



# REFLECTIONS

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**"Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"**

*Luke 20:2*

## Who's the Authority?

Breakfasts with one of my special friends have been neither frequent nor regular; but they are always a delight. The topics we discuss bounce from golf to world events to personal matters and back again. But our shared interest in the Bible almost always leads to the discussion of interesting questions arising from the study of it

As we all know, the Bible is a complex book even to those who study it regularly. Among Biblical scholars there are many passages that challenge understanding and that give rise to differing views. Many of those debates seek to explain Biblical events within the constraints of the laws of science and nature. The origin of the world is an example.

The opening verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," offers no explanation for *how* God created it all, so the process He used in the creation presents a challenge to our understanding within the constraints of natural laws. There are many other passages that are challenging too, like Noah and the flood, the day the sun stood still in the sky, Jonah and the great fish, and even the virgin birth of Jesus.

Just as everyone else, I have my ideas for resolving such questions. If God created the heavens and the earth is it not likely that He also established the laws of nature as well? And just as the pilot of an aircraft can override automatic controls at will, could not an all powerful God override the controls we know as natural laws? But not everyone chooses that reasoning, so differing opinions are common in Bible interpretation. And the basis for differing opinions became the subject of a discussion with my friend at breakfast one morning.

As the two of us discussed the subject of Biblical inerrancy, he told me of a newspaper article he read. In it the journalist had written something like, "When I read the Bible and discover something I don't agree with, I know that I am wrong. When some people read the Bible and discover something they don't agree with, they declare the Bible to be wrong."

So, when I discover passages that are contrary to my own understanding, I ask myself, who's the authority on the subject? Is the Bible inerrant? Or am I right? A third option is to wonder if such questions about the Bible suggest a need for greater understanding. Today I choose not to further impose my line of reasoning.

Rather I leave those questions for you to ponder during your own reflections.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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