

christian

WORKER



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

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THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

Wayne Jones

The Bible is one, complete book that tells one, complete story. It has one main character and one central focus. The Bible is a book all about God. Not only is the Bible about God, the Bible is also from God. Or, as our title expresses, the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Defining Our Terms

For the sake of clarity, we should allow the Bible to define our terms for us. The two texts most important for this definition are 1 Corinthians 2:11-12 and 2 Timothy 3:16. In the first text, Paul argues that only the Spirit of God could reveal the mind of God. Furthermore, Paul claims that the Spirit of God did just that to certain men in the first century. The second text addresses the process of that revelation. The Greek term that is most important to our discussion is "theopneustos." Here it is rendered "given by inspiration" (NKJV), "inspired by God" (NASB), and "breathed out by God" (ESV). Thus, inspiration is the supernatural working of God through the Holy Spirit to the mind and pen of men that produced His words as they spoke and wrote.

Proving Our Claim

In defense of this claim consider the evidence of the Bible's perfection. It is not our intent to exhaust the internal evidences for its perfection, but rather to provide a sampling of those evidences.

In the field of medicine, the Bible has been proven to be a treasure chest of foreknowledge. Long before man realized it, Moses wrote that life was in the blood (Lev. 17:11). That verse and man's later discovery may be the crowning example of the Bible's medical accuracy, but the Bible is littered with such statements.

For example, Moses made a seemingly strange statement about the treatment of lepers in Leviticus 13:45: "Now the leper...shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'" Cover his mustache? This would seem strange until it was discovered that nasal fluids are one of the easiest ways to spread this disease. There is no evidence that man even understood what contagious diseases were at the time the Moses wrote the book of Leviticus. Yet, the Jewish law contained many warnings like the one. How? Because it was inspired by God.

In the area of science, the Bible is filled with factual statements and provable claims that were given long before man verified them through his own discovery.

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Editor

Cody Westbrook



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

HIS TRUTH ENDURES FOREVER

Cody Westbrook

It is difficult to gauge the sincerity of the question but its depth is beyond dispute. In his fascinating exchange with Jesus, Pilate learned that Christ is King and "everyone who is of the truth" hears Him (John 19:37). Pilate's response was simple, yet profound. He asked, "What is truth" (John 19:38)? Regardless of his motive, Pilate asked an important question—one that is asked in every age.

What is truth? What is its nature? Does it really exist? Can it be known? If so, how? Everyone inevitably entertains some or all of these questions at some point in life. But, more important than the question, is the answer. If truth were just a theoretical proposition with no real substantive meaning or application, then its pursuit would be, at best, a waste of time. But if it is real; if it is objective; if it can be known and practiced, then we must stop at nothing in order to find and understand it. Thankfully we are not left to our own devices in order to do so. The "God of truth" (Deut. 32:4) has revealed truth to us in His Word. The Psalmist said, "The entirety of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever" (Ps. 119:160). What are the implications of that declaration?

Consider what the passage says about the nature of Scripture. The Hebrew term translated "truth" means, "certain, sure, i.e., that which conforms to reality, and is so certain not to be false."¹ Truth is that which corresponds to reality. It refers to that which is real, trustworthy, dependable, genuine, or valid. Since the Psalmist said that God's Word is truth, that means it communicates what is real and certain, and it can be trusted. Man spends his life searching for answers

1 James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

to the most important questions in life—Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? We seek answers to the questions of good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice. We naturally want to make sense of the world we see around us. But, without God's Word those answers would be completely unattainable. God has revealed His mind in the pages of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:10). God is completely truthful (Titus 1:2) and what He says is absolutely true. Therefore, we can be sure that what the Scripture says is absolutely true. We can, and must, turn to it in order to know what God would have us to know in order to be right with Him (2 Pet. 1:3).

Not only is the bible true, it is true for everyone, and always will be. The passage continues, "...Every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." The Postmodern mindset says that truth is relative to the individual, time, culture, and circumstance. God disagrees. Truth is not subjective and changing, it is objective and unchanging. It is an objective reality that exists outside of my own recognition and acknowledgement. God cannot lie (Heb. 6:13-18), He does not change (Mal. 3:6), and neither does His Word. Paul wrote of the "one faith" in Ephesians 4:5, which is in reference to the Gospel—the one system of faith, or doctrine, that all people must follow. Peter quoted Isaiah in 1 Peter 1:24-25 saying,

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

Time goes on, nations rise and fall, cultures and practices change, but God's Word remains. His truth endures forever, and therefore, in every age it is needed and relevant.

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“What is truth?” is a powerful and important question. But, “Where is truth?” may be more to the point. Throughout history mankind has searched every corner of the known world looking for truth while the answer has been in his grasp all along. Jesus said God’s Word is truth (John 17:17) and

If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

Friends, God’s Word is true. It always has been, and it always will be. The only question is whether or not we are willing to accept and obey what it says.

CW

THE ANSWER TO RACISM

Ross Haffner

Albert Einstein said, “What a sad era when it is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice.” Pretending racism is not a problem does not make it go away, but neither does making it out to be unsolvable. Instead of wasting time arguing to what degree it plagues us or offering platitudes like, “Listen more,” we should seek God’s answers. While society might take too long to fix this issue the Christian does not have to wait.

God does not condone racism. When Paul preached to the Epicureans and Stoics on Mars’ Hill he defended the “unknown God” as the Creator of all. By inspiration the apostle claimed that God made all of mankind “of one blood” (Acts 17:26). He is our Father and we are His offspring (Acts 17:28). Can we claim that we are our brother’s keeper if we hate our brother (Genesis 4:9)? John warns that if we hate our brother we are in darkness and cannot love God (1 John 2:9; 4:20). The precious blood of Jesus that provides God’s salvation is offered to all (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 11:17-18; Tit. 2:11). If our great God has shown love to all, how can we then restrict our love to some?

Christ came to defeat racism. Paul wrote,

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is

neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

And again,

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:14-16).

From eternity God’s plan was to save all men through Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9-11). All people have the same problem (Rom. 3:23) and all are in need of the same solution (Rom. 6:23). God has provided the means for dealing with man’s sin problem by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His body, the church. God adds all those who obey the gospel to the church of Christ (Acts 2:47), and that church is one unified body.

Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-23) and the apostles commanded it (Gal. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:8). Paul said that Jesus has “made both one” through the cross (Eph. 2:14) in reference to the unity of Jew and Gentile in the church. Today, that applies to those who are of different skin color. God’s will for the church is that we all—red, yellow, black, and white—be united. Such demands love and fellowship (1 Pet. 4:8; Phil. 2:1-5) but if I allow prejudice to upset unity, love, and fellowship I am actively fighting against the plan God has always had for His church. When Christians will not talk to, sit by, or serve those who look different, they are disobeying the teachings of scripture.

God’s word is the answer to racism. When I allow God’s word to direct my thoughts, I will choose to speak and act in a way that is appropriate and defeats it. Jesus warns, “evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:17; Mark 7:20-23). Racism is the result of a carnal mind (Rom. 8:5-8), one that does not conform to the teaching of scripture. But the mind can be “renewed” and “transformed” to remove racism (Rom. 12:1-2). God’s word can mold and shape our thoughts, and therefore our actions, into what He would have them to be. The result is a

Christian who treats someone who is different than him, as a soul to be loved the same as any other.

CW

THE ANSWER TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Steven Lloyd

When I was young, I recall thinking that psychology was the subject you study if you want to understand human nature and how to fix it when it goes wrong. It was an unquestioned assumption—not only of mine but also of our culture as a whole—and I am sorry to say, of some in the church. I would not be surprised if it is still an assumption of our culture, even though I see some cynicism concerning the “unquestioned assumption” aspect of it.

With my conversion came the hearing of the word, and the reading and discussion of it. With the reading of Scripture came the distinct impression that the Bible has a lot to say about what we call “mental health.” Passages like 2 Peter 1:3 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 played an important role in helping me to see the connection between the Bible and what we call “mental health.”

...Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue (2 Pet. 1:3).

Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

There are concerns addressed both by mental health professionals and by the writers of Scripture. Here are some, to name a few: What is the essence of human nature? If there is some chief end toward which we are to order our lives, what is it? What is the nature of the problems we face? To whom should we turn? What role do we play? These are just a few of the questions that are addressed both by some mental health professionals and by the writers of Scripture.

As a case in point, consider the question relating to human nature. For some mental health professionals, we are nothing more than biological machines, but the writers of Scripture view man as being created in the image of God. We are souls with bodies. How do you suppose someone who views you as a mere biological machine might address the “mental health” problems you face compared with how someone who views you as a creature made in the image of God might address the same problem?

Early in my work as a preacher, I had the opportunity to speak with enough people to recognize that many of the problems we face have common denominators. I made a list of fifteen common issues: What is the purpose of life? What is the problem? To whom, or to what shall we turn for solutions? What are the solutions? How can we ensure success? What roles do attitude, accountability, and honesty play? I added to the list issues relating to change, forgiveness, abstinence, fellowship, remaining current, and loneliness. And finally, I asked if there was any value that could be assigned to the problems we face. A few years later I added anger and anxiety to the list. I then asked the question, “Does the Bible say anything about these issues, and if so, what does it say?” For example, does the Bible say anything about the purpose for which we exist, and if so, what does it say? The Bible affirms that the purpose for which we exist is to glorify God (Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 1:3-14).

