

Inspired? What's That?

Joe Slater

“The Bible is the inspired word of God.” Most of us have heard that so many times that we automatically shake our heads in agreement. But what does it mean to be “inspired of God”?

When Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “*all Scripture is inspired by God*” (NASB), he used the compound word ***theopneustos***. The first two syllables mean God, and the second two syllables mean to breathe. Thus, to be inspired is to be God-breathed. The words in our Bibles are not merely the words men have breathed (spoken). They are, indeed, God’s own words. As Jesus said, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3, NKJV).

Inspired words proceeded from God’s own mouth, though He utilized people to make the words available to us. For example, God’s inspired word came via Paul’s pen: “*If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 14:37). God also employed Paul’s mouth: “*These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Some are putting forth the idea that inspiration is when God simply uses the writings of men, including their factual errors, folk tales, and even fiction, to put across certain moral or theological points. They claim that such Bible events as the creation, flood, crossing the Red Sea, fall of Jericho, and Jonah being in the fish’s belly three days, are not historical accounts; rather, they are simply tales handed down from generation to

generation, and God has utilized them to teach some guiding principles to His people. I wish I could say that this perverse idea is confined to liberals among the denominations; tragically, an excessive fascination with “scholarship” among our own brethren has resulted in the acceptance of this dim view of inspiration among some of our high-profile preachers and professors.

The apostle Peter specifically said that the prophets did not write their own interpretations. “*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

May each and all of us develop and maintain a lofty respect for the inspiration (and, therefore, for the authority) of the Bible!

x x x x x x x

IGNORANT AND UNEDUCATED

A broadcaster was giving reasons why he thought a person was not qualified for an office he was seeking. “He doesn’t believe in evolution!” The unstated conclusion he expected us to draw was, “He is ignorant, uneducated, and therefore unfit to hold any office.”

The statement, “He doesn’t believe in evolution,” is prejudicial and, regarding most people, not true. Micro-evolution is a common occurrence; every educated person “believes in it.” It accounts for the different breeds of dogs, Angus beef cattle and Jersey milk cows, etc. It is readily observable within kinds.

What the accused person likely did not believe, as I do not, is Macro-evolution, where one distinct kind gives rise to other distinct kinds (“amoeba-to-man”). That each kind was intelligently designed is more reasonable and, therefore, more scientific. That the complexities of living things happened accidentally is more religion than science.

–Cecil May, Jr. [adapted]; via *Preacher Talk*

Who Paid Up?

At an international conference a year ago, countries from around the world promised to give aid to the refugees from Syria. Unfortunately for the refugees, there is no nutritional value in a promise, nor will a promise put a roof over your head. Thus many refugees are still hungry and homeless.

Several countries (US, UK, Canada, Germany and even Estonia) met and even exceeded their promises. But there were several defaulters, and some of them were huge. Saudi Arabia pledged \$200 million but backed that down to \$27.9 million. China promised \$35 million, but paid only \$3 million.

But let’s not be too quick to criticize. Let us first ask, “How are we doing on our pledge to Christ?”

In coming to Christ we pledged to love him more than our earthly families (Luke 14:26). Are we putting his spiritual family ahead of our earthly family, or does his family take second place?

In baptism we promised that we were dying to the old life (Romans 6:1-4). Are we living the new life or the old?

We claim to be a people called together for the purpose of proclaiming his excellencies (1 Peter 2:9). Are we fulfilling that purpose?

In calling ourselves Christians we claim to be following in his steps (1 Peter 2:21). Would an impartial observer notice any resemblance?

It is easy to condemn the Saudis and the Chinese for not keeping their commitment. It is a different matter to look at our own lives to see how our actions look in light of our claims.

Are we living up to our commitment?

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)