



Q. How could fallible men produce an infallible Bible?

Josh McDowell Ministry

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A. One of the most frequent arguments leveled against the infallibility of the Bible is based upon the fact that the Bible was written by human authors. Human beings are fallible. Since the Bible was written by these fallible human beings, it necessarily follows that the Bible is fallible. Or so the argument goes. As Roman Catholic theologian Bruce Vawter writes, “A human literature containing no error would indeed be a contradiction in terms, since nothing is more human than to err” (*Biblical Inspiration*, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1972).

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Although we often hear this accusation, it just is not correct. We grant that human beings do make mistakes, and that they make them often. But they do not necessarily make mistakes in all cases, and they do not necessarily have to make mistakes.

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For example, several years ago an author was teaching a class on the reliability of the Bible. For it, he had typed up a one-page outline of the course. The finished product was inerrant; it had no typographical errors, no mistakes in copying from the handwritten original. Although the author was human and was prone to make mistakes, he was in fact infallible in this instance. The point is this: It is not impossible for a human being to perform a mistake-free act. It is not impossible for fallible man to correctly record both sayings and

events. Thus to rule out the possibility of an inerrant Bible by appealing to the fallibility of men does not hold up.

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John Warwick Montgomery, lawyer/theologian, illustrates this truth:

“The directions for operating my washing machine, for example, are literally infallible; if I do just what they say, the machine will respond. Euclid’s *Geometry* is a book of perfect internal consistency; grant the axioms and the proofs follow inexorably. From such examples (and they could readily be multiplied) we must conclude that human beings, though they often err, need not err in all particular instances.

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“To be sure, the production over centuries of sixty-six inerrant and mutually consistent books by different authors is a tall order — and we cheerfully appeal to God’s Spirit to achieve it — but the point remains that there is nothing metaphysically inhuman or against human nature in such a possibility. If there were, have we considered the implications for Christology? The incarnate Christ, as a real man, would also have to err; and we have already seen that error in His teachings would totally negate the revelational value of the incarnation, leaving man as much in the dark as to the meaning of life and salvation as if no incarnation had occurred at all” (*God’s Inerrant Word*, p. 33).

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We also believe that there is sufficient evidence that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. The Scriptures themselves testify, “All Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16). If they contain error, then one must call it God-inspired error.

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This is totally incompatible with the nature of God as revealed in the Bible. For example, Titus 1:2 says God cannot lie. John 17:17 says, “Thy word is truth.”

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Examples could be multiplied. The testimony of Scripture is clear. God used fallible men to receive and record His infallible Word so that it would reach us, correct and without error. Sounds difficult? With our God, it's not. As He said (Jeremiah 32:27, NASB), "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

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