

The Inerrant Word of God

The Holy Scriptures Believed and Authorized By Jesus, the Christ

By Gerald E. Cumby

One of the debates going on today between clergy, theologians, the laity, as well as secular scholars, has to do with the inerrancy (infallibility) of Scripture. The main issue in it all is simply “the authority of God’s Word.” However, when one claims and practices “true Christianity” with Christ Jesus as the main player in the work of man’s redemption...and yielding to the authority of Jesus Christ, he should also “yield and give allegiance to Christ’s view of the Holy Scripture”. **If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and in Him there was no sin, we must also responsibly strive to practice “believing what He believed”.**

Concerning Scripture, Jesus was very clear in how He felt concerning God’s Word and how to live by its principles and practices. Jesus never degraded or belittled Scripture. He never criticized it, contradicted it, opposed it, nor spoke in derogatory tones of the Holy Scripture. Jesus did, however, criticize those who misused or abused Scripture. ¹

It should be noted that there are many “theories” of inspiration by men of varying faith to frame a relationship between two authorships. The only one that is applicable to a true concept of infallibility of Scripture is the Verbal, Plenary Inspiration Theory.

“By verbal inspiration is meant that, in the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers’ characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error. By plenary inspiration is meant that the

¹ David Livingston, Jesus Christ and the Infallibility of Scripture, <http://answersingenesis.org> , April 2004, page 1.

accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority.”²

This is the doctrine set forth by Christ and the Apostles. It should be noted that this teaching provided and preserved a perfect balance, ascribing to each that which is sustained and maintained within the context of the Holy Bible.

There are four primary classifications of opinion with respect to inspiration. These are:

- 1. The Bible is of divine authorship almost exclusively;*
- 2. The Bible is of human authorship almost exclusively;*
- 3. The Bible is in some parts almost exclusively divine and in other parts almost exclusively human; and*
- 4. The divine and human authorship are both without impairment to either, wholly present in every word from the first to the last.*

The final of these four classifications is here declared to be the true representation of the fact of inspiration.³

Jesus quoted Scripture after Scripture as noted in the Gospels; however, He never misused them to prove or stress a point. Scripture was Holy to Him and it should be Holy to us.

“We are not afraid to say it; when we hear the Son of God quote the Scriptures, everything is said, in our view, on their divine inspiration—we need no further testimony. All the declarations of the Bible are, no doubt, equally divine; but this example of the Savior of the world has settled the question for us at once. This proof requires neither long nor learned researches; it is grasped by the hand of a child as powerfully as by that

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 & 2; Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, page 71.

³ *Ibid*, page 75.

of a doctor. Should any doubt, then assail your soul let it behold Him in the presence of Scriptures!”⁴

With the above quote in mind, let’s examine Christ Jesus’ use of and feelings for the Holy Scripture:

- **Jesus believed every word of Scripture.** All the prophecies concerning Himself were fulfilled⁵, and He believed beforehand they would be (The Pentateuch is but one book in five parts. Meredith Kline's *Treaty of the Great King*, has demonstrated convincingly that it was written by one person as a unity. Therefore, Christ's reference to any part of it as written by Moses infers He believed it was all written by Moses).
- **Jesus knew the Scriptures thoroughly, even to words and verb tenses.** He had either memorized vast portions or knew it instinctively (John 7:15). Knowing that Jesus was God and man, it is relevant here to understand that Jesus did not come into this world as a babe with the intelligence and understanding of an adult. He came into this world and, “grew in stature and wisdom, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Therefore, Jesus had to learn Scripture through the teachings of Rabbi’s and, possibly, His assigned earthly father and precious mother...just as we must do through teachers of the Word and Godly fathers and mothers who know that the Word of God is “a lamp unto our feet”. Being Divine, Jesus understood the Scriptures thoroughly because He was the Word...the Word living in Him....a man full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 14).
- **Jesus believed the Old Testament was historical fact and quoted it often, i.e. Matthew 19:4, 5...Genesis 2:24).** Jesus mentioned in conversations with his critics and with his followers many Old Testament scriptures that He had to know by heart and would never have mentioned unless they were fact. Some examples:

⁴ Gaussen, L., *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, (Chicago: The Bible Inst. Colportage Association, n.d.), p. 93.

⁵ Wenham, J. W., *Our Lord's View of the Old Testament*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1953), pp. 23, 24.

