

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER NEEDS: **Health**, Revena, & David Lundy, Kenny & Linda Mitchell, Joann & John Johnson, Lisa Maxwell, Alan Johnson, Dennis & Jean Rhodes. **Other:** We need to pray that God will raise up men to aspire to serve as deacons. We need to pray for the leaders of our country, and for those serving in the military. Pray for those saints who are weak and those going through difficult times.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: None known of at this time.

SINGING EVENING: This song service will be on Sunday evening January 9, at 5:00 pm.

EVANGELISM: For those of the Somerville family who would like to participate in the Bible correspondence course work, we will meet on Sunday January 2 & 16 at 6:00 pm

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER

Is published by the Somerville church of Christ to promote New Testament Christianity, and for the proclamation of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a part of its work.

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Schedule of Services
Sunday
 Bible class 9:45 a.m.
 Morning worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening worship 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday
 Bible class 7.00 p.m.

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If you would be interested in a **free** Bible correspondence course, or if you would like a **free** Bible study in your home, or if you have a request for Bible information, please write to the above address or phone one of the above numbers for prompt service.

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"The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11)

Volume 8, Issue 1

Date: January 2011

Inspiration

By George W Harris

The apostle Paul wrote to the young evangelist Timothy and said, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

What does it mean that all scripture is given by inspiration of God? It means that all scripture is God breathed. Literally God breathed the words into His people who either wrote those things down or spoke them verbally as a message from God to His people. Since the Bible is the word of God in human language which God has both given and preserved for His people, it behooves us as God's people to know and execute the commandments of God. The scriptures are the work of the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

The words *"all scripture"* refers to both Old Testament and New Testament writings as well as verbal and written inspiration.

VERBAL INSPIRATION

Jesus claimed over and over again that He did not speak by His own authority but spoke what the Father had given Him to speak. (John 12:49,50) Those things that the Father told Him to speak He told to the apostles. (John 17:8,14,18) Jesus gave the promise of the Father to the apostles that they would receive the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-13) Jesus assured the apostles that with His departure they would not be left comfortless, that another Comforter would be sent unto them, the Holy Spirit or Spirit of truth. *"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you, but the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* (John 14:25-26) Again to His apostles Jesus said, *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will*

show you things to come." (John 16:12-13)

Why was the Holy Spirit given to the apostles? What purpose was He to serve? Jesus, in the passages already considered, said it basically was three-fold. (1) The Holy Spirit was to guide the apostles into all truths teach them all things. (2) He was to bring to their remembrance all things Christ had taught them. (3) Further, He was to show them things to come.

In receiving the Holy Spirit not only were the apostles guided into all truths, but they were also guided in that which they spoke. Actually, it was the Holy Spirit speaking through them. This fact is abundantly set forth in numerous New Testament scriptures. The apostles, in receiving the Holy Spirit, spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4) *"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you shall speak, neither do you premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak, for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit."* (Mk, 13:11) *"For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you."* (Matt. 10:20) When, therefore, the Holy Spirit came to the apostles in Acts chapter 2, we find that they *"... began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance."* (Acts 2:4)

The Holy Spirit not only selected the idea but gave utterance to the idea, *"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 Cor 2:13) This plainly reveals that the inspired men did not rely on their wisdom to select words, but used such words as the Holy Spirit gave them.

Inspired men often spoke and wrote under inspiration things which they themselves did not understand. Job said in the long ago, *"Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."* (Job 42:3) In the first recorded gospel sermon Peter said, *"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."* (Acts 2:39) This had reference to Gentiles being a part of the church, but Peter had to be shown the vision of the sheet with unclean beasts and told to kill and eat, before he got the message to preach the gospel to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile household. (Acts chapter 10) The prophets sometimes searched diligently to find the meaning of their own words uttered under inspiration. *"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."* (1 Pet. 1:10-11) It is obvious that one cannot express a thought and select words and frame a sentence which he does not understand.

Inspired men often spoke in languages which they neither had learnt or understood. In such instances it was absolutely impossible for them to select the words. *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* (Acts 2:4)

WRITTEN INSPIRATION

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament is the work of the Holy Spirit. We consider not only the scripture under review in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, but also Peter concurred with the statement made by Paul when he wrote, *“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.”* (2 Pet. 1:3)

The scriptures are often attributed by man as the mere work of man or men. When you consider that the Bible was written by about 40 men over a period of 1600 years and has a remarkable purpose of unity, it is not in man to direct his own steps. Man cannot devise a simple scheme or plan of salvation so beautiful as the one God devised. Regarding how we got the scriptures Peter simply writes, *“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 Pet. 1:20-21)

Paul says, *“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”* (1 Thess 2:13) To the Corinthian brethren Paul wrote, *“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 Cor 14:37) Peter, unquestionably an inspired apostle, lends support to Paul being inspired when he wrote, *“and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation -- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”* (2 Pet. 3:15-16)

AS TO THE PURPOSE OF THE SCRIPTURES (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

First of all Paul here emphasizes that the scriptures (writings) have their origin in God and not, as many today teach, in man. The scriptures are not the outgrowth of man's thinking, wisdom or experience. To the contrary, Paul says the scriptures have their origin in God.

Second, Paul states that the scriptures were given by God for a very definite, specific purpose.

(1) They are profitable for doctrine - that which is to be taught. As Peter said in 1 Pet. 4:11 *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."* When we teach, we are to teach the scriptures, they are given by God for that particular purpose.

(2) They are profitable for reproof - for proving again and again what is right or wrong religiously. (The expression *"reproof"* is not here used as it is so commonly used today. The term does not mean to *"correct, chastise, scold or rebuke."* Rather, the word means to *"again prove."*) We establish what is right or wrong religiously on the basis of what the scriptures teach.

(3) They are profitable for correction - correcting that which has been proven wrong. All such correction is to be pursued on the basis of what the scriptures teach. (The Greek word *"epanorthosis"* is literally defined to mean: a restoration to an upright or right state. Setting right, improvement of life, and character).

(4) They are profitable for instruction in righteousness - teaching that which has been proven right or just. Teaching how one may live an acceptable life before God, (Instruction comes from the Greek word *"paidelan"* which means chastisement, discipline embracing the whole training and education of an individual).

Finally, Paul gives the results to such scriptural emphasis: that the man of God (that which you, I, and all others should desire to be) may be perfect, complete, lacking nothing, spiritually matured and refined. More, that man of God may be, by the scriptures thoroughly or completely furnished unto every, or all, good works. Truly, what a glorious treasure what a *"pearl of great price"* the Lord has given us in the scriptures!

If we could but learn, apply, and appreciate this salient lesson of Christianity, how well it would be for all of us. We need nothing more religiously than the Bible. We do not need the creeds, dogmas, catechisms, manuals and disciplines of men. The word of God is within itself, sufficient, all sufficient, to meet our every spiritual need and to guide us into the way of acceptance before our God. For what more could we ask?

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