

Home Group Questions

September 15, 2019

Home Group Questions will be a bit different this week. Take the outline from the sermon this week and review it with your home group, stopping frequently to discuss the information in the handout and to read the verses listed so that everyone is comfortable with the ideas used to defend the Bible as the Word of God. This is a two-week series, so Pastor Mel will have more information to help us next week as well.

Also, here is an article you can refer to and even read portions of it to give added insight and depth into the truth that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Take turns having people read verses and portions from the article and then discuss perhaps objections that may be answered by these articles. Again, part two of this study is coming this coming Sunday!!

Here's the article:

The Bible as the Word of God

From the website www.carm.org by [Matt Slick](#)

One of the objections raised by critics of biblical inspiration is that the [Bible](#) is not the word of God, but that it *contains* the word of God. Is this accurate? No. First of all, this doesn't fit what the Bible says about itself. The collection of 66 books that the Christian Church recognized as being inspired speaks as the very words of [God](#) in many places.

1. "Thus says the Lord" occurs over 400 times in the Old Testament.
2. "God said" occurs 42 times in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament.
3. "God spoke" occurs 9 times in the Old Testament and 3 times in the New Testament.
4. "The Spirit of the Lord spoke" through people in [2 Sam. 23:2](#); [1 Kings 22:24](#); [2 Chron. 20:14](#).

Of course, the errantists (those who say the Bible in its original documents had errors) will reject these scriptures' accuracy; that is, they will deny that God's word is without error--even in the originals.

If appealing to the Bible in a general sense isn't good enough. Let's consider that Jesus said the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (all of the Old Testament) were [Scripture](#), and that the Scriptures cannot be broken--cannot fail ([John 10:35](#)).

Some might say that there are instances of verses that "contain" God's word, but that it doesn't mean the Bible *is* God's word. The problem is addressed by Jesus.

[Luke 24:44-45](#), "Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things **which are written about Me** in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' 45 **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.**"

Notice that Jesus speaks about what is written regarding him in the Old [Testament](#). Then Luke writes that Jesus opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. What Scriptures? The Law (Moses), the Prophets, and the Psalms. This was a common designation for the Old Testament. Therefore, Jesus says that the written form of the

Old Testament is Scripture. Jesus goes on to deal with the religious leaders who would violate these Scriptures which he called "the word of God."

- [Matt 15:6](#), "he is not to honor his father or his mother. And thus you invalidated the **word of God** for the sake of your tradition."
- [Mark 7:13](#), "thus invalidating the **word of God** by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."
- [John 10:35](#) "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)."

Jesus never said the scriptures *contain* the word of God. He said they *were* the word of God. Therefore, we can see that the word of God *is* the written form of Scripture. In fact, we are told by Paul not to exceed what is written. Note, Paul doesn't say to not exceed the *parts* of the scripture that *contain* God's word; he says not to exceed what is written!

[1 Cor. 4:6](#), "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might *learn not to exceed what is written*, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other."

It is the written form that is proclaimed as being Scripture, unbreakable, the word of God, and the standard of which we are not to exceed. This can only be true if the written form is the Word of God and not just something that *subjectively* contains the word of God.

What does it mean to be the Word of God?

The Bible is full of citations where it quotes God. However, it also has citations of non-inspired individuals, such as Judas, Herod, etc. Satan, for example, lied when addressing Eve in The Garden of Eden. This means that the Bible contains a record of a lie. But how can such an error be included in the Word of God and still have the word of God be inerrant since a lie is an error?

The answer is that the Bible inerrantly records the lie. It makes no mistakes in its reporting of events, in its proclamation of truth, and in its revelation of God's will. Where it may record the lies, failures, deception, etc., of various individuals, it does so perfectly and without error. Likewise, when it records historical events, genealogies, etc., it does so using the idioms and cultural norms of the time--yet it is without error.

