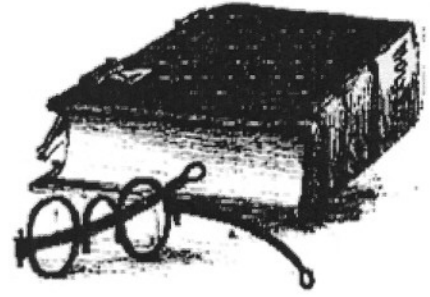


Seeking the Truth

A Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson Two: The Validity of the Bible



When the chief priests and elders of the Jews questioned the authority of Jesus, He, in turn posed a question to them about the baptism of John—“where was it from? From heaven or from men?” (Matthew 21:25). That same question needs to be asked about the origin of the Bible—“Where is it from? From heaven or from men?” It is a question that each person must answer because the response one gives to it may well determine the eternal destiny of his/her soul.

The Bible: From God or Man?

If the Bible is a product of man, think of the kind of men involved in its production. They would be wicked liars who posed as something they were not, who offered empty promises and hopes which could not be fulfilled, and who claimed to be from God when, in reality, they would be far from Him. Also, since they received no worldly acclaim, power, or riches from authoring it. Not only, then, would they be wicked but also they would be stupid. Additionally, nearly all those men who authored books of it died a martyr’s death because of it. To say that the origin of the Bible is with man is illogical.

On the other hand, it is completely logical to believe God is the source of the Bible. Since man could never have known of God and His will by his own wisdom and resources, it was necessary for God to reveal Himself and His will to him. If man were going to know his origin, identity, purpose, and destiny, God had to reveal them to him. To accomplish such a revelation, God

revealed His word to the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13) who, having searched the mind of God, made it known to men, inspiring them to write down what He revealed to them (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Bible, then, is a product of inspiration.

The Bible: A Product of Inspiration

Inspiration is “a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness” (Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 131). The Bible claims such inspiration. In 2 Timothy 3:16 it says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”

Having revealed Himself and His will to the Holy Spirit, God separated certain men to reveal that will to man. They did not teach according to their own wills (2 Peter 1:20). Rather, they spoke the words and thoughts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13). They were inspired to great depth and detail (Matthew 22:31,32; Galatians 3:16).

This inspiration fully qualified them in their teaching both what they spoke and what they wrote (Matthew 10:9; Acts 2:4). Thus, what they wrote were the words and commands of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37). They wrote exactly what God wanted them to write without errors or mistakes. Therefore, when one reads the Bible, he is reading the words of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Evidence of Inspiration

There are many areas which give supporting evidence for the inspiration of the Bible showing it to be from God. Consider the following.

The Unity of the Bible. The Bible's sixty-six books were written by about forty men over a period of approximately 1600 years yet all are written in perfect harmony each complementing, never contradicting, the others.

The Scriptures Claim Inspiration. Besides 2 Timothy 3:16, which we have already noted, the Scriptures have an "air of infallibility" about them. Though unlearned men—fishermen, farmers, tax-collectors, etc.—often did the writing, they wrote with confidence. They announced without embarrassment they were revealing God's message (1 Corinthians 14:37).

The Brevity of the Scriptures. The Bible's brevity is a good example of inspiration. In the Scriptures, facts are related in a small amount of text that under normal circumstances would have taken men volumes to reveal.

The Calmness of the Scriptures. In the Bible, the wonderful and commonplace are described alike. Such events as the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5), the murder of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:6-12), the miracles of Jesus, and even the crucifixion (Matthew 27:33-56) are related in simple, commonplace terms.

Fulfilled Prophecies. Prophecy is a declaration of future events, such as no human wisdom or forecast is sufficient to make; depending on a knowledge of the innumerable contingencies of human affairs, which belongs exclusively to the omniscience of God; so that, from its very nature, prophecy must

be divine revelation. Time and again the writers of the Bible foretold of events which would later come to pass. Sometimes speaking hundreds of years before the events were to occur, the prophecies of the writers of the Bible were detailed. They were not like the broad generalizations of the so-called "prophets" of today. Every Biblical prophecy was fulfilled in exact detail.

Scientific Knowledge. Negatively, one does not find the superstitions or wrong ideas which were prevalent in Biblical times. Positively, its writers possessed advanced knowledge that mankind did not discover until centuries later. This includes such ideas as the roundness of the earth (Isaiah 40:22), the suspension of the earth in space (Job 26:7), the isolation of communicable diseases (Leviticus 13:45), and the need to wash in running water because of the presence of germs (Leviticus 14:1-6).

Archaeological Proof. No archaeological discovery has ever disproved any portion of the Bible. On the other hand, archaeology has proven many Biblical facts to be true.

Historical Accuracy. The Bible is without error in relation to its historical record of events.

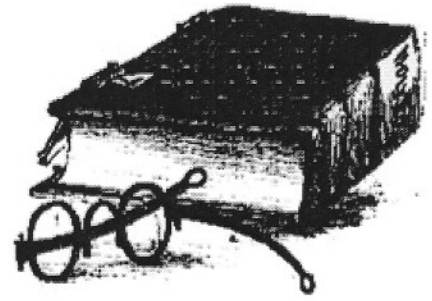
Conclusion

The Bible is the word of God. It bridges the gap between human and divine wisdom. In it God has revealed those things man could not know in and of himself. God has given man all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) so that he might live soberly, righteously, and godly in this life (Titus 2:11-14) in order to live eternally with Him in the life to come. ❁

• Complete the Questions for Lesson Two •

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Questions on Lesson Two

Answer the following questions by using the lesson text and your Bible.

1. Why is it important to know whether or not the Bible is from God or man?

2. If the Bible were a product of mere men, what kind of men would have written it?

3. How many men wrote the Bible? _____

Approximately how many years did it take to write the Bible?

4. What happened to most of the men who wrote the Bible?

5. What is inspiration?

6. Who inspired the men who wrote the books of the Bible?

7. Does the Bible claim to be inspired?

Yes No

8. What is prophecy?

9. Who is the source of all true prophecy?

10. Has any archaeological discovery ever disproved any portion of the Bible?

Yes No

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Grade _____