



LESSON ONE

ESD. 2017

# THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

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Meeting the challenges of everyday life is not always easy, and we struggle for guidance and for answers to many questions related to our existence, to God's expectations of us, and even to life's disappointments. That guidance is available to us if we are willing to accept it, and it is found in God's word. And the wonderful aspect of God's word is that it was supplied to us through the process of inspiration; that is, God directed the writers to pen the words they did. Consequently, we know that what we find there is exactly what God wanted us to know. Inspiration is the topic of this study.

In this first lesson, we will show the firm foundation in Scripture for answering the most fundamental life questions:

How did life  
originate?

If there is a  
God, how do I  
honor Him?

What's the  
meaning  
of life?

Does anyone  
truly love me?

In whom can  
I fully trust?

How can I  
find peace?

Is there life  
after death?

As we look deeply into God's word, we realize that the authenticity of Jesus and Scripture rise or fall together; and we find Jesus weaving His identity and purpose with Scripture and truth:

- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14).
- "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.... For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:39, 46-47).
- "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).
- "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Jesus assigns authoritative teaching to the apostles who further the cause He initiates.

- "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth..." (John 16:13).
- "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Jesus' experiences in the closing chapter of His life show Him attesting to the truth He taught. His life hung in the balance when He stood before Pontius Pilate, but He did not back down. In Jerusalem's crisp, spring morning air, Jesus cut to the heart of the matter.

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:36-37).

Perhaps Pilate thought, "The fate of this religious teacher is in my hands, but His purpose escapes me. Since Jesus of Nazareth is on trial, not me, why do I feel as if I am on the hot seat?" Throughout Scripture, Jesus and the Holy Spirit bear

witness to the truth and put us all on the hot seat. Jesus says those who are *of the truth*—those who *want the truth*—will hear *His* voice. The open-minded truth seeker will believe the Scriptures.

In this lesson, we will consider the process of inspiration and the evidence for inspiration,

List three of life's big questions: 1) \_\_\_\_\_,

2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus said that He came to bear witness to the \_\_\_\_\_.

Why do so many love or hate the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

“And the Word became \_\_\_\_\_ and dwelt among us...”

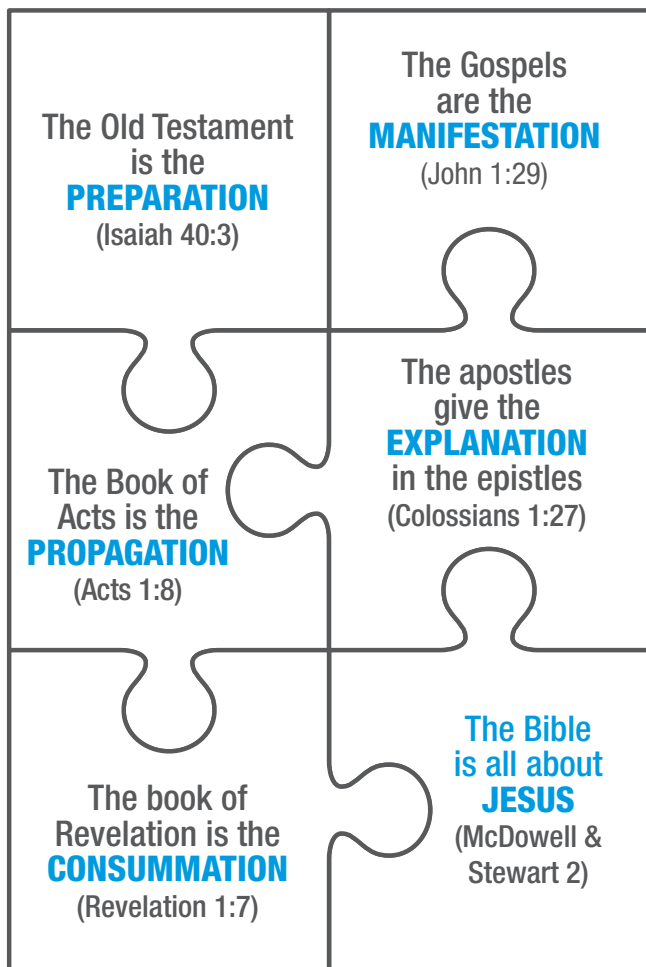
“You search the \_\_\_\_\_, for in them you think you have  
\_\_\_\_\_ life; and these are they which \_\_\_\_\_ of Me...”

“If you abide in My \_\_\_\_\_, you are My disciples indeed.”



## WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

The Holy Scriptures are unique. Each of the thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books represents precisely-cut puzzle pieces. Only when all the pieces are joined together do they present the precise image of Jesus and God's will intended by the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit has inspired no other book penned by human hands, resulting in a down-to-the-letter precision overseen by the Almighty (Galatians 3:16). The Apostle Paul lays down this cornerstone of the faith in 2 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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.](#)” Literally, the Apostle Paul writes, “[All Scripture is God-breathed.](#)” It is no wonder man struggles to describe the lofty process of inspiration. One writer explains it as follows:

It would be nearer the truth to compare the whole work of the Spirit to that of driving a well-trained horse. You draw the lines to the right or the left as you see that the horse needs guidance; you check him when he would go too fast, and urge him forward when he would go too slow; but he usually keeps the road and maintains the desired gait and speed of his own accord; still your hand is ever on the lines, and its pressure on the bit is constantly felt, so that you are controlling the horse's movements when he is going most completely at his own will. Indeed, the horse is all the time going very much at his own will, and yet he is never without the control of the driver (McGarvey 213).



The Apostle Paul speaks of the revelation process in 1 Corinthians 2:13: “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” God did not give the apostles general ideas and leave them free to choose what to write. Martin Luther rightly said of John 6:63, “Christ did not say of His thoughts, but of His words, that they are spirit and life.” The message comes from God and through man: “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).

How many books are in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

How many books are in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

How precise is the inspiration of Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_

“\_\_\_\_\_ Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for \_\_\_\_\_, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be \_\_\_\_\_, thoroughly equipped for \_\_\_\_\_ good work.”

“These things we also speak, not in \_\_\_\_\_ which man’s wisdom teaches but which the \_\_\_\_\_ teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

## EVIDENCE FOR INSPIRATION

The Apostle Peter boldly predicts the abiding nature of God’s word in 1 Peter 1:24-25: “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.” How well does that prediction stand the test of time?

Willis C. Newman notes that Satan has done everything in his power through his influence on evil men to refute this claim of perseverance of Scripture with relentless attacks:

The indestructability of the Bible indicates it is from God. Only a very small percentage of books survive more than 25 years, still fewer for 100 years, and then only a tiny number lasts 1,000 years. Many attempts to destroy the Bible have come from various groups such as governments (e.g. Roman Emperor Diocletian in A. D. 303); the old Soviet Union; religions (e.g. Islam), and infidels (e.g. Voltaire, Ingersoll) (Newman 53).

Evaluating the effectiveness of these assaults, Bernard Ramm writes, “A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put” (Ramm 232-33).

Some may ask, “Since we don’t have original copies of the New Testament books, how can we be sure that we have the precise words originally written?” While we do not have the original New Testament letters, we do have:

- 5,800 Greek handwritten copies from 500 to more than 1,900 years old
- 10,000 Latin handwritten copies
- 10,000–15,000 handwritten copies in other ancient languages
- 86,000 NT quotations from preachers in the earliest centuries of Christianity (Rhodes 216)

In fact, there are enough quotations from the early church fathers that even if we did not have a single manuscript copy of the Bible, scholars could still reconstruct all but eleven verses of the New Testament from material written within two hundred years of the time of Christ (Rhodes 216)

Meanwhile, early secular writings that are widely accepted as authentic and accurate have relatively little manuscript support. No ancient document even comes close to the textual support we find for the New Testament (Bish 55).

- Homer’s **Iliad** (643 copies)
- Julius Caesar’s **Gallic Wars** (10 copies)
- Herodotus’ Historical Works (8 copies)
- Thucydides’ Historical Works (8 copies)
- Pliny the Younger’s Historical Works (7 copies)



Only God's supervision can explain the remarkable unity and continuity of the sixty-six books of the Bible. Rene' Pache explains how presenting the same truth from each writer's unique perspective highlights their authenticity:

If four independent witnesses in court parrot syllable by syllable the same story, made up of a series of complex facts, those men would at once be charged with collusion. Their very uniformity would make them suspect (Pache 123).

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart add:

Find ten people from your local area who have similar educational backgrounds, all speak the same language, and all are from basically the same culture, then separate them (and) ask them to write their opinion on only one controversial subject, such as the meaning of life. When they have finished, compare the conclusions of these ten writers. Do they agree? Of course not. But the Bible did not consist of merely ten authors, but forty. It was not written in one generation, but over a period of 1,500 years; not by authors with the same education, culture, or language, but with vastly different education, many different cultures, from three continents and three different languages, and finally not just one subject but hundreds (McDowell 2).

