



Week 2 - "The Inspired Word of God" "The Revelation of God to Man"

Our evaluation of the Bible and other "holy books" is governed by the recognition that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

If God's final word is found in what we call the Bible, then no other book can be God's word.

To differ with what the Bible says is to differ with God.

What do we mean by *inspiration*?

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

Inspired is translated from the Greek word *theopneustos* which literally means "God-breathed."

Inspiration, in the biblical sense, is the writers accurately wrote what God wanted written.

2 Peter 1: 20-21 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Theologian Carl F. H. Henry writes, "Inspiration is a supernatural influence upon the divinely chosen prophets and apostles whereby the Spirit of God assures the truth and trustworthiness of their oral and written proclamation."[1](#)

Furthermore, the writers were "divinely superintended by the Holy Spirit in the choice of words they used."[{2}](#)

Although some things were dictated to the writers, most of the time the Spirit simply superintended the writing so that the writer, using his own words, wrote what the Spirit wanted

The Historical View of the Church

Historically, the church has consistently held to the inspiration of Scripture, at least until the 19th century.

One scholar has said that throughout the first eight centuries of the church, "Hardly is there a single point with regard to which there reigned . . . a greater or more cordial unanimity."[{3}](#)

The great Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield said, "Christendom has always reposed upon the belief that the utterances of this book are properly oracles of God."[{4}](#)

In the 16th century, the Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin were explicit in their recognition of the divine source and authority of Scripture.[{5}](#)

B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, J. Gresham Machen, Carl F. H. Henry, J. I. Packer and other very reputable scholars and theologians over the last century and a half have argued forcefully for the inspiration of Scripture. And as Warfield notes, this belief underlies all the creeds of the church as well.[{6}](#)

The Witness of the Old Testament

Let's turn now to the Bible itself, beginning with the Old Testament, to see whether its own claims match the beliefs of the church.

The clear intent of the Old Testament writers was to convey God's message.

Consider first that God was said to *speak* to the people.

"God says" (Deut. 5:27),

"Thus says the Lord" (Exod. 4:22),

"I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer. 1:9),

"The word of the Lord came to him" (Gen. 15:4; 1 Kings 17:8).

All these references to God speaking show that He is interested in communicating with us verbally.

The Old Testament explicitly states 3,808 times that it is conveying the express words of God.[\[7\]](#)

God was so interested in people preserving and knowing His word that at times He told people to write down what He said.

Exodus 17:14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." (See also 24:3-7, 34:27; Jer. 30:2; 36:2.)

The clear testimony of Old Testament writings is that God spoke to people, and He instructed them to write down the things He said. These writings have been handed down to us.

Of course, we shouldn't think of all the Old Testament or the New Testament either as having been dictated to the writers. In fact, most of the Bible was not.

What we want to establish here is that God is a communicating God, and He communicates verbally.

The Witness of Jesus

It is clear that Jesus acknowledged the Old Testament writings as being divine in nature.

John 10: 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be broken— 36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Jesus believed it was God's word that came to the prophets of old, and He referred to it as Scripture that could not be broken.

Matthew 5: 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

He affirmed the Law as being fixed and above the whims of men.

Jesus drew on the teachings of the Old Testament in His encounter with Satan

(Matt. 4:1-11). "Man shall not live on bread alone"

(Deut. 8:3), "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only"

(Deut. 6:13), and "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test"

(Deut. 6:16) are all drawn from Deuteronomy.

Each statement was prefaced by "It is written" or "It is said."

Jesus said that he only spoke what the Father wanted Him to (John 12:49).

By quoting these passages as authoritative over Satan, He was, in effect, saying these were God's words.

He also honored the words of Moses (Mark 7:10), Isaiah (Mark 7:6), David (Mark 12:36), and Daniel (Matt. 24:15) as authoritative, as carrying the weight of God's words. {8}

The Witness of the Apostles

Finally, we need to see what the apostles tell us about the nature of Scripture.

