



Lesson 5: Evidence for the Inspiration of the Bible

The Concept of Inspiration & The Unique Claims of the Bible

WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

2 Timothy 3:16 declares that “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The word translated inspiration in this verse (Greek: *theopneustos*) literally means “God breathed.” Inspiration is the process by which the very breath of God spoke His word directly through a man’s speech or writing. By this definition, if a writing is truly *inspired* it came directly from God. God merely used a man to express Himself.

WHAT THE BIBLE CLAIMS CONCERNING ITS INSPIRATION

- **All Scripture is Inspired.** The Bible claims that the entirety of Scripture is inspired. Inspiration is complete (or plenary). We recognize that 2 Timothy 3:16 was penned before the writing of the New Testament was completed. Nevertheless, the writings of the New Testament are also categorized as “scripture” (see 2 Peter 3:16). As such, they also lay claim to inspiration. The words penned by inspired men in the pages of the New Testament are “the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37).
- **Every word is inspired (verbal inspiration).** In the process of inspiration, the *very words* were given by the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 explains that the Holy Spirit taught inspired men the words they were to use. And while the Spirit may have used an individual man’s vocabulary, experiences and mannerisms, He Himself directed which words would be used. Ezekiel 1:3 describes this process when it states that “the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel”.
- **Inspired men spoke as they were moved by the Spirit of God.** In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the inspired apostle Peter explains why Scripture is not open to “private interpretation” – men are not free to interpret Scripture according to their personal preferences because the Scriptures are NOT mere human words. They were brought forth by the Spirit of God.
 - Elsewhere, Peter asserts that it was the Spirit who directed the Old Testament prophets’ as they foretold of the coming of Christ and the gift of salvation (1 Peter 1:10-11).
 - The Old Testament itself identifies the Spirit of the Lord as the source of the words of the prophets (Zechariah 7:12; Nehemiah 9:30).
 - The Spirit speaks in Scripture! (Revelation 2:7, 11, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).
- **God is quoted in Scripture.** The phrase “thus says the Lord” or its equivalent occurs more than 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone. (Note Genesis 1; 2 Samuel 23:2-3; Jeremiah 10:1-2).
- **Scripture cannot be broken.** In John 10:35 Jesus said that “The Scripture cannot be broken.” Scripture is authoritative and infallible. It is incapable of being false, erroneous or mistaken. If it could not be trusted on one point, it could not be trusted

on any point. But Jesus said that Scripture CANNOT BE BROKEN! The Psalmist exhibited this same attitude toward God's word when he said, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right" (Psalm 119:128).

QUESTIONS ON THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE:

1. Based on the information in this lesson, but in your own words, define "inspiration".
2. How do we know that the writings of the New Testament should be considered inspired Scripture?
3. Describe the process by which God revealed what was in His mind to men? (1 Corinthians 2:10-13).
4. Why aren't men free to give their own personal interpretations of Scripture? (2 Peter 1:20-21)
5. According to Zechariah 7:12, how had the Lord sent His law and His words to the people?
6. How does David describe his inspiration in 2 Samuel 23:2?
7. If inspired Scripture is wrong on some point, what would that imply about God?