

MILILANI COMMUNITY CHURCH  
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES  
January 2003

LESSON 1: THE BIBLE: OUR GOD-BREATHED BOOK

"Bible" comes from the Greek word *biblos* meaning "book"

THE CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE (The Bible has two parts)

Old Testament (thirty-nine books)

1. Law (5)
2. History (12)
3. Poetry (5)
4. Major Prophets (5)
5. Minor Prophets (12)

New Testament (twenty-seven books)

1. Gospels (4)
2. Acts – history
3. Epistles
  - a. Paul's Epistles
  - b. General Epistles
4. Revelation

THE THEME OF THE BIBLE

The central theme of the Bible is Christ. He is the key to understanding the Old Testament and the New Testament:

Old Testament – He is coming!

Gospels – He is here!

Acts – Let's go tell everyone!

Epistles – How to get to know Him.

Revelation – He is coming again!

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

II Timothy 3:16-17: "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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

II Peter 1:21: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Inspiration Latin word: *inspiro* meaning "to breath in" (does not clearly reveal meaning of the Greek word it translates)

Greek word: *theopneustos* "God-breathed" or "breathed out by God"

Theos = "God"

Neustos = "to breathe or blow"

## THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

1. Inspiration is verbal (the very words are God-given Matt. 5:18).
2. Inspiration is plenary (it is inspired in all its parts II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; Rev. 22:18).
3. Inspiration gives the Bible final authority (John 10:35).
4. Inspiration includes complete inerrancy
  - God cannot err (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2).
  - The Word of God cannot err.
  - Therefore, "the Bible which is the Word of GOD CANNOT ERR"
5. Inspiration does not rule out the fact that the Bible manifests a variety of literary styles, figures of speech, and individual personalities of its authors. Like Christ, the Bible is "theanthropic" having both the divine and human elements united in one expression, but without error

The Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, His revelation to man, inerrant in the original writings and is therefore the supreme and final authority in all matters of doctrine, faith and life.

Revelation: From God to man (Revelation means "unveiling." By revelation, God makes known to men what would otherwise be unknown)

Inspiration: From man to paper (Man records what God has disclosed)

Definition of Inspiration: "Inspiration may be defined as the Holy Spirit's superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God's Word written—authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs" (Moody Handbook of Theology)

Not all agree with the above definition and its implications.

## VARIOUS THEORIES OF INSPIRATION:

1. Natural inspiration theory: Bible writers were simply men of great genius and their writings were no more inspired than other geniuses in history.
2. Spiritual illumination theory: The writers of the Bible were Spirit-filled and guided believers, just as any believer may be today. In this view any Spirit-filled Christian could write Scripture today.
3. Divine dictation theory: The writers were completely passive and God simply dictated to them what was to be recorded.
4. Partial inspiration theory: The parts of the Bible related to matters of faith and practice are inspired, but matters related to history, science, or other non-faith matters may be in error (This view rejects the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. But how can the Bible be trustworthy in one area while in error in another?).
5. Neo-orthodox theory of inspiration: The Bible is full of errors because it is merely the product of fallible writers. But it is a witness to the Word of God. It becomes the Word of God to the reader as he "encounters Christ" in his own subjective experience. The historicity of the events is unimportant.

## THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF INSPIRATION

1. Christ's view of the Bible
  - a. Old Testament (Luke 16:17; 24:44; Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35; Matt. 22:31-32)
  - b. New Testament (John 14:26)
2. Paul's view of the Bible (I Tim. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16)
3. Peter's view of the Bible (I Peter 1:21; II Peter 3:16)

NOTE: To deny the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture we must reject the integrity of Christ and His apostles.

## WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT THE BIBLE:

1. Divine inspiration of the Bible – Matt. 22:43
2. Indestructibility of the Bible – Matt. 5:17-18
3. Infallibility of the Bible – John 10:35
4. Final authority of the Bible – Matt. 4:4,7,10
5. Historicity of the Bible – Matt. 12:40 (Jonah); Matt. 24:37 (Noah)
6. Scientific accuracy of the Bible – Matt. 19:2-5
7. Factual inerrancy of the Bible – John 17:17

## SUPPORT FOR THE BIBLE'S CLAIM TO BE THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

(using your hand as a reminder)

1. Fulfilled PROPHECY (the "pinkie" finger)

There are over 60 Old Testament prophecies about Christ that were fulfilled in the New Testament. The place of his birth, the time of his birth, the manner of his birth, his betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, the manner of his death, the reaction of people, the piercing of his hands and feet, his burial in a rich man's tomb, and his resurrection, are just a few of the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the life of Christ. The probability of just eight being fulfilled in any one man in history at any one time is one in  $10^{17}$  (one with 17 zeros behind it) (See Evidence That Demands A Verdict, p. 167)

General prophecy can also illustrate the supernatural origin of the Scriptures. In many cases these prophecies are so graphic and accurate that liberal critics of the Bible have assigned dates to some books and portions of books that are later than those claimed by the books themselves, because they assume that such prophecy is not possible!

- Ezekiel's prediction of the destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26)
- Isaiah's prediction of Cyrus King of Persia (Isaiah 44:26-28; 45:1-3).  
Isaiah predicted that Babylon would conquer Jerusalem, Persia would in turn conquer Babylon and then allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem. He actually names the King (Cyrus who ruled from 559-530BC). Cyrus let the Jews return in 538BC. Isaiah lived in 700BC! That is like naming who will be President 150 years from now and what his major foreign policy decision will be!

2. The UNITY of the Bible (the ring finger)

A ring is a symbol of a couple's unity. The Bible contains 66 books, was written over a period of 1,500 years, by about 40 different authors, from many different backgrounds, in several languages, on hundreds of topics, and yet the Bible has an amazing unity. Every part fits into the whole – like a symphony, each part contributing to the overall unity, orchestrated by One Master! (See illustration in Evidence That Demands A Verdict, pp. 16-17).

3. The Bible answers the BIG QUESTIONS (the big finger)

The Bible answers the big questions people ask at one time or another, in a way that fits with man's nature and the world as you and I know it to be. For instance, on the question of salvation, the majority of non-biblical religions seek to earn salvation by human works and merit. Only the Bible deals seriously with the reality of human sin. In the Bible salvation is not by human works, but by grace through the death and resurrection of Christ.

4. The Bible is an INDEX TO HISTORY (the index finger). That is, the Bible is historically accurate.

The most significant area of confirmation of the historical accuracy of the Bible comes from archaeology. There is not one single find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point. Nelson Glueck, a famous archeologist said: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible." Critics at one time insisted that Luke's recounting of the birth of Christ was filled with historical inaccuracies. But now William Ramsey, a noted historian and archaeologist has stated, "Luke's history is unsurpassed in trustworthiness."

5. The Bible CHANGES LIVES (the thumb).

In the days of the gladiators, if the king gave a thumbs down sign, the man would die. If the king gave a thumbs up sign, he would live. When people come to faith in the Christ of the Bible they live, their lives are transformed.

6. The Bible is INDESTRUCTIBLE (the fist).

The Huguenots portrayed the Bible and Christianity as an anvil surrounded by three blacksmiths, with the inscription: "The more they pound and the more they shout, the more they wear their hammers out!" The indestructibility of the Bible has been verified to this day (I Peter 1:24-25).

**CONCLUSION:** If the Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God, as we believe, then it has supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life. It gives us absolute truth that is unchanging. It is the Books of books—God's Book—the written revelation of God to man. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy.