

Series Title: Bias aside, reason engaged, why the NT remains credible

Sermon Title: Week 3 What makes scripture, Scripture!

Date: 01-17-21

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- **What is INSPIRATION? What does it mean to be ‘inspired’?**
- **Classic rock fan, I thought “maybe there are stories out there of musicians who share how they are inspired”... I searched “musicians who were inspired... autofill... Jimi Hendrix!**
- **Lots of ways we are inspired, but basic idea is when something happens to us- we have an idea, a flash of creativity, because of something GIVEN TO US. Something that is EXTERNAL TO US imparts within us something that wasn’t there before, impacts us, changes us, becomes part of us, and is expressed THROUGH US as something new... something that is FROM US, but would not have happened if we had not received that gift... if we had not been INSPIRED.**
- **Week three of 4 week series... WHY NT REMAINS CREDIBLE. Why SCRIPTURE is such an incredible gift, and incredibly important. Quick RECAP...**

† God has *revealed* Himself through *creation*, through *Israel*, and ultimately in *Jesus Christ*.

- **Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.**
- **God’s revelation of who Jesus is, what he did, is NEW TESTAMENT**

† Reality! It can be strongly argued and demonstrated that the New Testament has greater historical (**events**), cultural (**known to the people of its time**), textual (**consistency of actual texts**), and procedural (**how it came together**) integrity and accuracy that any other book in human history.

† Reality! That’s still not enough **for us to say that scripture, is SCRIPTURE!** For the New Testament to move from being historically accurate to being scripture, it must be **INSPIRED**. It must be of **GOD**.

- **What we mean by the inspiration of scripture may be one of the least taught, but most important concepts regarding how we approach and engage scripture as the Truth foundation of the Christian Life.**

– **THAT’S where we are going today. BUT FIRST- PE, TO, Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup>**

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† As people of faith, why is the concept of the Inspiration of Scripture so important?

If scripture is inspired, if it is OF GOD, then:

- It is a **GIFT**
- **OT example... Gift of the law. This was NEW... God showed Israel how they could KNOW HIM. That God desires for us to KNOW HIM.**
- **“Scripture is God’s instruction book”... FAR MISS of full truth! God has revealed Himself through the miracle of scripture, so that we may KNOW HIM. RECEIVE LIFE. EXPERIENCE HIM.**
- It is a source of **CERTAINTY**

**Luke 1:1-4** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup> With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

- *In a profoundly uncertain world, scripture is a FIRM FOUNDATION. Because Scripture is inspired, we may know with CERTAINTY this Truth given to us by God.*
- It speaks to humanity with **AUTHORITY**
- *May initially think about Morality... How God calls/commands us to LIVE, to DO.. what is MORAL, ETHICS. Scripture DOES SPEAK TO THIS. But even more, scripture speaks with authority about WHO GOD IS. WHO WE ARE. GOD'S DESIRE FOR HIS CREATION.*
- *Speaks with Authority about HOPE. GOODNESS. FREEDOM. PURPOSE.*
- *PROBLEM- we are inconsistent. We like to claim the authority of scripture when it suits us- when we want to point out something about another person... but when scripture would challenge US, convict us, call for change in our lives... maybe not so much.*
- *Voices in the church have been trying for centuries to diminish the authority of scripture in parts of our lives where it is inconvenient to us...*

**Romans 13:1** *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*

- *But if I set aside Romans 13:1, I also set aside Romans 8:1 (no condemnation)*
- *If scripture is truly GOD BREATHED, it is TRUTH, then it calls us to hear, to receive, and to surrender...*
- **TAKE STEP DEEPER...**

† As conservative evangelical Christians, we confess that scripture is **INSPIRED, INERRANT, and INFALLABLE**. But what does this **MEAN?**

- *Growing up in Baptist church I was taught that scripture was God's infallible word, without any 'mixture' of error. OK, but what does that mean?*

† Inspiration: What the Bible says about itself is **LITTLE**, but **SIGNIFICANT**. *(look at a few)*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*

- *Paul is referring to OT. PRINCIPLE applies to NT. If scripture is OF GOD, then God has given it with a purpose. Scripture is NEVER just information about God, it always is an invitation to KNOW GOD. To respond to God. Always being used by God to teach, convict, grow, develop us into disciples- for how God will work through us.*

**John 14:26** *But the Advocate, 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.*

- *It is promised work of the Holy Spirit to take God's Word and teach us, remind us of truth as we go through life... BUT KEY, Jesus gave this promise to Apostles who would be telling and writing down what Jesus taught, what happened. It was through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that they did this with accuracy. Inspiration*

