

This is our second study in a series titled CREDO -

CREDO = Latin for I BELIEVE.

Jude -- a brother of Jesus and of James said this in his short letter

3Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.



In this series we are following the storyline of the Bible and defining the essential doctrines of Christianity – DOCTRINE = WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE.

Last month (March 29) we began the series with a study titled TRINITY: God is. In that study we saw that Bible teaches that there is ONE God - Who eternally exists as three distinct persons - Father, Son and Spirit - Each FULLY and EQUALLY God

TONIGHT – our topic is REVELATION: God Speaks

We live in a world that is OBSESSED with COMMUNICATION!

Mobile Phones – E-Mail – Blogs – Web Sites – Text Messaging – Physical Mail – Verbal Communication – Television – Radio – Advertising – Marketing.

The THIRST for such communication comes out of the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God – An issue we will address in great detail in our next study in this series.

We have seen already in our first study in this series that God is a TRINITARIAN community of Father, Son, and Spirit. God has within His own essence and nature PERFECT COMMUNICATION.

As we are made in the image and likeness of God

God speaks to us

We – by the Spirit and through the Son – speak to God the Father

We speak to one another and build relationships around communication.

ALL of this is built upon the Biblical doctrine that the One True and Living God SPEAKS

Throughout this study we will answer a number of questions about REVELATION

QUESTION #1 – WHAT IS REVELATION?

REVELATION is the MEANS by which God has chosen to SPEAK to us.

We read in in Genesis 1 alone – no less than ten times – “God said”

WHY do we NEED REVELATION? WHY does God have to SPEAK?

BECAUSE if God did not DISCLOSE Himself to us – REVEAL to us who He is and what He has done for us through Jesus Christ – We would be LEFT with SPECULATION as the means by which we could find God.

SPECULATION – in contrast to REVELATION – is man's effort to guess at what God is like and how we might know Him and how God wants us to live. SPECULATION is man GUESSING – REVELATION is God SPEAKING.

WHY is man left to SPECUALTION? WHY is SPECULATION futile?

Man was created to know God and experience fellowship with God.

From the time sin entered the world man has been alienated from God.

Since the fall of man – recorded in Genesis 3 (Which will be the topic of our 4th study in this series) – fallen man has sought to discover God. The problem is that his efforts to describe and define and know God began from a place of complete spiritual darkness. Man was not only walking IN spiritual darkness, Paul the apostle said of fallen man, Ephesians 5:8 8for at one time you were darkness

Therefore – every effort of philosophers and religious leaders to discover God have been mere SPECULATION.

The simplest way to picture this is to draw a circle (for earth) and a stick man on top of the globe (fallen man) with his hands reached out (trying to grasp an infinite God.) It is IMPOSSIBLE for FALLEN man, beginning from a FINITE base, and from TOTAL DARKNESS, to understand the INFINITE God. The picture is the epitome of philosophical and religious SPECUALTION.

Paul speaks of this in his first letter to the Thessalonians. There in 1 Thes. 2:3 Paul (by way of contrast) stated that every philosophy and religious system of man had its origin in error.

The Bible tells us that

God the Father SPEAKS – He desires to communicate to us WHO HE IS.

Jesus – God the Son – Came to this earth to REVEAL to us the God who speaks to us/

The Holy Spirit has INSPIRED the writing of Scripture and ILLUMINIATES us – REVEALS to us WHO Jesus is, and WHAT He has done for us in His death and resurrection.

CRUCIAL: The One, True and Living God has graciously rescued fallen man from the futility of HUMAN SPECULATION with DIVINE REVELATION.

REVELATION is God reaching down to FALLEN and FINITE man, who being in absolute moral and spiritual darkness was hopelessly groping in the dark for after God.

REVELATION is God speaking to humanity with divine clarity to inform man of what was otherwise unknowable to him.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF TWO CATEGORIES OF REVELATION

GENERAL REVELATION and SPECIAL REVELATION

I. GENERAL REVELATION

IT IS CALLED GENERAL in that it is available to ALL people in ALL cultures in ALL circumstances at ALL times

IT IS CALLED GENERAL in that though it does reveal a great deal about God it does not give to us the specific NAME of God – it does not tell us specifically what God has done for us the sending of His Son to die in our place for our sins and save us by His resurrection.

KEY INSIGHT: There are three ways in which God has GENERALLY revealed Himself to us.

1.) CREATION -

Romans 1:19-21 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

QUOTE: John Calvin “God...has.... revealed himself and daily discloses himself in the whole creation and preservation of the universe. As a result, humans can not open their eyes without being compelled to see God.” (Inst. I, V, 1)

OTHER REFERENCES that echo this

Psalms 19:1-4 1 The Heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Psalms 94:8-10 Understand, O dullest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise? 9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see? 10 He who disciplines the nations, does he not rebuke? He who teaches man knowledge—

SO – God is CREATOR and CREATION gives to us much understanding about God.

