

# INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

## I. Biblical references

- A. Only one verse directly refers to "inspiration" of Scripture.
1. II Tim. 3:16 - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness..."
  2. "Inspiration" is a translation of Greek word *theopneustos*
    - a. *Theopneustos* is derived from two Greek words
      - (1). *theos* = "God"
      - (2). *pneo* = "to blow, to breathe"
    - b. Means "God-breathed"
    - c. *pneo* is also the root of *pneuma*, which is "spirit"
    - d. Eng. word "inspire" from Latin *inspirare*, "to breathe in"
      - (1) This could mean that God "breathes into"
        - (a) a written document; an investiture into scripted literature.
        - (b) the human authors
      - (2) Such meaning is not consistent with "God-breathed"
      - (3) Perhaps "inspired" and "inspiration" are not the best translations for what Paul meant.
    - e. "God-breathed" conveys idea of God-originated
      - (1) Perhaps better English translation might be
        - (a) "Expiration" or "expired"
        - (b) "Aspiration" or "aspired"
      - (2) Refers to the divine transmission by His Spirit of the articulated content of His revelation to man
      - (3) The ontological content of His revelation to man is Jesus Christ, the Word (Jn. 1:1,14)
      - (4) No explanation is made of the procedures employed by God to convey the content of Scripture

B. Others verses to be considered:

1. Matt. 22:43; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42 - "David in the Spirit, calls Him 'Lord'." (Ps. 110:1) - (RSV, LB, JBP, TEV, NEB - "inspired by Spirit")
2. John 10:34-36 - "to whom (David) the word of God came (and Scripture cannot be broken),..." (Ps. 82:6)
3. Acts 1:16; 4:24 - "Holy Spirit through mouth of David.." (Ps. 2:1; 69:25; 109:8)
4. I Pet. 1:10,11 - "prophets..the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow"
5. II Peter 1:21 - "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God"

## II. Men's theories attempting to explain the procedures of God's "breathing" and "moving" in the inspiration of Scripture.

### A. Intuition

1. Men intuitively gained insight into God's truth
2. The thought and writing are all of men, not God.

- B. Indication
  1. God indicated every word to the writers by dictation
  2. The thought and writing are all of God, not men.
- C. Illumination
  1. God illuminated the author's thought processes
  2. The end-product of written material, and the accuracy or inaccuracy thereof, cannot be attributed to God
- D. Influence
  1. God influenced the thinking of the authors (perhaps unrealized)
  2. These authors had been providentially prepared by God for the task
  3. The authors employed their individual characteristics
  4. Divine and human elements in inspiration of Scripture

### III. Divine and human elements in "inspiration" of Scripture

- A. Divine element
  1. Scriptural statements emphasize Divine source and origination
    - a. *ek theos*, not *ek anthropos*
    - b. Not product only of human initiation or impulse
  2. Content of Scripture divinely transmitted/originated in minds of the writers as they "listened under" God in obedience
  3. The product of written scripture is
    - a. word of God (John 10:35)
    - b. testimony of God (I Cor. 2:1)
    - c. God's wisdom (I Cor. 2:7)
    - d. revealed by God through Spirit (I Cor. 2:10)
- B. Human element
  1. Scripture indicates human agency and instrumentality
    - a. "men...spoke from God" (II Pet. 1:21)
    - b. "Moses says" - (Matt. 22:24; Acts 3:22; Rom. 10:5,19)
    - c. "David says" - (Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:42; Acts 2:25; Rom. 11:9)
    - d. "Isaiah says" - (Jn. 1:23; 12:39; Rom. 9:27,29; 10:20)
  2. Scripture writers engaged in usual preparation for writing
    - a. investigated (Lk. 1:3), collected facts
    - b. conducted interviews (Lk. 1:2)
    - c. compiled (Lk. 1:1)
    - d. laid out in logical, consecutive order (Lk. 1:3)
    - e. formulated conclusions
    - f. condensed speeches
    - g. composed the words
    - h. structured material for particular audience
  3. Scripture writers utilized their personal traits
    - a. backgrounds - religious, racial, national
    - b. cultural conditioning (cf. head-coverings)
    - c. personal preferences (Paul and marriage)
    - d. vocabulary
    - e. grammar
    - f. style and format
    - g. hermeneutic understanding
  4. Does this allow that what they wrote might be colored or tainted by their own thoughts, personalities and abilities?
    - a. God providentially prepared these men for such a task.
    - b. Even for the development of their personalities, vocabularies, etc.

