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## DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

### { 1 }

# God's Autobiography

**CITY RESIDENTS FOUND LITTLE** comfort as they sweltered under the summer sun on August 1, 1885. But relief was on the way. Six and one-half inches of torrential rain fell on Chicago over the next twenty-four hours.

Unfortunately, this produced major flooding. Sewage from the city's 750,000 residents and runoff from the infamous stockyards washed into the Chicago River. The polluted water was then carried out into Lake Michigan. According to an exaggerated story in the *Chicago Tribune* at the time, this toxic brew was then sucked up by the intake system that provided the city with its drinking water.<sup>1</sup>

The *Tribune's* story was very alarming—even if it was suspect. Chicagoans started talking about the possible outbreak of cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and other waterborne diseases. Somebody suggested, although nobody remembers *who* said it, that people were dying from these diseases.

It was eventually claimed that one out of eight Chicagoans had succumbed to the epidemic. This part of the story

was repeated again and again over the following years, without any supporting evidence. Each successive retelling merely parroted the previous accounts.<sup>2</sup> Today those events are known as the Chicago epidemic of 1885.

In 1956, Chicago's water sanitation department actually distributed an official pamphlet describing the 1885 epidemic. It was politically motivated; the sanitation department wanted public support for projects that would upgrade Chicago's water purification system.<sup>3</sup> But sanitation officials knew the voters were aware of the many improvements that had already been made in this regard (such as filtration and chlorination systems), which now ensured safe drinking water. So in order to get their money, they decided to put a little scare into the local population. They printed a pamphlet that retold the story of the 1885 epidemic.

Fast-forward to recent times. In 2000 Libby Hill wrote *The Chicago River*, a history of the river's impact on the city and surrounding environs. The Northern Illinois University professor included a section on the 1885 epidemic. In her research for the book, she couldn't find any evidence for the story of a massive epidemic. In fact, Hill discovered that the death rate for 1885 was actually *lower* than for previous years. That got her thinking: If one out of eight people had died, as the epidemic story claimed, there would've been dead bodies everywhere (almost 94,000 of them)! But there weren't. And

the city would've come to a grinding halt. But it hadn't.<sup>4</sup>

Well, it turns out that the Chicago epidemic of 1885 was a tall tale. Even the environmentalist group Friends of the Chicago River was forced to take the story off its website.<sup>5</sup>

Could this account serve as a metaphor for how the Bible came into existence? Is the Bible nothing more than a collection of tall tales? Have the Bible's stories been exaggerated from the beginning? Have they been stretched so that the storytellers could advance their own agenda? Has contemporary research now proven these stories to be fabrications?

Bottom line: Is the Bible reliable?

In this chapter, I will begin to answer this question (in the affirmative, of course) by making the case that the Bible has come to us from a trustworthy God. This book is, amazingly, *God's Autobiography*. And that means that it is marked by three unique, reliability-affirming characteristics—it is supernatural, inerrant, and authoritative.

### **A Supernatural Book**

A key text for understanding the Bible's authorship is 2 Timothy 3:16. This is a verse worth memorizing. For now, I just want to roll out its opening phrase: "All Scripture is God-breathed . . ." What does the expression *God-breathed* mean? In the old King James Version of the Bible, the word *inspired* was used instead of *God-breathed*. Why didn't the translators of our

contemporary New International Version stick with *inspired*?

The NIV translators most likely dropped the word *inspired* because it wouldn't communicate to a contemporary audience what the apostle Paul meant to say when he wrote 2 Timothy 3:16. When we use the word *inspired*, we're usually referring to a person who's been emotionally or creatively moved to do something. I might say, for example: "I was inspired to clean the garage this past week." (Believe me, it would take inspiration!)

Or to use a classier example, we might say that George Frideric Handel was inspired when he composed his famous oratorio, *Messiah*. Here's a guy who wrote 260 pages of music for a complete orchestra in just twenty-four days. He didn't leave his room the entire time. He barely touched his food.<sup>6</sup> And when *Messiah* was first performed in 1742, it was so majestic that the King of England rose to his feet when the choir began to sing the *Hallelujah Chorus*. Yes, Handel was inspired. He was creatively moved.

