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## How We Got Our Bible



**QUESTION:** How do we know that the revelation which God gave to the human authors of the Bible was recorded accurately in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts.

**ANSWER:** The doctrine of inspiration.

### I. Definition of (Biblical) Inspiration

- A. Inspiration is the ministry of the (1) **Holy Spirit** superintending the (2) **human authors** of the Bible so that, using their (3) own **individual personalities**, they composed and recorded (4) **without error** God's revelation in the words of the (5) **original manuscripts**. (Charles Ryrie)
  - B. Inspiration refers to the *recording of revelation accurately* in SCR.
  - C. The word "inspiration" only appears in the Bible in **2 Timothy 3:16**.
    - (KJV) "All scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
    - (NIV) "All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."
    - (ESV) "All Scripture is **breathed out** by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."
  1. **All scripture** means everything from Genesis to Revelation; all literary types, including genealogies, census data, lists of names, descriptions of the temple and tabernacle, citations from extra-biblical records, etc.
  2. **Inspiration**: (*theopneustos*) - ADJECTIVE fem. sing. nominative "God-breathed"
    - a) *theos* (θεο/ς) - noun "God"
    - b) *pneu* (πνε/ω) - noun "air"; verb "to breath, blow"
    - c) *-tos* (-τοϛ) - suffix forming an adjective (the suffix *-tos* > a perfect passive participle)
    - d) The composite meaning is "breathed (out) by God."
  3. **Profitable** (*ofelimos*) - ADJECTIVE, "beneficial, profitable" Also, 1 Timothy 4:8 "Bodily exercise is *profitable* a little, but godliness is *profitable* for all things."
  4. **Teaching** (*didaskalia*) - NOUN, instruction about the plan and commands of God's program for humanity [*positive term*] {factual information}
  5. **Reproof** (*elegmos*) - NOUN, statement that someone has done wrong based on evidence of such wrongdoing [*negative term*]
  6. **Correction** (*epanorthosis*) - NOUN, an activity to rectify an error from a previous condition of faults or failures [*negative term*]
  7. **Training** (*paideia*) - NOUN, instruction with the intent of forming proper habits of behavior. [*positive term*] {practical instruction}
- D. The concept of inspiration appears in other passages.
  1. The phrase, "*thus says the Lord*" appears in the OT 415x (ESV).
  2. The phrase, "*oracle of the Lord*" appears in the OT 394x (ESV).
  3. The expression, "*the Lord says/said*" appears in the OT 280x (ESV).
  4. **Matthew 2:43** "*He said to them, How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'?*"

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5. **Micah 3:8** "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."
  6. Other expressions signify that God, through the Holy Spirit, communicated information to prophets and apostles that was accurately recorded and became part of our Bible.
- E. To WHOM or to WHAT does inspiration refer?
1. The product - **God-breathed**. The Bible is the product of God's *out-breathing* as 2 Timothy 3:16 indicates.
    - a) (ASV) "**Every scripture** inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness."
    - b) The ASV reading implies that some SCR is not inspired.
    - c) See Kaiser, 1981, WTJ, p. 307-310. [TRY: 'Every scripture *is* God-breathed.']
    - d) The **expiriation** of Scripture follows the model of God's activity of the original creation week.  
**Psalms 33:6, 9** 'By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. 9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.'
  2. The writers - **born-along**. 2 Peter 1:21.
    - a) TEXT
      - (1) [ESV] "For no prophecy was ever produced **(a)** by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along **(b)** by the Holy Spirit."
        - (a) *Produced > carried along* [enexthé, Aor-P-Ind > ferö]
        - (b) *Carried along* [feromenoi, Pres-P-Part > ferö]
      - (2) [KJV] "For the prophecy **came** not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were **moved** by the Holy Ghost."
      - (3) [NIV] "For prophecy never **had its origin** in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were **carried along** by the Holy Spirit."
    - b) COMMENTS (Re: **2 Peter 1:14-21**)

<sup>14</sup> since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. <sup>15</sup> And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased," <sup>18</sup> we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup> And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> 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.

      - (1) **Verse 14**. Peter will be dying soon.
      - (2) **Verse 16**. Peter was an **eyewitness** and a direct **disciple** of Jesus' life and teachings. Peter has faithfully transmitted what he received.
      - (3) **Verse 20**. "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own **interpretation**."
      - (4) "**Private interpretation**" - (*epiluseos* - an explanation of the meaning of a text that is difficult or complex") SCR is not a matter of the prophet's own understanding. The

Spirit explained the message of God to the prophet/apostle.

(5) **Verse 21.** "Men spoke from God as they were *carried along* by the Holy Spirit."