In the Old Testament, Bible writers claim their message comes from God more than 3,800 times with phrases like "Thus saith the Lord." Pache details the Bible's cohesiveness illustrated by the connections formed between the Old and New Testament:

At least 295 quotations or direct references to the Old Testament have been counted in the New, a total of one verse out of every 22. If we add to this the [613 – C. H. Toy] evident allusions, the proportion reaches to about 10 percent of the New Testament text. The discourses of Jesus and such books as Hebrews, Romans and Revelation are literally saturated with expressions, allusions and actual texts drawn from the Old Testament. ... the allusions go back to every book in the Old Testament. ...[with] not one explicit citation from the Old Testament Apocrypha. ... (Pache 97).

At the same time, the Scriptures reveal the flaws and failures of the great men and women of faith: Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's cowardice, Jacob's

duplicity, Moses' impatience, Rahab's checkered past, David's adultery, Esther's hesitancy, James and John's selfishness, and Peter's arrogance. This background provides integrity when contrasted with the sinlessness of Jesus and the inerrancy of the Scriptures (Hebrews 4:15; Psalm 12:6-7; John 10:35).

The Bible speaks on the most important issues of human history: man's origin, purpose, lofty heights, abysmal depths, and ultimate destination after this life. No other book speaks with such authority on these topics. Jesus is the answer and has the answer to all major life questions. God made His Son and His Word available to us so that we could make sense out of this life and prepare for the next life.

The New Testament is supported by \_\_\_\_\_ Greek handwritten copies from 500 to over 1,900 years old and \_\_\_\_\_ New Testament quotations from preachers in the earliest centuries of Christianity.

In the Old Testament, Bible writers claim their message comes from God over \_\_\_\_\_ times with phrases like "Thus saith the \_\_\_\_\_."

At least 295 \_\_\_\_\_ or direct references to the \_\_\_\_\_ have been counted in the New, a total of one verse out of every 22. If we add to this the evident allusions, the proportion reaches to about \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the New Testament text. ...



## FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

Next, Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy mightily demonstrates the inspiration of Scripture. (Note to student: The subject of fulfilled prophecy is addressed more fully in presentation 807 and 808 at [LetTheBibleSpeak.com](http://LetTheBibleSpeak.com).) Many highly educated Jews offer touching descriptions of their conversion to Christianity. Perhaps the most interesting, though, was Alfred Edersheim, author of **The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah**. This book is essentially a commentary on the four gospels. As a Jewish convert to Christianity, his handling of the Messianic prophecies captivates the objective reader.

Edersheim documents 456 Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. That is not so unusual. More striking is Edersheim's citations of these prophecies in hundreds of rabbinical writings. Jewish rabbis, not Christians as usually anticipated, link these Old Testament teachings to the coming of the Messiah (710-741).

Peter Stoner, Science Professor at Westmont College, in Santa Barbara, California, examines the mathematical significance of these prophecies. He calculates that the probability of any man fulfilling just *eight* Old Testament Messianic prophecies *by mere coincidence* is 1 in  $10^{17}$ , that is one chance out of one with seventeen zeros after it (100,000,000,000,000,000)! That's not one in a million, not one in a billion, but one in one hundred thousand times *more* than a trillion. Note, those astronomical odds take into account only eight of the hundreds of existing prophecies. Furthermore, for one man to fulfill even forty-eight prophecies expands the unlikelihood of coincidental occurrence to 1 out of  $1 \times 10^{157}$  (or 1 out of 1 with 157 zeroes after it) (Stoner 99-111).

Numbers like these defy comprehension. To see the significance, consider that Emile Borel, an expert on probability theory, says anytime there is less than one chance in ten to the "fiftieth" power (one with fifty zeros after it), the probabilities are so small that it becomes a logical impossibility (28). Clearly, it is more rational to accept the inspiration of God's Word than it is to deny it.

Finally, if the Bible is the inspired word of God, we would expect it and its central character to have a profound impact on our planet. Professor Philip Schaff articulates how Jesus, and by extension, Scripture, measures up to this expectation:

This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times (29-30)

Alfred Edersheim documents how many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah? \_\_\_\_\_

The odds of fulfilling eight Messianic prophecies is one out of out of one with \_\_\_\_\_ zeros.

Probabilities become so low that an event becomes impossible at 1 in 10 to the \_\_\_\_\_ power.

With no earthly explanation for the Bible and Jesus, man struggles to explain how Jesus could be both God and man and how the Bible could be the product of both God and man. The evidence supports both statements, meaning this book and this man must have come from heaven. No other book makes and supports such a claim.

Man's intense feelings – love or hate – toward the Bible exist because it puts our hearts to the test. Now that you have discovered more about this unique book, will you resolve to act on the evidence for Jesus and His word? The remaining five lessons of this series will guide you further in how to make Jesus the King of your life. Please contact us for answers to other questions you have along the way.



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