INTELLIGENT DESIGN argues that the design of the universe tells us something about the designer.

CREATION tells us that God must be POWERFUL

CREATION tells us that God must be BEAUTIFUL because creation reflects something of His glory.

CREATION tells us something of the merciful and compassionate and loving care of God.

EXAMPLE: The Bible tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

The complexity of the immune system – the ability of the body to fend off disease and restore health – tells us of the compassion and mercy of God.

God created the eye to see – the ear to hear – the hand to touch – They tell us of the love of God in wanting us to experience pleasure and joy

2.) PROVIDENCE – This concept of PROVIDENCE declares that God not only MADE the world – but He also continues to be involved with it and rules in it.

This is in contrast to DEISM that says God made the world and left it alone.

Christianity says that God is both SOVEREIGN OVER Creation and He is at work IN creation to reveal Himself.

Acts 14:17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven

and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

God’s continued involvement in and oversight of the world He has made reveals to us truth about God.

3.) CONSCIENCE – Creation is an EXTERNAL witness that there is a God – while CONSCIENCE is an INTERNAL witness that reveals to us something of the goodness and holiness and justice of God.

EXAMPLE: Paul – In speaking of unbelievers who did not have the Bible – says

Romans 2:14-16 14For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

Paul is saying that EVERY human being – even though they are not a Christian – experiences general revelation through the INNER conviction of their conscience.

Anyone who has ever NOT done something because they innately knew it was wrong

Anyone who has ever done something they KNEW was wrong and then felt badly about it

Anyone who has ever apologized for something

Anyone who has ever appealed to a greater moral standard – “That’s not right –you should NEVER do that – THAT is unacceptable.”

GRANTED – Man is fallen – He is FAR from that original image and likeness of God – but even in fallen man we witness in our conscience a GENERAL revelation of the justice and righteousness of God.

THAT is why even non-Christians will say that you shouldn’t take advantage of the poor – you shouldn’t rape or murder or steal

WHERE does this come from?

QUOTE: Who Made God?

All of these tell us that there is a Righteous and Holy God who has made us with a sense of justice and right and wrong.

SO – God has revealed Himself in GENERAL by way of

CREATION
PROVIDENCE
CONSCIENCE

There is another way by which God reveals Himself to man.

II. SPECIAL REVELATION

SPECIAL REVELATION in that the INFORMATION about God is CLEARER than it is in GENERAL REVELATION.

SPECIAL REVELATION in that SPECIAL REVELATION is limited to a smaller number of people
It comes to an individual or a group of people or a certain limited number of people. EXAMPLES: Noah – Abraham – Israel (receiving the Law)

Let’s look at THREE ways in which God SPEAKS in SPECIAL REVELATION.

1.) THE MIRACULOUS

EXAMPLE: Surrounding the Birth of Jesus –

His father, Joseph was given a prophetic dream telling him to not divorce Mary because she had been a faithful woman and had conceived Jesus by a miracle.

Mary herself – The angel Gabriel came to her and told her that by the power of God she would conceive a child independent of sexual relations

This was REVELATION not available to or directed to ANY and ALL people. It was God speaking in a SPECIAL way and to SPECIFIC people.

2.) JESUS

Jesus is God the Son – He came into human history

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Hebrews 1:1-3 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..... 3He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature,

In Jesus we have SPECIAL REVELATION of the person and nature of God.

God is revealed IN FULL in Jesus.

That is why we read in Colossians – Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

3.) THE SCRIPTURES

The Bible not only records the life of Jesus – but it also includes the record of God working in human history to bring Jesus into the World and the promise of the return of Jesus to the earth.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God

God literally worked through human authors to SPEAK to us.

This leads us to our second question

QUESTION #2 – WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURES?

The New Testament speaks of the Old Testament as Scripture. That word "Scripture" comes from the Greek word *graphe*, meaning "writing." SO we are talking about WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word for book. Holy Bible, therefore, means "Holy Book."

The Bible is a COLLECTION of DIVINELY INSPIRED writings – Again – all scripture is breathed out (inspired) by GOD.

KEY INSIGHT: The Bible is actually a LIBRARY of books.

Some people pick up the Bible and start reading from genesis forward and become confused because it is not in chronological order.

That is because it is a COLLECTION of SIXTY-SIX books. They are not put together in Chronological order. Instead they are out together by GENRE of literature

The LAW (first five books) is together

The HISTORICAL books are together

The POETIC books (Psalms)

The WISDOM literature is together (Proverbs / Ecclesiastes)

The PROPHETIC books are together

The BIOGRAPHIES of the life of Jesus (Gospels) are together

The LETTERS of the apostles are together

So in a very real way – when you pick up the Bible it is like going to a LIBRARY. And like a library the collections are organized by GENRE of literature.

