



How God Delivered and Preserved His Word for Us

The New Testament, Part One
Thursday Indepth Bible Class of the
Trilacoochee church of Christ
March 11, 2021

Hebrews 1:1-3

- “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”

The New Testament Spokesman

- In the Patriarchal and Mosaic periods, God spoke through multiple men using multiple means of communication
 - Heads of families - Gen. 18:7-19
 - Moses - Num. 12:6-8
 - Prophets - 2Peter 1:20-21
- In the Christian dispensation, Christ is the authorized spokesman who commissioned inspired writers to communicate His word

The New Testament Spokesman

- John 14:25-26 - “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”
- John 16:13-14 - “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”

The New Testament Spokesman

- 2Peter 1:12-13, 15-16, 19 - “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth... 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you... 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty... 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed...”
- 2Peter 3:1-2 - “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior”

The Process Of Inspiration

- How to identify a true prophet of the Lord:
 - The prophecy must come to pass - Deut. 19:20-22
 - The prophet's teaching must be consistent with what has already been revealed - Deut. 13:1-5
- Gal. 1:6-9 - "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed."

The Process Of Inspiration

- Inspiration means that what they received came from God and not from themselves or other men
 - Num. 12:5-8 - “Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6 Then He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD...”

The Process Of Inspiration

- Inspiration means that what they received came from God and not from themselves or other men
 - Jer. 1:4-7, 9 - “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. 6 Then said I: ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’ 7 But the LORD said to me: ‘Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak...’ 9 Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.’”

The Process Of Inspiration

- New Testament writers received it directly from the Holy Spirit sent by God.
- Paul received it from the Lord, and not from the other apostles - Gal. 1:11-20
 - Gal. 1:11-12 - “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
 - Matt. 10:19-20 - “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

The Process Of Inspiration

- Inspiration means that they wrote and taught without error
- The Law of Moses was perfectly delivered, and was to remain unaltered until it was fulfilled
 - Deut. 4:2 - “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
 - Prov. 30:5-6 - “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”

The Process Of Inspiration

- The Law of Christ was complete and perfectly delivered.
 - James 1:25 - “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”
 - Rev. 22:18-19 - “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

The Process Of Inspiration

- The Law of Christ is complete and perfectly delivered.
 - 1Cor. 13:10 - “But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”
 - Matt. 11:25 - “At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.’”

Three Historical Stages Of The Delivery Of The New Testament

- Only oral Word
 - Time Parameters: Pentecost to Acts 15:23-29 or until the first epistle or Gospel account
 - Means of the Word's existence: in one-generation of men - 2Cor. 4:7, 16 (very short term duration)

Three Historical Stages Of The Delivery Of The New Testament

- Oral into written (conversion process)
 - Beginning of process with Paul's earliest epistles; demonstrates apostolic awareness of the process from the very beginning.
 - End of process with production of last written book



Three Historical Stages Of The Delivery Of The New Testament

- Only written Word
 - Time parameters: from about A.D. 80 to the second coming of the Lord
 - Means of the Word's existence: in a multi-generation book (the New Testament; long term duration)



Three Historical Stages Of The Delivery Of The New Testament

- The New Testament was in existence and well known by the end of the first century A.D.
 - "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written between the forties and eighties of the First Century A.D." (Nelson Glueck, former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary in the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, renowned Jewish archaeologist)
 - "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after 80 A.D." (W. F. Albright, Biblical archaeologist)

The Power And Authority Of God's Word

- God's Word is authoritative regardless of its form
- Affirmed in separate verses
 - Oral: 1Thes. 2:13 - "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."
 - Written: 2Thes. 3:14 - "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed."

The Power And Authority Of God's Word

- God's Word is authoritative regardless of its form
- Affirmed in same verse
 - Oral and Written: 2Thes. 2:15 - "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle"

The Power And Authority Of God's Word

- The authority of God's Word remained constant through all three historical periods
- When only oral: Authoritative
 - Acts 11:18 - "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'"
- When both oral and written: Authoritative
 - 2Thes. 2:15 - "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle."
- When only written: Authoritative
 - 2Peter 1:15 - "Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease."



The Power And Authority Of God's Word

- The issue between the oral and written word is not a difference in power to direct, but a difference in ability to survive the years.
- Oral word is easy to degrade over time and difficult to disperse consistently
- Written word is easy to preserve accurately and disperse consistently

The Process Of Converting The Word From Oral To Written

- Process was directed by God
 - 2Tim. 3:16 - “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”
 - “All scripture,” oral or written, by speaking or writing prophets, by the preaching or writing of the apostles, is directed by God
- Process was guided by the Holy Spirit
 - John 14:26
 - John 16:13
 - 2Peter 1:20-21

The Process Of Converting The Word From Oral To Written

- Process was overseen by the apostles and inspired writers
 - Col. 4:16 - “Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”
 - 2Peter 1:16 - “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”

The Process Of Converting The Word From Oral To Written

- Time for the Process: 30 to 50 years at the most
- Integrity of the Process: Guaranteed by superintendence of apostles and inspired writers, and the testimony of a multitude of witnesses - 1Cor. 15:3-8

Brief Biographies Of New Testament Writers

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Peter
- Paul
- James
- Jude



When Were The New Testament Books Written?

- 44 AD - Epistle of James
- 50-51 - Epistle to Galatians
- 52- 53 - Matthew, 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- 54 - 1Corinthians
- 55 - 2Corinthians
- 55-56 - Romans
- 58 - Luke
- 60-61 - Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians
- 64 - Acts
- 64-65 - 1Timothy, 1Peter, Titus
- 66-67 - Revelation, 2Peter
- 67-68 - 2Timothy, Mark, Hebrews
- 75 - Jude
- 80 - John, & 1,2,3 John

How God Delivered and Preserved His Word for Us

- Whether spoken or written God's word is binding authority upon all hearers and readers. (2Cor. 5:18-20)
- Whether spoken only, both spoken and written, or written only, the revealed will of God is sufficient so that all hearers and readers can apprehend the will of God, develop faith, and fully obey God. (2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:3-4)
- There has never been a time in which the will of God for man has been unrevealed or unclear.