How does this relate to problems of living? Consider the behavior of some men toward their wives, or some parents toward their children, or one brother toward another brother. Can a man mistreat his wife and glorify God at the same time? Can a parent mistreat their children and glorify God at the same time? Can a man hate his brother and glorify God at the same time? How we are to behave toward others is spelled out in Scripture. So, the key to success is found in meditating on Scripture day and night (Ps. 1; Ps. 119:97-104).

The Bible is the most fruitful book to read where “mental health” is concerned. I encourage you to take the list of questions above and ask yourself the same question. What does the Bible say about such-and-such? You will see for yourself how relevant the Bible is in addressing today’s problems of living.

CW

THE ANSWER TO MARRIAGE AND FAMILY PROBLEMS

Todd Clippard

For more than half a century, God's plan for marriage and the family has been under attack. This attack began with the "free love" movement in the 1960s. Along this pernicious path came no-fault divorce and "women's liberation" in the 1970s, the normalization of homosexuality even to the extent of declaring it equal or superior to male and female relationships in the 1980s, the explosion of couples cohabiting without the confines of marriage in the 1990s, and the present denial of Biology 101 with regard to sex and gender.

Despite these attacks traditional marriage remains the foundation of civil society, the greatest safeguard against poverty, and is by far the most successful medium for the raising of well-adjusted capable children. Moreover, the large-scale abandonment of marriage is not the result of the discovery of a better plan. Rather, I believe it is the result of a lack of practice and modeling of the Divine plan as found in Scripture.

Because of the constraints of space, I will only address what I believe to be the two most prominent threats to the family unit, namely homosexuality and cohabiting without marriage. There is a single biblical text that addresses both of these matters succinctly and completely. In 1 Corinthians 7:2, the Bible says, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband." The meaning could not be clearer; all sexual relationships outside the bounds of marriage between a man and woman constitute fornication. This should be the go to text to every individual who tries to use the Bible to advocate for homosexual unions or cohabiting.

Regarding homosexuality, advocates for homosexual marriage argue that the language of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:10 is not an indictment against homosexuality, (though it clearly is). The appropriate response is to go to Romans 1:24-27. Rather than using specific words to describe the people involved in this debauchery, this text describes the practice in which they are engaged and God's attitude toward the same.

To be forthright, the Supreme Court ruling legalizing homosexual marriage hasn't drastically changed the social landscape, as a vast number of

concessions that had been made by the government, insurance companies, and other large entities to accommodate the homosexual community. The worst part of the decision is seen not in a proliferation of homosexual marriages, which never materialized because this whole fiasco wasn't really about marriage. Rather, the real danger is evident in the unconstitutional protections against criticism this community now receives in public schools, the workplace, and in the public square in general.

Finally in this respect, and it includes those who cohabit as well, there is the opening of the floodgates for those practicing homosexuality and other sexual sins to serve as foster or adoptive parents. This runs contrary to the Bible as well as to the social science regarding child welfare (cf. 1 Cor. 7:14; Eph. 6:1-4; Titus 2:4).

With regard to the problem of cohabiting without marriage, biblical considerations aside, (yes I remember the title of my article!), one of the greatest issues is overcoming the misconceptions about the supposed advantages to living together before or instead of marrying. For example, the most common error is the belief that living together is a good trial before marriage. However, marriages between those who live together prior to marrying fail two thirds of the time (67%), while those who do not cohabit before marriage divorce 45% of the time. Overall, 85% of those cohabiting before marriage separate before marriage or divorce within 10 years. Additionally, women who cohabit before marriage are more likely to suffer abuse or depression. Men who cohabit are more likely to "cheat" on their partner¹.

Consider the contrast of cohabiting with biblical marriage. Cohabiting lacks any real moorings while biblical marriage is founded with permanence,

For this cause shall a man leave his father
and mother and be joined to his wife...
therefore what God has joined together,
let not man separate (Matt 19:5-6).

Marriage partners are joined until separated by death (Rom 7:2). Cohabiting is based on the satisfaction or happiness of one of the partners, but biblical marriage is based in love and sacrifice:

¹ Statistical information from <http://www.bpnews.net/27699/living-together-before-marriage-a-statistical-risk>. "Living together' before marriage a statistical risk", Baptist Press, March 26, 2008.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her... So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies (Eph. 5:25,28).

Cohabiting lacks the defined roles and responsibilities of marriage. Lacking such a framework makes its success far less likely. However, biblical marriage has clearly defined roles that provide both the framework for success and the personal satisfaction that comes through the achievement of defined roles and goals.

Because the family unit is a product of Divine origin and wisdom (cf. Gen. 2), we should expect that the science behind the family unit would confirm what the Bible says. In marriage and the family, God's word still matters!