If you are interested you can pick up a CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE. You can read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in it's chronological order.

KEY INSIGHT: As we have noted – The Bible is a Collection of 66 separate books.

This collection of 66 books, known as the Holy Bible, is the bestselling book of all time, and is now available in nearly three thousand languages.

These 66 books were written over a period of roughly 1,500 years by roughly 40 authors. We know the names of most of the authors of the books of the Bible. Some are undetermined.

The Bible is written in primarily THREE languages – Greek and Hebrew being the predominant languages – with small parts written in Aramaic.

If you have picked up this collection of 66 books in the Bible you have noticed those books are divided into chapters

There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible. These chapter divisions were not in the original manuscripts – They are not Divinely inspired. They were inserted in the early 1200s. This was done for much the same reason your house and my house have numbers in front of them. These chapters are like ADDRESSES by which we can find the location of particular sections / events / persons or truths.

In the 1500s those 1,189 chapters were broken further divided into 31,173. Now there is not just the general address – of say, Romans 1 and 2 – now there are sub-addresses – Romans 1:16

SO TODAY – We have 1,189 chapters in the Bible. We have 31,173 verses within those 1,189 chapters.

We have the PRIMARY DIVISIONS of the Old and New testaments

SOME PEOPLE ARE PUT OFF – or struggle with reading the “OLD Testament” because the title suggests that it is OLD – it is outdated and archaic – and as such is irrelevant.

The Bible does not use this terminology. The first person to use the terms OLD and NEW Testaments was a man named Origin (2nd and 3rd century). He got the concept from Jeremiah 31 where God speaks of the NEW Covenant that would make. SO Origin used the terminology of OLD and NEW Testaments.

UNFORTUNATELY some look at the terms OLD and NEW and conclude that the NEW Testament is important and the OLD Testament is unimportant and outdated.

THAT IS UNTRUE.

JESUS LOVED the Old Testament – READ and STUDIED the Old Testament. The Old Testament was the

Bible that Jesus used and by which Jesus (as a man) grew in wisdom and stature and favor with men and with God. (Luke 2:52)

KEY INSIGHT: Roughly three-quarters of the Christian Bible is the Old Testament.

The Old Testament was written on papyrus—a form of paper made out of reeds.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament – which is a record of time from God creating the world and our first parents Adam and Eve up until the coming of Jesus Christ into human history.

In many ways, the Old Testament is a series of promises that God makes. It is a **FORESHADOWING** of the coming of Jesus. It contains **PROPHECIES** and **ANTICIPATIONS** and **EXPECTATIONS** of the coming of Jesus.

The Old Testament has 929 chapters and 23,214 verses.

In the Old Testament, the longest book is Psalms and the shortest book is Obadiah.

The New Testament is the record of the fulfillment of those promises.

The New Testament was written on parchments (prepared animal skins).

The twenty-seven books – 260 chapters and 7,959 verses – of the New Testament begin with the four gospels, which record the life, death, burial, resurrection, and return to heaven of Jesus, and then proceed to instructions to various Christians and Christian churches about how to think and live in light of who Jesus is and what he has done – and closes with the return of Jesus to the earth and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth.

In the New Testament, the longest book is Acts and the shortest book is 3 John.

WE HAVE SAID THAT the Bible is really more of a library of books rather than a single book – And we have noted the primary division of those books into the Old and New Testaments –

BUT WE MUST point out that there is an amazing unity and continuity between the various books of the Bible and their Old Testament and New Testament groupings.

As you start reading a New Testament book without **IMMEDIATELY** running into a **CONCEPT** – an **IDEA** – a **PERSON** or a **QUOTE** that comes from the Old Testament.

THAT is because the **NEW** is the **FULFILLMENT** of the **OLD**.

The **OLD** foreshadows and the **NEW** fulfills.

QUESTION #3 – WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT THEMSELVES?

IF the Bible itself does not claim to be from God – holy – trustworthy – and good – then we should not believe that about the Bible either.

Here is what the Bible has to say about itself –

The Bible says that it shouldn't be added to – and nothing should be taken away from it.

Proverbs 30:5-6 Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. 6 Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.

So right there the Bible says – Don't **ADD** anything to the Scriptures.

There we are talking about what theologians call the **SUFFICIENCY** of Scriptures.

The Bible also claims to be EFFECTIVE

Isaiah 55:11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

The Bible itself claims to be PERFECT

We are told in Psalm 19 that God's Word is PERFECT.

WE are not perfect. Our WORLD is not perfect. But God's Word is PERFECT.

The Bible itself claims to be a guide for our life.

