



### III. THE INSPIRATION OF GOD'S WORD

#### A. The Definition of Inspiration

1. Basic usage and meaning
  - a. Modern usage of the word *inspiration* has led many to an incorrect understanding of scriptural inspiration. After all, the modern usage points to something yielding encouragement or strength.
  - b. Many Christian writers have simply defined the word *inspiration* as "God-breathed." This sounds great on the surface and certainly bears some truth. However, a closer look at the usage of the word in scripture demonstrates that this definition, in and of itself, is weak.
2. Biblical usage
  - a. The word *inspiration* only occurs in two places in the Bible (Job 32:8; 2 Timothy 3:16).
  - b. In Job 32:8, there is a contrast between "a spirit in man" and "the inspiration of the Almighty."
    - (1) Just as man is contrasted with the Almighty, so man's spirit is contrasted with the inspiration of the Almighty.
    - (2) Apparently, inspiration is meant to be an emphasis on the person of the Godhead known as the Spirit of God rather than merely on God's breath.
    - (3) It is not merely God's breath that guides into all truth and shows the future. It is the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)!
  - c. While 2 Timothy 3:16 does not, by itself, yield an easy definition, another related verse confirms that inspiration has much more to do with the Spirit of God (2 Peter 1:21).
  - d. As stated earlier, the doctrinal meaning of inspiration is the act by which God insured that every word of scripture was completely without error and precisely as He intended. So how did He do that? He did it by His Spirit.
3. A review of the foundation
  - a. God used revelation to take a truth not previously known to man and make it known to him.
  - b. In God's infinite wisdom He knew man's propensity to pervert the truth if left to his own devices. Therefore, God inspired His word.
  - c. He not only revealed the truth, but He also guided the recipient by His Holy Spirit so that the truth received was perfectly transmitted.
4. Scriptural principles of inspiration
  - a. Addressing the initial problem
    - (1) Many believers depart from scripture concerning the principles of inspiration. This departure brings with it two great errors:
      - a) Their emphasis is directed away from the work of God and onto men whom they refer to as "divinely inspired."
      - b) Their erroneous assessment is further compounded as they claim that the doctrine only applies to the original texts (2 Timothy 3:14-17).



b. Addressing the errors

- (1) Inspiration pertains to the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-17).
  - a) The Bible never points to the penmen as being inspired.
  - b) In fact, to direct one's attention toward this false premise creates questions that must be answered.
    - i) What about Tertius (Romans 16:22)?
    - ii) What about Solomon's works (1 Kings 4:32)?
    - iii) What about the missing epistles (1 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 4:16; 3 John 1:9; Jude 1:3)?
    - iv) What about Paul's claims (1 Corinthians 7:6, 12, 25)?
      - (a) If Paul was inspired, these passages raise issues.
      - (b) Not only would this mean that God told Paul what to write, but He also told him that they were his own words and not God's words.
      - (c) If it is the scriptures which were inspired, God instructed Paul to include these words.
- (2) The men were moved.
  - a) The Bible plainly teaches that God used men, and it is just as plain that these men were not inspired. However, the Bible does teach that the men were "moved" (2 Peter 1:21).
  - b) When the Bible says that these men were moved, it means they did not speak of their own will, but their words were dictated by the Holy Ghost.
  - c) These men had no ultimate control over what they spoke (as pertaining to the scripture) but were moved, manipulated, and controlled by God (1 Corinthians 9:17).
  - d) The extent of control God exercised over the men is mentioned in several passages.
    - i) Moses proclaimed his inability to speak, God rebuked him and let him know that He could work through a willing servant (Exodus 4:10-12).
    - ii) The Lord told Jeremiah that the words proceeding from his mouth were put there by God (Jeremiah 1:6-9).
    - iii) This truth is confirmed by David (2 Samuel 23:2).
  - e) Although the men did not control their words, the Holy Spirit distinctively used the men in their writings.
    - i) The language in Luke's gospel is more sophisticated (Luke 1:1-4).
    - ii) John did not refer to himself in the first person (John 21:20-24).
    - iii) Yet these words were settled in heaven before these men were born (Psalm 119:89).
  - f) Only the Almighty God could orchestrate this work.
    - i) The Lord made it obvious that He used different men and different styles to compile one perfect Book.
    - ii) And, in His foreknowledge, He did all this before the men were even born.



