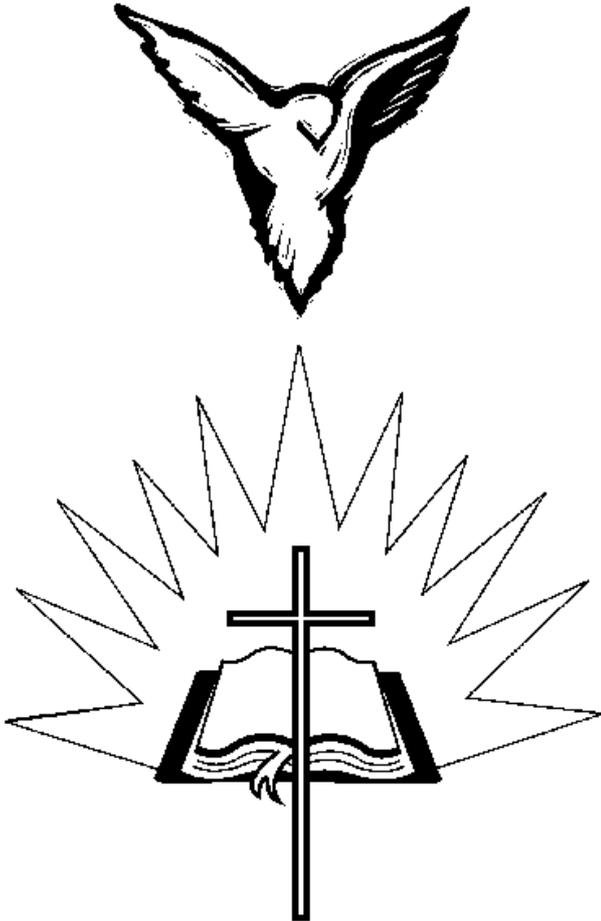


LESSON 2 - THE BIBLE COMES FROM GOD TO MAN



In this lesson we will learn about the special way in which God gave His Word to man in the Bible. After you have carefully studied this lesson you should be able to know what we mean by "the inspiration of the Bible," and "verbal inspiration." You should also be able to tell clearly God's purpose in giving the Bible to us.

In the second part of the lesson you will study about various translations of the Bible. Also added to this lesson is a section on Bible study helps. You will learn how to use a concordance, Bible dictionary, Bible handbook, Bible atlas, and Bible commentary.

(PART A)

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The word "inspiration" means a "breathing into." God breathed into certain men His very own thoughts and words, so that what they wrote was God's Word and not human ideas and words. 2 Timothy 3:16

tells us: "**All Scripture is God-breathed.**" Another translation says, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.**" "God-breathed" and "given by inspiration" mean the same thing.

Notice from 2 Timothy 3:16 that it is Scripture that is God-breathed. Scripture refers to the written words of the Bible. It was not just the idea to write or the thoughts of the Bible writers that were God-breathed. No, the very words which they wrote in the Bible were breathed into

them by God (Galatians 3:16). Since the very words of the Bible were inspired by God, we speak of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. The word verbal refers to words and not just to ideas.

There are other important Bible passages that also speak clearly about inspiration, the special way in which God gave His Word to us. Look at the following passages carefully and answer the questions.

2 Peter 1:21: "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

1 Corinthians 2:13: "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit."

Galatians 1:11-12: " I want you to know, brothers, that the Gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. "

Galatians 3:16: "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds, " meaning many people, but "and to your seed, " meaning one person, who is Christ. "

QUESTIONS:

1. What person of the Trinity is credited with the work of inspiration?
_____.
2. In the first passage, what words describe what happened to the men who spoke and wrote God's Word? _____.
3. In the second passage, which words tell us about verbal inspiration?
_____.
4. Agree or Disagree Every word that Paul said was inspired by God.

To summarize, inspiration is the special way by which God gave His Word to man. God breathed into the Bible writers exactly what He wanted them to write. The verbal inspiration of God means that He breathed into the writers the very words He wanted them to write.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

God tells us clearly that the Bible came from Him so that we might have full confidence in what it says. We do not have to worry that there might be errors in the Bible, because it all came from God. Because God inspired the Bible to be written, it is inerrant, that is, it is not possible that it contains error. The Bible has full authority because God is its author. God cannot lie; therefore His Word cannot lie. Jesus said clearly to God the Father concerning His Word, "**Your word is truth**" (John 17:17).

OTHER SO-CALLED HOLY BOOKS

How are we to consider the so-called "holy books" of other religions, such as the "Koran" of the Moslems? Someone has said it this way: "If they agree with the teachings of the Bible, they are unnecessary; if they do not agree with the teachings of the Bible, they must be rejected." Such books as the "Koran" are clearly the products only of men. They have no divine authority. They cannot be trusted in matters of faith and life. The Bible alone has divine authority.

HOW THE INSPIRED BOOKS BECAME RECOGNIZED

The 39 books of the Old Testament in the days of Jesus were commonly accepted by the Jews as coming from God. Jesus Himself clearly shows that He accepted the 39 Old Testament books as God's Word (Luke 24:44-45). Jesus' testimony that the Old Testament Scripture is the Word of God is certainly sufficient for us. Jesus said of the Old Testament: "**The Scripture cannot be broken**" (John 10:35). In His teaching and preaching Jesus often quoted the Old Testament Scriptures as having divine authority (Mat 12:40, 42; Mar 2:25, Mat 19:4-6).