In Psalm 119:105 – an amazing chapter of the Bible – a non-stop declaration of the perfection – helpfulness and truthfulness of the Word of God – the Bible claims to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

The Bible claims to be TRUE.

In John 17:17 (the high priestly prayer of Jesus – His longest prayer in the Bible) Jesus prays this – Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

The Scriptures declare that they are to be obeyed.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

The Scriptures claim to be to be all that we need to know God.

Again – the SUFFICIENCY of Scripture

In Luke 16 there is the story of a man who did not know God and died. He is experiencing the torment of Hades and he asks that someone be sent back from the dead to warn his 5 brothers to repent lest they end up in the same torment. Here is the reply he was given.

Luke 16:28-31 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30And he said, 'No..... but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

They have the Scriptures – If they the Scriptures are sufficient for man to know God.

The Scriptures declare that they are the way in which God SPEAKS to us.

Hebrews 4:12 12For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

CRUCIAL: There are MANY people who would love to have God speak to them.

When we open the Bible we DO have God speak to us.

LASTLY – The Scriptures claim to be the standard for doctrine and teaching in the Church and that anything we BELIEVE or EXAMINE is to be TESTED by Scripture.

Acts 17:11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Here they had Paul – the author of much of the New Testament – teaching and preaching – and they took

what he said and measured it against the Scriptures!

They weren't just willing to trust a teacher. They weren't just willing to trust an author. They tested everything against the Scriptures.

QUESTION #4 – WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

There is a PARTNERSHIP between God – Who is the DIVINE AUTHOR – and men – who were the HUMAN AUTHORS.

I am not saying that these men were in a catatonic state when they wrote.

I am saying that God was breathing out His Word through their personalities and education and observations and experiences to INSPIRE them to PERFECTLY write down an ABSOLUTELY TRUSTWORTHY and RECORD of the Word of God.

Sometimes the authors of the OT would sit down and would literally write down on a long scroll their book of the Bible.

Sometimes they would speak or prophesy and there would be a trained scribe – think here in terms of a court stenographer.

EXAMPLE: Jeremiah 36:4 4Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him.

SO – Sometimes they penned their own book – Other times they would speak under inspiration of God and their words were faithfully recorded by a scribe recorded.

CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE: The O.T. prophets were fully aware that they spoke on behalf of God.

More than 200 times they would say – “Thus saith the Lord!” – and then they would speak and preach exactly God's Word . God would speak TO them and then God would speak THROUGH them. We find constantly – The Word of the Lord came to me – God spoke to me – God said to me

We find such phrases 3,800 times in the O.T. alone!

CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE: The New Testament sees itself as the fulfillment of the OT.

We find in the NEW Testament 300 explicit Old Testament quotations — as well as upwards of 4,000 allusions to the Old Testament.

People – Places – Language – Images – Major concepts.

SO – We see the Bible setting itself forth as UNIFIED REVELATION by God of Himself to man.

Here is how the NEW TESTAMENT speaks concerning the Old Testament.

PETER – Appointed by Jesus to be the leader of the Church after His ascension into heaven – had this to say

Peter says in 1 Peter 1:10-12 “the prophets (O.T. prophets) who prophesied about the grace (O.T. is about the Grace of God because is the same yesterday today and forever) that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. (SO the first thing he says is that the O.T. is about the grace of God that would be poured through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – and they were speaking and writing about the coming of Jesus Who would be the giver of Grace ——— they did this BY THE SPIRIT = Divine Revelation) It was revealed to them (The Bible is REVELATION – not

speculation) that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look” (Here Peter connects the Old and New testament – In the OT they were proclaiming the coming of Jesus who would be God giving us grace – THAT was fulfilled when Jesus came, lived, died and rose –and now we receive Grace from Jesus who is our great God and Savior –And NOW – the same Holy Spirit inspires the NT Apostles to proclaim the same message of salvation by grace alone and by Jesus alone. And this is something that angels have desired to look into – HOW was that going to happen – WHAT was it going to look like)

AGAIN – The NT is written by INSPIRATION of the Holy Spirit even as the OT was.

Peter also says in 2 Peter 1:20-21 that “no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Jesus predicted this on 2 occasions –

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 16:14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

While Jesus was alive in the earth He promised that AFTER He had died and arose and ascended into heaven that the Holy Spirit would come to the Apostles and remind them of all they heard saw and experienced and the Holy Spirit would enable them to faithfully record the writings of the NT to tell without error the story of Jesus.

SO we have human authors of the NT –

Matthew – 28 chapters in NT

Mark – 16 chapters

Luke – 42

John – 50

Paul – 93 (or 106 – debate over whether he wrote Hebrews)

Peter – 8 chapters

James (the brother of Jesus) – 5

Jude (the other brother of Jesus) – 1

The NT has human authors – each as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Paul says

1 Corinthians 2:13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit – I’m not telling you things that I learned or made up – I’m telling you things REVEALED by the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 14:37 the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

He sounds JUST LIKE the OT prophets would say Thus saith the Lord!

