

### **Scripture: God's Inerrant Word Given Through Men**

*“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Peter 1:16–21, AV 1873)*

In this final article on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture I wish to address the role of man in the making of Scripture. There is much misunderstanding regarding this. It seems that some hold to a theory that has God dictating Scripture and the biblical writers taking it down word for word. Others hold to an idea that presents man as being of such a nature that he will always err, so that even Scripture has errors. In addressing this issue, I shall embrace neither position. The biblical presentation of how Scripture was given is a very different picture. Scripture presents God as using men, their personalities, their knowledge and backgrounds, and the result being His perfect Word.

### **God The Source of Scripture**

First of all, we must affirm along with the Scriptures that God is the source of the Scriptures. As we have seen in previous articles, when Paul speaks of Scripture as being “given by inspiration of God,” (2Timothy 3:16) it means that God is the source of Scripture because He breathed it out. In our text above we see that Scripture did not originate with man, but with God.

Note that Peter stated that Scripture did not come because men simply willed to give it to us. Scripture came to us because men were carried along by the Holy Spirit. One commentator had this to say about the phrase “moved by the Holy Ghost:” *“being borne along.* It seems to be a favorite word with Peter, occurring six times in the two epistles.<sup>1</sup>” In other words, the Spirit of God moved upon the men who were used to give us the Scriptures. They did not act of their own impulses, but the impulse came from God, and He carried them along as they spoke and wrote.

As we have seen in our other studies, Scripture has God for its source.

### **The Role Of Men In The Making Of Scripture**

What role did men play in the making of Scripture? Is Scripture a Divine production, or a human production? The answer is that Scripture is both a Divine production and a human production.

It seems to be the idea of some that the Divine inspiration of Scriptures means that God somehow overrode the personalities and wills of the men He used when He gave Scripture to us. Is this so? I think not, and it seems to me that the Scriptures disagree with that assessment as well.

Notice that our text presents to us the understanding that men were intimately involved in the writing of Scriptures. In fact, we are told that Scripture came to us because men spoke and wrote. *“Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* (2 Peter 1:21, AV 1873) Not only did God move men to speak and write, and then carry them along as they did so; men spoke and wrote. Peter does not speak of men overcome by God, but men moved by God and carried by God. My son is my son with all of his personality traits, whether he walks on his own or I carry him where he and I both choose to go. And so it is with the men who were used of God to give us the Scriptures: they were not suddenly rendered null and void of personality and will, but were just as human as they always

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1 Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 2 Pe 1:21 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002).

were.

Though Scripture quotations could be multiplied regarding this issue, I shall give just a few passages that show us that men were still normal men when God used them to write His words.

- ♣ *“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”* (Matthew 22:41–45, AV 1873) Though Jesus presents to us the Psalms as being the Word of God, He also plainly states that it was David who spoke and called Christ his Lord. It is David who bows to the Lordship of Christ and spoke of Him as Lord.
- ♣ *“Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers; and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.”* (John 7:22, AV 1873) The first place that we read about circumcision is in Genesis, and Jesus attributes the composition/authorship of Genesis to Moses. Note that Jesus stated that Moses gave circumcision. While, as we have seen in other articles, Jesus understood the Old Testament Scriptures to be the Word of God, Jesus spoke of Moses as the one who was used of God when the Pentateuch was given.
- ♣ *“Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.”* (Galatians 6:11, AV 1873) Whatever the reason Paul wrote with large letters, it is plain that it was Paul who wrote them.
- ♣ *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:”* (2 Peter 3:1–2, AV 1873) *“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”* (2 Peter 3:15–16, AV 1873) Peter here writes of the words spoken by the prophets, the commandments of the apostles, his own writings, and the writings of Paul. He does not use a generic term to refer to these as the Word of God, but explicitly mentions the men or groups of men who wrote the words.

As one reads the Scriptures and becomes familiar with them, it is relatively certain that he will eventually become familiar enough to recognize the differences that exist between the various books. Not that the books themselves differ in the sense of contradicting one another, but there is a difference in style. Anyone who is familiar with the New Testament will not mistake the writings of John for the writings of Paul. There is a distinct difference of style as well as thought. Though they agree in their theology, the personalities and styles of John and Paul are obviously very different.

Why is this so? Because God, when He moved men to write and used them to give us His inspired Word, did not overrule the personalities of the men who wrote. God used their unique gifts and personalities to His glory as He used men to write the Scriptures.

This is certainly in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the gifts of the Spirit and the unity of the body of Christ. God uses us with our personalities and our gifts to His glory, but it is still His Spirit at work within us. *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”* (1 Corinthians 12:4–7, AV 1873) And again, *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12–13, AV 1873) *“Now ye are*

*the body of Christ, and members in particular.*” (1 Corinthians 12:27, AV 1873) These verses give us the understanding that God uses people with different personalities, gives them gifts, and uses them to His glory, but does not overrule their personalities while using them. So it was with the men God used in the making of the Scriptures.

### **God-Breathed + Man Written = God's Inerrant Word**

That's a bit of a surprise, isn't it? After all, we are often presented with something similar to the following:

Men make mistakes.

Men wrote the Bible.

Therefore the Bible has mistakes in it.

I'll grant that will work as a syllogism. It is not correct, however, because its first premise does not lead to the conclusion. Sure, men make mistakes. The problem with that view is not that those who hold it think that men make mistakes. The problem is that they are asserting that men always make mistakes. That is a self-refuting statement, though, because if it were true it would at the same time be mistaken.

Men do not always make mistakes. The human element in Scripture does not mean that Scripture contains error. The fact that it is God-Breathed means that it is God's Word and thus without mistakes.

Let us remember that the Scriptures are not only God-Breathed, but that those who were used in the making of the Scriptures were holy men and who had no intent to deceive. They were also carried along by the Holy Spirit so that the product was the very Word of God. There was a power guiding them and strengthening them for the task they performed and He enabled them to produce the Word of God free from error. This does not mean that the writers of Scripture were without error in everything that they said and did. It does mean that God enabled them to write His Word without erring.

Finally, let us consider two statements that were recorded by John:

▲ *“This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”* (John 21:24, AV 1873) John's testimony of Christ was written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (See John 20:30-31). If we admit error into the Scriptures, where does it end? Ultimately we are left doubting the very truthfulness of the accounts of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. After all, they were written by men. Many will speak disparagingly of this statement and call it a slippery slope argument. The reality is that some slopes are slippery and we should warn people so that they will not get on those slopes.

▲ *“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”* (Revelation 21:5, AV 1873) John declared that he wrote because He was commanded of God to do so. He was commanded to write words that were true and worthy of our believing them. Would those words be true and worthy of our confidence if they were in error?

We can safely conclude that God's Word, though given to us through men, is without error.