

X-Files vs. Providence

Thinking Better About Inspiration

TWO SIDES

God's Providential Role (ultimate source)

- Author's life
- Occasion of content
- Divine Prompting

Human Output

- Composing, arranging, editing

Flawed Approaches

Inspiration as Paranormal Event

- trance state?
- automatic writing?
- human mind overtaken?
- divine download?

Flawed Approaches

Inspiration as Paranormal Event

- Result cannot be touched
- No ongoing interest on God's part

Flawed Approaches

Presumes

- Advanced knowledge
- Foreign content
- Later audience is primary
- Divine origin of culture and worldview

Flawed Approaches

Problems

- **Fails to conform to the text**
 - sources, editing, agendas, parallels, varied technique
- **Nonsensical to original writers and readers**
- **Divine endorsement of human failings, prejudices**
- **Obsolete, not transcendent truths**

Coherent Approach

One that accounts for what is actually found in the biblical texts.

Requirements:

- set aside assumptions, traditions
- focus on the biblical data
- think clearly about God's decisions

Coherent Approach

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that (ἵνα) the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

- **divine origin and intent**

Coherent Approach

2 Peter 1:20-21

Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

- **Guidance, not dictation**
- **Authorial intention led by providence**

Coherent Approach

Jeremiah 25:13

I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations.

Coherent Approach

God's Role (ultimate source)

Divine Providence

- Author's life, preparation
- Author's culture and worldview
- Specific occasion, setting

Human Output

- Writing, arranging, editing
- According to ability and need

Coherent Approach

God's Choices

Who, When, Where

- Bound by time
- Product of culture, worldview
- Limited knowledge

Writer's Choices

How

- based on outcome of providence

APPLICATION

So What is the Bible?

ONE Adjective is NOT Enough

The Bible is not a **divine book.**

It's a **divine-human book.**

A Profound Shift

Let the Bible be what it is.

What is the Bible?

An ancient **collection** of books . . .

Written by **men** . . .

Who lived at a specific **time** . . .

Who came from a specific **region** . . .

Who were part of specific **cultures** . . .

Who had a shared **worldview** . . .

Who were prepared by **God** for the task.

The Bible: A divine-human book

God's Role: Providence

- Author's life, preparation
- Author's education, ability
- Author's culture, worldview
- Specific occasion, setting

Human Role: Writing

- Writing, arranging, editing
- According to ability and need

Put Another Way

God Makes Choices

Who, When, Where

Instrument, Time, Place

Writers Make Choices

- How, in what way
- Mode of expression, technique

Can You Trust the Bible?

YES ... if ...

- You let it be what it is.
- You're content with God's decisions:
 - God didn't alter the people he chose.
 - God let them be who they were.
 - God let them express their thoughts the only way they knew how.

Can You Trust the Bible?

. . . You're content with God's decisions

- **God wanted them to communicate to an audience alive when they were.**
- **God wanted certain truths in that communication to transcend that audience, to out-live that audience.**
- **God had the ability to ensure the results.**
- **God was happy with the results.**

Summary

The Bible was written **FOR** us, but ...

It was not written **TO** us.

All of this is why ...

Truth **propositions** and
the **means** by which those truth
propositions are expressed:

- Are **distinct**
- Need to be *allowed to be* **distinct**

Questions

How big is your God?

Is he capable of ...

Influencing people?

Overseeing their lives?

Letting them be who they were?

Keeping them on track?

METHOD

Let's see how this works ...

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY SAYS
ABOUT GOD'S HEAVENLY HOST

ANGELS

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