

The Blessed Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit



Lesson 16--The Holy Spirit's Role in Inspiration and in Illumination

Inspiration

There are two key passages on inspiration (2 Peter 1:20-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17) which we will now consider, and we will learn that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in providing us with an inerrant and authoritative Bible.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

To correctly understand this important passage, we must realize what the main idea is. The passage is telling us how the Bible originated, not how the Bible is to be interpreted. This passage answers the question, "How did we get the Bible?" or "How did the Bible originate." The key word is in verse 21, "For the prophecy C_____ not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The word "**came**" means to become, to originate, to come into existence. How did the Bible originate? How did the Scriptures come into existence? The Bible did not originate from men; it originated from God. This is the main point of the passage.

The word "interpretation" found in verse 20 means explanation or interpretation. Vine, in his *Expository Dictionary*, explains the word this way: "The writers of Scripture did not put their own construction upon the God-breathed words they wrote." For example, Isaiah gave the great

prophecy found in Isaiah 9:6--"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Suppose Isaiah spoke this prophecy and then someone were to then come up to him and say, "Isaiah, that's just your interpretation. That's just your explanation of the coming Messiah. I don't agree with you at all." No, Isaiah's wonderful prophecy did not come from his own interpretation or from his own imagination. It did not come from Isaiah; it came from God (2 Peter 1:21). Isaiah was just God's prophet, God's spokesman. The message was God's and it originated from God.

D. T. Young helps us understand the true meaning of 2 Peter 1:20-21. He writes:

So the text, rightly understood...asserts that Scripture is not human in its ultimate origin. It is God's interpretation, not man's. We often hear of certain statements of Scripture as representing David's opinion, or Paul's opinion, or Peter's opinion. Yet, strictly speaking, we have no man's opinion in those Holy Writings. It is all God's interpretation of things. No prophecy of the Scripture represents an individual's interpretation: men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost [Dinsdale T. Young, *The Unveiled Evangel*, pages 13-14].

Another author has said it this way: "What the Bible writers wrote was not a concoction of their own ideas, and it was not the result of human imagination, insight, or speculation" [William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, page 2293].

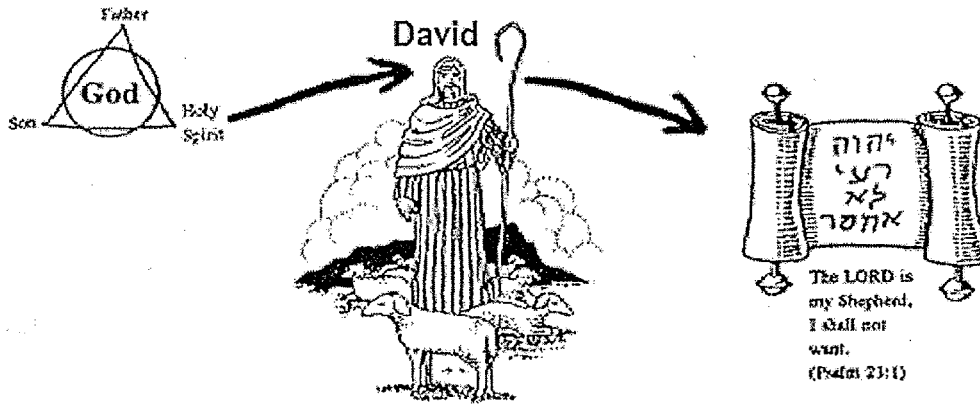
God used human instruments in the giving of His Word. He used Isaiah and He used other "H_____ M_____ of God" (2 Peter 1:21) such as Moses, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Matthew, John, Paul and Peter. These men did not make up the message. God used these men in the giving of His message, but the message came from God. There are many human authors of the Scripture, but there is one Divine Author. It is God's Word, not man's word, but God used men as His instruments in the giving of His Word.

