

were moved by God to write (2Peter 1:21). *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."* (2Timothy 3:16) Inspiration literally means that **God breathed** out the very words He intended to be written. God has not "breathed out" any translations. Only the original manuscripts of scripture can be said to be "God breathed." What are "manuscripts?"

📖 **MANUSCRIPTS** Manuscripts, when referring to the Bible, are ancient, handwritten copies of the Scriptures in the original Biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. No original manuscripts of the Bible have yet been found and no two manuscripts are exactly alike because they are hand written copies of copies, etc. However, God has preserved His word for us! How?

📖 **PRESERVATION** God has chosen to preserve His Word primarily through thousands of manuscripts (over 5000) as well as other ancient textual documents (like sermon notes of early preachers) and hundreds of translations of the Bible in many languages. All together, there are several tens of thousands of pieces of evidence for our Bible! Other ancient literature do not even have one tenth of the manuscript evidence today that the Bible has. For example, Thucydides, who wrote around 400 B.C., has 8 existing manuscripts and Tacitus, a Roman historian who wrote around AD 100, has only 2 existing manuscripts.

God has promised to preserve His Word. The inspired writer King David said *"Forever O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"* (Psalm 119:89). Matthew 5:18 says, *"For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* God has also promised to prosper His Word. Isaiah 55:11 reads, *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void (empty), but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it."* God has promised not only to preserve His Word, but to make sure that it all happens just as He said it would. We can have a copy of the whole preserved Word of God in our hands in the form of a translation.

📖 **TRANSLATION** A translation is a copy of a manuscript in another language and can be said to be "the inspired Word of God" only to the degree that it accurately reflects the preserved manuscripts. That does not mean that God does not help those involved in Bible translation work. He helps them just as much as He can help preachers preach a sermon, or teachers teach a Bible lesson. Translation, like preaching and teaching, is a human work. Therefore, a translation is imperfect just as a sermon or Bible lesson is imperfect and only "perfect" insofar as it accurately reflects what "God breathed." Inspiration was a one-time work. It was finished when the book of Revelation was completed. Translation is an on-going work. There are about 6,000 languages that still do not have a complete Bible. Modern languages that

currently have a translation of the Bible need to be periodically updated because languages change – especially English.

📖 **UPDATING** There has always been a need to update translations. The KJV translators themselves updated the KJV several times and it has been updated since. For example, In John 3:16, the 1611 King James Version (KJV) translates the Greek word *Pisteuo*, "beleueeth." The 1769 revision of the KJV translates it "believeth," and the NKJV translates it "believes." In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 the KJV 1769 revision translates the Greek word *Phthano*, "prevent." The NKJV translates it "precede." "Prevent" was understood correctly in the 17th century, but it must be translated "precede" for us to understand it correctly today. The Word of God did not change – the word is still *Pisteuo* – only the translation changed or was updated to reflect current English meaning. There are many such minor differences between revisions. There are more significant differences between translations. These differences are in the manuscripts, which are then reflected in the translation and occur because one translator deems one manuscript more accurate than another. Or, as in the case of the KJV and the NASB, manuscripts that are available today were not discovered until many years after the KJV was translated. So there are differences between the KJV and the NASB, but miraculously, if you were to add up all of the words or phrases of the Greek N. T. that there is any real question about concerning the original wording, it would only fill up about one-half of a page! And **not one** of those

differences changes or in any way alters any doctrine of the Scripture even though the manuscript copies used are centuries apart in age!

Some are concerned that when a translation is updated it is "changing the Word of God." The updating of a translation does not change God's Word, it only clarifies it by using current wording – remember languages do change; the Word of God does not! The King James translators themselves said in their original preface to the readers that their new translation should be updated often. The KJV still used today is itself an update of 6 previous translations: the Tyndale Bible (1526) - about 90% of it's wording is included in the KJV, the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishop's Bible (1568), and the Rheims-Douay Bible (1582). As you can see, it is not a new thing to update or translate the Bible in English.

The original 1611 KJV translation was updated 8 times (1611, 1613, 1616, 1629, 1638, 1701, 1762, 1769). There were also about 1,000 editions with minor changes made during the time from 1611 to the 18th century. The historical position regarding Bible translation has been to update on a regular basis. The KJV translators said in their original preface, "no cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current" (In current speech). Not all new (or old) translations are equal in accuracy. Again, to quote the KJV translators: "we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very meanest (poorest) translation of

the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession, containeth the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God (emphasis mine)." When the Lord Jesus Christ quoted the Old Testament, He quoted from a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament called the Septuagint. This Greek translation was and is still considered to be a poor translation. For one reason, it had the Apocrypha scattered all through it! Even though it differed from the Hebrew somewhat, Jesus still quoted it as the Word of God. For an example, compare Jesus' quotation of the Septuagint's translation of Isaiah 61:1-2a in Luke 4:18-19. There is some variation, but Christ quoted it as the Word of God. The Apostle Paul also quoted from the Septuagint even though it did not agree with the Hebrew wording (compare Rom. 9:27-28 to Isaiah 10:22-23 and Gal. 4:27 to Isaiah 54:1). Most of the NT quotations of the OT are from the Septuagint.

Do not be afraid to use a modern or updated Bible translation. Look for a translation that uses as its primary rule, a word for word translation (literal) whenever possible and which also emphasizes accuracy and clarity. The two translations, available today that best fit these guidelines are the New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the New King James Version (NKJV). God bless you as you read and study His Word!

For more information on this subject see **The Mind Of God To The Mind Of Man; A Layman's Guide To How We Got Our Bible and God's Word In Our Hands**, *Ambassador Press*.



HOW DID WE GET THE BIBLE?

☞ REVELATION The God of all creation has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind. The word "revelation" means to "reveal or uncover something unknown."

Revelation is God making known to mankind something about Himself that man would not have known any other way. God reveals Himself in His creation (Rom. 1:20), and in the human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). These are called "general revelation." Another way God has chosen to reveal Himself is called "special revelation." Special revelation includes the incarnation of the LORD Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God), and the written Word of God (the Holy Bible).

General revelation tells us there is a God. Special revelation tells us who God is and how to have a right relationship with Him. In His Word, God reveals to us His holiness and our sinfulness; His provision for our salvation and our need to accept it. We can know the mind of God because He chose to reveal His mind. Has He revealed His mind? Yes, in the Holy Scriptures. How do we know that what the Bible says is the Word of God? Because of Inspiration!

☞ INSPIRATION The Inspiration of the Scriptures is not some emotional, "inspired" feeling, but the very Words of God written down as holy men of God