

Chapter 2:

Perfect or Inspired?

The story of Abraham and Isaac opens a larger question: how do we read scripture itself? For many, the Bible is considered flawless, perfect, inerrant. It is held up as a book without mistake, without contradiction, without error. But if we are honest, this claim does not hold under the weight of the text itself.

There are scribal errors, differing accounts of the same events, and even contradictions about God's nature. Place names shift. Numbers don't always agree. Prophets see from different angles, sometimes even correcting one another. When we insist that the text is flawless, we demand from it something it was never meant to give.

The Bible is not perfect—it is inspired. That is what makes it holy. The Spirit breathes through the writers, but they remain human. Their language is limited, their cultural lenses imperfect, their knowledge incomplete. They were not dictation machines. They were poets, storytellers, prophets, letter-writers, witnesses. They were like us: moved by God, yet human all the same.

If we treat scripture as flawless, we risk placing it above the very God it reveals. We forget that Jesus said, "Greater works shall you do, because I go to the Father." If the Spirit continues to inspire, then revelation did not end with the ink on the page. Inspired words can emerge in every generation, through hearts moved by love.

Canon itself reminds us of this truth. What we now hold as sixty-six books once existed as a wider collection. At one time, more than eighty writings were considered. Councils debated, argued, and voted. Even now, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians cannot agree on the exact number of books. If the Bible were "perfect," wouldn't there be perfect agreement?

The danger of perfectionism is that it can lead us away from love. A "flawless" scripture can be used as a weapon to justify cruelty. But inspired scripture—like inspired people—must always be tested by love. If it breathes love, it carries God's breath. If it reeks of hate, domination, or violence, it cannot be from Him. For God is love, and love must be the final judge.

Journal Prompts

- 1.) How were you first taught to view the Bible—as perfect, inspired, or something else?
- 2.) How does it change your reading of scripture if you see it as inspired rather than flawless?
- 3.) What dangers do you see in insisting the Bible is "perfect"?

4.) How might love serve as the lens through which you test and interpret inspired words—both ancient and modern?

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