The Holy Spirit played a key role in this process: "Holy men of God spoke [and wrote] as they were _____ by the _____ Ghost [Spirit]" (2 Peter 1:21). The word "moved" is found in Acts 27:15 and 17. At the end of verse 15 it says, "we let her **drive**" meaning, "we were borne" or "we were carried along." At the end of verse 17 it says, "and so were **driven** [moved, borne, carried along]." Thus the word "moved" was used of the mighty wind carrying along this large sailing vessel. The ship did not go where the sailors wanted it to go; instead, the ship went wherever the wind decided to move it! The course of the ship did not depend on the sailors but it depended upon the stormy winds. The sailors were being directed by forces outside of themselves, and they ended up at the destination where God wanted them to be (the island of Melilta or Malta--Acts 28:1).

Let us now apply the meaning of this term to 2 Peter 1:21. Holy men of God (such as Moses, Daniel and Luke) spoke and wrote as they were moved or carried along by the Holy Spirit. In a way that we cannot fully understand the Bible writers were directed by God the Holy Spirit so that the words they wrote were exactly the words God wanted them to write. And in doing this, God did not destroy the individuality or style of the writers. However, what they wrote was nothing less than the Word of God. For example, God used John in the giving of His Word and John's style was to often use short sentences, such as "God is love" (1 John 4:8). God also used Paul in the giving of His Word and Paul's style was to often use long sentences (see Ephesians

1:3-14 which is one very lengthy sentence!). But what John and Paul wrote was exactly what God wanted them to write, and the message came from God.

As an example, consider a passage with which most people are very familiar. David wrote Psalm 23:1 as he was moved (carried along) by God the Holy Spirit:



God was preparing David to write Psalm 23:1 even before David was born! The same was true of Jeremiah. God was preparing Jeremiah to be a prophet even before he came forth out of his mother's _____ (see Jeremiah 1:5).

David grew up and became a shepherd. One day as he realized the loving care and protection of the LORD, he wrote, "The _____ is M _____ S _____." God the Holy Spirit was moving David in such a way that the words that David wrote were exactly the words that God wanted him to write. Listen to what David himself said at the end of his life in 2 Samuel 23:2 – "The _____ of the L _____ S _____ by _____, and His _____ was in _____ tongue." According to this verse, who was the One who really spoke? _____ Whose Word was in David's tongue? _____

In Matthew 22:43-44 the Lord Jesus is referring to a passage of Scripture which David wrote in Psalm 110:1. But Jesus makes it clear that David did not think up this verse all by himself. Rather, it was something that David said, "in the S _____" (Matthew 22:43). See Acts 1:16. Whose mouth did the Holy Spirit use to give us some of the Scriptures?

_____ What holy man of God did the Holy Spirit speak through according to Acts 28:25? _____ In Hebrews 3:7-11 the writer of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 95:7-11. Who is the true Author of this passage in Psalm 95, according to Hebrews 3:7?

_____ In Hebrews 10:15-17 a prophecy of Jeremiah is discussed, but Who is the true Author of this prophecy (Hebrews 10:15)?

_____ Who helped Ezekiel in the giving of his prophecies (Ezekiel 2:2; 11:24)? _____

Thus the Holy Spirit moved or carried along the human writers so that they wrote exactly what God wanted to have in His Word, and He also kept the writers from writing anything that was erroneous or untrue. The Bible is without error. "Thy _____ is T _____" (John 17:17). It is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! In light of 2 Peter 1:20-21, we are justified in saying that the Holy Spirit is the true Author of the Scriptures. He perfectly guided each of the writers.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly [thoroughly] furnished unto all good works.

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible on the subject of inspiration. How do we know that the Bible is really God's Word? How do we know that the Bible is really true? Is the Bible merely a human product, setting forth the words and ideas of man, or is the Bible a divine product, a direct revelation and communication from the living God?

First of all, let us consider the extent of inspiration. "_____ scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Scripture" here refers to the sacred writings, the authoritative writings, the inspired writings.

The little word "all" is very important. It says that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The word "all" can also be translated "every." Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Every verse in the Bible is inspired by God.