But that's *not* what the apostle Paul meant to say about Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16. The best English translation of Paul's original Greek expression is, in fact, exactly what we have in the NIV: "All Scripture is God-breathed." So, when theologians today use the old KJV word *inspired* to refer to the Bible, this is what they're talking about: the God-breathed nature of the book.

But what exactly is it about the Bible that is inspired or God-breathed? There are two mistaken notions with regard to inspiration. Some people assume that this must be a reference to the Bible's *writers*. Men like Moses and King David and the apostle Paul, who penned various books of the Bible, were inspired, right? Didn't God breathe into them some general ideas, after which they sat down and wrote out, as best they could, their particular portions of the Bible? No, that would be the first wrong notion.

The trouble with this view of inspiration is that it leaves open the possibility that these human writers might not have gotten things right. What if they misunderstood what God breathed into them to say? Or what if they didn't choose the best words to communicate these general God-given impressions to us? No, it's not enough that the *writers* themselves were inspired.

A second mistaken notion is to assume that inspiration refers to the Bible's *readers*. When you pick up the Bible and read it, God speaks to you. You, as it were, become inspired. Make sense? Some people who hold this view have gone so far as to say: "The Bible is the Word of God when it becomes the Word of God to you." Huh? What if that doesn't happen? What if you read the Bible and it doesn't feel like God is speaking to you? Is the Bible only inspired when it connects with you? Is it only inspired when you, as the *reader*, are inspired?

No. Inspiration is not about the Bible's *writers* and it's not about the Bible's *readers*. It's about the Bible's *words*. Go back to the opening phrase of 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed." What is "God-breathed"? (Sorry to ask the obvious.) *Scripture* is. The Greek word for Scripture is *graphe*, and it means, literally, *writing*. So the writing itself, the very words that appear in print, is what God inspired. That's why theologians, when they speak of inspiration today, will often add the adjective *verbal* in front of it. "Verbal inspiration" clarifies the fact that God breathed out the actual words of the Bible.

**WHAT GOD wanted to say got said, exactly as God wanted it said.**

Why is this so important to note? Because it assures us that what God wanted to say got said, exactly as God wanted it said. Does this mean that the human writers (Moses, David, Paul, and so on) were simply secretaries, stenographers to whom God dictated His Word? Absolutely not. If you read the Bible, which is a compilation of sixty-six books, you'll quickly discover that each book reflects the vocabulary, the culture, the historical setting, and the personality of its human author.

For instance, compare Moses' laws with David's psalms, or with Paul's letters, or with Solomon's proverbs, or with Zechariah's prophecy, or with Matthew's biography of Jesus,

or with Luke's history of the early church. There's a lot of variety among the books by those seven writers. That variety reflects the differences among the human authors. God didn't dictate His Word to them in some uniform fashion. However, God *did* ensure that what He wanted to say got said, exactly as He wanted it said. "All Scripture"—the writing itself, the very words that appear in print—"is God-breathed."

That makes the Bible a unique book. It's unlike any other book you can pick up at Barnes & Noble, or Amazon.com, or the public library. The Bible is *God's* Word. And because it is the Word of a supernatural God, it must be a supernatural book.

I know that sounds like an outrageous claim, especially if you are a skeptic as you read this. You probably think that I'm pretty gullible to believe that the Bible is God-breathed just because 2 Timothy 3:16 says that it's God-breathed. Well, I assure you that I have just as much of an aversion to being caught gullible as you do. I am very wary about being taken for a ride down fantasy lane.

I remember, years ago when I was a college student, taking a walk on a starry night with this good-looking girl. She began to point out constellations to me in the brightly lit sky. The Big Dipper was easy to spot. So was Orion's Belt. But as we continued to stroll, she began identifying starry configurations that I had never heard of. And when she'd ask me, "Do

you see such-and-such?" I would nod my head and say uh-huh, even though I couldn't quite make out the cluster of stars that

she was describing. Constellation after constellation, my astronomy lesson continued. Wherever my date pointed, I would gaze and say: "Wow! That's cool!!"

