

Inspiration of the Bible

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

II Timothy 3:16-17

APPRECIATION OF INSPIRATION

- A. God’s ministers may be perfect and furnished for all matters by His inspired scripture.
 - 1. If a minister does not love this subject, he has a problem, for the scriptures are mainly his to study and teach (I Tim 4:13-15; II Tim 2:15; 4:2; Neh 8:8; Mal 2:7).
 - 2. Every minister, or every man, should aspire to be like inspired Elihu (Job 32:1-10); though he was inspired directly, you have indirect inspiration in the scriptures.
- B. God wrote His words in stone by His finger for Moses (Ex 31:18; 32:15-16; De 9:10).
 - 1. No wonder we have the expression, “written in stone,” for finality and certainty!
 - 2. But no one could see the stones or writing, yet you have them twice (Ex 20; De 5)!
- C. How do you read your Bible? It is not the words of men, but of God (I Thess 2:13).
 - 1. Do you read it as if every single word were chosen by God primarily for you?
 - 2. Does it light you up to know the mind and heart of the infinite Creator Jehovah?

DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

- A. The Bible declares its inspiration, as the opening text above states (II Tim 3:16-17).
- B. The English word “inspire” comes from two Latin words in (*in*) and spirare (*breathe*).
 - 1. Thus the basic, literal sense of the word inspiration means to breathe into a person.
 - 2. Figuratively it means to infuse some thought or feeling into someone or thing as if by breathing; or to animate or actuate by some mental or spiritual influence.
- C. We understand inspiration to be God’s use of men to write His words in the Bible.
- D. The best description of inspiration is by Peter about God moving men (II Pet 1:21).
- E. The action of inspiring is ascribed to God (II Timothy 3:16; Job 32:8; II Peter 1:21).

NECESSITY OF INSPIRATION

- A. If the Bible’s words came by the will of man, then it is not scripture (II Peter 1:20-21).
 - 1. The word of God and the word of men are not the same (I Thess 2:13; Rom 3:4).
 - 2. The opinions of any man, any group of men, or all men is only folly and vanity.
- B. Satan and men have corrupted the words of God, so we need inspiration for protection from their crafty deceit and flagrant perversions (Gen 3:1-5; II Cor 2:17; 4:2).

DEPENDENCY OF INSPIRATION

- A. Inspiration depends on preservation, or inspiration is a moot theological distraction.
- B. Men prove inspiration by quoting scripture texts like II Tim 3:16-17 and II Pet 1:21, which must be preserved accurately to prove anything, thus preservation is assumed.
- C. Without preservation, the profit of inspiration would be limited or gone (II Pet 1:19), and God and inspiration would be reduced to a big tease misleading God’s elect.
- D. Preservation of scripture is an entirely different study outside the scope of this study.

EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

- A. *Natural inspiration* is a theory that scripture was written by faithful and good men who were inspired only in the sense any writer of genius or moral ability is inspired.
- B. *Conceptual inspiration* is a theory that scripture was written when God gave thoughts or ideas to men and they wrote them down in their own words.
- C. *Plenary, verbal inspiration* is a theory that all (plenary) words (verbal) were inspired by a direct act of God, but it is too vague as to how inspiration actually occurred.
- D. True inspiration is understood by the doctrine and example of scripture concerning it.
 - 1. Scripture is considered God's voice (II Sam 23:2; Heb 3:7; 4:7; Acts 1:16; 28:25).
 - 2. The words of scripture are called God's words (Deut 8:3; Ps 12:6; Luk 4:4; 21:33).
 - 3. The words of scripture were given by God (Jer 30:1-2; 36:1-2,18,32; Ex 34:1,28).
 - 4. Every jot (letter) or tittle (accent mark for distinction) is important (Matthew 5:18).

METHOD OF INSPIRATION

- A. God *moved men* to speak (write) the scriptures (II Peter 1:21; Ecclesiastes 12:10-11).
 - 1. The cause was God. It was not by the intelligence, will, effort, or plan of men.
 - 2. The instrument was men. About 40 men were moved by the Spirit (Mark 12:36).
 - 3. The message was God's; at times they did not fully understand it (I Pet 1:10-12).
 - 4. God inspired a dumb ass, a false prophet (Balaam), and a king (Nebuchadnezzar)!
- B. God dictated the words *internally* to the men who wrote them down as scripture.
 - 1. David wrote words his heart dictated (Ps 45:1; I Chr 28:11-13,19; Job 32:18-20).
 - 2. Paul wrote words given by the Holy Ghost (John 14:17,26 compare to I Cor 2:13).
 - 3. Compare inspiration to the gift of tongues or prophecy (Acts 2:4; I Cor 14:2,4,18); though God took control of the vocal cords like Balaam's ass, they could refrain.
- C. God dictated the words *audibly* to the men who in turn wrote them down as scripture.
 - 1. Moses (the Law) wrote the words that God dictated (Ex 24:4; 34:27-28; Deu 31:9).
 - 2. Jeremiah (the Prophets) wrote the words that God dictated (Jer 30:2; 36:1-2,18,32).
 - 3. John (New Testament) wrote God's words (Rev 1:11 compare 2:1,8; 14:13; 19:9).
- D. This method of inspiration is ridiculed as "*mechanical dictation*," because it does not give much glory or role to men, but we are not ashamed of the clear examples above.
 - 1. God may have involved the writer's feelings or opinions (Gal 1:6; Phil 1:3), but we emphasize the method clearly stated in scripture, knowing it could include such.
 - 2. Read Jeremiah 36:18. Which of the four theories of inspiration sounds the closest?
 - 3. God used men that He prepared (holy men) to write down scripture (II Peter 1:21).
 - 4. God prepared Moses, David, and Jeremiah (Ex 4:10-12; II Sam 23:1-2; Jer 1:4-10).
 - 5. God used the differences in experience, knowledge, and style of the men He chose, but the words are still His (Eccl 2:1; Luke 1:1-4; II Thess 3:17; II Peter 3:16; etc.).