Paul attributed what he taught directly to Christ

2 Cor. 13: 1 This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 2 I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them— 3 since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

He identified his gospel with the preaching of Jesus

Romans 16: 25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

And he said his words were taught by the Spirit

1 Corinthians 2: 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

What he wrote to the Corinthians was "the Lord's commandment"

1 Corinthians 14: 36 Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

Furthermore, Paul, and John as well, considered their writings important enough to call for people to read them (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; John 20:31; Rev. 1:3).

Peter put the apostolic message on par with the writings of the Old Testament prophets

2 Pet. 3:1 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

Paul wrote:

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness

Peter also wrote:

2 Peter 1: 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Revelation

The content and process of God's making Himself known to people. All knowledge of God comes by way of revelation.

Human knowledge of God is revealed knowledge since God, and He alone, gives it.

He bridges the gap between Himself and His creatures, disclosing Himself and His will to them. By God alone can God be known.

Modern thought often questions the possibility and/or reality of revelation. Biblical faith affirms revelation is real because the personal Creator God has chosen to let His human creatures know Him. The question remains, "How can a person know God." The Bible appears to distinguish two ways of knowing God, general and special revelation.

General Revelation:

Romans 1: 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

To say God reveals Himself through nature means that through the events of the physical world God communicates to us things about Himself that we would otherwise not know.

Psalms 19: 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

This is what we call natural or general revelation.

General revelation is universal in the sense that it is God's self-disclosure of Himself in a general way to all people at all times in all places.

General revelation occurs through nature, our experience and our conscience, and in history.

God also reveals himself in men and women. They are made in the "image" and "likeness" of God

Genesis 1: 26 Then God said, "Let us make man[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Humans, as a direct creation of God, are a mirror or reflection of God.

People are God's unique workmanship evidenced by their place of dominion over the rest of creation; in their capacity to reason, feel, and imagine; in their freedom to act and respond; and in their sense of right and wrong (Genesis 1:28 ; Romans 2:14-15).

God's general revelation is plain, whether in nature, in human conscience, or in history.

- (1) Religious belief is a nearly universal human phenomenon.
- (2) Such religious belief is implanted by God.
- (3) All people ought to acknowledge God on the basis of what they learned from the world around them.
- (4) All people believe in God and show their belief even though they do not admit it.
- (5) No one, no matter how seemingly insignificant or weak-minded can be excused for missing God's revelation.

The light of nature is not sufficient though to give the knowledge of God necessary for salvation.

For God's power (Romans 1:20), goodness (Matthew 5:45), and righteousness (Romans 2:14-15) have been revealed ... but not His redemptive power through grace.

That is revealed only through special revelation.

Special Revelation:

Special revelation is necessary to instruct people how to worship God rightly. God in His general revelation reveals Himself, but because of our sinfulness, humans pervert the reception of His general revelation, a revelation so plain it leaves all without excuse.

In contrast to God's general revelation which is available to all people, God's special revelation is available to specific people at specific times in specific places.

**It is available now only by consultation and alignment with sacred Scripture.
(The Christian Bible)**

Hebrews 1: 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

Things to Mull:

1. What is meant by “Inspired Word of God”?
2. Has the church always believed that the Bible was inspired by God? Why?
3. Were the authors of the books of the Bible aware of God leading them to write the words they were penning?
4. What level of importance was Jesus giving to the inspiration of scripture in Matthew 5:17-19? What should our view be?
5. What was Paul’s position on the inspiration of scripture in Romans 16:25-27?
6. If the Bible was written by the inspiration of God what should be our response to it? Why don’t we always respond this way?
7. Describe in your own words what general revelation is.
8. Describe in your own words what general revelation is. What are the differences between the two?
9. Does God still speak to people by specific revelation?
10. Would books written today from a Christian perspective be considered general revelation, specific revelation, or neither?

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