Faith for Life

Lesson 3 – Inspiration of the Bible

1. Why Faith?
   1. Since man sinned, faith has been an essential principal in man's redemption.
      1. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder to them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).
   2. Faith is so vital in man’s redemption that the gospel of redemption is called “the faith.”
      1. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for 'the faith' which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).
   3. Thus the objective basis of redemption is called “the faith.”
      1. How to obtain “the faith”
      2. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).
   4. The obedience of faith is not only the way to heaven; it is the way of life here on earth.
2. Inspiration of the Bible
   1. Among our brethren, the strongest and most direct argument for the inspiration of the Bible has come from Thomas B. Warren. Warren states his argument in the introduction to the book “What Shall We Do With The Bible?”
      1. “If it is the case that the Bible contains predictive prophecies which were clearly made in advance of their unquestioned fulfillment, is characterized by a humanly impossible unity, treats matters of science in a way which transcend human invention in the days when its various parts were written, has a view of reality otherwise unknown in human thought, has been confirmed by all the accepted means of historical research (e.g., archaeology), and is free from demonstrable error (as well as possessing other features which are beyond mere human wisdom or invention) then the Bible is the Word of God”
3. Our Argument for the Inspiration of the Bible
   1. In order to demonstrate the divine authority of the Scriptures, it must be shown that the Bible has a divine claim corroborated by a divine character and supported by divine credentials.
      1. The Bible claims to be an inspired revelation from God. If one would count the expressions “The Lord said,” “The Lord spake,” “The Word of the Lord came,” nearly 3,000 times the Bible claims inspiration for itself. The prophets and writers claim that the Lord spoke through these men and that their written message was God’s message to mankind.
   2. The writers claim that God gave them their message.
      1. David wrote “The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me and his word was upon my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2).
      2. Peter said that “men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).
      3. Paul wrote that “every scripture IS inspired by God, and profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16
4. The scientific foreknowledge of scripture is impressive.
   1. Where did Isaiah get the wisdom to write in 700 B.C., “He sitteth above the circle of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22)?
      1. How did the author of Job know that God “stretcheth out the north over empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7)?
   2. Moses told the Israelites that “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11-14). He was correct. Because the red blood cells can carry oxygen (due to hemoglobin molecules inside each cell), life is possible.
      1. In fact, human red blood cells carry approximately 270,000,000 molecules of hemoglobin per cell. If the number were much less, there would not be enough oxygen to sustain life after, say, a hard sneeze or a hefty pat on the back.
      2. We now know that the “life of the flesh is in the blood.”
      3. But we didn’t know that in George Washington’s day. How did the “father of our country” die? We bled him to death! People back then (even highly educated scientists) thought that the blood was where evil “vapors” were located and that getting rid of the blood would make a person well again. Today, of course, we realize that is not correct. Think of how often blood transfusions have made life possible for those who otherwise would have died. We know the truth of the matter, but how did the biblical writer know it?
   3. In Genesis 17:12, God commanded Abraham to circumcise newborn baby boys on the eighth day. But why day eight? In humans, blood clotting is dependent upon three important factors: (a) platelets; (b) vitamin K; and (c) prothrombin. Vitamin K is responsible for the production (by the liver) of prothrombin. If the quantity of vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency, and hemorrhaging (bleeding) may occur. Interestingly, it is only on the fifth to seventh days of a newborn’s life that vitamin K (produced by the action of bacteria in the intestinal tract) is present in adequate quantities. Vitamin K—coupled with prothrombin—causes blood coagulation, which is important in any surgical procedure. Obviously, then, if vitamin K is not produced in sufficient quantities until days five through seven, it would be wise to postpone any surgery until sometime after that.
      1. But why did God specify day eight?
      2. On the eighth day, the amount of prothrombin present actually is elevated above 100 percent of normal. In fact, day eight is the only day in the male’s life in which this will be the case under normal conditions. If surgery is to be performed, day eight is the perfect day to do it.
   4. Long ago, Solomon wrote, “All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again” (Ecclesiastes 1:7). This statement, considered by itself, may not seem profound at first glance. But when considered with additional evidence and other biblical passages, it becomes all the more remarkable. For example, the Mississippi River, when moving at normal speed, dumps approximately 6,052,500 gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico. And that is just one river! Where does all that water go? The answer, of course, lies in the hydrologic cycle so well illustrated in the Bible.
      1. Ecclesiastes 11:3 states that “if the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.”
      2. Amos 9:6 tells us that “He...calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the Lord is His name.” The idea of a complete water cycle was not fully understood or accepted until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More than 2,000 years prior, however, the Scriptures had indicated a water cycle.
