

REVELATION



INSPIRATION

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ANIMATION



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APPLICATION



COMMUNICATION

THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, May 24, 2009

The Bible's Claim of Inspiration

The doctrine of verbal inspiration is not something first believed and then imposed on the Bible. It is rather something that is believed as a result of taking seriously the claims that the biblical writers themselves have made about their writings.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT CLAIMS THAT IT IS THE WORD OF GOD.

- A. According to Dr. Rene Pache¹, the Old Testament--in various ways--declares 3,808 times that it conveys the expressed words of God. There are over 420 such statements in the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses). (See such examples as Exodus 17:14; 19:6-7; 20:1; 24:4, 7).
- B. When Ezra read the books of the law of Moses, he referred to them as the words of God (Ezra 9:4; 10:3). Similarly, Nehemiah confirmed that they were the words that God gave through Moses (Nehemiah 8:1, 8; 9:13-14).
- C. Psalm 119--the great 'song' of God's word--makes 175 references to the Scriptures. In it, the Scriptures are referred to as the word (or words) of the Lord twenty-four times.
- D. The typical manner of the writing prophets of the Old Testament was to introduce or declare their words to be the word of God. We find this 120 times in Isaiah, 430 times in Jeremiah, 329 times in Ezekiel, 53 times in Amos, 27 times in Haggai, and 53 times in Zechariah.

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO AFFIRMS THIS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. The New Testament often presented what the Old Testament Scriptures said as if God were speaking (compare Gal. 3:8 w/ Gen. 12:1-3; Romans 9:17 w/ Exodus 9:16). Note that in both the cases just cited, God would have said these things at a time prior to the Scriptures being written; and yet Scripture is identified with the expression, "God said . . ."
- B. Jesus quoted Old Testament Scripture as that which God said (compare Matt. 15:4-6 w/ Exodus 20:12 and 21:17; Matt. 19:4-5 w/ Gen. 2:24).
- C. The first disciples cited Scripture as if it were God speaking (compare Acts 4:24 w/ Ps. 2:1; Acts 13:34-35 w/ Isa. 55:3 and Ps. 16:10; Heb. 1:5 w/ Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:6 w/ Ps. 97:7; Heb. 1:7 w/ Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:8 w/ Ps. 45:6-7; Heb. 1:10 w/ Ps. 102:25-28).

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT PRESENTS ITSELF AS GOD'S WORD.

- A. The teaching of Jesus is presented as the word of God (Luke 5:1).
- B. The preaching of the gospel in the book of Acts was presented as the word of God (Acts 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:7, 44; 15:35; 17:13; 18:11; 19:20; see also 1 Peter 1:23-25).

C. The apostle Paul presented his own preaching to be the word of God (1 Cor. 2:12-13; 11:23; 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Thess. 2:2-4, 9; 4:15). It should also be noted that the apostle Peter placed Paul's writings in the same category of "the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

IV. WHAT'S MORE, THE BIBLE CONVEYS THE IDEA THAT GOD CONTINUES TO SPEAK THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES.

(See John 5:39; Romans 4:3; 10:11; Hebrews 3:17, 13; 12:25; 14:7.)

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"It is evident, now, that such a doctrine must rest primarily on the claims of the sacred writers. In the very nature of the case, the writers themselves are the prime witnesses of the fact and nature of their inspiration. Nor does this argument run in a vicious circle. We do not assume inspiration in order to prove inspiration. We assume only honesty and sobriety. If a sober and honest writer claims to be inspired by God, then here, at least, is a phenomenon to be accounted for." -- B.B. Warfield²

¹Most of the information for this study was drawn from Rene Pache, Helen I. Needham, trans., *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp. 81-85.

²Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Samuel G. Craig, ed., *The Inspiration and Authority of The Bible* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1951), pp. 422-3.