About twenty minutes into the walk, an awful thought popped into my head: *What if she's making all this up?* What if she's playing a practical joke on me to see how gullible I am? What if I've been nodding my head and oohing and aahing over constellations that don't exist? What if she goes back to her dorm and tells her roommate: "You wouldn't believe the loser I suckered tonight!"

Nobody likes to be thought of as gullible . . . naïve . . . clueless . . . simpleminded. And that's why, in today's culture, it's a bit intimidating to express a belief in the Bible as God's Word; to claim that it's a *supernatural* book. No Western-civilized, college-educated, self-respecting man or woman believes that *God* authored the Bible. C'mon! Why should anybody swallow the 2 Timothy 3:16 statement that the Bible is God-breathed?

**BECAUSE IT is the Word of a supernatural God, the Bible must be a supernatural book.**

### Evidence for a Supernatural Book

Very briefly, let me give you some hard evidence that points to the *supernatural* nature of the Bible. None of these proofs is conclusive in itself. But when you take them all together, they make a pretty strong case that this book has been authored by God.

*Historical accuracy.* When it comes to its many references to people, places, and events, the Bible is an amazingly accurate book. So say archaeologists. I'll talk more about this in the next chapter when I cover how it was determined which books to include in the Bible, because historical accuracy was a critical test that had to be passed. But let me note Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts as a quick example of the Bible getting its facts straight. Christian author and apologist Lee Strobel cites a highly esteemed archaeologist in his book *The Case for Christ*, who examined every one of Luke's references to thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands. And he didn't find a single mistake!<sup>7</sup>

*Fulfilled prophecy.* Did you know that prophecy is fairly rare in the writings of most religions? In all the works of Buddha and Confucius there is not a single example of predictive prophecy. In the entire Quran, written by Muhammad, there's only *one* prophecy—and it's pretty general.

By way of contrast, the Bible's Old Testament alone contains over two thousand predictive prophecies. These are not

vague predictions, like the kind you'd find in a fortune cookie. Many of them are very specific.

Consider just a few of the prophecies made about Jesus Christ, hundreds of years before His birth. (I refer to these prophecies, as well, in chapter 3 of *Epic* and show how they contribute to the Bible's overall storyline.) Daniel foretold the exact time of Jesus' appearing (Daniel 9:24). Micah predicted that Jesus would be born in the small village of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would enter Jerusalem triumphantly on the back of a colt, but later be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 9:9; 11:12–13). Isaiah described how Jesus would be put to death alongside criminals, and yet be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9). Prophecies like these surely evidence the Bible's supernatural character.

*Indomitable durability.* Time and again throughout history, the enemies of Christianity have attempted to undermine or even stamp out the Bible. But such efforts, though sustained, have all proven unsuccessful. My favorite anecdote in this regard concerns eighteenth-century French philosopher and skeptic Voltaire. Voltaire was a caustic critic of the Bible. He described it as a book of fairy tales that would cease to exist within a generation or two of his lifetime. It turns out that Mr. Voltaire wasn't much of a prophet. After his death, his house was purchased by a printing business that published

copies of—would you believe—the Bible! Got to love God's sense of humor.

*Overall consistency.* Keep in mind that the Bible is actually sixty-six books in one. And yet its authors—who represent a wide variety of vocations, come from three different continents, and write over a period of fifteen hundred years—speak with remarkable harmony about *one* central theme. Imagine such a diverse collection of writers today agreeing on any topic, whether it be medicine or economics or sports or you name it.

*Miraculous depictions.* If the Bible is God-breathed, if it's a supernatural book, wouldn't we expect it to contain stories of God's miraculous interventions in our world? And yet, ironically, this is the very thing that skeptics won't tolerate about the Bible. Thomas Jefferson is a case in point. Are you familiar with Jefferson's New Testament? Jefferson was a true child of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on scientific investigation. If something couldn't be studied or tested in the laboratory, ol' Tom wouldn't believe it. So one day he got out his X-ACTO knife and cut out all the passages in the Gospels that describe Jesus' miracles.