Ephesians 3:4-5 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

The Apostles are given the ability to PERFECTLY RECORD the revelation from God as to who He is and what He has done through Jesus.

THAT is why Paul says in Ephesians 2:20 that the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and

the prophets.

SO - The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Old testament to record the foreshadowing of Jesus – and He inspired the writers of the NT to record the fulfillment of that foreshadowing in the Virgin birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

ALL OF THIS IS SUMMED UP IN WHAT IS CALLED THE DOCTRINE OF VERBAL - PLENARY INSPIRATION

Some call it the doctrine of Verbal - Plenary Inerrancy

Here at Metro we hold to the doctrine of the VERBAL and PLENARY INSPIRATION of Scripture. We always HAVE and always WILL.

By VERBAL we mean that God inspired the very WORDS of the Bible are INSPIRED by God. –

Jesus said this very thing in Matthew 5:18 where He said that not the least STROKE OF THE PEN – the dotting of an I or the crossing of a T in Scripture would be neglected – He would fulfill ALL of it.

SIMPLY PUT – God the Holy Spirit inspired not just the thoughts of Scripture, but also the very details and exact words were perfectly recorded for us as Scripture.

By PLENARY inspiration we mean that every part of the Bible is divinely inspired revelation.

There are not parts of the Bible that we don't like – There are not parts of the bibl that we don't believe – There are not parts of the Bible that we won't read – There are not parts of the Bible that we won't teach – There are not parts of the Bible that we won't reference.

We believe that ALL of the Bile is INSPIRED.

EXAMPLE: Historical illustration of what this does NOT look like – Thomas Jefferson (who was a deist) sat down with his copy of the Bible and simply CUT OUT with scissors all the parts he didn't believe were right. He called it “The Philosophy of Jesus Christ.”

Pretty blatant – Most are not that overt in their view of Scripture. But in reality there are many men and women in churches – many pulpits – that chose to avoid – neglect – abandon certain parts of the Bible. They take the liberty of choosing what parts of the Bible they deem as valuable – and those that are not.

We do not – and can not because the Word of God is FLAWLESS (Prov.30:5)

ALL SCRIPTURE is God breathed and profitable.

So we believe that

the very words of Scripture are inspired

that ALL of Scripture is inspired

Which makes THIS book UNLIKE any other book.

HERE ARE SEVERAL KEY VERSES ON THIS DOCTRINE

1.) 2 Timothy 3:16:17 is the CLASSIC passage on this doctrine of Verbal - Plenary Inspiration

All Scripture is breathed out by God – It is GOD'S WORD to us!

and profitable – We LOVE you guys. We want you to have a life that is everything Jesus died for you to have. THAT is why we say here at Metro that we have a PASSION FOR THE WORD OF GOD.

The Word of God is PROFITABLE – Not profitable merely in the way that a phone is profitable in that it might be filled with accurate information. It's true in the sense of a loving relationship where someone cares for you and converses with you and interacts with you and counsels you and comforts you and confronts you and encourages you. It is THAT kind of helpful. It is relationally profitable – He SPEAKS to us in Scripture and we speak back to Him in prayer.

for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Whatever you need in your life you NEED the Bible. It speaks to ALL of life..... Sexuality – Marriage – Work – relationships – stewardship – service.

It speaks in principle to EVERYONE – It speaks in principle to EVERYTHING.

There should be NO part of your life that is disconnected from Scripture – BECAUSE there is NO part of your life that doesn't NEED Scripture. God has graciously SPOKEN to us because He wants to HELP us in every way.

2.) 2 Peter 1:20-21 “no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”

AGAIN – That is INSPIRATION.

The Old Testament prophets didn't fully understand ALL that prophesied.

When they prophesied that Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver – that He would be buried in a rich man's tomb – born of a virgin – in the town of Bethlehem

THOSE kinds of prophecies were NOT things that men could have made up. They couldn't have know the future. They were men – Only God knows the future.

They couldn't have seen the PANORAMA of history and predicted in AMAZING DETAIL what would happen concerning Jesus.

But the Holy Spirit could. He is God! He knows the future. He is sovereign over the future. And He told the authors what would happen in the future.

THAT is exactly what Peter is saying – The authors were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

They held the pen – but WITHOUT the Holy Spirit they know NOTHING about the coming of Jesus – And they would be left to mere SPECULATION instead of REVELATION. BUT – Because of the Holy Spirit they were able to speak of the coming of Jesus in GREAT DETAIL.

3.) 2 Peter 3:15-16 – This passage is INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT and AMAZINGLY RELEVANT to the Church – and especially YOU and your peers.

