

The Caiaphas ossuary was discovered in 1990 in a burial cave south of the old city of Jerusalem. Twelve ossuaries were found with a very ornate one inscribed with “Joseph son of Caiaphas.” The ossuary contained the skeletal remains of a 50-year-old male. It is likely the remains are of Caiaphas the high priest who interrogated Jesus (Matthew 26:3, 57; Luke 3:1-2; John 18:13-14; 24, 28; Acts 4:5-6).

(2) Pilate Stone

Until 1961, there was no archaeological evidence that demonstrated that Pontius Pilate existed (Matthew 27:1-26; John 19:1-15). Some literary sources mention him, but no administrative records survive from him and no genuine letters of his have been preserved.

In June 1961, Italian archaeologist Antonio Frova, while working in the ruins of Caesarea Maritima, found a sizable piece of limestone that bears the name of “Pontius Pilatus.”

The inscription says that Pilate had built a “Tiberieum” (likely a temple in or near Caesarea) dedicated to the then reigning Roman emperor, Tiberius, who ruled from A.D. 14 to A.D. 37.

The “Pilate Stone” is historically significant because it dates to Pilate’s own lifetime.

(3) Erastus Pavement Inscription

When Paul moved to Corinth in about AD 50 many people became Christians, including Erastus (Acts 19:21-22; Romans 16:23; 2 Timothy 4:20) who became a friend of Paul. Erastus was the city manager (Romans 16:23).

During the excavation of Corinth in 1929, archaeologist found a rectangular pavement stone with a Latin inscription mentioning Erastus. It is translated as, “Erastus in return for his aedileship<sup>13</sup> paved at his own expense.” The commentative inscription specifically mentions Erastus and his title.

V. Inspiration of the Bible.

A. Erroneous theories of inspiration.

1. Intuitive or natural inspiration.

a. Ideas.

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<sup>13</sup> Aedile – an official in ancient Rome in charge of public works and games, police, and the grain supply

- (1) Inspiration is the superior intuitive insight of natural man into moral and religious truth.
    - (2) Involves man's speculation about God apart from divine help.
  - b. Objection: a naturalistic, rationalistic, humanistic, and unbiblical view.
2. Mystical or illumination theory.
  - a. Ideas.
    - (1) Inspiration is merely an intensifying and elevating of the religious perceptions of the believer.
    - (2) Every believer has this illumination to an extent, but some have a greater degree than others.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) Confuses inspiration and illumination.
    - (2) Inspiration of biblical writers is unique in relation to the experience of other believers.
3. Neo-orthodox theory.
  - a. Ideas.
    - (1) Inspiration is a human production of a fallible record.
    - (2) This record contains a witness to divine revelation.
    - (3) Revelation is personal and not propositional in form.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) If the Bible is a fallible record, then it could be a false witness. See John 14:6; 17:17.
    - (2) Revelation is propositional in Scripture.
4. Conceptual theory.
  - a. Idea.
 

Inspiration extends to the concepts or thoughts of Scripture, but not to the very words.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) Accurate communication of thoughts requires accurate communication of words. See Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 24:35; John 6:63; 10:35.
    - (2) Letters are the building blocks of words (Matthew 5:18).
    - (3) Words are the building blocks of thoughts.
5. Fallible inspiration theory.

- a. Idea.  
Scripture is inspired, but not infallible.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) Who is to determine what parts of the Bible are in error and what parts are not.
    - (2) What is the purpose of inspiration if not to insure infallibility.
6. Dynamic or partial theory.
- a. Ideas.
    - (1) Inspiration extends only to matters of faith and practice.
    - (2) For other areas of knowledge, human intelligence was relied upon.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) Matters of faith and practice are inseparably intertwined with these other areas.
    - (2) Did the Holy Spirit vary His operation when the biblical writer moved from one area of knowledge to another?
    - (3) Scripture itself does not distinguish itself between these areas of knowledge.
7. Dictation theory.
- a. Ideas.
    - (1) Inspiration involves God's use of biblical writers as passive instruments.
    - (2) The biblical writers were like typewriters used by God.
  - b. Objections.
    - (1) This theory does not properly account for the individual personality of each writer.
    - (2) This theory does not account for difference in the literary styles of the writers.

Observation: Admittedly parts of the Bible were dictated (Revelation 2:1, 2:8; Jeremiah 26:2).

- B. Scriptural view: verbal<sup>14</sup>, plenary<sup>15</sup> inspiration.
1. Definition: “God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.”<sup>16</sup>
  2. The qualifications.
    - a. Verbal inspiration.
      - (1) Applies only to the original manuscripts.
      - (2) Means that God’s superintendence extends to the very words of Scripture.
        - (a) Jeremiah 1:9 – The Lord’s words are communicated to the prophet.
        - (b) Matthew 5:18 – The very letters that form the words of Scripture are significant.
        - (c) John 10:34-36 – Christ’s argument in this context is based on a single word.
        - (d) Galatians 3:16 – Paul’s argument in this context is based on the distinction between singular and plural.
    - b. Plenary inspiration means that every part of Scripture as defined in the Protestant canon is equally inspired.
    - c. Verbal, plenary inspiration allows for:
      - (1) God’s superintendence in the production of Scripture without necessitating the dictation of Scripture.
      - (2) Obvious differences in personality and literary style of biblical authors.
      - (3) The evident use in Scripture of:
        - (a) Diverse expression. e.g. Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19
        - (b) Literary documents. Luke 1:1-4 cf. Joshua 10:13; Acts 17:28; Jude 14
        - (c) Phenomenal language. Genesis 15:12; Matthew 5:45
        - (d) Figurative language. John 10:9
  3. The process.

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<sup>14</sup> of, relating to, or consisting of words

<sup>15</sup> complete in every respect: absolute, unqualified

<sup>16</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine, (Chicago: Moody, 1972), p. 38.

- a. God – divine source – truth revealed  
(2 Timothy 3:16).
- b. Writer – human instrument – truth relayed  
(2 Peter 1:21).
- c. Bible – divine-human product – truth recorded (John 17:17).  
Matthew 1:22-23 – by the Lord, through the author, recorded in scripture.

4. The proof.

In general, this was the viewpoint of the early church fathers, the medieval theologians, and the reformers; and it is the viewpoint of many present-day evangelical Christians. Members of the Evangelical Theological Society are required to subscribe to an inerrancy viewpoint of Scripture.

It has been observed that “... a survey of the Fathers will reveal that the orthodox doctrine of inspiration prevailed throughout the history of the church from apostolic times to the rise of Deism<sup>17</sup> and Rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with hardly a noteworthy voice dissenting.”<sup>18</sup>

a. The character of God.

- (1) Scripture is a reliable record.
- (2) John 17:3; Romans 3:4; 1 John 5:20 – Scripture reveals a God of truth. Also Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18 – God can not lie.
- (3) 2 Timothy 3:16 – All Scripture is God breathed.
- (4) Therefore, John 17:17 – Scripture must be true.

To say that the Bible is God’s Word (“Thy word is truth,” John 17:17 cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13) and yet that it errs, contradicts the truthfulness of God’s character.

b. The claims of Scripture.

- (1) 2 Timothy 3:16 – The fullness and fact of inspiration.
- (2) 2 Peter 1:21 – Men and method of inspiration.
- (3) Exodus 17:14; Jeremiah 30:2 – the command to record the words of the Lord.

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<sup>17</sup> At its basic level, Deism teaches that God made the universe and its natural laws, and then left it running on its own, free from any divine interference or interaction. God holds Himself aloof from the world; leaving it to the government of natural laws.

<sup>18</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, (Chicago: Moody, 1968), p. 99.