**A REASONABLE case can be made for the Bible being God-breathed based on its historical accuracy, fulfilled prophecy . . . and transformed lives.**

Let me tell you what's so wrongheaded about Jefferson's approach. Historical events are not proven by testing them in a science lab. We verify historical events by checking out the eyewitness accounts of those events. That's how we know that George Washington crossed the Delaware River in December of 1776, and that Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address in November 1863, and that the Chicago Cubs won the World Series in October 1908 (as unbelievable as that last event seems). Eyewitnesses attest to each of these events. And that's how we know that Jesus did miracles: eyewitness accounts.

*Transformed lives.* I've been the pastor of Christ Community Church for almost thirty years. During the past three decades, I have collected several files' worth of letters from people who claim that the Bible teaching they've received from my sermons and in our community groups has changed their lives in dramatic ways. Broken marriages have been reconciled, destructive addictions have been conquered, life-purpose has been discovered, character has been reformed, difficult trials have been endured, and concern for others has been developed. And people give the credit for these positive transformations to the impact of the Bible in their lives!

Is the Bible God-breathed, as it claims to be in 2 Timothy 3:16? Is it a supernatural book? A reasonable case can be made for this position based upon the Bible's historical

accuracy, fulfilled prophecy, indomitable durability, overall consistency, miraculous depictions, and transformed lives.

### **An Inerrant Book**

What does *inerrant* mean? It means that the Bible is free from any kind of error. In the preface of a book, an author often will acknowledge all the people who helped shape that book: the mentors, the colleagues, the researchers, the editors. And then the author will make a disclaimer that goes something like this: "While I wish to thank all these people for contributing to my book, any errors that you find in these pages are entirely mine." That's a nice, generous, humble thing to say. But you won't find God saying that about His book. Why not? Because it's inerrant!

Why should you believe that the Bible is inerrant? On the basis of three testimonies. First, there is *the testimony of God's character*. The Bible repeatedly refers to God as "the God of truth" (Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16). The apostle Paul tells Christ followers that God has promised us eternal life, and then Paul adds: "God . . . does not lie" (Titus 1:2). The writer of Hebrews makes this same claim even more starkly: "It is impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). God is truthful through and through. So, when God speaks, it is reasonable to conclude that His words are true. They're inerrant. Free from any kind of error.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible: 176 verses. And this psalm is all about God's Word. One of the things that it repeatedly affirms about God's Word is that it's true: "Your law is true . . . All your commands are true . . . All your words are true . . ." (Psalm 119:142, 151, 160). You get the idea. Because God is the *God of truth*, because God's character is 100 percent true, God's Word, the Bible, must be true.

Here's a second reason to believe that the Bible is inerrant: *the testimony of Jesus Christ*. Jesus obviously believed that Scripture is trustworthy and true. He affirmed this in one of His prayers: "Father . . . your word is truth" (John 17:1, 17). And He constantly quoted the Old Testament to back up His teaching, beginning these citations with the words "It is written." In other words, Jesus cited Old Testament stories as if He took them at face value. Stories about Noah and the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God's miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness, Jonah spending three days in the belly of a giant fish—Jesus seemed to accept all these accounts as being historically accurate.

**JESUS BELIEVED that Scripture is trustworthy and true, and affirmed this in one of His prayers.**

And Jesus didn't merely believe that the Bible is true in a broad brushstroke sort of way. His position was *not*: Scripture

is true, generally speaking, even if some of the details are in error. No! Jesus said that not even “the smallest letter [or] the least stroke of a pen” in God’s Word would disappear until it had all been fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

A third reason to believe the Bible’s inerrancy is *the testimony of logic*. This would be a good time to acknowledge that there are some Christian Bible scholars who don’t care for the word *inerrant*. There are some who want us to believe that the Bible is basically trustworthy, even though it’s not without error. “But that’s OK,” these scholars say, “because God is still able to get His message across, in spite of the errors that are sprinkled throughout Scripture.” I struggle with the illogic of that perspective.

Does it make sense to you that God would speak His *truth* through statements that are occasionally *false*? (And if you point out that God speaks His truth through faulty pastors every Sunday, I would ask you how you know that these pastors are occasionally faulty. Isn’t it by comparing what they say with God’s faultless Word?) Furthermore, if some of what we read in the Bible is in error, who decides which statements those are? It seems to me that this position would allow us to reject portions of the Bible we don’t like with a dismissive, “Oh, that’s one of those errors.”