We would be in a terrible dilemma if only some of the Bible were inspired. How would we then figure out which parts of the Bible were inspired and which parts of the Bible were merely the fallible ideas of men? How would we determine which parts of the Bible are true and which parts are not true?

There are people today who say that certain parts of the Bible are inspired but other parts are not inspired. They might like Psalm 23 and the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes and the wonderful verses about heaven. These portions of God's Word they would consider to be true, but other parts of the Bible they might not like so much, such as verses about eternal judgment and the lake of fire. They pick and choose which parts of the Bible they want to believe. We must not do that! All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and it is true whether we believe it or not, or whether we like what it says or not. We should not judge the Bible; we should let the Bible judge us.

For many years there has been an inerrancy debate taking place. The key question: Is the Bible really free from error? In the 70's a theologian named Harold Lindsell wrote a key book called *The Battle for the Bible* in which he defended the doctrine of inerrancy (that the Bible is totally free from error of any kind). In 1978 another theologian, Dr. Robert Lightner, wrote a book in defense of the total truthfulness of the Bible, *A Biblical Case for Total Inerrancy*. Why did these men write these books?

There were many who were teaching a dangerous and wrong view on inspiration. These dangerous teachers were saying this: When the Bible speaks about salvation or how to live the Christian life, then what the Bible says is absolutely true. However, when the Bible speaks about history or science, or when the Bible gives a genealogy, or when the Bible gives certain

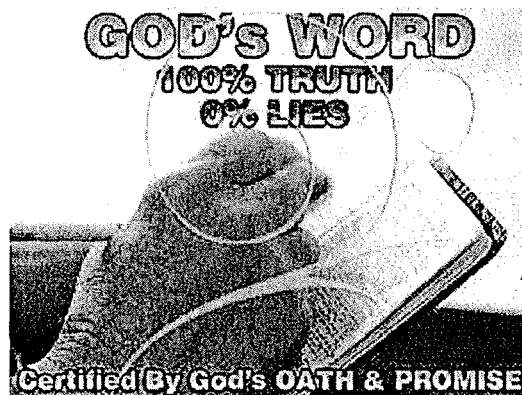
numbers, then there can be errors. So what the Bible teaches is true (its doctrines), but there are many other things in the Bible (history, science, numerology, etc.) which are not true. This is very dangerous teaching and as we will see, totally contrary to what 1 Timothy 3:16 is teaching.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, even the historical parts, even its numerology, even its genealogies, even its chronological details, and even when it treats scientific subjects.

Plenary Inspiration: We don't believe in partial inspiration. We strongly affirm a full, complete, total inspiration of every part of the Bible. This is called plenary inspiration. Plenary means full, complete. (For example, a plenary session of Congress is when all the congressmen are supposed to be present, not just some of them.) Inspiration applies to every part of the Bible. There is no verse in the Bible that is not inspired.

Verbal Inspiration: When we say that someone is very verbal, we are saying that the person is good at using words, or likes to talk a lot ("verbose"). Verbal inspiration means that the very words of Scripture are inspired, not just the ideas. The Bible is made up of words, and those words are exactly the words God wanted us to have.

Inerrancy: This term means that the Bible is totally without error. Let's enlarge upon this definition: The Bible is free from error of any kind (including historical, chronological, genealogical and scientific errors), no errors, totally and completely exempt from errors, absolutely true, no mistakes, no flaws, no contradictions, no discrepancies, no inconsistencies, no inaccuracies, no disagreements, no imperfections, no defects, no deceptions, no blunders, no lies (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18), no falsity, no misconceptions, no false impressions. The Bible is *the TRUTH, the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH* (John 17:17; Psalm 119:160).



There may be **apparent** contradictions in the Bible, when two passages seem to conflict in some way. These are apparent contradictions but not real contradictions. For example, some people think that Genesis chapter 2 contradicts Genesis chapter 1. But Genesis 2 does not contradict Genesis 1; instead it give additional information and additional details, especially concerning the sixth day of creation.