Jesus acknowledged this when he said that the Word of God, the Scripture, cannot be broken. This means that it cannot fail. Why? because the written form of the word of God, which is Scripture, is inspired; and because it is inspired, it cannot fail; it must be fulfilled. Remember, Jesus called the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (all of the Old Testament) Scripture; and he says that the Scriptures cannot be broken--cannot fail. He was obviously referring to the written form of the Old Testament:

- [Luke 24:44-45](#), "Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things **which are written about Me** in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' 45 **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.**"
- [John 10:35](#) "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)."

If a citation of a city was incorrect, is that not a failure of Scripture? If a date is wrong, is that not a failure of scripture? Likewise, would not an error in a fact likewise be a failure in the Scripture? Of course it would! But Jesus says the Scriptures cannot be broken. They cannot fail. Is Jesus wrong?

Is the New Testament also Scripture?

It should go without saying that the New Testament is also Scripture. The early church recognized the New Testament documents as being authentic and inspired and included them in the canon of Scripture along with the Old Testament. In fact, Paul recognized the authority that his words had in the church. Take for example what he said to the Colossians.

[Col. 4:16](#), "And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea." [1](#)

Likewise, Peter made an interesting comment about Paul's writings when he said,

"as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction." ([2 Pet. 3:16](#)).

Peter called Paul's writings Scripture. In turn, Paul called Scriptures "God-breathed," and Jesus said the Scriptures cannot fail.

Scripture is God-breathed

[2 Tim. 3:16-17](#) says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The word "inspired" is literally "God-breathed." This is an interesting phrase since it implies that the Scriptures are from the mouth of God.

Likewise, Peter says in [2 Pet. 1:21](#), "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Notice that Peter is stating that prophecy is not the product of human will. Instead, prophecy occurs by those moved by the Holy Spirit.

God spoke through the mouth of the prophets. We see in [Acts 3:18](#), "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled." Clearly, Luke, the writer of Acts, understood the Old Testament Scriptures to be spoken by God through the prophets. In fact, we find other references to the Old Testament referring to God speaking through the prophets.

- Words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah are referenced in [Matt. 2:17](#), [27:9](#).
- Words spoken through the prophet Isaiah are referenced in [Matt. 1:22](#), [8:17](#); [John 12:37-40](#).
- Words spoken through the prophets Moses and Hosea are referenced in [Matt. 2:15](#).
- Words spoken through the prophet David are referenced in [Matt. 13:34-35](#).
- Words spoken through the prophet Zechariah are referenced in [Matt. 21:4](#).
- Words spoken through the prophets generically are referenced in [Matt. 26:56](#).

Because the prophets speak for God, write Scripture, and make prophecies, the Scriptures must be fulfilled. It is the written Scriptures that are referenced here. It is not some vague and ambiguous reference to some areas of the Bible that "contain" the word of God.

The problem of subjectivity

If the Bible contains the word of God but is not the word of God, then we must ask which parts of the Bible are the Word of God and which are not? The problem in answering this question is that the one who seeks to do so

inadvertently places himself as the judge of what is and what is not inspired and without error. But by what standard would such a person make such judgment?

What about the numerous contradictions in the Bible?

It is true that there are difficulties within the Word of God. But these are due to copying errors through the centuries. As more and more historical, archaeological, and manuscript evidence is uncovered, the fewer Bible difficulties there are. Nevertheless, for an examination of answers to the alleged Bible contradictions, please see [The Bible Difficulties section](#) in the navigation menu on the left.

Conclusion

When claims that the Bible contains the word of God but is not the word of God are made, it is done so usually because the critic of inspiration wants to assert that the original documents in the Bible contained errors. The problem is that this undermines the very trustworthiness of God's Word. How are we to decide what is and is not inspired and therefore true if the very breath of God moving through a sinner results in documents with mistakes? Does this inspire trust in God's Word? Does it promote security and rest in believing God's Word? Obviously not.

This undermines the faith of Christians and is, naturally, a dangerous and false teaching.