CW

SALVATION

Don Walker

Man's biggest problem originated in the Garden of Eden. The Bible says, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17).

Holy Scripture continues to record that sin infiltrated paradise.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat (Gen. 3:6).

Space does not allow us to cover the entire topic of sin, but allow us to consider its danger which will stand as a beacon pointing to its destructive force and thus producing man's greatest need – Salvation from sin whose wages are "death" (Rom 6:23). First consider Isaiah 59:1-2,

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you

and your God, And your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Now consider Jeremiah 3:25.

Weli edown in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

An abundance of verses could be presented concerning sin, but these two verses will suffice to emphasize our point. Sin destroys, brings death, and establishes man's greatest need – salvation from sin. Man has provided sin and the need.

God, on the other hand, has provided an answer to man's greatest need, and that is His glorious grace. John 3:16, though abused by many, still sets forth a great divine truth.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

One preacher set forth a number of "greatest" expressions in this verse. He started with "the greatest Being-God," "the greatest emotion-love," and emphasized, among a number of other "great things," "the greatest act-gave." Man introduced sin and God provided grace, which provides salvation from that sin.

John wrote in His prologue, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). Life or salvation is found in Christ and in Him alone. Paul wrote,

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10).

Jesus taught that we could draw near unto the Father only by His Son Jesus Christ (John 14:6). The apostles taught,

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:1).

Everyone in the New Testament who spoke with the authority of God and guidance of the Holy Spirit preached Christ and spoke of salvation being only in Him.

The fact that "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6) and "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8) speaks to salvation being by the "grace"

of God (Eph. 2:8). For no man could ever deserve or earn such a majestic gift. Yet, even though it is true that we cannot earn our own salvation that does not mean that there is nothing for man to do. In Romans 6:17-18 we learn that there has been a doctrine delivered to us that we must obey. This obedience is from the heart (sincere), and this obedience is part of being made free from sin. Jesus said,

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven at but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (7:21).

It is those “that do His commandments that will have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

There are many different elements that are required for man’s salvation. Some of these elements only God can supply and some of these elements only man can supply. We are saved from our sins because of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior (1 Cor. 15:1-4) and we associate with that death and obtain the cleansing that can only come through the blood of Christ by dying to our sins and by being buried in baptism to rise and walk in the newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4). At baptism our Lord applies the blood of Christ to us so we can be cleansed from our sins (1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:38; Matt. 26:28; Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5). God’s great grace was provided because of man’s horrible sin. May we ever appreciate God’s great sacrifice, never shirk in obeying the word realizing it is by God’s authority that such has been revealed. And may we each study our Bibles more and more.

CW

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These statements were not prophetic in nature as if God were predicting these discoveries. They were simply matter-of-fact references to things that man had yet to learn or accept. Psalm 19 is a goldmine of scientific foreknowledge. Consider verses 5 and 6:

Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Critics once used these verses to reject the Bible claiming that those who believed that the Sun revolved around the Earth wrote it. Only fairly recently has it been discovered that rather than being fixed in space, the Sun actually is in an orbit of its own. In fact, it is estimated to be moving at the rate of 600,000 miles per hour and it will take approximately 220,000,000 years to complete one orbit.¹ How did the psalmist portray such accurate statements? Inspiration is the only answer.

Finally, the perfection of Biblical prophecy and fulfillment is proof of inspiration. One highlight of Biblical prophecy is the number of predictions made about the Messiah. It has been calculated that there are over 300 Old Testament references to the Christ. All of those prophecies have been fulfilled. Thompson noted:

The statistical odds against someone predicting 35 events and being 100% correct on all 35 is 1 to 34,359,738,368. That is a 36 billion, 359 million, 738 thousand, 368 to 1 chance against someone making 35 predictions and all of them coming true. Notice what I am saying here, not 35 out of hundreds but 35 out of 35! That is nothing short of a miracle.²

Applying Our Belief

Some absurdly claim that the antiquity of Scripture lessens its application and relevance for modern man. The reasoning goes something like this, “How can something written that long ago in a time much different from ours be applicable to us today?” Friends, the answer to the question is found in the reality of the Bible’s inspiration.

Who better to author a book about what man needs and how man should live than the One who created him? He knows us. He knows our hearts, our needs, our tendencies, our emotions, and our potentials. In His eternity God knows these things about every man from every generation. As the One who sits above the circle of the Earth, God knows these things about every man in every location. This means, dear reader, that the Bible is a book from God for YOU! Our prayer is that you will read it, love it, and share it.

¹ http://www.apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books_pdf/idobi.pdf

² <http://www.christianarsenal.com/Apologetics/MessProphecies.htm>

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