There was once a very intellectual university student who approached another student who was a dedicated Christian, and he said, "There are all kinds of contradictions in the Bible." The believer quietly went to his room, got his Bible, handed it to the unbelieving student and calmly said, "Here, could you show me one of those contradictions." The unbeliever was unable to show him even one. Often those who criticize the Bible are not very knowledgeable about the

Bible. There may be a problem with someone's understanding of the Bible, but there is no problem with the Bible. God's Word is inerrant.

Infallible: This term means not liable to error (hence a synonym for *inerrant*); incapable of being wrong or mistaken or inaccurate or misleading; absolutely trustworthy and sure. The term is sometimes used of persons. For example, it has been claimed by some that the Pope is infallible. No POPE or PRIEST or PASTOR or PERSON is infallible, but God is infallible and thus His Word is infallible (John 10:35). People may err, but not the Bible. Jesus said to a group of people, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). The greatest reason people fall into error is ignorance of the Scriptures.

What Does 2 Timothy 3:16 Really Teach?

The expression "inspired of God" (2 Timothy 3:16) literally means "God-breathed." All Scripture is breathed out from God, breathed out from the mouth of God. It is not so much the idea of inhaling (breathing in) but it is the idea of exhaling (breathing out).

Did you know that whenever you talk you are breathing out words? It is impossible to speak words without breathing them out. Try this experiment. Hold your breath and try to speak at the same time. Can you do it? _____

This verse tells us that God has breathed out certain words. God has breathed out the Scriptures. "All S _____ is God-breathed" and this means that the whole Bible is from the mouth of God! The whole Bible is God's Word. "For the _____ of the Lord hath _____ it" (Isaiah 40:5). When we read any verse of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, we should be reminded that "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Compare Psalm 33:6 where the expression "the word of the _____" is equivalent to the expression "the _____ of His mouth." All Scripture is breathed out from the mouth of the Lord. All Scripture is God's Word, coming directly from His mouth. When we think about the breath of the LORD, there is a hint here of the Holy Spirit's ministry when it comes to inspiration. The word "Spirit" in the Bible also carries the meaning of "wind" and "breath." As we have already seen from 2 Peter 1:20-21, the Holy Spirit played a major role in inspiration and in giving us the Bible.

Based upon what we have learned so far, when we read a verse of Scripture anywhere in the Bible, we need to pause and say, "This verse is from the mouth of God. It's God breathed. This verse has come from God. It's His Word. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it." And I need to respond to that God-breathed Word and say, "This is a faithful _____ and worthy of all acceptance" (1 Timothy 1:15). Every single verse in the Bible is from the mouth of God and it is His Word, and it is absolutely true.

If the Bible is really God's Word (breathed out from God), then it has to be inerrant, because how can God lie? How can God be untruthful? God C _____ lie (Titus 1:2); it is I _____ for God to lie (Heb. 6:18).

So when you read any verse in the Bible, whether you understand the verse or not, you need to remember that it is inspired. It is part of the words which God has breathed out. It is from the

mouth of God. It is His Word and He cannot lie. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it. So no matter what verse you read, always remember that there is a "**Thus saith the LORD**" behind that verse.

All Scripture is Profitable

All Scripture is God breathed and all Scripture is "profitable." This means all Scripture is useful, beneficial and helpful. How can the Bible help me? How can the Bible be useful to me? What does it do for me? According to this verse, the Bible can help me in four ways: doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.

The best way to understand these four terms is to think of a road, and the road represents God's will for your life.

God says, "This is the _____, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21) "Ask for the old _____, where is the good way and _____ in it and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16). Over and over again in the Bible God tells us to stay on His path and not turn to the left or to the right (one example of this is Proverbs 4:27). Stay on God's path and don't deviate. This is what the book *Pilgrim's Progress* is all about. It is about the Christian pilgrim staying on God's path, avoiding temptations to leave that path, and the dangers that are faced when a person gets off that path.



