TWO NATURES OF THE BIBLE

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My post yesterday about the two natures of Bible translation caused me to reflect on the way that the Bible itself has, in a sense, two natures. I've probably written about this in earlier blog posts, but it is worth revisiting.

Christians believe that the text of the Bible is inspired (2 Tim 3:16). There are various ways of describing what this means, but essentially it means that in some way, God has had input into Scripture, ensuring that it reliably conveys the message that he wants to pass on to his creation. Obviously there is more to it than that, but this will do for now.



On the other hand, we know that the Bible was written by human beings. There are clear differences in style and methodology in the way different sections are written. The human authors were much more than divine dictation machines; they put their personalities and experiences into the words they wrote.

So what?

We don't know how this worked out in practice for the authors, but in the Bible we have an amazingÂ amalgamÂ of divine and human communication.

The point of bringing this up is not simply to rehash a bit of basic theology, but to ask why the Bible is the way it is? The answer to that question lies in the nature of God. As I've said numerous times, the Triune God of the Bible is a God of relationships. Father, Son and Spirit are joined in an eternal, loving union. Amazingly, God wants to draw us into relationship with him. He could have brought about the Bible by simply dictating to a passive human secretary (which is close to how Muslims view the Koran) or he could have given us a book already written in letters of gold on the finest parchment. But he didn't.

The Triune, relational God gave us the Bible through relationship. He loved the meticulous way that Luke gathered his material, sifted the accounts and compared sources, so he worked in and through Luke to produce an inspired Gospel which reflects Luke's character. God enjoyed the way that Paul's forensic mind got to grips with the theological conundrums posed by the relationship to the death and resurrection of Jesus and Jewish law and history. So he inspired Paul as he thought through these complex issues, shaping his thinking so that Paul could write inspired, but authentically

Pauline letters.

The Bible is the way it is because God is the God he is. He loves us and he is not ashamed to see his message wrapped up in the thoughts and writings of fallen human beings. Just as he was not ashamed to take on frail human flesh and dwell amongst us.