

HOW DID GOD AUTHOR THE BIBLE, SPIRITUALLY AND/OR VERBALLY?

Christianity, Islam, Mormonism and many other cults have books that they get their doctrines from which are reputedly inspired by God. Their teaching is to be as valid as it would be if the book dropped down from Heaven.

The theologians say that there are two kinds of inspiration. One is spiritual, God putting the thoughts in you letting you find the words yourself, and the other verbal is actually inspiring the words of a text, or putting the words in your mind. The two could be true at the one time. Or it could be one or the other.

In the spiritual variety, if God makes me realise that adultery is wrong then he can leave it up to me to express this in my own words. If I put it down badly he will keep at me until I do it right or get somebody else to do it. The most striking absurdity in this is that a sensible God would choose good writers but much of the Bible is so badly and unclearly written that even the author of Second Peter complained about Paul's epistles.

The spiritual theory is most popular among those who feel that there are minor errors of grammar and history in the word of God. They say that this does not make God a liar for he did not inspire the words but the meaning and his purpose was to give us light in faith and morals.

If a book claims to be inspired then it must be held that it is saying that God has sanctioned every word in it for you cannot separate the words from the meaning. They are different but not separate. A blue plastic toy is a toy and it is blue. Blue and toy and different but are the same thing when you can't have one without the other. The thought cannot be conveyed accurately without the words so the inspiration of the Bible must be plenary (page 19, A Summary of Christian Doctrine).

The spiritual or mental theory is indeed a mental theory for God must inspire you to write some of the words for most thoughts come to you in the form of words and you mentally talk to yourself in words all the time. The theory implies that God has to inspire the words because he needs some control over the words used to get the idea expressed clearly and properly. If I write, "Adultery is bad", because I feel or sense that God has told me it is sinful then that is no use for I could mean that it is unpleasant but not immoral. God will have to tell me to put the word immoral where bad is. God approves the words of the text which is all that matters though some claim that they don't accept that he does. The theory of spiritual inspiration is ridiculous so verbal inspiration is the only possibility it seems.

When God inspires some words then he might as well inspire the rest. Why not?

The universal Christian consensus that God let the Bible writers write as they pleased but without error or inserting what God did not want them to include so that the words of scripture are as much the words of man as they are God (page 9, Know What You Believe; page 21, Set My Exiles Free). The Bible does not sanction this absurdity. It's a contradiction though religion says it's a paradox.

When we need to believe in a paradox to believe in the Bible's divine inspiration there is something wrong. You cannot assume that the paradox exists on the grounds that the Bible shows evidence of divine inspiration and was also freely composed by man. It is irrational to assume paradoxes where there is no need for there is no shortage of philosophies that have contradictions that they pretend are paradoxes. Better to assume that they were like divine typewriters or if the Bible teaches the paradox then to scrap the Bible. God should not make paradoxes where there need to be none and if the Bible requires one like this then it is not the word of God at all. Also paradoxes are serious business for they might be contradictions so you need absolute proof that the seemingly conflicting components of a paradox are true. For example, you must prove that the Bible is inspired by God first before you can believe in the paradox of inspiration. The Bible cannot provide that kind of evidence. There is a paradox in it regarding divine sovereignty and human freedom (page 28, Know What You Believe). To avoid a paradox, divine sovereignty or human freedom or both should be denied for paradoxes are inherently undesirable and are only tolerated under extreme conditions. You would need to prove that God controls all things as divine sovereignty claims as much as you can free will. You cannot so God, and God must be in control of all things and be causing them to come to be to be God, has to be done away with for to forsake his sovereignty dogma is to forsake theism.

The Bible authors could have been used by God like typewriters which felt free but who were not. This is not refuted by the fact that the authors studied and did research for what they had to write. God got them to know what to write and then he gave them the words to write with. This view is simple and avoids the improbable mystery of how God could get free agents to freely write only what he wants.

Why can't he get us to freely do what he wants all the time? The theory contradicts the existence of God which depends on us having free will to get God off the hook for doing evil. It is blasphemous to teach this inspiration mystery as being true when the Bible says we are biased against holiness which is true. It is blasphemy because if God could control us without imposing on our free will then he should not let us sin so much. The Bible can't be trusted when the devil's men wrote it freely.

The Bible assumes that we have commonsense so it implies that we should not create mysteries where none need be. No verse says that people were free to write what God wanted. Implication is one of the ways that the Bible says it had to have been written by men used like typewriters.

Any sinful fraud could say that God made them write new scripture. Trusting their work is not a matter of trusting God but them even if God did write through them for we don't know the difference. There is a lot of merit in claiming God controlled you to write, but if the person claims to be free we have far less reason to trust them. Besides, you only have the fraud's word for it that he was not free so it doesn't help much. But it makes more rational sense to believe the person who denies his freedom and that God was really the only author. We don't have any affidavits from Bible writers that they were not free when they wrote so we have no right to believe that God wrote the Bible.

Spiritual inspiration needs verbal inspiration to work. If you want to believe God wrote books then believe the authors were his typewriters.

It may be objected that any scripture allegedly verbally inspired by the same God would have the same style but all such books show different styles showing that the books can't be or claim to be verbally inspired. But God could imitate the writer's style. If he had not the sceptics would say that the New Testament or whatever was forged by one author. God is not like humans that he tends to stick to the same style.

THE MYTH APPROACH

The spiritual theory of inspiration often means that the Bible stories are thought to be a divinely inspired myth. Here is an example. We read in the book of Genesis that God made Eve from Adam's rib. The reader might say that God is only indicating that woman needs man and the literal story is not to be taken seriously. The story is only a parable.

But the story could have been meant literally. There is no hint given that we are to impose our own meaning on it. The Catholic Church in the Catechism settles for saying that the account has symbolism but is based on a historical skeleton which means Adam and Eve and their power to infect the universe with sin and Satan's role in this is all true.

The myth approach leads people to invent their own interpretations and declare them the word of God. Only a hypocrite says he believes in the Bible as the word of God and then makes his interpretations the real word of God. That is the person that scoffs at the believer in the literal interpretation and labels him a fundamentalist! The worst fundamentalist is the one who says his fantasies about the Bible word of God are the Bible word of God. Better to be the humble literalist!

Think about God's alleged true meaning, that woman needs man. The story would indicate that better by saying that God made Eve from Adam's heart. Why a rib? Its an insult to woman to say that God had to make her from something that could be done without such as rib! And no women believe that men and women need to be bodily or genetically related. And Adam had to be asleep for the rib to be taken. Thus he missed out on a chance to see this creature being built from a part of him. He had to depend on God telling him that he made him from him. That makes this a bit more impersonal.

The myth approach promotes the fundamentalism of telling people lies about the Bible.

FINALLY

Verbal inspiration tends to be unpopular though the Bible teaches it. The "faithful" wish to stave off atheist ridicule for they feel it is too much to say that "Jesus is Lord," Paul's words, are just as much God's words. The idea that Jesus became fully man despite being fully God implies that you can say the Bible is fully human and fully supernatural. It's a mystery. Spiritual inspiration is popular but most of its preachers do not believe it for they use it as an excuse for getting rid of God's teachings that they do not like. One casualty was hell being God's torture chamber and the latest seems to be the teaching that only a man and woman can marry in the sight of God.

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