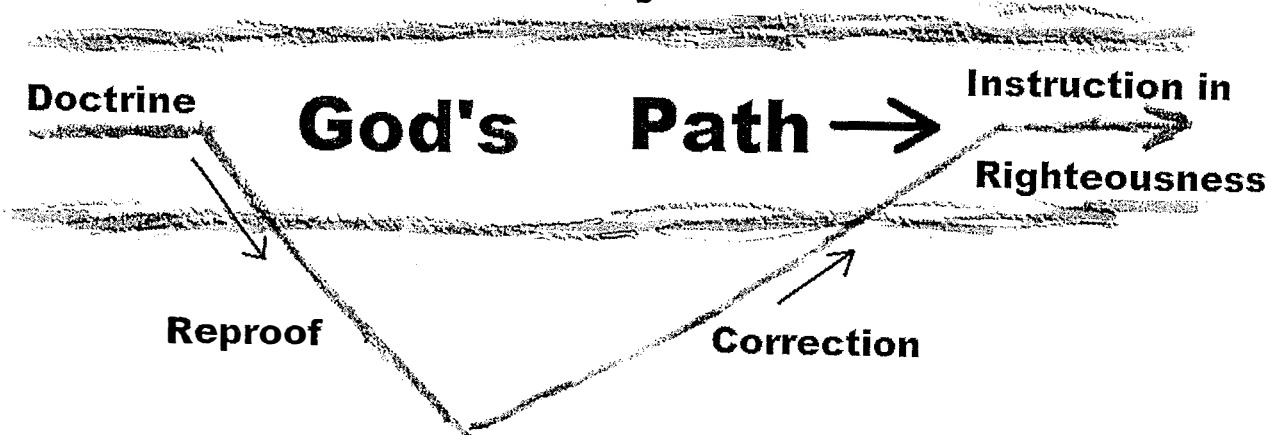
Doctrine: Doctrine means teaching. God's Word teaches us how to walk down God's path. "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Reproof: The Bible will convict you and point out where you are wrong. It will rebuke you when you have deviated from God's path. If you have a really good friend, that friend will tell you when you are wrong and will rebuke you, even though you may not want to hear it. The Bible is our good friend. It rebukes us: "You are off the path; you have sinned; you have disobeyed God and gone your own way."

Correction: The Bible not only tells us that we are wrong, but it shows us how we can fix the problem. The Bible will show you how to correct your course and how to get back onto God's path. You are wrong, but this is what you need to do to get right.

Instruction or training in righteousness: The Bible gives us the instruction we need or the training we need so that we can stay on the right path.

2 Timothy 3:16



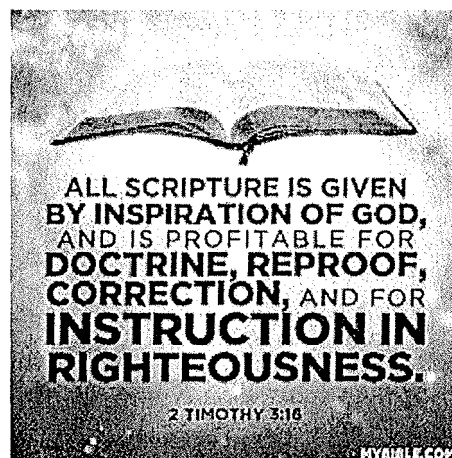
We can summarize these four things that the Bible does for us in simple terms:

The Bible teaches me what is right (doctrine).

The Bible convicts and points out when I'm not right (reproof).

The Bible shows me how to get right (correction).

The Bible gives instruction on how to stay right (instruction or training in righteousness).



God's Word is Completely Sufficient (2 Timothy 3:17)

The Word "that" indicates purpose. What is the purpose of the Word of God? Why has God given us His Word? That the man of God may be P_____. When this verse speaks of being perfect, it is not speaking about sinless perfection (which the believer will not attain to until he gets to heaven). The meaning of the word perfect is "complete." God has provided His God-breathed Word so that the man of God might be complete, mature, not lacking anything he needs.