- (3) The words are from the Holy Ghost.
  - a) Words are the means by which God communicates with us.
  - b) According to the Bible, these words are directly from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13; Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Hebrews 3:7).
- (4) Inspiration continues
  - a) Inspiration pertains to scripture, or the very words of God.
  - b) As long as something is scripture, it is inspired.
  - c) Some limit this to the original autographs, but in doing so they violate a principle of inspiration—“[a]ll scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16).
  - d) Examining the context of the scripture shows that this instance of inspiration is definitely not referring to any original autographs (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

## B. The Extent of Inspiration

1. The word is inspired
  - a. Few believers would argue against the inspiration of the word—the Bible in its entirety or its message.
  - b. The Bible provides several witnesses to attest to this fact (Psalm 119:140; 2 Timothy 3:16).
  - c. Even the translators of the modern bibles declare this to be true.
    - (1) Many of them will plainly tell the reader they translated using “dynamic equivalence” or a “thought-for-thought translation.”
    - (2) In other words, they believe the thoughts of God are inspired and preserved, but not necessarily His individual words.
2. The words are inspired
  - a. God knew mankind could not be trusted with His message unless He also gave them the words with which to convey that message.
  - b. Not only is the entire message inspired of God, but every word of that message is inspired (Proverbs 30:5; Psalm 12:6).
  - c. The modern perversions may be subtle in attacking God’s words, but any attack on God’s word damages the integrity of the whole.
    - (1) Perhaps one of the most telling changes made in modern versions was the subtle installation of the word *exchange* for the word *change* (Romans 1:25).
    - (2) According to this passage, a burden of guilt lies upon those who “changed” the truth of God into a lie.
    - (3) One could imagine how condemning this might be to committees and individuals who tamper with the truth of God.
    - (4) Modern versions swapped the word *exchanged* for the word *changed*, and in doing so they exchanged the burden of guilt.
  - d. God, in His foreknowledge, knew that men could not deliver His word without His words (see the modern perversions).
  - e. He secured His truth by securing for us every word. He carefully chose each word and man has no authority to override His choice.



3. The italicized words are inspired.
  - a. The usage of italicized words
    - (1) Italicized words are used in the King James Bible when there is no equivalent Hebrew or Greek word in the text for the English word, but the English word must be used in order to say the same thing which is said in the Hebrew or Greek.
    - (2) There are times when Hebrew and Greek words must be translated with two or more English words, as well as times when two or more Hebrew or Greek words may be correctly translated with only one English word.
    - (3) Words may need to be included in order to maintain correct grammar.
    - (4) The fact the King James translators used the italicized words demonstrates their sincere desire to be honest in their translating.
  - b. The quotation of italicized words
    - (1) In order for the Lord to demonstrate His approval of the italicized words of the English Bible, a particular italicized word in the source verse would have to appear in a citation of that same verse without italics.
    - (2) There are many examples of this occurring in scripture. Here is merely a sampling:

Word(s) Italicized	Source	Quotation
<i>am</i>	Exodus 3:6	Matthew 22:32
<i>word</i>	Deuteronomy 8:3	Matthew 4:4
<i>is</i>	Deuteronomy 30:14	Romans 10:8
<i>he is</i>	Psalm 16:8	Acts 2:25
<i>are</i>	Psalm 82:6	John 10:34
<i>art</i>	Psalm 2:7	Hebrews 1:5

- c. Conclusions about Italicized Words
  - (1) Any honest Bible student will confess that the italicized words are necessary for proper understanding in the English text.
  - (2) They are divinely placed and are as much a part of the inspired text as the non-italicized words.
  - (3) The King James translators demonstrated absolute honesty by including the italics in the English, but placed those words within the text giving them the same authority as every other word.
  - (4) To reject the italicized words is to dispute the likes of Peter (Acts 2:25), Paul (Romans 10:8), the Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:34), God the Father (Hebrews 1:5), and ultimately the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13).



