to include all that God wanted included, to exclude all that God wanted excluded, and to state divine truth in perfect accuracy. Inspiration may be defined as God so supernaturally directing the writers of Scripture that without waiving their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feelings, or any other human factor, His own complete coherent message to man was recorded in perfect accuracy, the very words of Scripture bearing the authority of divine authorship.** Thieme has quoted the second half of this Chafer quote directly many times, from memory. This is one of the few quotations of man which is well-worth studying and memorizing.
2. All Scripture is *God-breathed* (II Tim. 3:16). The Greek word found here is θεόπνευστος (theopneustos) and it is most often translated *inspired by God*. However, it is the combination of two Greek words, θεός (which means *God*) and πνεύματι, which is from the Greek word πνέω (*to breathe*). It is found only once in the NT and I personally would have thought that this would have been a coined word by Paul. It was not. It is also found in classical Greek writings (although most of the passages seem to come from the first or second century BC).
 - (a) On the inhale, we have God the Holy Spirit providing the writers of Scripture with information, as in II Sam. 23:2–3 Isa. 59:21 Jer. 1:9 Acts 28:25).
 - (b) On the exhale, we have the writers of Scripture writing God's word (or speaking it; and these words are recorded).
3. God's Word is not a matter of human viewpoint but Scripture is written while the writer is filled by the Holy Spirit or by means of the Holy Spirit or carried along by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 22:42–45 Acts 4:24–25 II Peter 1:20–21). As Thieme puts it, the Holy Spirit makes *use of human agencies and language*. Chafer points out that the *Bible is our ultimate authority...It is an act of futility to attempt to debate theology and the truths relating to it without agreeing on the foundation and source of this truth.*
4. We may pause here and ask, why did God do it this way? Why did He not drop a book out of the sky in every language so that there would be no problem recognizing its divine significance? Why did He just not give us a book written in reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics (?) and have someone with magic glasses write down the content?
 - (a) There is a great deal of parallelism throughout the Bible. One of the most important is that of Jesus Christ, who is the living Word, fully and unequivocally God and yet true humanity (John 1:1–12); and this is parallel to the concept of Scripture, God's complete and connected message to man as recorded by the human authors of Scripture who did not waive any of their humanity in the writing of Scripture. A grasp of the living Word gives us understanding of the written Word and vice versa.
 - (b) There is the principle of chronological revelation; that is, we exist in time and God has different programs for different ages. The church age was not pertinent to Adam and Eve, to Noah, or to Moses. Having information about the church age would have not been helpful. Jesus Christ came in time so the Scriptures which preceded His coming had to look forward to His coming and those Scriptures written after His death and resurrection had to look backward to His first advent. Therefore, each set of generations of peoples required revelation which was for their time in human history. It was not until the church age that we had God's complete revelation to man.

- (c) We must never forget that we are an integral part of God's plan. We are not just a separate entity on earth with some divine will imposed upon us from heaven. God is personal and there is an moment-by-moment interaction between God and ourselves which is real and dynamic.
5. What Paul presented to the Corinthians is the *mind of Christ* (II Cor. 2:16). By extrapolation, we may include all of Paul's writings and the rest of Scripture.
 6. God's Word is more important than any worldly item (Prov. 8:10–11). God has exalted his Word even above His name (Psalm 138:2)¹.
 7. God's Word existed in eternity past, prior to its being written down in time (Prov. 8:22–31).
 8. Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, God spoke to man in several ways:
 - (a) Directly (Gen. 2:16 3:9,14–19 9:1–18 12:1–3 Num. 12:7–8).
 - (b) Through the oral tradition, which was primarily meaningful prior to Moses' recording of Scripture (Gen. 24:2,7 28:1,3).
 - (c) Through dreams (Gen. 15:12–21 31:10–13 37:5–11 41:1–38² Num. 12:6 Dan. 10:9)³
 - (d) Visions or trance-like states (I Kings 22:19 Isa. 1:1 6:1 Acts 10:9–34 Rev. 1:10 and following).
 - (e) Through the Scripture which had already been written or was about to be written (Deut. 6:6–9).
 - (f) Through various rituals and through priests, who, although they primarily represented man to God, by their activities in the tabernacle and in performing the animal sacrifices, they revealed the gospel to man (Ex. 12:24–27 13:4–10).
 - (g) God's Word as spoken through His prophets (Isa. 6:8–10).
 - (h) Through angelic teaching (Acts 7:53)
 9. If an angel or even an apostle teaches anything contrary to the gospel that Paul has delivered, then they are cursed (Gal. 1:8). We are not to add or to take from God's Word, now that it is complete (Rev. 22:18–19⁴).
 10. The Extent of Inspiration:
 - (a) Prehistoric past: There are significant events which have occurred prior to the advent of man which the Bible gives us an accurate account of. The creation of the universe and the restoration of the earth is recorded in Genesis, Isaiah, John and Colossians. Satan's fall is recorded in Isaiah and in Ezekiel. We would have no way of ascertaining these events without Scripture.
 - (b) Ancient history: The Bible contains an accurate portrayal of ancient history; far superior to that which we have any records for. This goes back prior to the flood, from which we have no written records apart from the Bible. In fact, ancient mythology is explained by the events found in Gen. 6. Archeologist used to ridicule the Bible due to its continual mention of the Hittites and their great power, for which there was a dearth of archological evidence. That has all changed and the Bible has given an accurate portrayal of the Hittite race and empire.