- Noah and the flood (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26,27)
- Abel being a real individual (Luke 11:51)
- Abraham (John 8:56-58)
- Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15; 11:23, 24; Luke 10:12)
- Lot and Lot's wife (Luke 17:28-32)
- Daniel and Isaiah (Matthew 24:15)
- Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:28)
- The Serpent (John 3:14)
- Manna (John 6:31, 49, 58)
- Jonah (Matthew 12:39-41)
- **Jesus believed that the books of the Word of God were written by the men whose names they bear.** For instance:
 - Moses wrote the Torah (First five books of the Bible): Matthew 19:7, 8; Mark 7:10; Mark 12:26; Luke 5:14; Luke 16:29, 31; Luke 24:27, 44; John 1:17; John 5:45, 46; John 7:19.
 - Isaiah wrote Isaiah: Mark 7:6-13; John 12:37-41
 - Daniel wrote Daniel: Matthew 24:15
 - Jonah wrote Jonah: Matthew 12:39-41.
- **Jesus believed that Scripture convicts as much, if not more, than the outward (that which can be seen with the eye) and surface manifestation of the miracles of God:** Luke 16: 29, 31...The Word of God pierces to the inner core of man (like a two-edged sword). Jesus knew that “miracles” were to show the “Glory of God” not just to provide a source of physical manifestation of God’s power, but to give glory to the One who brought man into the world (John 1:4, 40).
- **He believed the Old Testament, written by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was spoken by God Himself.....even though fallible men held the pen:** Matthew 19:4, 5; Matthew 22:31, 32, 43; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37.
- **Jesus used Scripture to crush Satan’s attempt to persuade Jesus to thwart His ministry and fulfillment of Scripture.** Using Old Testament Scripture Jesus put down

ever attempt by Satan. The Word of God was used by Jesus as His defense in the dispute: Matthew 4: Luke 16:29, 31.

- **As a basis for His own teaching Jesus quoted Scripture. Our Lord's ethics never contradicted what was already written in Scripture:** Matthew 7:12; 19:18, 19; 22:40; Mark 7:9, 13; 10:19; 12:24, 29-31; Luke 18:20.
- **Jesus warned against replacing Scripture with anything else...or adding or taking away from it.** The Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees (leaders) in His day had added to it with their Oral traditions: Matthew 5:17; 15:1-9; 22:29; Mark 7:12. It is imperative that today's spiritual leaders uphold the truth of God's Word and take any attempt to question God's Word as an attempt to destroy the Christian's faith in the Bible as God's Word. This is like opening the door to a "new tradition."
- **Jesus, as Messiah and King, will judge all men by Scripture in the last day.** This will be on the basis of His infallible Word (He never lies) committed to writing by fallible men, guided by the infallible Spirit of God: Matthew 25:31; John 5:22, 27; John 12:48; Romans 2:16.
- **Jesus ushered in and made provision for the New Testament by sending the Holy Spirit.** Although Jesus never wrote one word of Scripture, He was truly the Word of God Himself (John 1). Jesus was the living Word (Torah) in the flesh and blood. Turning over the task of all writing of the Word of God to fallible men...the Holy Spirit (being infallible) guided them into the truth. The apostle's words had the same authority as Christ's: Matthew 10:14, 15; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 14:22; 15:26, 27; 16:12-14.
- **Jesus never worshipped Scripture; however, He honored and respected it with dignity and the highest tribute.**

Jesus obeyed the Word of God, not man. However, Jesus respected authority and the law of the day (render unto Caesar was Caesar's and unto God what is God) but was never subject to man

as the principle authority for His life. Jesus was subject to the Word of God, not man. If some leader's view of inspiration were true, Jesus was subject to an errant "Word of Man." Therefore, He would have been subject to the will of man, not the will of God. Even though Jesus respected man and the laws of the day, He would not disobey Scripture to satisfy man's desire for authority and selfish ambitions.

As we look at the life of Jesus and the way He conducted Himself as to His acts of redemption, He was subject to Scripture as God's Word. He obeyed it and it was His authority, the rule by which He lived. He came to do God's will, not His own, and certainly not man's. He always did things because they were written—just as if God had directly commanded (according to Scripture). He fulfilled Old Testament Prophecies about Himself, i.e. Matthew 11:10; 26:24, 53-56; Mark 9:12, 13; Luke 4:17-21; Luke 18:31-33; 22:37; 24:44-47.

Jesus Himself **IS** the Word of God. There are no questions as to what the definition of "IS" is when it comes to the authority of Jesus and Him being the Word of God. Every word from His lips was the Word of God, every thought captive to God's thoughts (John 3:34). If Jesus had felt the need or desired to pen a new set of rules, He could have and it would be the Word of God. However, He did not...as it was foreordained before time began. Jesus followed without question the Word of God already penned by men (Old Testament). It would be advantageous as well as highly desirable for every believer to do likewise. **We should adopt the attitude of Jesus and become subject both to Him as the Living Word and to the Written Word that is, indeed, INFALLIBLE.**

Bibliography

1. Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1 & 2*; Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, page 71.
2. Gausson, L., *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, (Chicago: The Bible Inst. Colportage Association, n.d.), p. 93.
3. Livingston, David, *Jesus Christ and the Infallibility of Scriptures*, April 2004, <http://answersingenesis.org>
4. Wenham, J. W., *Our Lord's View of the Old Testament*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1953), pp. 23, 24

Note: Of the resources above, it should be noted that a significant amount of material was taken from the text of David Livingston's writing on "Jesus Christ and the Infallibility of Scriptures." I did not quote verbatim, but used his material quite freely.