Peter is the LEADER of the disciple – personally trained and installed by Jesus. He is ALWAYS listed first – BECAUSE he was their leader.

What Peter has to say here is so important because there are those wh say that authors really didn't now that they were writing the Bible –And it wasn't until hundreds of years later that someone came up with the idea that these were the inspired books that should be called Scripture.

Here is what Peter said in speaking of Paul – who wrote more chapters of the NT than anyone – nearly TWICE as many chapters as Luke who is the 2nd most prolific author in the NT.

just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote – speaking of the letters Paul had written

to you according to the wisdom given him – some of your translations might read according to the wisdom God gave him

16as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand – if you have ever picked up your Bible and started reading Paul – and you said “man - that is hard to understand” – don’t feel bad! Peter wrote parts of the Bible and HE said there were things Paul wrote that were hard to understand

Paul wrote about predestination and election – women wearing head covering – speaking in tongues. These are things that have been difficult to understand and Christians have been debating their meaning for a long time.

CRUCIAL: That these things are hard to understand does not mean that they are NOT TRUE! When you are talking about God there are going to be some things that are HARD to understand – even though they are INSPIRED by God.

which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction –

Paul says that a pastor should be a man – Some say, “We don’t like that - we’re going to twist that”

Paul says that the husband should love his wife and that the wife should respect her husband – Some say, “we don’t like that - we’re going to twist that so that it says what we want it to say.

Paul says that there really is a hell and if you don’t believe in Jesus you are going to go there – Some say, “We don’t like that - we’re going to twist that - cut that out - ignore that.

CRUCIAL - CRUCIAL - CRUCIAL – SOMETIMES what Paul says is HARD to understand – not because he is unclear but because WE are UNRECEPTIVE!

Romans 1:18 says that some of us SUPPRESS the truth because of their unrighteousness.

Sometimes the Bible is NOT hard to understand – it’s that we are UNWILLING to repent.

QUOTE: Mark Twain – It’s not the parts of the Bible that I don’t understand that bother me – It’s the parts of the Bible that I do understand that bother me!

Sometimes Paul is hard to understand because he’s talking about very complicated things – Other times he is hard to understand BECAUSE we simply don’t like what he has to say.

EXAMPLE: Conversation with an old friend from High School

You believe that Jesus lived - died and rose again. WHAT is keeping you from being a Christian?

Because if I become a Christian I can’t sleep with my girl friend!

In other words – I don’t want God telling me what I can or can’t do.

He could UNDERSTAND the Scriptures – He just didn’t like what they say.

MANY TIMES – The problem is not with the Bible - which is perfect - the problem lies with us who are imperfect! It is not that the Bible is UNCLEAR but that we are UNWILLING!

Lets read it again

just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable (those who think they are smarter than God and want to cut things out of the Bible) twist to their own destruction, (ruin their life and perhaps even their own soul in eternity) as they do the other Scriptures.

Peter makes this amazing claim that Paul's writing were not just letters that got published and distributed. Peter claims that Paul is writing SCRIPTURE. He is saying that they bear equal weight with genesis - Exodus - Leviticus – Psalms and Isaiah. God BREATHED the writings of Isaiah – God BREATHED the letters of Paul.

The DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION led to the DOCTRINE OF SOLA SCRIPTURE

Sola Scriptura means – that Scripture ALONE is our highest authority

Here at Metro we believe that the Bible is – metaphorically speaking – our Supreme Court

We BELIEVE the Bible – READ the Bible – STUDY – TEACH and PROCLAIM the Bible.

Some call this PRIMA SCRIPTURA

KEY POINT: There are LESSER courts of authority.

I'll try to explain this by contrasting SOLA Scriptura with SOLO Scriptura.

PLEASE – Follow closely here so that you won't think I'm a heretic.

SOLO Scriptura says that Scripture alone is our ONLY authority.

We do not believe that. We believe that Scripture alone is our HIGHEST authority.

ILLUSTRATION: The Scriptures do not tell us how to perform open heart surgery. The Scriptures do not tell us how to repair an iPhone. The Scriptures don't tell us how to play guitar. If we want that information we have to go ELSEWHERE to find it.

We can look to all kinds of academic and technological or musical disciplines for that information – and we learn. These are LESSER courts of LOWER authority.

We believe in SOLA Scriptura – Which means that we check whatever we learn there to see if it agrees with Scripture. If it doesn't disagree with Scripture then we have freedom there.

ILLUSTRATION: You can be a Christian doctor – as Luke was. You can go to medical school – and if they try to teach you that man does not bear the image of God and that man doesn't have a soul and that God can't heal through prayer – I APPEAL that information to the SUPREME COURT of Scripture.

LAST QUESTION: WHY SHOULD WE TRUST THE BIBLE TO BE ACCURATE?