   5. There are approximately 7,000 prophecies that adorn the pages of this body of literature. The fact that these fore-statements (dealing with nations, people, and events) were fulfilled in a precise way (e.g., the more than 300 that previewed the coming Messiah) is more than incredible.
   6. Every word of the original manuscripts is one which came as the result of the miraculous gift of prophecy. The inspiration of the New Testament as well as the Old was accomplished by means of the gift of prophecy (1 Cor. 12-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Eph. 3:5). No one living today has the gift of prophecy. Therefore, no one can write Scripture. (Although both the Old Testament and the New Testament are inspired, as to a specific law in force, men today live under the new covenant (Heb. 9:15-17; Gal. 4:21-31; Heb. 10:9).
      1. It is clear, therefore, that the Bible claims to be the true objective standard. That is, the Bible claims to be the source of right answers to religious questions. The conditions with which sinners must comply in order to be saved are the conditions that the Bible sets forth (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 12:48).
      2. No one can be saved who does not comply with the conditions set forth therein (2 Thes. 1:7-9; Ac 2:38; Mk 16:15-16).
      3. All who practice what is not authorized by the Bible sin in so doing (Lev. 10:1-2).
   7. The Very Words are Inspired
      1. To say that the Bible (the totality of the original manuscripts) is inspired is to say that its very words are the utterances of God. There is absolutely no middle ground between inspiration and non-inspiration. If a writing is inspired, then it is of God. It is divine. If the writing is not inspired, then it is not of God. It is of human origin. It is absurd on the very face of it for anyone to refuse to face up to this clear alternative.
      2. The Bible is God speaking to man. That the words of the Bible claim to be the words of God is seen from such passages as the following: He 1:1; 2:3, 4; Lk 1:70; Ac 3:19-21; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Ti 3:16-17; Mt 5:17-18; Jn 10:35. Further, inspiration applies to the very words of the Bible: Jr 1:9; Jn 17:8; 2 Pet 1:21; Ex 20:1; Is 1:10; Eze 2:7; Ex 4:12, 15; Dt 18:18-20. (Each reader is urged to study these passages of the Bible.)
   8. Not Human “Inspiration”
      1. When I affirm that the Bible is the inspired word of God, I am not referring to the so-called “natural revelation”; that is, I am not affirming that the Bible was written by men who were “inspired” in the same sense that they were merely men of literary genius. If such is all that is meant by “inspired,” then the Bible is nothing more than a human document, and it cannot rightly be regarded as the authoritative, inerrant will of God.
      2. It is clear that the writers of the Bible claim to be speaking the words of the external God. Note such passages as: Jer. 1:5-10; Is. 8:11; Ex 4:10-12; 2 Sam. 23:1-2; 2 Pet 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16. Jesus and the New Testament writers used Old Testament writings as the very word of God.
   9. Not Just Parts are Inspired
      1. When we make the claim that the Bible is inspired, we do not mean to say that only parts of it are inspired. Rather, we mean to say that all of it is inspired, completely and entirely, in every part of it. Every part of the Bible is inspired and equally inspired.
      2. This claim is clearly substantiated by a number of passages to which I have already referred. In claiming that the Bible is inspired I am not claiming that God inspired merely the thought and allowed the various writers to put these thoughts into their own words merely as they might remember them (thus being liable to human error). According to such a theory the actual words of the Bible are not inspired.
      3. We reject this view, because it entails the view that the infallible God has entrusted His infallible truths to fallible men who were authorized to write it as they thought best. This view would mean that men wrote the Bible without the guiding power of the Holy Spirit.
   10. Not Just “Contains” the Word of God
       1. When I say the Bible is the inspired word of God, I do not mean to say that it merely “contains” the word of God. There are those who claim that the so-called “fundamental truths” are inspired but that the arguments and explanations, numbers and historical facts are of human origin and are therefore liable to error.
   11. Guaranteed Inerrancy of Every Word
       1. When I say that the Bible is inspired, I mean that the Holy Spirit guaranteed each writer from writing error in the Bible. Error of any sort! When we claim the Bible is inspired, we are affirming that the inspiration is full, complete, and entire, that it extends to every word of every part of the Bible.
5. To say that the Bible is inspired means that the inspiration pertains to words, as well as to book. To say that it pertains to words is also to say that it pertains to letters (the elements of words). Verbal inspiration is the work of God so directing men, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the choices which they make of the subject matter and words, that their writings are exactly what God desired and all that He desired them to contain. This means that every word in the Bible is just exactly what God wanted. There were no words left out of it that should have been there, and that there are no words in it that should not have been there.
6. Knowing the Bible is inspired, we next look to Jehovah God.