

Nothing is more important than knowing the Word of Christ and obeying it; for the Word of Christ is no less than the Word of God. Jesus made it plain that His words were more than just the teachings of a mortal man, for He said, “the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak ... therefore, the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me” (John 12:49-50). Obviously, we need to know the exact words of Jesus. We need to know what God expects from our daily lives and what God wants the church to be like. But how can we be sure that the exact words Jesus spoke are available to us? Can we feel confident that God’s will for His church is available? Jesus is not with us today in a physical form to reveal these important truths. Can we trust the memory of New Testament writers to accurately and positively preserve the message of God through Christ? Did they really represent God when they wrote the words of the New Testament?

Before Jesus departed from this physical world, He set in place a means by which God’s message could be preserved for all times. It was the plan of God that His Word be entrusted to a group of specially selected men whom Jesus called “Apostles.” Jesus promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would help them remember everything He had taught (John 14:26). He went on to explain that when the Holy Spirit had come upon them, they would be guided “into all the truth” (John 16:13). We need not fear that the words of Jesus and the will of the Father were left to feeble human memory. The Holy Spirit of God “inspired” the apostles of Christ with a miraculous recollection of all He had spoken; then guided them into “all the truth.”

We have then a marvelous “chain of inspiration” which begins with a message of life from the Heavenly Father. Then, this message was embodied in the person of Jesus; who, in turn, passed on the keeping of this message to His Spirit filled apostles. The Holy Spirit brought to their memory far more than just the “ideas” that Jesus taught, they were given the very “words.” Like runners in a relay race, Jesus passed the baton of God’s Word on to His apostles. On their behalf, Jesus prayed to the Father and said, “for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them ... I have given them Thy word ... as Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:8-18). In Mark 13:11 Jesus assured His apostles of the Spirit’s presence. He said, “... do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.”

It is obvious that Jesus’ apostles understood that their teaching was inspired by the Spirit. When the Apostle Paul sent directions to the church in Corinth he wrote, “... the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment” (I Corinthians 14:37). Again, to the church in Thessalonica he said, “... when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God ...” (I Thessalonians 2:13). In I Corinthians 4:17, Paul assured the people that his ways were indeed the ways of Christ.

It is true that Jesus never wrote a book which contained His teachings; but His apostles did. They were guided by the Spirit to remember all things that Jesus taught; and they wrote it down. They were guided by the Spirit into all the truth; and they wrote that down. In fact, Paul taught that the written word of inspired teachers was of equal authority with their spoken word. He encouraged Christians to “... stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us” (II Thessalonians 2:15). Neither Jesus nor His apostles are physically with us today to convey the Word of God. But we can know what they taught by reading the Holy Scriptures. Paul said, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

1. According to John 12:50, the “Word of Christ” is actually the word of _____?
whom
2. After the ascension of Christ back to heaven, the Word of God was entrusted to a group of specially selected men whom Jesus called _____.
3. Jesus promised these men that the Holy Spirit would help them in what two ways:
John 14:26 _____
John 16:13 _____
4. True or False: The Apostles of Christ were assisted by the Holy Spirit to remember only the “general ideas” that Jesus had taught. (John 17:8,14)
5. What assurance did Jesus give His Apostles in Mark 13:11?
6. From the following passages of scripture, what clues do you see that the apostles fully understood that their teaching was inspired by God?
I Corinthians 14:37 _____

I Thessalonians 2:13 _____

I Corinthians 4:17 _____

7. Did the apostle Paul expect Christians to respect the authority of his written words as much as they did his spoken words? (II Thessalonians 2:15)
8. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for _____, _____, _____, for training in _____; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for _____ good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17)
9. Where should we look today if we want to know the will of Jesus Christ?