FIRST – The historical reliability of the Bible should be tested by the same criteria by which all historical documents are tested.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST

This is an examination of the “textual transmission” by which documents reach us. In other words, since we do NOT have the originals documents, how reliable are the copies that we have.

This is based upon two things –

- 1.) How many copies of the original document do we have?
- 2.) How OLD are they – or in other words – how close to the original were those copies made.

Author When Written Earliest Copy Time Span # Copies

Caesar 100-44 B.C. 900 A.D. 1,000 yrs. 10
Plato 427-347 B.C. 900 A.D. 1,200 yrs. 7
Sophocles 496-406 B.C. 1,000 A.D. 1,400 yrs. 193
Aristotle 348-322 B.C. 1,100 A.D. 1,400 yrs. 49
Homer (Iliad) 900 B.C. 400 B.C. 500 yrs. 643
N.T. 40-100 A.D. 125 A.D. 25 yrs. 24,000+

CRUCIAL: The Variants in the New Testament Manuscripts Are Minimal

In the many thousands of manuscript copies we possess of the New Testament, scholars have discovered that there are some 150,000 “variants.” This may seem like a staggering figure to the uninformed mind.

But – a look at the hard evidence shows that the New Testament manuscripts are amazingly accurate and trustworthy. To begin, we must emphasize that out of these 150,000 variants, 99 percent hold virtually no significance whatsoever. Many of these variants simply involve a missing letter in a word; some involve reversing the order of two words (such as “Christ Jesus” instead of “Jesus Christ”); some may involve the absence of one or more insignificant words.

Really, when all the facts are put on the table, only about 50 of the variants have any real significance - and even then, no doctrine of the Christian faith or any moral commandment is effected by them.

For more than ninety-nine percent of the cases the original text can be reconstructed to a practical certainty.

Even in the few cases where some perplexity remains, this does not impinge on the meaning of Scripture to the point of clouding a tenet of the faith or a mandate of life. Thus, in the Bible as we have it (and as it is conveyed to us through faithful translations) we do have for practical purposes the very Word of God, inasmuch as the manuscripts do convey to us the complete vital truth of the originals.?

?By practicing the science of textual criticism - comparing all the available manuscripts with each other - we can come to an assurance regarding what the original document must have said.

Let us suppose we have five manuscript copies of an original document that no longer exists. Each of the manuscript copies are different. Our goal is to compare the manuscript copies and ascertain what the original must have said. Here are the five copies:

Manuscript #1: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole worl.

Manuscript #2: Christ Jesus is the Savior of the whole world.

Manuscript #3: Jesus Christ s the Savior of the whole world.

Manuscript #4: Jesus Christ is th Savior of the whle world.

Manuscript #5: Jesus Christ is the Savor of the whole wrld.

Could you, by comparing the manuscript copies, ascertain what the original document said with a high degree of certainty that you are correct? Of course you could.

This illustration may be extremely simplistic, but a great majority of the 150,000 variants are solved by the above methodology.

By comparing the various manuscripts, all of which contain very minor differences like the above, it becomes fairly clear what the original must have said.

Most of the manuscript variations concern matters of spelling, word order, tenses, and the like; no single doctrine is affected by them in any way.

We must also emphasize that the sheer volume of manuscripts we possess greatly narrows the margin of doubt regarding what the original biblical document said.

If the number of manuscripts increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. Manuscript Evidence for the New Testament by Ron Rhodes

THE LAST, LAST QUESTION: WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL LIFE?

It is a life that RECEIVES Jesus Christ as Lord.

It is a life that REPENTS of sin when the Bible points it out – and we rejoice that the Blood of Jesus takes away our sin.

It's a life that doesn't go to the Bible just for INFORMATION – but rather goes to the Bible for TRANSFORMATION – So that we can have a life IN JESUS.

Everything good in my life – my family – this fellowship – is the result of THIS BOOK being used by God the Holy Spirit to change my life and other peoples lives so that we can look more like Jesus Christ.

THAT is what I want for MY life – my WIFE'S life – my kids lives – ALL OF YOU!

We want to see the Bible in your hands and Jesus in your hearts!

What is the canon of Scripture?

The English word canon goes back to the Greek word kanon and then to the Hebrew word qaneh. According to Neil R. Lightfoot, "Its basic meaning is 'reed,' and our English word 'cane' being derived from it. Since a reed was sometimes used as a measuring rod, the word kanon came to mean a standard or rule. It was also used to refer to a list or index and when so applied to the Bible denotes the list of books which are received as Holy Scripture. Thus if one speaks of the 'canonical' writings, one is speaking of those books which are regarded as having divine authority and which comprise our Bible." (How We Got the Bible, p. 152).