I believe that the Bible is inerrant because the God of truth breathed it out, because Jesus accepted it as totally

trustworthy, and because it makes logical sense that God would not leave us guessing about which parts are true and which are not. However, this doesn't mean that there aren't places in the Bible that *appear to be* in error. Let me give you several reasons why people sometimes mistakenly assume that they have found errors in the Bible.

*Figures of speech are taken literally.* For example, the Bible talks about “the four corners of the earth” (Revelation 7:1). Does that mean that the Bible contains scientific errors? After all, this is a description of a flat earth, right? Hardly. It's a poetic figure of speech that's not intended to be taken literally. Same thing when the Bible speaks of the sun *rising*. We all know that the sun doesn't rise. But that doesn't make the Bible wrong any more than it makes the TV weatherman wrong when he tells us the time of tomorrow's sunrise.

*Narratives are not always arranged chronologically.* Sometimes when the Bible tells a story, it relates the events of that story in the order in which they occurred. But other times the Bible relates the events thematically or topically (e.g., lumping together several

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of Jesus' miracles or parables). So if one of the Gospels tells us that Jesus did things in a certain sequence, and another Gospel tells us that He did those things in a different sequence, that doesn't mean that one of the accounts is wrong. It means that one of the accounts has not been arranged in chronological order.<sup>8</sup>

*Imprecise quotations are used.* What if Matthew records that Jesus said something one way, and Mark's quote of Jesus is a little bit different. Is somebody in error? Nope. We do this all the time, don't we? We say: "My boss said . . ." or "My wife said . . ." or "My doctor said . . ." And then we give a summary, not an exact quotation, of what they said. In fact, the very next time we summarize what they said, we will probably do it a little bit differently.

*Numbers are rounded off.* Let me ask you a question. How old are you? On the count of three, I want you to call out your age. One . . . two . . . three! (Pause for your participation.) I bet you called out your age in a round number. I bet you said: "fifteen" or "thirty-three" or "fifty-seven." Am I right? But that's how old you were on your last birthday. That's not how old you are today. Your current age, to be precise, is a matter of years and months and days. Sometimes in the Bible, we read two different accounts of the same event, and the numbers are not exactly the same. An error? No, just rounded-off numbers.

I could add to this list of mistaken assumptions about errors in the Bible, but I think you get my point. Many of these so-called errors can be quickly straightened out with fairly simple explanations. (If there is a particular discrepancy about which you'd like some clarification, you'll probably find it covered in Norm Geisler's *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* [Baker].) Yes, I will admit that there *are* some discrepancies in Scripture that are still difficult, even impossible, to fully explain. But considering the Bible's overall track record for inerrancy, I'm prepared to give God's Word the benefit of the doubt in these cases.

### **An Authoritative Book**

A couple of years ago, Sue and I met with our financial consultant and he suggested that we consider refinancing our mortgage. He gave us several good reasons for doing this: the low interest rates, the short amount of time it would take to recover the cost of the refinancing, and so on. In brief, our financial consultant said, "Go for it!" So we . . . didn't.

It's not that we don't trust our financial consultant. He gives great advice. But in this particular case, considering that our mortgage was almost paid off and a few other factors, we decided to sit tight. We're allowed to do that. We're not expected or required to obey everything our financial consultant says to us. He may be an expert, but he's not our final authority.

Many people respond to God's Word in a similar fashion. They treat it as if it's full of good suggestions. Kind of like the suggestions one might get from a teacher or coach or counselor or friend or investment analyst or Oprah. Please don't make the extremely dangerous mistake of dismissing God's Word as so many suggestions. God's Word is not advice—it is to be the final authority in our lives. Take a look at a story that Jesus told to illustrate this point:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. (Matthew 7:24–29)

Please note that both of the builders in the story represent people who have heard Jesus' teaching. They are like people who go to church and listen to sermons. The difference between the two groups is that the wise builders *do* what Jesus says to do (houses on rock) and the foolish builders *don't* (houses on sand). Are you responding to the Bible these days as if God Himself were looking you in the eye and giving you directives? Because He is. The Bible is *God's* Word. That makes it authoritative.