RESULT OF INSPIRATION

- A. It is harmonious throughout because it is one message from one Author (II Pet 1:21).
- B. It is without internal contradiction for the very same reason (John 10:35; Prov 8:8-9).

- C. It is dependable for detail to an incredible degree, as 17 one-word arguments show.
1. An argument may be based on a single three-word phrase (Hebrews 12:26-27).
 2. An argument may be based on a single word – the word “new” (Hebrews 8:13).
 3. The passive voice of a verb rather than the active is to be considered (Gal 4:9).
 4. The present tense rather than the past tense is clearly to be considered (John 8:57).
 5. The inability to alter or violate a single word is used as an argument (John 10:35).
 6. An important argument may be based on the number of a noun (Galatians 3:16).
 7. An interpolated word in translation may be used for debate (Mat 22:31-32; Ex 3:6).

CONSIDERATIONS OF INSPIRATION

- A. Scripture is magnified above God’s own name (Neh 9:5 cp Ps 138:2; Exodus 20:7).
- B. Scripture is personified as God Himself (Gal 3:8; Romans 9:17; Hebrews 3:7; 4:7).
- C. Scripture is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89,152,160; Matt 5:18; I Pet 1:25).
- D. Scripture is more sure than the voice of God (II Peter 1:16-21 cp Matthew 17:1-9).
- E. Scripture has nothing froward (unreasonable) or perverse (evil) in it (Proverbs 8:7-8).
- F. Scripture cannot be broken (contradicted or refuted) even in a single word (Jn 10:35).
- G. Scripture is the judge of truth and error (Acts 17:11; I John 4:6; 2:21; Ps 119:128).
- H. Scripture works effectually if believed (I Thess 2:13; Rom 10:17; Col 1:6; I Pet 2:2).
- I. Scripture is necessary for man to live spiritually (Deut 8:3; Luke 4:4; Proverbs 30:5).
- J. Scripture is scientifically, historically, prophetically accurate to an amazing degree.

IMPLICATIONS OF INSPIRATION

- A. Paraphrases are not scripture; they deny God’s words; they are novels about the Bible.
 1. We do not want men’s words, even if those words of men are about Bible words.
 2. We cannot climb higher toward the will of God than the original source document.
 3. Kenneth Taylor’s, *The Living Bible*, published in 1971 was his take on the ASV.
 4. Eugene Peterson’s, *The Message*, published in 2002 was his idiomatic translation, of which he said, “*When I’m in a congregation where somebody uses [The Message] in the Scripture reading, it makes me a little uneasy. I would never recommend it be used as saying, ‘Hear the Word of God from The Message.’ But it surprises me how many do.*” [Reported in Christianity Today, October 7, 2002.]
- B. Dynamic equivalent translations are not technically paraphrases but take such liberty.
 1. The *New International Version* is one such translation modifying original words.
 2. The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* claims to be based on optimal equivalence!
 3. For a list of types of translations ... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynamic_and_formal_equivalence.
- C. When first hearing someone complain about the *thee’s* and *thou’s*, you might agree.
 1. Why dumb down the KJV to modern English in the second person pronouns, even though it is lovers of Hebrew and Greek that often make this deceitful argument!
 2. For more about *thee’s* and *thou’s* ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/scripture/thee-and-thou.php>.
 3. Once you eliminate *thee’s* and *thou’s*, how long until it is a gender-neutral Bible?
 4. If you alter one or both of these, reverence and godly fear are hurt (Heb 12:28-29).
- D. Never let anyone compromise the Bible’s words in any way to reduce word integrity.

CONCLUSION OF INSPIRATION

- A. We have the words of God expressing His mind and will for our lives (Deut 29:29).
- B. We may take rules of study like I Corinthians 2:13 to find Holy Spirit use of words.
- C. We may preach based on Nehemiah 8:8 and II Timothy 2:15 with God's exact words.
- D. We may argue from individual words as the Bible illustrates in at least 17 examples.
- E. But what good is inspiration, unless you read the Bible as God's very words to you?
- F. And what good is reading, unless it leads to doing what you read (James 1:21-25)?