CRUCIAL – A distinction needs to be made between canonizing and collecting. No man or council can pronounce a work canonical or scriptural, yet man was responsible for collecting and preserving such works. F. F. Bruce writes: "One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa—at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397—but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of these communities" (F. F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?, p. 27).?

The word appears to have been first used in this sense by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in a letter circulated in AD 367. Wayne Grudem uses the following definition: "The canon of Scripture is the list of all the books that belong in the Bible" (Systematic Theology, p. 54).

When we speak of the "canon of Scripture," we are referring to those books that the church has recognized as the authoritative Word of God. Thus, although a formal distinction can be made between canon and authority, they are closely related. Specifically, books that the church has recognized as canonical are those that are recognized as having divine authority (F. F. Bruce, The Books and the Parchments, p. 95).

It is unclear exactly when what we now recognize as the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament were clearly recognized as a closed canon (in the Hebrew Old Testament, these books are divided and arranged

differently, making only twenty-two books). In earlier generations, it was thought that a council of rabbis in Jamnia (modern Yavne, Israel) formally recognized the Old Testament canon in the late first century AD. Most scholars now doubt this view; the recognition of the Old Testament canon was probably a more gradual process (see D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 727-28).

Good evidence exists in the New Testament that shows that by the time of Jesus, the canon of the Old Testament had been fixed. It cannot be questioned that Jesus and his apostles time after time quoted from a distinctive body of authoritative writings. They designated them as “the Scripture” (John 7:38; Acts 8:32; Rom. 4:3), “the Scriptures” (Matt. 21:42; John 5:39; Acts 17:11), “the holy Scriptures” (Rom. 1:2), “the sacred writings” (2 Tim. 3:15), and so forth. They often introduced their quotations with “it is written,” that is, it stands firmly written.

How did the church know which books ought to be recognized as canonical? What were the criteria for canonicity? There were three primary criteria used by the church in discussing which books were canonical:

Conformity to “the rule of faith.” In other words, did the book in question conform with orthodoxy, that is, Christian truth recognized as normative in the churches?

Apostolicity. Was the writer of the book an apostle or did the writer of the book have immediate contact with the apostles? Mark’s gospel was tied to Peter and Luke’s to Paul. “The Fathers universally rejected pseudonymity as an acceptable literary category for documents bearing the authority of Scripture. . . . That any pseudonymity was knowingly accepted into the New Testament is denied by the evidence” (Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 737).

Catholicity. For a document to be considered canonical it must have had widespread and continuous acceptance and usage by churches everywhere. “The fact that substantially the whole church came to recognize the same twenty-seven books as canonical is remarkable when it is remembered that the result was not contrived. All that the several churches throughout the Empire could do was to witness to their own experience with the documents and share whatever knowledge they might have about their origin and character. When consideration is given to the diversity in cultural backgrounds and in orientation to the essentials of the Christian faith within the churches, their common agreement about which books belonged to the New Testament serves to suggest that this final decision did not originate solely at the human level.” (Barker, Lane, and Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks*, p. 29; qtd. in Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 736).

The concept we have today of a completed Bible was formulated early in the history of the church. By the end of the second century all but seven books (Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, James, and Revelation) were recognized as apostolic, and by the end of the fourth century all twenty-seven books in our present canon were recognized by all the churches of the West. After the Damascene Council of Rome in AD 332 and the third Council of Carthage in AD 397, the question of the canon was closed in the West. By the year 500 the entire Greek-speaking church had accepted all the books in our present New

For Further Reading on Bible Translations

“Pastoral Reflections on Bible Translations” by Mark Driscoll

The Indestructible Book by W. Kenneth Connolly??

The Word of God in English by Leland Ryken??

Choosing a Bible by Leland Ryken??

The Bible in Translation by Bruce M. Metzger??

How We Got the Bible by John H. Sailhamer??

A General Introduction to the Bible by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix

For Further Reading on How to Study Scripture

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Reading the Bible With Heart and Mind by Tremper Longman III

Getting the Message by Daniel M. Doriani??

On the Old Testament by Mark Driscoll

On the New Testament by Mark Driscoll

For Further Reading on Apparent Bible Contradictions

When Critics Ask by Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe

For Further Reading on Miscellaneous Bible Issues

The Origin of the Bible, edited by Philip Comfort, is a good introduction to the authority and perfection of Scripture from a team of theologians.

Christ and the Bible, by John Wenham, is a very helpful survey of how Jesus Christ viewed the Old Testament.

The Canon of Scripture, by F. F. Bruce, is a thorough book on how the sixty-six books of the Protestant canon came to be.

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?, by F. F. Bruce, is a good survey of the accuracy and credibility of the New Testament.

The Indestructible Book, by W. Kenneth Connolly, is a fascinating historical look at how the Scriptures have been both opposed and adored over the ages.

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