

# HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

## LESSON 3 INSPIRATION

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The word inspired or inspiration actually comes from the equivalent Greek word describing the divine nature of the Bible. This is found in 2 Timothy 3:16 which says, “All Scripture is inspired by God.” Literally this word, *theopneustia*, means “God-breathed.” God effectively breathed out Scripture; it came from His mouth. It is His word. In what sense did God breathe out the Bible though?

### DIFFERENT VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

- Natural theory—the Bible is merely the product of extraordinary men and literary geniuses from the past
- Moral theory—God oversaw the human authors, somehow ensuring that they spoke truthfully in all moral and spiritual matters, while historical or scientific matters may be in error
- Dynamic theory—God communicated His word to human authors through general impressions such that the concepts of the Bible are from God, but the actual words used may be in error
- Dictation theory—God dictated His very words to the human authors, who were entirely passive in the production of Scripture
- Concursive theory—God superintended the human authors, working in and through their individual styles, such that as they wrote their own words, they were also writing the very words of God at the same time

## **BASIC DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION**

Any definition of inspiration must properly include and relate these three aspects: God's role, man's role, and the result. Along these lines, we can define the process of inspiration as follows:

God, through the Holy Spirit, worked in and through human prophets, writing with their own individual personalities, vocabularies, and styles, to produce His authoritative, trustworthy, inerrant Scripture.

## **GOD'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION**

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  - Meaning of "Scripture"
  - Meaning of "all"
  - Meaning of "inspired by God"
    - See Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 33:6; 2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9; Matthew 4:4
- 2 Peter 1:19-21
  - The origin of scripture- v20
  - Meaning of "moved" by HS- v21

## **MAN'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION**

- God providentially used the unique styles and perspectives of the prophets
  - Time
  - Place
  - Education
  - Experiences
  - Vocabulary
  - Style
- Inspiration does not exclude:
  - Variety
  - Personality
  - Approximation
  - Use of other documents

## THE RESULT OF INSPIRATION

As the work of God and the work of human authors came together, the result was the inspired Scriptures. Though through the means of human hands, they ultimately came from the breath of God. The product was therefore a perfect union of God and man. Being the perfect word of God, there are various implications to consider now.

- Implications of inspiration
  - The Bible is inerrant
    - Psalm 19:7; 119:160; John 17:17; Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2
  - The Bible is infallible
    - Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; 24:44; John 10:35; Acts 1:16
  - The Bible is authoritative
    - Matthew 21:42; Mark 11:17; Acts 15:13-17; Galatians 3:16; Hebrews 7:4-10

In all, the Bible can truly be said to be God's word. And just like God's spoken word, God's written word is just as true, just as unbreakable, and just as authoritative. As a final note, although we will study this more later, we can already establish the extent of inspiration.

- Extent of inspiration
  - Inspiration is verbal
    - Scripture is the record of God's "words"- Exodus 20:1; 24:4; Deuteronomy 18:18; Isaiah 8:1; Ezekiel 2:7; 1 Corinthians 2:13
    - Not even the smallest part of a letter would fail- Matthew 5:18
    - Prophets warned not to omit a word, add, or subtract anything- Jeremiah 26:2; Revelation 22:18-19
  - Inspiration is plenary
    - Every part of God's word is inspired- 2 Timothy 3:16
    - Jesus believed all parts of the canon pointed to Him- Luke 24:27, 44
    - Peter viewed all prophetic writing as being given by the Spirit- 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:20-21

## INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The Old Testament is identified as the words of God
  - Psalm 119
  - “The words of the God of Israel”
    - Ezra 9:4
  - “Hear the words of the Lord”
    - 1 Kings 22:19
    - 2 Kings 20:16
- The Old Testament records God directly speaking
  - Genesis 1-3
  - Genesis 12:1-3
  - Exodus 3-4
  - Exodus 19:3; 20:1
  - Joshua 1:8-9
  - 1 Samuel 3:21
  - 1 Kings 14:5
  - 1 Kings 3:5
- The Old Testament records God speaking through prophets
  - Inspiration of “the Law”
    - Exodus 3:15; 32:16
    - Leviticus 1:1
    - Numbers 1:1
    - Deuteronomy 31:26
    - All throughout the rest of the Old Testament, the Law of Moses is seen as God’s word
      - Joshua 1:8; Judges 3:4; 1 Samuel 12:6, 9; Daniel 9:11-12; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1
  - Inspiration of “the Prophets”
    - “Thus says the Lord” or “declares the Lord” 3800+ times
    - 2 Samuel 7:8ff; 23:2
    - Isaiah 1:2
    - 1 Kings 20:13

- “The word of the Lord came to...”
  - Jeremiah 1:1-2, 4, 11
  - Ezekiel 1:3
  - Hosea 1:1-2
  - Joel 1:1
- Later prophets bore witness to earlier prophets
  - Daniel 9:2
  - Ezra 1:1; 5:1
  - Zechariah 7:12
  - Nehemiah 9:30
- Because God authoritatively speaks through His prophets, false prophecy is a most serious offense
  - Deuteronomy 12:32; 13:1-5; 18:15-22
- The Old Testament records God authorizing a written account of His words
  - Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27
  - Exodus 32:16
  - Deuteronomy 31:24-26; Isaiah 8:1; 30:8
  - Jeremiah 30:1-4; 36:28
  - Habakkuk 2:2
- The New Testament affirms the inspiration of the Old Testament
  - The apostles identified the Old Testament as the very word of God written through prophets
    - Matthew 1:22; 2:15, 17-18; 4:14-16- “what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet”
    - Matthew 19:4-5
    - Matthew 22:44-45 cf. Psalm 110:1
    - Acts 1:16
    - Acts 2:16-17
    - Acts 3:18
    - Acts 4:25
    - Acts 13:33-35
    - Romans 3:2

- Romans 9:17
- Galatians 3:18
- Hebrews 3:7
- Further evidence that the apostles believed the Old Testament was the very word of God:
  - Appealing to Old Testament for their authoritative gospel proclamation and teaching
    - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
    - Romans 12:19
    - 1 Peter 1:15-16
    - Acts 17:11
  - The belief that all Old Testament prophecy must be fulfilled
    - Acts 1:16; 2:15-16; 3:18; 4:8-12
  - The belief that everything in the Old Testament was true and reliable, even minor historical details
    - Matthew 2:5
    - Matthew 12:3-4
    - Acts 7
    - 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7
    - Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:10; 2 Peter 2:5
- Jesus affirms the inspiration of the Old Testament
  - See section below

## THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The New Testament is identified as the words of God
  - The words of Jesus are the word of God
    - Luke 5:1
    - John 3:34
    - John 6:63, 68
    - John 8:44-47
    - See also John 1:1; Revelation 19:13; Hebrews 1:1-2
  - The words of the apostles are the word of God
    - Acts 4:29-31
    - Acts 17:13
    - 2 Corinthians 13:2-3
    - 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- The New Testament records God directly speaking
  - Matthew 3:16-17
  - Matthew 17:5-6
  - John 12:27-32
  - Acts 9:1-19
  - Revelation 1:1-3
- The New Testament records God speaking through apostles and prophets
  - Who were the New Testament apostles and prophets?
    - The church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.
      - Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11
  - 1 Corinthians 2:1-16
  - 1 Corinthians 14:37-38
  - 1 Thessalonians 4:15
  - 1 John 4:1-6
  - 2 Peter 3:1-2

- The New Testament comes as an authorized expansion of God's Scripture
  - The meaning of Scripture
  - The New Testament as Scripture
    - 1 Timothy 5:18
    - 2 Peter 3:1-2
    - 2 Peter 3:16
  - The New Testament as authoritative as Scripture
    - Acts 17:11-13
    - 1 Corinthians 7:10-12
    - Colossians 4:16
    - 1 Thessalonians 5:27
    - 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15
    - 2 Thessalonians 3:14
    - Revelation 22:18-19
- Jesus affirms the inspiration of the New Testament
  - See section below



