

2. The Bible – Only Rule of Faith and Practice

Regarding the inspiration of the Bible, do Seventh-day Adventists teach that the Bible is the very word of God, the only infallible rule for faith and practice?

Seventh-day Adventists believe that "all scripture," both Old and New Testament, from Genesis to Revelation, was "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and constitutes the very word of God—the truth that "lives and abides for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). We recognize the Bible as the ultimate and final authority on what is truth. The Holy Scriptures came to us through the ministry of the prophets who spoke and wrote---as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1: 2 1). The apostles declared that the God who made the heavens and the earth spoke through the mouth of David and the prophets of old (Acts 4:24-26; Matt. 1:22; 2:15; Acts 3:18-20; 28:25, 26; Heb. 1:1; 4:7).

And these chosen messengers of God declared that what was given through them was the very word of God (Isa. 43:1; 45:1; Jer. 17:19, 20; 18:1, 2; 22:1,2; 26:1, 2). Paul reminded his converts that when they listened to the Scriptures being read, they were hearing, not the words of men, but in truth, the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13).

Through the ministry of these messengers of old, Jehovah declared His truth to the world. Quoting the message of Moses: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18:18). And Jeremiah records the Lord as saying, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1:9). The word which these men spoke and wrote was not their own; it was the word of the living God. And to Ezekiel God said, "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them" (Eze. 3:4).

Expressions such as "Hear the word of the Lord---"; "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying"; "The word of the Lord came unto me," etcetera, occur more than 1,300 times in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. And the New Testament writers make much the same claim. The apostle Paul says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. 11:23). "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

We take the Bible in its entirety, believing that it not merely contains the word of God, but is the word of God.

We believe in the authority, veracity, reliability, and truth of the Holy Scriptures. The same union of the divine and the human that is manifest in Christ, exists in the Bible. Its truths, revealed, are "given by inspiration of God- (2 Tim. 3:16), yet are couched in the words of men. Seventh-day Adventists hold the Protestant position that the Bible and the Bible only is the sole rule of faith and practice for Christians. We believe that all theological beliefs must be measured by the living Word, judged by its truth, and whatsoever is unable to pass this test, or is found to be out of harmony with its message, is to be rejected.

True Christianity receives the word of God as the great treasure house of inspired truth and the test of all inspiration. -The Great Controversy, p. 193. We are to receive God's word as supreme authority- Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 402. In our time there is a wide departure from their [the Scriptures'] doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty.-The Great Controversy, pp. 204, 205.