The term "thoroughly furnished" means to be completely equipped or fully fitted. In Western states such as Colorado, hunting, fishing and camping are a big part of life. There are people called "outfitters" who pack horses with all the needed equipment and provisions, so that when they go into the mountains to hunt or to fish, they have everything they need. They have their bedding, their food, their matches, their ammunition, their fishing tackle and all their other supplies. Everything they need is provided. We are outfitted with God's Word, and God's Word has everything we need to serve Jesus Christ. Nothing is missing; nothing is lacking. God knows what we need and He provides it through His Word.

God's Word is completely sufficient; it's all that we need. But we have to use it. Consider a hunter who says, "I didn't sleep at all last night; I was freezing." But on his horse was packed a nice tent and a sleeping bag which he never used it! A person needs to use all that God has provided for him in the Bible.

Or, for another illustration, think of a kitchen. If a kitchen is completely furnished, then the kitchen is fully equipped and ready to handle any cooking job. If a can needs to be opened, there is a can opener. If a hamburger needs to be fried, there is a frying pan. If waffles are desired, there is a waffle iron. This kitchen is fully furnished with every piece of equipment that is needed for cooking and serving food. So also the Bible can supply the believer with everything he needs to live godly in Christ Jesus. For example...

When I sin, God has provided 1 John 1:9 and Psalm 51.

When I need to know how safe I am for all eternity, God has provided John 6:37-40 and 10:27-30.

When I need to know how much God cares, He has provided 1 Peter 5:7.

When I need to be reminded of God's great faithfulness, He has provided Lamentations 3:21-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:9.

When I I need strength, God has provided 2 Cor. 12:9-10 and Philippians 4:13.

When I lack, God has provided Psalm 23:1 and Philippians 4:19.

When I need victory over sin, God has provided Romans 6 and John 8:31-36.

When I need help, God has provided Hebrews 13:6 and Isaiah 41:10,13.

When I need comfort, God has provided 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

When I need guidance, God has provided Proverbs 3:5-6 and Psalm 23:2-3.

When I need faith, God has provided Romans 10:17 and Hebrews chapter 11.

When I need wisdom, God has provided James 1:5-7.

We could probably add many items to this list! May the Holy Spirit of God, the Author of the Bible, teach us and show us how to use the Bible every day of our lives, for His glory. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _____ which proceedeth out of the _____ of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Illumination

Illumination occurs when God sheds light on His Word so that the believing heart can understand it. It was by **inspiration** that God gave us His Word; it is by **illumination** that God opens our eyes and helps us to understand His Word. The same Spirit who was involved in inspiration (2 Peter 1:21) is also involved in illumination. Apart from the Holy Spirit of God we could never understand the Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16

Verse 9--How can we learn about the things that God has prepared for believers? Can we learn about such things by just using our eyes? _____ by just using our ears? _____ by just thinking and using our minds? _____

Verse 10--The only way we can learn God's truth is by (circle the correct answer):

- a. Going to college for four years (especially a Bible College)
- b. Reading books about religion and the Bible
- c. Having God's truth revealed to us by God
- d. Watching beautiful sunsets
- e. Thinking and meditating for long periods of time

We learn from 1 Corinthians 2:10 that God reveals His truth to us by (through) _____. Is there anything about God or about God's truth that the Holy Spirit does not understand? _____ [Remember, the Holy Spirit is God--see Acts 5:3-4; as God He is all knowing or omniscient]. According to 1 Corinthians 2:10, who really understands the deep truths and the deep things of God? _____

Verse 11--Without the Lord's help, is it possible for a man to know and understand the things of God? _____ Who does know the things of God according to this verse? _____ Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Are God's thoughts far above and far greater

than your thoughts? _____ Read Romans 11:33-34. Do you think the Lord needs a teacher? _____ Is there anything that the Lord does not know? _____ Is there anything that you do not know? _____ Do you need a teacher? _____ Who must this teacher be?