- C. Divine/human interaction
  - 1. Not the same as Person of Jesus being divine and human
  - 2. Incarnational union much deeper than process of inspirational inscripturation
- D. Processes and procedures God used in influencing man and transmitting content are not explained.
  - 1. How did "God breathe"? (II Tim. 3:16)
  - 2. How were they "moved by Holy Spirit"? (II Peter 1:21)
  - 3. How did the "word of God come"? (John 10:35)
  - 4. How did God control, guide, direct, lead, influence, etc.?

#### IV. Contemporary considerations of the "inspiration" of Scripture

- A. Modern "fundamentalist" and "evangelical" affirmation
  - 1. Typical statement of belief
 

"We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture; that the Holy Bible is the divine Word of God and is the absolute, infallible and inerrant authority for Christians in the Church, when literally and accurately interpreted."
  - 2. Questions to be considered
    - a. Does "verbal" mean exact "word for word" dictation? (cf. II Cor. 2:13)
    - b. Does "plenary" (full, complete) mean that every part is equally inspired and equally profitable (cf. II Tim. 3:16)
    - c. God is holy. Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - d. God is divine. Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - e. Christ is the Word of God (Jn. 1:1,14). Should we refer to the Bible as such?
    - f. God is absolute. Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - g. God is infallible. Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - h. God is inerrant. Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - i. Christ is authority (Matt. 28:18). Should we attribute such to the Bible?
    - j. Does "literal" mean only direct and physical, or does it pertain to the literary genre of the literature and the literary intent of the author, which may be figurative and metaphorical?
    - k. Does accurate interpretation mean conformity to the thought and opinion of a particular group, or can we allow Christians to "agree to disagree"?
    - l. Are some Christians in danger of deifying the Bible, and engaging in Bibliolatry? (cf. Jn. 5:39)
      - (1) textualism
      - (2) literalism - "letterism" (II Cor 3:6; Rom. 2:29; 7:6)
      - (3) biblicism
      - (4) book-religion
- B. Additional considerations about "inspiration" of Scripture
  - 1. Is "inspiration" only to be attributed to the original text of Scripture?
    - a. No original manuscripts exist
    - b. This becomes an undocumentable and hypothetical argument.

2. Do the New Testament references refer only to the "inspiration" of the Old Testament scriptures?
  - a. New Testament authors recognized they were speaking and writing "in the Spirit"
    - I Cor. 2:13 - "we also speak..as those taught by the Spirit"
    - I Cor. 14:37 - "things which I write are the Lord's commandment"
  - b. Peter recognized Paul's writing as "scripture"
    - II Pet. 3:15,16 - "Paul...wrote in his letters...untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures..."

V. The place of the inspired Scriptures in Christian lives

- A. Must recognize the Christocentric emphasis of Scripture
  - John 5:39 - "it is these that bear witness of Me"
  - Lk. 24:27 - "explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures"
- B. Must employ acceptable hermeneutic principles
  1. Handle accurately - II Tim. 2:15
  2. Avoid "literalism"
  3. Engage in *exegesis*; not *eisegesis*
  4. Allow for diversity of interpretation
- C. Must recognize the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit in understanding the "inspired" meaning of Scripture.
  1. Holy Spirit empowers our understanding (Matt. 22:29)
  2. Holy Spirit illumines, enlightens, reveals (Eph. 1:18; Phil. 3:15)
  3. Holy Spirit allows us to appraise and know (I Cor. 2:6-16)
- D. Must accept the Scriptures as
  1. Authoritative, but not "absolute authority"
    - a. Scripture fulfilled - Mk. 14:49; Jn. 13:18; 17:12
    - b. "It is written" - Matt. 4:4,7,10; Lk. 24:46
    - c. "Have you not read?" - Matt. 19:4; 21:42; Mk. 12:10
  2. Trustworthy
    - a. Cannot be broken - Jn. 10:35
    - b. Not to be annulled - Matt. 5:19
  3. Instructional
    - a. Written for our instruction - Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11
    - b. "Profitable for teaching,..training - II Tim. 3:16
    - c. Learn and become convinced - II Tim. 3:14
    - d. able to give wisdom - II Tim. 3:15
    - e. lead to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus - II Tim. 3:15
  4. Encouraging
    - Rom. 15:4 - "through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"