## 4. The letters are inspired

- a. At this point, even some Bible-believing Christians may find themselves at odds, but it can be demonstrated that the Lord went so far as to inspire even the letters found within the words of God. The Lord goes to great lengths to prove this point (see Genesis 22:18 versus Galatians 3:16).
  - (1) The Lord made sure that it was understood that He specifically intended “seed” rather than “seeds” in the preceding passage.
  - (2) The only difference between the two words is a lowercase s on the end of the word.
  - (3) Yet, the Lord made it clear that He purposely omitted the s on the end of the word.
- b. Think about how many verse meanings would be changed by simply making a word plural that is currently singular, or vice versa. This is just the beginning of examples. If God was not in charge of every letter, man does not and cannot have the perfect words of God.
- c. American Bible publishers are beginning to take liberties with the King James text in this area (i.e., changing Saviour to Savior, and reward to rearward). It may be suggested that these changes do not affect doctrine, and that is generally true, but these spelling changes could easily lead into textual changes. The saints of God would do well to be very careful not to be deceived by the words King James on the cover if changes to the text have taken place.

## 5. The punctuation is inspired (Matthew 5:18)

- a. There is no doubt that the word of God is valid all the way down to the letters. Yet, in order to have the perfect word and words of God, it must also be true that God provided a Bible with perfect punctuation.
- b. If God did not take care to provide the proper punctuation in the proper place, the doctrine accepted by Bible-believing Christians will be found wanting at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- c. In the same manner that changing the words and the letters can defile the message of God’s word, so it is with the punctuation.
- d. This truth is not to be accepted blindly, but can be demonstrated by modifying the location or type of punctuation.
  - (1) Consider the comma after the word *ever* in Hebrews 10:12.
    - a) What if that comma were moved?
    - b) Could the meaning of the verse be changed by such a seemingly insignificant modification?
    - c) If so, would that bear any doctrinal implications?
    - d) Did Christ for ever sit down at the right hand of God?
    - e) How then shall He return?
  - (2) Consider the comma after the word *thee* and the period after the word *paradise* in Luke 23:43.
    - a) What if the position of the comma was changed and the period was exchanged for a question mark?
    - b) Does this change the meaning?



- c) All of a sudden, a thief that had great assurance of meeting the Lord in paradise has now lost all hope as the Lord hypothetically questions the man's eternal destination.
- e. Insignificant changes may be possible when dealing with the vast majority of literature, but the Bible is not so.
  - (1) A change in punctuation can remove the assurance of a person's eternal destination and cancel the coming of our Saviour.
  - (2) Yet, God knew this and gave us a Bible with perfect punctuation.
- 6. Translations can be inspired.
  - a. Consider Exodus 5:1-2.
    - (1) Moses and Aaron most likely spoke to Pharaoh in Egyptian or in their native tongue of Hebrew.
    - (2) Since Exodus is written in Hebrew, Pharaoh would have been forced to speak to his slaves in their language.
    - (3) Either Pharaoh took the time to learn the language of his slaves, or his words and possibly Moses' words were translated into Hebrew as they became part of the canon of scripture.
    - (4) Would these translated words become less inspired than those spoken in Hebrew and written in Hebrew?
  - b. Consider Genesis 42:23.
    - (1) Perhaps it might be argued that Pharaoh, Moses, and Aaron conversed in Hebrew, but it is plain from scripture that Joseph spoke to his brethren in the Egyptian language.
    - (2) Joseph spoke to the interpreter in Egyptian and his words (as recorded in Genesis 42) were translated by the interpreter.
  - c. Consider Acts 26:14.
    - (1) The Bible critic's problems are further compounded by the fact that the Lord Jesus spoke to Paul "in the Hebrew tongue."
    - (2) Acts 26, a New Testament passage originally penned in Greek, provides an interesting example of a translation that is completely confined within the New Testament.
    - (3) Saul (later called Paul) gave a testimony of the words he heard from Christ while on the road to Damascus.
    - (4) In his testimony of that day, he mentioned that the Lord Jesus spoke to him "in the Hebrew tongue."
    - (5) Apparently, this passage had to be translated from Hebrew to Greek just to go into the "original autographs."
  - d. Consider Acts 21:39 – Acts 22:2.
    - (1) In order for the words of Paul to be included in the "original manuscript" of the book of Acts, they had to be translated from Hebrew to Greek.
    - (2) Applying the logic of many of the Bible critics, this would make the "originals" corrupt.
    - (3) On the other hand, the true student of the word of God (the Bible believer) knows and believes that translations can be, and are, the inspired words of God.