¹The proper interpretation here is: some people profess to be religious, spiritual, to love God, etc. The reality of the alleged *spirituality* is found in their interest in God's Word. This is where we find out just exactly Who God is. Without His Word, we do not have the ability to love God because we do not know Who God is.

²Note, however, that even though God spoke to Pharaoh, this required a mature believer to interpret the dream.

³Notice that these dreams, visions and trancelike states occurred with more frequency prior to the recording of Scripture. After Moses recorded the first Scripture, then these methods were used by God in order to write more Scripture.

⁴Prophecy does not begin and end with the foretelling of future events. A prophet represented God to man and his message was God's message to man. So all that a prophet had to say was called prophecy and only a portion of that was prophetic.

- (c) Scientific data: although the Bible is not a scientific textbook nor was it written by people with scientific leanings, all scientific information found in the Bible is accurate. The earth is identified in one passage in Isaiah as spherical; the Bible also points out that the earth is hung upon nothing. Although the Bible is in direct opposition to evolution (which is but a theory, and a poorly conceived one at that), it is not in opposition to the "Big Bang" theory.
- (d) Objective-law: The Bible sets down laws with regard to marriage, family and nation, which, when followed by believers or unbelievers, cause the marriage, the family and their nation to prosper. How many other documents written millenniums ago could be dusted off and applied today with any sort of success?
- (e) In many portions of the Bible, God is said to be speaking directly to the author or to the people. The Bible is accurate in its recording of these quotes.
- (f) There are many areas of prophecy in the Bible, given months, years and centuries prior to their fulfillment. In fact, the way a prophet was to be tested was to wait a short time to see if some of his prophecies came to pass. If they did, then he was a prophet from God. Ezekiel predicted the destruction of the Edomites, an extremely powerful and vigorous people that no one seemed to be able to defeat. However, their land became an area of desolation, just as God foretold through Ezekiel. ii. Tyre has been seen as an impregnable island s for centuries. God predicted that it would fall by troops marching overland. Alexander the Great built a causeway from the mainland to the Island city and overthrew Tyre. iii. One of the most significant areas of prophecy is that surrounding the person and work of Jesus Christ. There are passages in Isaiah which sound like eyewitnesses to the crucifixion. Isaiah was written almost a millennium prior the Christ's advent and the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) was translated over a century prior to the advent of Jesus Christ.
- (g) The Bible records falsehoods accurately. When Satan lied to the woman and told her "You shall not surely die"; that was a lie and the Bible records it. The book of Ecclesiastes is filled with human viewpoint; but it is what Solomon thought at the time. Proverbs is Solomon mature and in fellowship and Ecclesiastes is Solomon searching for truth and satisfaction in life apart from God's Word.

11. Apologetics. This is a study of certain truths of Scripture and certain aspects of the Bible which give credence to it being what it claims to be.

- (a) Human authorship. Over forty different authors, from kings to common fishermen to tax collectors to four star generals to theologians wrote the 66 books of the Bible over a period of over 1600 years. The cohesion of Scripture is better explained by the supernatural guidance of God than it is by pure coincidence. Some detractors will try to point out that this is religious literature put together by religious people who all have the same viewpoint. This is highly unlikely because if anyone has a different set of viewpoints, it will be religious people. Recall the statement, *When any two rabbis agree on any one thing at one time, Messiah will come.*
- (b) Personal honesty and objectivity of the writers of Scripture. Believer and unbeliever authors alike tend to see themselves with rose-colored glasses. They can spot the faults and shortcomings of others, but cannot see even the same deficiencies in themselves. However, the authors of Scripture, when they sinned or were wrong, they did not do the natural human thing: gloss over it, neglect to include it or rationalize and/or justify it; instead, they record their sins and failures along side their triumphs and successes. David's adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband that he contracted; Noah's drunkenness (probably originally recorded by Noah); Moses's sin which caused him to be kept out of entering into the promised land with a multitude of one of the most degenerate generation of Jews ever; Solomon's failure to woo the Schulumite woman in Song of Solomon. The Bible is filled with the accurate recording of many men. Some Christians find this troubling; to examine some great man of Scripture and then to find out that not only does he have feet of clay, but he is knee deep in mud.