When the writings of the evangelists and the apostles appeared in the New Testament, the apostles themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit gathered them together (1 Thess 2:13, 5:27; Colossians 4:16) and attested that those writings were to be regarded as God's Word (2 Peter 3:15-16). For instance, Jesus' words "the worker deserves his wages" found in Luke 7:10 are quoted by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18 and called Scripture. They taught the believers that the writings of the apostles (and those closely associated with the apostles such as Mark and Luke) were to be regarded as inspired, just as the Old Testament Scriptures had been

inspired (2 Peter 3:2, Ephesians 2:20). Remember the testimony of the New Testament about its contents: that it is not words of human wisdom but words of God the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13). Remember also that a large part of the New Testament contains the very words of Jesus and many quotes and references from the Old Testament. The Old and New Testaments are written in perfect harmony with one another because they are the product of the same Spirit.

Finally, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who convinces us by the words of the Bible that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. The Word of God is "living and active" as Hebrews 4:12 reminds us. The Spirit that caused the disciples to remember all the words that Jesus spoke (John 14:26) is the same Spirit of Truth that has gathered together for us the 66 books of the Bible as God's inspired Word.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

God gave us the Bible to reveal Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin. The Law in the Bible is

necessary to show us that we have a need for a Savior because of our sin. Then the Gospel shows us our Savior and says that we freely have eternal life in Him. John 20:31 tells us the central purpose of the Bible: **"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."** The Bible is not only written to give us faith in Jesus as our Savior, but also so that we may continue in the faith all our lives. John also wrote in 1 John 5:13, **"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."** Peter after writing about putting our faith into practice in our lives explains, **"If you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."** (2 Peter 1:10-11) Once a person realizes that Jesus Christ has paid the price of their sin, rescued them from eternal death, given them the gift of eternal life, they naturally respond by wanting to live for God. Reading the Good News in the Bible gives us spiritual strength to live for God (Romans 1:16) and to grow stronger in the faith (1 Peter 2:2).

Read again 2 Timothy 3:16 and list each of the purposes for the Bible listed there:

_____, _____,
_____, _____.

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. That God inspired the Bible means that He _____.
2. By verbal inspiration we mean that God inspired the very _____ of the Bible.
3. 2 Peter 1:21 says: "**Men spoke from God as they were _____
by the _____.**"
4. Because it is not possible for the Bible to contain errors, we say that it is
_____.
5. Why can we not trust what books like the Moslem's Koran say? _____
_____ 
6. The _____ convinces us by the _____ that the Bible is indeed the inspired
Word of God.
7. The central purpose of the Bible is to _____.

(PART B)

COPIES AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

Today we do not have any of the original "autograph" manuscripts which the Bible writers produced. However, many copies of what they wrote were made and passed down through the years. The Jewish scribes were very careful in copying the books of the Old Testament. The same can be said of the men who copied the books of the New Testament.

To give you an example of how meticulous the Jewish scribes were, here are some of the regulations they followed:

1. A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of ceremonially clean animals.
2. This skin must be prepared for the use of the synagogue by a Jew.
3. Every skin must contain a fixed number of columns, equal throughout the entire scroll.
4. The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 68 lines.



5. The breadth must consist of 30 letters.
6. The whole copy must be first lined; and if three words be written without a line, it is worthless.
7. The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe.
8. A scribe may only copy a scroll that has been certified to be an authentic copy. The scribe is not allowed to deviate from it at all, not even one letter.
9. No word or letter, not even a yod (the smallest Hebrew letter), must be written from memory. The Scribe must always look at the scroll before him and copy from it.
10. Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene.
11. Between every new section, the breadth of nine consonants must intervene.
12. Between every book, three lines must intervene.
13. The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line, but the rest do not need to do so.
14. The copyist must sit in full Jewish dress.
15. He must wash his whole body before starting to copy.
16. A copyist may not write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink.

17. Even if a king should address him while writing God's name, he must take no notice of him.

All of the above regulations were to ensure that the surface upon which God's Word was written and materials used to write it would in no way cause a mistake to be made. Likewise the regulations about clothing and bathing would ensure that the scribe was fully alert when he sat down to copy. In addition, after the copy was completed, the manuscript was meticulously analyzed for defects. The name "scribe" in Hebrew is derived from the verb "to count." They counted the verses, words, and letters of the Scriptures in order to check the accuracy of what had been copied. They would count from the beginning of a document and count backwards from the end to find the middle letter. If the expected letter was not at the right spot, they would destroy the copy and try again!

The strictness with which the Jews copied the Old Testament accounts for the fact that when the Dead Sea Scrolls (a collection of scrolls most of which appear to have been written between 200 –100 BC) were discovered in the late 1940's and compared to the previously earliest known manuscripts of the Old Testament from around 980 AD, there was not much difference between them. For instance, of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, only one of them is possibly different – and it was written in the margin, not in the text itself. Gleason Archer stated that the Isaiah copies of the Qumran community "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling."