Circle the sentences that are true:

- a. I can learn God's truth without the Lord's help.
- b. It is impossible for me to learn any truth about God and about His Word unless He reveals it to me and teaches me.
- c. Unless the Lord shows me and teaches me what the Bible means, I will never really understand it.
- d. I can understand the Bible on my own, although with the Lord's help I would probably learn much more.

Verse 12--What does every believer receive the moment he is saved?

_____ This verse teaches us that God wants us to _____ the things that are freely _____ to us of God and that is why He has given to us the Holy _____ to be our Teacher. Do you think that God wants you to know His truth? _____ Read 1 Corinthians 14:20. When it comes to understanding His truth, does God want us to be babies or grown up men?

Verse 13--Do we learn God's truth by our own wisdom or by the Holy Spirit teaching us?

Verse 14--The "natural man" is the unsaved person. This verse teaches us that unsaved men and women, boys and girls are blind when it comes to God's truth. Can the natural man receive the truths of God's Word? _____ Can he know and understand them? _____ What one word in this verse shows us what the unsaved man really thinks about God's truth?

_____ Therefore, when you share something from the Bible with an unsaved person, should you be surprised if he should make fun of you? _____ Should you be surprised if he can't really understand God's Word? _____ [Do you remember when you were unsaved? Did you understand the things of God or were you blind?

_____ The word that is translated "natural" in 1 Corinthians 2:14 is the same word that is translated "sensual" in Jude 19. Thus as we look in the book of Jude, verse 19, we learn that the natural (sensual) man is the man who does not have the _____. From what we have learned already, who is the only Person who can teach us and reveal to us God's truth? _____

If a person does not have the Teacher, can he learn the truth? _____ Does the natural man (the unsaved man) have the Teacher? _____ Read 1 Corinthians 1:18. Does the natural man understand what Jesus did for him on the cross? _____ What one word best describes the way the unsaved person feels about the cross? _____ If you share with a person that the only way he can be saved is by believing in a crucified Saviour, should you be surprised if he thinks you are a fool? _____ According to 1 Corinthians 1:18 what kind of person really understands the meaning of the cross? _____

Only God can open the eyes of the blind. The natural man is spiritually blind and he cannot understand truth. Only God can open the eyes of a natural man through the miracle of the new birth (John 3:3-5). Who opened the eyes and heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14)? _____
 The moment a person is born again (by believing in Christ as Saviour) he receives the Holy Spirit, and as a newly born baby, he begins to desire the pure milk of the Word of God so that he might learn and grow (see 1 Peter 2:2). The Holy Spirit is now his Teacher!

Verse 15--The spiritual man is the person who has the Holy Spirit (he is a believer in Christ) and who allows the Spirit to teach him. The spiritual man loves the Word of God (Psalm 119:97) and his constant prayer to God is this: " _____ thou mine _____, that I may behold _____ out of thy _____ " (Psalm 119:18).

Suppose you were reading a book which was somewhat difficult to understand. Would it not be wonderful if you were able to invite the author of the book to your home and listen to him as he explained the book that he wrote? No one is better qualified to help you understand a book than the author himself (or herself). Whenever we read the Bible, it is wonderful to know that the author of the Bible is present with us. The Spirit of God Himself is with us (and "in us"--1 Cor. 6:19-20) and able to teach us and help us to understand the Scriptures. When Jesus was with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, was He able to help them understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-45)? _____ So also, the Holy Spirit is with every believer and He is able to help us understand the Holy Scriptures. This is why it is so important to pray before reading the Bible, asking the Lord to shed light on the Scriptures and to help us to understand how we can apply the Bible to our daily living.

**Open my eyes that I may see
 Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
 Please in my hands the wonderful key
 That shall unclasp and set me free.**

**Silently now I wait for Thee,
 Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
 Open my eyes, illumine me,
 Spirit divine! --Clara H. Scott**