

Why the Bible is Trustworthy, Unique and Enough – Class #3
Adult Equipping – Sept. 26th, 2021

Unique: Inspiration of Scripture

- Goal: The goal of this class is to demonstrate that the Scriptures are *trustworthy, unique* and *enough* so that followers of Christ will eagerly engage God's Word in humility and sincerity.

Psalm 119 Reading and Prayerful Reflection

Psalm 119:17-24

Gimel

- 17 Deal bountifully with your servant,
that I may live and keep your word.
- 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.
- 19 I am a sojourner on the earth;
hide not your commandments from me!
- 20 My soul is consumed with longing
for your rules at all times.
- 21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from your commandments.
- 22 Take away from me scorn and contempt,
for I have kept your testimonies.
- 23 Even though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant will meditate on your statutes.
- 24 Your testimonies are my delight;
they are my counselors.

Review from last week's reflections

Inspiration Core Points:

- What is Inspiration: A divine act that creates an identity between a divine word and a human word [Frame 143]. "Every Scripture...is the product of...a specifically Divine operation"[BB Warfield 133]

- What is an identity? Simply that they are one and the same. When Jesus, or Paul or other writers refer to Scripture, they do not ascribe the writings to the human author, but rather to God. Human word = God's Word.

- [Mt 22:29-32][Ex 3:6] But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." Jesus attributes this scriptural quote as directly from God.

- [Heb 3:7] [Ps 95:7][Ps 110:1] A Rest for the People of God

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

"Today, if you hear his voice,

8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness,

9 where your fathers put me to the test
and saw my works for forty years.

10 Therefore I was provoked with that generation,
and said, 'They always go astray in their heart;
they have not known my ways.'

11 As I swore in my wrath,
'They shall not enter my rest.'"

The Hebrew writer attributes this quote of Ps 95:7 as coming from the Holy Spirit, not from the writer of the Psalm, likely a Levite priest.

- God intends to speak to His people – It is God initiated, not human initiated
 - [2 Ptr 1:19-21] And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, 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.
- God doesn't just encourage them to write, but the human writers are "carried by the Holy Spirit". They are "taken by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing". [BB Warfield 137]
- God is able to make himself known and understood (a capable communicator)
- The personality, knowledge, characteristics, etc. of the writer play a role in the writing, but the Holy Spirit "breathes out" and ensures the content. What the Scripture says God says.
 - [Mk 12:35-36][Ps 110:1] And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet.”

David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.

Jesus attributes the quote to David, but clearly considers this to be from God.

- What content/ideas are inspired?
 - Verbal inspiration: Words...text, not just general ideas or concepts
 - [Jn 1:1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - [Mt 7:24-28] Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall..”
 - [Jn 6:68] Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”
 - Over and over again, Jesus and the other writers of Scripture would say “it is written”. If it is in Scripture, then it is assumed to come from God, in the words that were written. [Jesus in his temptation in Mt 4 and Mt 21:13, Paul in Gal 3:10 and I Cor 9:9].
 - *Plenary* inspiration is a technical term meaning that *all* of scripture is inspired. [2 Tim 3:16-17] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. What does all mean? It’s all of the words in all of the books included in Scripture. That is the canon of scripture and will be discussed in detail in a couple of weeks.
 - Counters to this view:
 - The ideas are inspired, not the words [Verbal inspiration above]
 - Inspired only in matters of faith and practice
 - The OT is Scripture, but the NT is not [I Cor 14:37-38] [2 Ptr 3:15-16]
 - The human participation introduces flaws in the content
[TELEPHONE GAME] [Two tiny toads ate fat flying flies.] [Dogs dig holes for big bones.]
 - The texts became less true to God over time as they were copied and “improved”
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- How does inspiration work? [Heb 1:1] Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets
 - Direct dictation
 - [Ez 34:1-2] The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God:
 - [Jer 36:1-2] In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you...
 - [Rev 2:1] "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:..."
 - Visions and dreams
 - [Rev 1:17-19] When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this
 - Research
 - [Lk 1:1-3] Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.
 - Compilation [Psalms, Proverbs]
 - Men who were with Jesus
 - [2Ptr 1:16-18] For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.
 - [Jn 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.
 - 'The Scriptures...are conceived by the writers of the New Testament as...God's book, in every part expressive of His mind, given through men after a fashion which does no violence to their nature as men, and constitutes the book also men's book as well as God's, in every part expressive of the mind of its human authors.' [BB Warfield 153]

- Example: The narrative of the serpent in the wilderness. God moved to put the Israelites in the desert in Numbers 21, brought the people into the wilderness, as they rebelled, He was prepared with snakes to come to camp, provided the means to put up a cross, and gave Moses the words to speak to record that (likely not a dictation). Start to finish this was a movement of God, and everyone was carried along in God's intent.
 - Or consider Paul. God needed a man of Paul's characteristics to write His letters. Paul is a man that God put on the scene, gave the skills, learning, expertise, and then put him to the task of writing the letters God wanted written to be part of the NT.
- Why does it matter?
- We can totally rely on all of scripture (per the 2 Tim passage)
 - The words of Scripture have the same intent, purpose and effect as if they were the direct words of God. There is no distinction between "red letter" words attributed to Jesus and any other Biblical text.
 - All other texts can be proofed against Scripture. If inconsistent, believe Scripture.
 - All other leanings, learnings, inspiration, visions, dreams, voices, internet sites, content of any kind can be tested for veracity against Scripture. Again, if there is disconnect, believe Scripture.
 - We can hear from God each and every day by reading His Word.

Note: Law = Prophecy = Scripture. These words are used interchangeably [Jn 10:34]

Note the authority of scripture that is invoked by the casual comment: "It is written". Jesus uses this over and over, and does not attempt to justify it...that authority is understood.

Questions for Reflection:

1. *Think about what it would have been like to be one of the writers of Scripture. Spend a few minutes in prayer thanking God for His willingness to communicate His Words through people and for the assurance that what we have in our Bibles is God's message to us, collectively and personally.*
2. *What are the implications of the Bible being written through the "breathing out" of the Holy Spirit? How does that change the way we think about the words of the Bible?*
3. *How can you use the Bible to validate other content (internet, books, advice, etc)? Look for an opportunity this week to exercise this process – searching Scripture for validation or correction of some internet site, article, email, etc.*
4. *2 Tim 3:15-16 says (ESV) "All Scripture is breathed out by God". Acts 2:2 says: "Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind" on Pentecost. Both passages can alternatively be*

translated "carried along on a wind", and refer to an action of the Holy Spirit. How are these passages similar and how are they the different actions of the Holy Spirit?

5. *Open your Bible to Psalm 119 and pick a short section (your Bible likely divides it up by Hebrew letter). Spend time praying through those verses and consider memorizing one verse that you can carry with you throughout the week.*