

The Verbal Inspiration of the Bible

Outlined into lecture arrangements by Pastor Arnold

The following six points are gleaned from the book, **FAITH FOUNDED ON FACT: ESSAYS IN EVIDENTIAL APOLOGETICS**; by John Warwick Montgomery: (Nashville: Thomas Nelson: Copyright © 1978), pp. 225-227.

I. A passage of Holy Scripture is to be taken as true in its natural, literal sense unless the context of the passage itself indicates otherwise, or unless an article of faith established elsewhere in Scripture requires a broader understanding of the text.

II. The prime article of faith applicable to biblical interpretation is the attitude of **Christ and His Apostles toward the Scriptures**. Their utter trust in Scripture — in all it teaches — must govern the interpreter's practice, thus eliminating in principle any interpretation which sees the biblical texts as erroneous or self-contradictory.

III. **Extra-biblical linguistic and cultural considerations** must never decide the interpretation of a text; and any use of extra-biblical material to arrive at an interpretation inconsistent with the truth of a scriptural passage is to be rejected. **Extra-biblical data can and should put critical questions to a text, but only Scripture itself can legitimately answer questions about itself.**

IV. **Not all literary forms are consistent with scriptural revelation.** The interpreter must not appeal to destructive literary forms (such as mythology) which cast doubt on the reliability or the morality of the Divine Author of Scripture.

V. **The interpreter should employ all tools of scholarly research that do not make experience, reason, or feeling the basis of interpretation.** Such practices are identified by their assumptions, which either do violence to articles of faith, or (like certain documentary theories) oppose the clarity of the authentic biblical texts and the factuality of the events recorded in them, or (like the so-called “new hermeneutic”) give to the sinful cultural context, past and present, a definitive role in the formulation of biblical teaching. These and other unscriptural techniques are to be studiously avoided in carrying out the task of interpretation.

VI. **Harmonization of apparent scriptural difficulties** should be pursued within reasonable limits, and when harmonization would pass beyond such bounds, the interpreter must leave the problem open rather than, by assuming error, impugn the absolute truthfulness of God, who inspires all Holy Scripture for our salvation and learning.

*“If you believe that something in scripture does not seem to be true, you must not conclude that the human writer God chose made a mistake; that the manuscript was in error, **but** maybe that the version is not accurate, or that you just do not understand the meaning.”*

THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLES

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- A. **Christ** pre-authenticated the inerrancy of the entire New Testament. Doubters have always questioned how the apostles could remember the precise words Christ spoke and the truths He taught.
1. In (John 14:26) Jesus said “...the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you ‘all things’, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you.”
 2. In (John 16:12-15) Jesus said that the many things He could not then tell them would all be revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. He said also that the apostles would be guided into all truth and be instructed concerning things to come and that all things concerning Christ would be declared to them.
 3. Before His ascension Christ commanded His disciples concerning what to write (Acts 1:2) and then sent the Holy Spirit to instruct and guide them (John 16:13).
 4. Thus Christ declared that what the apostles wrote was verbally inspired and that the Holy Spirit was actually the “author” of the Bible.
- B. Do the apostles themselves witness to this fact?
1. **Peter**
 - a) In (2 Peter 1:21), the apostle claims that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit and that no prophecy came by the will of men. In other words, no theologian could fabricate or reproduce the Word of God. **The Word of God is by the God of the Word.** (RWA)
 - b) In (2 Peter 1:16-18), Peter denies that in writing the New Testament, the apostles were simply following “cunningly devised fables,” and that he himself was an eye-witness of Christ’s majesty and had actually heard the voice of God (Matthew 17:1-5).
 - c) Peter accepted the writing of Paul as inspired Scripture (2 Peter 3:15, 16).
 2. **Paul**
 - a) He accepted the Genesis account of Adam and Eve (1 Timothy 2:13, 14 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).
 - b) He claimed that “All Scripture” is given by inspiration of God. “Inspiration” means “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16).
 - c) In Romans 1:2, Paul claimed that the Gospel of God had been promised by Old Testament prophets in the Holy Scriptures, thus affirming the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament.
 - d) Paul repeatedly quoted from the Old Testament beginning with the phrase “as it is written,” (Romans 1:17, 2:24, 3:4, 10, 4:17, 8:36, 9:13).
 - e) In (Galatians 1:11, 12) Paul claimed that the Gospel he preached was not from man but was a **direct** “revelation of Jesus Christ”.
 3. **John**

The strongest words of John that reveal verbal inspiration are “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of Life...” (Revelation 22:18, 19).