**2 Peter 3:15** *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.*

- *Peter asserts that Paul's writings were guided by God. Went on to refer to Paul's letters as scripture.*
- *Throughout the NT we see phrase "Word of God", or "Gods Word". What does this mean? NT didn't full exist yet. Example: 1 Thessalonians 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 a human word, but as it actually is, the **word of God**, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

- **Old Testament. “Words of God” (Romans 3:2- ‘Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God)**
- **For these first believers, it was the Gospel, The Cross, Truth of the Resurrection. Story of Jesus**
- **Jesus Himself- “THE WORD” (John) PRESENCE OF GOD to us, at work in us! Hebrews...**

**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- **SO, if we confess that scripture IS INSPIRED, OF GOD... How did this happen?**

#### ✠ Historic views/theories of inspiration and inerrancy

- **Naïve/dictation:** Human writers were the pens of God, not the pen-mans of God.
  - **Really naïve, entire book just given by god, intact.**
  - **This denies one of the great attributes of God we see throughout scripture, is that GOD, who IS INFALLABLE, loves to accomplish his work, and reveal himself, through regular PEOPLE, who are fallable. People like you and me.**
  - **A miracle of scripture is that God chose to reveal His Word through the lives of REAL PEOPLE, with their own personalities, perspectives, and stories. THIS LEADS TO THE CONCEPT OF...**
- **Inerrancy:** (*The Bible is God’s Word, and God is perfect, therefore scripture is perfect.*) The Spirit led human writers, through their own backgrounds and personalities, to a proper expression of the Truth without imparting the particular words or forms of expression.
  - **Peter describes this principle, one of clearest statements of inspiration and importance of scripture.**

**2 Peter 1:19-21** We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- **Key! God used very real people, but under strong leadership/influence, of Holy Spirit, so that the result is truly GOD BREATHED. THIS IS ESSENTIAL! But not all hold to it.**
- **STEP DOWN....**
- **Illumination:** Writers experienced an intensifying of spiritual perceptions that to a lesser degree all believers possess.
  - **We reject this. Does God open the word in our hearts? YES. But this is not inspiration. What happened with Biblical writers was something fully unique to them.**
  - **You will hear some teachers say... “I recognize scripture says THIS, but the Spirit has revealed to me something different.”... This is to be rejected.**
  - **We rightly wrestle with interpretation, meaning, and application, but we do ADD truth TO scripture.**
  - **FURTHER step down...**
- **Limited inerrancy:** Without error in points dealing with salvation and core theology, but nothing else.

- *View that focus' on core of Gospel, but allows us to diminish or ignore teaching on ethics, how we live, history, etc... what we don't want to listen to*
- **Whatever.** General guide to God, then whatever we want to make of it. Not Authoritative
- *Reality- once we set aside the principle that All of scripture is inspired, and God's truth to us, it is a short journey from "GODS WORD" to "WHATEVER"*

#### † **The bottom line**

- Scripture was written by men, all possessing their own personalities, living in specific cultural and historic contexts, and writing for specific purposes.
- *RESTATE! God chose to use specific people to write scripture, knowing who they were, their perspectives, what was happening in their lives- God used all of this to yield his message to us.*
- Scripture was inspired by God and shepherded by the Holy Spirit in its authorship, its meaning, its canonization, and it's preservation through the centuries.
- *This is statement of faith, but not blind faith! Leads to conclusion*
- Therefore, all Scripture is TRUE and TRUSTWORTHY.

#### † That said, a few important concepts

- Scripture was not written in English, by people living in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Western culture. *The truth of scripture must be interpreted. (Don't miss next week!)*
- *No brainer, but this is critical! We often ignore this.*
- *"God said it, I believe it, that settles it"*
- *YES, BUT... it must be interpreted.*
- *Scripture is FOR US, but it was not written originally TO US. There are important principles, perspectives (CONTEXT) that we must bring to bear to "appropriately divide the word of God" (Next week- SUPER important, don't miss it!)*
- Scripture is inspired, interpretation of scripture is not.
- *God has blessed the church with wonderful scholars, teachers, pastors over the generations- but every teacher is a person with their own bias, traditions, pre-dispositions, and life story that impacts how they see scripture. AT BEST, we are second hand sources!*
- *This is why it is important for the CHURCH to engage God's Word, think, wrestle, cherish... we will continue to do this until Christ returns.*
- *This past week I again had a person ask me... HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT IS TRUE! Many details of world right now where we don't. But by faith, WE STAND upon a greater truth.*

Matthew 6:24-29 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."  
<sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

- *Because scripture is inspired, we may KNOW GOD with CERTAINTY. In a world increasingly built upon sand, we stand upon A FIRM FOUNDATION*

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said— To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*