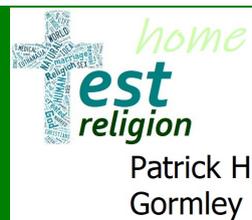




Does challenging superstition or faith protect people?
 Is it mistaken to support organised religion in membership or donations?

If people do good because they are human, not because God prompts them,
 is it right to risk giving God any credit when they alone own their good?



THE IDEA THAT GOD EFFECTIVELY WROTE THE SCRIPTURES IN JESUS DAY

The Bible as sincere religious scholarship tells us, is written by man but also counts as being written by God. While this does not mean dictation it does mean what the man writes has the final say. This is the doctrine of verbal inspiration where the words can be counted as the words of God. Some parts of the Bible do claim dictation. But there is no hint that these parts have any more authority than the other parts.

Liberals are people who want the benefits of Christianity for themselves so they misrepresent it where it suits and don't really take it seriously. The equation of scripture and God's communication in the strongest way is what you would expect from those times. Jesus is said to have contradicted Moses law. He did not. Moses wrote a commandment allowing divorce but there is no such command in the Torah. Its a law of Moses' own.

Contrary to liberal Christian lies, the idea of God dictating the writings of the Bible was rife in Bible times.

The angel in the Book of Revelation is clear that the words of the book and by extension any Bible book are trustworthy and true. If this is not verbal inspiration then it may as well be. The angel says that there is no uncertainty about the moral God wants you to keep when he warns, "Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong. Let the vile person remain a vile person. Let the one who does right remain in doing right. And the one who is holy remain holy."

The high honour given to 2 Esdras (from 100 AD) which nearly ended up in the Catholic Bible during the Council of Trent and which is hugely respected as being near scripture by every Christian tradition must be stressed. Why? Because it would not have been respected so much had it been wrong to preach dictation. It is an indication of what the Bible authors meant by inspiration from God. You have to read the Bible as its earliest readers would have understood it.

2 Esdras 14

- 1 On the third day, while I was sitting under an oak tree,
- 2 suddenly a voice came out of a bush near me and called, "Ezra! Ezra!" I stood up and answered, "Here I am, Lord."
- 3 The voice continued, "I revealed myself from a bush and spoke to Moses when my people were slaves in Egypt.
- 4 I sent him to lead them out of Egypt, and I brought them to Mount Sinai. I kept Moses with me there on the mountain for a long time,
- 5 while I told him the secrets about the ages and the end of time. I told him
- 6 what to make public and what to keep secret.
- 7 Now I command you
- 8 to memorize the signs, visions, and interpretations that I have given you.
- 9 You will be taken out of this world into the heavenly world where you and others like you will live with my son until the end of time.
- 10 The world is no longer young; it is rapidly approaching old age.
- 11 The whole history of the world is divided into twelve periods, and the tenth period has already arrived
- 12 and it is half over; only two and a half parts remain.
- 13 So set your house in order, warn your people, comfort those who are humble, and teach those who are wise. Then say good-bye to this mortal life.
- 14 Put earthly cares away from you, throw down your human burdens, and lay aside your weak human nature.
- 15 Put all your anxieties aside, and get ready to leave this world quickly.
- 16 You have seen many evil things already, but far worse things are about to happen.
- 17 As the world grows older and weaker, the evils that will come upon its people will multiply.
- 18 Truth will depart and falsehood will draw ever nearer. The eagle you saw in your vision is just about to arrive."
- 19 I replied, "Let me speak in your presence, Lord.
- 20 I am ready to depart, as you have commanded, and I will warn the present generation; but who will warn the people who have not yet been born? This world is a dark place, and its people have no light.

21 Your Law has been destroyed by fire, so no one can know what you have done in the past or what you are planning to do in the future.

22 Please send your holy spirit to me, so that I can write down everything that has been done in this world from the beginning, everything that was written in your Law. Then in these last days, people will be able to find the right way and obtain life if they want to."

23 He answered, "Go and call the people together and tell them not to look for you for forty days.

24 Prepare a large number of writing tablets, and take with you these five men who can write fast: Seraiah, Dabriah, Shelemiah, Ethan, and Asiel.

25 Then come here, and I will light the lamp of understanding in your heart, and it will not go out until you have finished what you are supposed to write.

26 When you have finished your work, you will make some of it public, and you will give the rest to some wise people, who will keep it secret. Tomorrow at this time you will begin to write."

27 I did as I was commanded and called all the people together. I said,

28 "Listen to what I have to say, people of Israel.

29 At first our ancestors lived as foreigners in Egypt, but then they were set free

30 and received from God the life-giving Law. But they did not keep it, and when your turn came, you did not keep it either.

31 God gave you the holy land as your own possession, but you were as sinful as your ancestors and did not follow the ways that God Most High had commanded.

32 God is a just judge, so after a while he took away what he had given you.

33 Now you are in exile here, but you are closer to Jerusalem than some of your own people.

34 But if you will discipline your thoughts and be willing to learn, you will be kept safe in this life and will be granted mercy after death,

35 for Judgment Day comes after death. We will be brought back to life, and the righteous people will be made known, while what the godless have done will be exposed.

36 But now for forty days, no one is to come near me or try to find me."

37 As I had been commanded, I took the five men, and we went to the field and stayed there.

38 On the next day I suddenly heard a voice saying, "Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I am giving you."

39 So I opened my mouth, and I was handed a cup full of a fiery-colored liquid,

40 which I took and drank. When I had drunk it, my mind overflowed with understanding, and wisdom increased within me as my memory became perfect.

41 I began to speak and went on talking without stopping.

42 God Most High also gave wisdom to the five men with me, and they took turns writing down what I said. They used an alphabet that they had not known before, and worked for forty days, writing in the daytime and eating at night.

43 I spoke all day long, and I was not silent even at night.

44 During the forty days, ninety-four books were written.

45 At the end of the forty days, God Most High said to me, "You are now to make public the first twenty-four books that you wrote, so that everyone, whether they are worthy or not, may read them.

46 But the last seventy books that you wrote are to be held back and to be given only to those who are wise among your people,

47 because these books contain a flood of understanding, a fountain of wisdom, and a river of knowledge."

48 Then I did as I was told.

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