## CHRIST'S VIEW OF INSPIRATION

- Jesus on the inspiration of the Old Testament
  - Jesus attested that the historical details of the Old Testament were completely true, including miracles
    - The creation of Adam and Eve—Matthew 19:3-6
    - Abel and his murder—Matthew 23:35
    - Noah and the flood—Luke 17:26-27
    - The destruction of Sodom—Luke 17:28-29
    - The judgment on Lot's wife—Luke 17:31-32
    - Moses and the burning bush—Luke 20:37
    - The bronze serpent—John 3:14
    - Manna from heaven—John 6:49
    - The visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon—Matthew 12:42
    - Elijah's famine—Luke 4:25, 27
    - Naaman's healing—Luke 4:27
    - Jonah and the fish—Matthew 12:40
    - Nineveh's conversion—Matthew 12:41
  - Jesus affirmed the divine authorship of the Old Testament through prophets
    - Moses—Matthew 8:4; John 5:45-47
    - David—Matthew 22:43-44; Luke 20:42; Mark 12:36
    - Isaiah—Matthew 13:14-15
    - Daniel—Matthew 24:15-16
    - What the prophet said, God said—Matthew 15:1-11
    - John 17:17—God's word is not just truthful, but truth itself
  - Jesus believed that since the Old Testament was God's word, all prophecy must be fulfilled
    - Matthew 26:31, 54
    - John 13:18; 17:12
    - Luke 24:25-27, 44-47
    - Mark 9:12-13

- Jesus believed the entire Old Testament was completely authoritative, being God's word
    - Matthew 5:17-18
    - John 10:35
    - Luke 16:17
    - Luke 16:27-31
    - Jesus used Scripture to settle disputes
      - Matthew 12:1-8 cf. 1 Samuel 21:6
      - Matthew 21:12-13 cf. Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11
    - Jesus used Scripture to refute falsehood
      - Luke 4:1-13; Matthew 4:1-11
      - Matthew 19:3-9- cf. Genesis 2:23-24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4
    - Jesus used Scripture to testify of His own identity
      - John 5:39-47
  - In all Jesus viewed the OT as inspired, authoritative, and inerrant. He never once cited an error or corrected the Bible. He never found it false or apologized for it. The OT was everywhere upheld by Jesus. There is no greater champion of the inspiration of the OT than the Lord Himself.
- Jesus on the inspiration of the New Testament
- Jesus said His words were on level with the Father
    - John 8:26-28
    - John 14:10
    - John 17:7-8
  - Jesus divinely commissioned the apostles as His witnesses
    - During His ministry, Jesus commissioned His apostles and prophets as preaching witnesses of His gospel
      - Luke 10:1-16
    - After His death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned His apostles again as witnesses of His resurrection and the fuller truth of the gospel. This greater revelation would be accompanied by the Holy Spirit to empower them as witnesses all the more.

- Matthew 28:19-20
    - Acts 1:8
    - Acts 1:22; 3:14-15
    - At first the apostles gave verbal witnesses through preaching. Some later took it further and made a written witness of the teaching of the apostles and prophets to last after they were gone. This is the New Testament.
      - John 19:35; 21:24-25
  - Jesus pre-authenticated the New Testament and guaranteed its inspiration through the Holy Spirit
    - John 14:25-26
    - John 15:26-27
    - John 16:12-15, 25-28
    - John 17:20
- From Jesus we learn:
- Inspiration extends to all of Scripture
    - Matthew 5:17-18
    - Luke 24:44
    - John 10:34-35 with Psalm 82:6
  - Inspiration extends to the books of Scripture
    - Jesus quotes from all the books of Moses, many of the major and minor prophets, and many of the Psalms and writings
  - Inspiration extends to the words of Scripture
    - Matthew 22:31-32
    - Matthew 22:44
    - John 8:58
    - John 10:34 with Psalm 82:6
  - Inspiration extends to the letters of Scripture
    - Matthew 5:18
  - Jesus believed in verbal plenary inspiration