Both the Old and New Testaments were translated very early into other languages. The Hebrew of the Old Testament was translated into Greek between 250-150 B.C. This Greek translation of the Old Testament is known as the Septuagint. Septuagint is a Greek word for 70, since about 70 men were involved in the translation. Greek-speaking people could then read the Old Testament in their own language.

The New Testament Greek was translated into Latin and Syriac by about 150 A.D. and into Coptic, a language spoken in northern Africa, by about 200 A.D. In later years the whole Bible was translated into hundreds of languages.

Today the Bible has been translated in whole or in part in about 2,000 different languages. This work is still continuing. Some of our men are currently involved in translating the Bible into African Bantu languages.

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

The earliest translation of the whole Bible into English was done by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor and theologian. His English translation was published in 1382. It was not translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek, but from a Latin translation of the Bible called the Vulgate. Therefore it was a translation of a translation. Since the printing press had not yet been invented, all the copying of these Bibles had to be done by hand.

William Tyndale (born about 1494) was fluent in eight languages and the first to translate the Bible into English from the original Greek and Hebrew. He was inspired by Luther's translation of the Bible into German in 1522. Tyndale moved to Germany where he consulted frequently with Luther and Melancthon, completing his translation of the New Testament in 1524. The printing press, invented in 1451, by this time made publication much easier. By 1526 Tyndale published his completed New Testament in the city of Worms. About 15,000 copies of Tyndale's New Testament in English were smuggled into England - hidden in bales of cotton, sacks of flour, and bundles of flax. The church of Tyndale's day was very much against an English translation of the Bible and he was put to death by the English king crown in 1536. However, in 1537, Miles Coverdale finished Tyndale's work of translating the Old Testament and published an English Bible with the King of England's blessing.

The best known of all the English versions has been the King James Version, published in 1611. It is also known as the Authorized Version. King James of England had appointed 54 excellent Hebrew and Greek scholars to translate. They labored for four years on the translation. The King James Version is still used widely around the world to this day. The problem is, however, that it continues many old English words and expressions that are difficult for people to understand today. The translation is over 400 years old.

Other English versions of the Bible are the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, the New English Bible of 1970, the New American Standard Bible, Today's English Version, and the Living Bible or Good News Bible. The New American Standard is a good literal translation.

A recent translation that is very popular and well done is the New International Version (NIV). The NIV was originally published in 1978 by the New York Bible Society. It is the translation that is most commonly used in the Wisconsin Synod (WELS) and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) today. No translation is perfect, so they all must be evaluated on how faithful they are to the original meaning of the text.

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

There are many books available to aid in Bible study. Your instructor will tell you about each of the following kinds of books, tell you where they may be found, and show you how to use them. Write your own notes after each of the books.

CONCORDANCE TO THE BIBLE

BIBLE DICTIONARY

HANDBOOK TO THE BIBLE

BIBLE ATLAS

BIBLE COMMENTARY

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. An early translation of the Old Testament into Greek is called the

2. Into what language of northern Africa was the New Testament translated at 200 A.D.?

_____.

3. The Bible has been translated into about how many languages? _____.

4. Who was the first person we know to translate part of the Bible into Japanese? About what year was this?

5. Give three names for Japanese translations of the Bible.

6. Which translations have you read? _____.

(SUPPLEMENT TO LESSON 2)

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF BIBLE STUDY HELP BOOKS:

Concordance to the Bible - a book listing the verses of the Bible that contain a given word; words are listed alphabetically. For example, when you look up the word "hope" in the concordance, you will find all the Bible verses that use the word "hope."

A concordance helps you to find a Bible verse when you know only a word or two from the verse.

Bible Dictionary - a dictionary that gives you brief information on people, places, events, etc. of the Bible.

Handbook to the Bible - a book like our course "Introduction to the Bible." A Bible handbook gives introductory material on the Bible and a brief explanation of the contents of each book of the Bible. Often there are also maps, charts, and articles on special subjects.

Bible Atlas - a book of maps from the various periods of Bible history.

Bible Commentary - a book that helps explain the meaning of the words of the Bible.

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ADDITIONAL PASSAGES REGARDING THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE:

"Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Then the LORD reached out His hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put My words in your mouth. (Jeremiah 1:6-7,9)

I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. (Daniel 9:2)

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?" (Acts 4:25)

Paul made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when He said through Isaiah the prophet..." (Acts 28:25)

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways. (Hebrews 1:1)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-- the gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scripture. (Romans 1:1-2)

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11-12)

This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you." (Jeremiah 30:2)

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; His word was on my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:2)

What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. (Romans 3:1-2)

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. (1 Corinthians 2:13)

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2

Timothy 3:16-17)

Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. (Jeremiah 36:2)

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. (Eph 3:2-5)

I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles. (2 Peter 3:2)

(כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה)

The phrase, "This is what the Lord says" appears 293 times in the Old Testament. Over and over again God claimed to be speaking through the prophets. This claim was repeated over and over again in the New Testament as well. The church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone." (Ephesians 2:20)