If God says in His book not to allow any unwholesome talk to come out of your mouth (Ephesians 4:29), then, with God's help, don't allow any unwholesome talk to come out of your mouth. Period. End of sentence. If God says in His book to abstain from sex outside of marriage (Hebrews 13:4), then don't sleep with your girlfriend, be unfaithful to your spouse, or fantasize to pornography on the Internet. It's that straightforward. If God says in His book to let go of bitterness toward those who've wronged you (Ephesians 4:31), or to return a minimal 10 percent of your income to the Lord's work (Malachi 3:10), or to honor your father and mother (Ephesians 6:1, 2), these are not optional suggestions for your consideration. This is God speaking to you. Authoritatively!

If you are ignoring God's Word, you are building your house on sand. And one day it's going to come crashing down. Let me encourage you, instead, to build your house on the

rock-solid foundation of Scripture. Read the Bible daily. Join a small group and study the Bible with others. Take notes when you hear the Bible being taught at church—and don't miss a weekend service. Value the Bible's input over any advice that you get from a counselor or expert or friend. Let the Bible become your final authority.

Several months ago a husband and wife approached me after the church service, asking me to settle their dispute. The man had just lost his job. He had been an executive for a large company that was downsizing. He'd been given a very generous severance package. And that was the focus of the dispute with his wife. She felt that they should tithe on the severance (i.e., put 10 percent of it in the offering bag), since it was income the Lord had provided. And he was angry at the thought of doing any such thing. As he explained to me, executive positions are hard to find and so it would be irresponsible to give away some of the severance money that they might need to live on while he was job-hunting.

**VALUE THE BIBLE'S  
input over any advice  
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The man wanted to know what I thought they should do. Even though I knew that my counsel might be suspect, since I'm the pastor of the church that would benefit from a

tithe on his severance package, I still encouraged him to obey what the Bible says and return a portion of this income to the Lord. I said, "This is a time in your life when you can't afford for God to be sitting on the sidelines. You would welcome His participation by doing what His Word tells you to do."

To his credit, the guy went home and wrote out a tithe check. But that's not the end of the story. Within a week's time, four companies had called him for job interviews. He was back at work in short order. He saw that as a bit miraculous, and so did I. We both also made the connection between his submission to God's authority and God's blessing.

The Bible is *God's Autobiography*. As such, it is a supernatural, inerrant, and authoritative book. And you are a budding theologian, having just covered the critical *Doctrine of Inspiration*.

## Study Guide

The *Study Guide* questions at the end of each chapter have been designed for your personal benefit. *All* questions can be used for personal study and, if you're part of a discussion group, for preparation for your group meeting. If you are part of a small group, you will find that the questions preceded by the group icon (  ) are especially useful for discussion. Your group leader can choose from among those questions when the group meets.

### **Icebreaker**

What tall tale (i.e., frequently recounted and increasingly exaggerated personal story) has become well-known among your family or friends?

1. What is wrong with viewing the Bible's inspiration in terms of its *writers* or *readers*?

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, what *is* it about the Bible that's inspired (i.e., God-breathed)? Practically speaking, what does this mean? How does *God-breathed* differ from *God-dictated*?

## Foundation

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2.  Describe a situation in which your belief that the Bible is *God's Word* was called into question or ridiculed. How did you defend your position at the time (or *did* you)?
3.  List and briefly describe the six evidences that point to the supernatural character of the Bible. Which of these impresses you the most? *Why*?
4. Give three reasons for believing in the inerrancy of Scripture.

## God's Autobiography (Doctrine of Inspiration)

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In what sense would refusing to believe in the Bible's inerrancy put you in a position of authority over Scripture?

5.  How might you respond to someone who claims that the Bible is "full of errors"?

6. In what way(s) is the counsel of God's Word different from the counsel you receive from any other source (e.g., friend, therapist, self-help book, teacher, consultant, etc.)?

## Foundation

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7.  What is the basic difference between the guy who builds on rock and the one who builds on sand in Jesus' parable (Matthew 7:24–29)? Give some real-life examples of what could happen to you if you build on sand.
8.  What step(s) might you take to ensure that you are building your life on rock?
9.  Describe a time in your life (if you can) when obedience to some directive in God's Word brought you blessing.