- "Carried along" (*feromenoi*) - a nautical term; as wind moves a ship (Acts 27:15), the Holy Spirit moved the 'boat' (i.e., the prophet) in a certain direction without changing his personality.

3. The process - **inscripturation**. *Inspiration* refers to the Holy Spirit's activity of communicating to the prophet or apostle. *Inscripturation* refers to the process by which the Spirit's thoughts got down on paper. See **1 Corinthians 2:9-16**.

a) TEXT: (ESV) But, as it is written,

*"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him"— [Isa 64:4, generally]*

<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to **us** through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>And **we** impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup>The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup>*"For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" [Isa 40:13]* But **we** have the mind of Christ.

b) COMMENTS:

- (1) The "**we/us**" refers to apostles who wrote Scripture (or Paul is using the *editorial we*). This makes good sense in vv. 6, 7 and 10. Paul is defending his apostolic authority.
- (2) **Verse 12** speaks about **revelation**. The section explains the role of the Spirit to reveal God's thoughts to the apostles. Paul points out that his message is not the product of human wisdom, but it is wisdom from God. To the world this message is foolishness.
- (3) **Verse 13** refers to speaking, not writing (Cf. 2 Peter 1:21 "Men spoke from God.") Paul is arguing that his apostolic teaching (mostly public and oral - but also reflected in his epistolary writings) originated in words he received from God's Holy Spirit and with that authority. **Important:** the words of the prophets and apostles did not originate in their own imaginations but were the words of the Spirit of God. Thus, the apostles could claim to have the mind of Christ = the mind of God.
- (4) **Verse 14.** The natural man has no interest in this information. The passage teaches that the Spirit of God reveals the deep things of God to the human authors.
  - (a) Both believer and non-believer **understand** the message of Scripture, but the non-believer does not receive it or accept it as true.
  - (b) The Holy Spirit testifies to the believer that the Scriptures are true.
  - (c) The Scriptures are *clear*. The clarity of Scripture was an emphasis of the Reformers. Readers do not need an interpretation from a church authority; the Bible is clear in itself - to believer and non-believer - assuming that the reader has a basic education that equips him/her to read and understand **ANY** written text.

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- (5) See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "A Neglected Text in Bibliology Discussions: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16" *WTJ* 43.2 (1981) 302-320. p. 318-319.
- (a) "In contrast to the Apostolic reception (*lambano*) of revelation (vs. 13), the natural man does not 'welcome' or 'accept with pleasure' (*dexomai*) the things of the Spirit of God. This is not to argue that there are two systems of logic in the world, one for the converted and the other for the unconverted. Instead, the natural man has a cognition of this teaching which he then repudiates. Indeed, he must first know at least to some degree, what he then comes to despise."
  - (b) "Thus, the natural man neither welcomes nor embraces the realities found in the biblical text because they are 'discerned' (*anakrino*) that is, they are investigated and appraised to have a certain value or worth by a person who is aided by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit's ministry is one of aiding the believer to apply, to see the value, worth, and significance of a text for his own person, situation, and times. But the natural man has, or wants, none of this help."
  - (c) "Accordingly, we must not confuse this activity of the Holy Spirit. His work does not offer the believer a short-cut which avoids the perspiration of grammatical, syntactical, historical, cultural, and theological exegesis. There is no royal road to interpreting the Scriptures. He does not infuse a meaning or meanings beyond what he has already taught to the writers when they combined spiritual truths with appropriately taught spiritual words. But on the other hand, the Holy Spirit does, and, indeed, he must, aid me in assessing, appraising, and evaluating the word, value, application, and significance of that biblical truth with my need and my personal condition ..."
- (6) **Verse 16.** "We have the mind (**nouß**) of Christ." V. 16a quotes **Isaiah 40:23**
- (a) Cf. W. C. Kaiser, Jr. 1981. "A Neglected Text ... 1 Corinthians 2:6-16" *WTJ* 43.2: 316, "Paul is not talking about the Spirit that animates believers, but about the Holy Spirit's operation in delivering the Scripture to this apostle."; n. 31, "Contrary to the discussion of most commentators ... it interrupts the context without any warrant or grammatical justification to switch from a discussion of the apostle to believers in general."
  - (b) Note **Philippians 2:5** "**Have this mind** (*froneite, fronei/te* Pres-A-Imperative) in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Paul *exhorts* them to have in mind what was in Christ, implying that they do not have this mind naturally.
  - (c) **Romans 12:2** "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (**nouß**), that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
  - (d) **Ephesians 4:23** (You were taught) "... to be renewed in the spirit of your minds (**nouß**)."
  - (e) Believers have the mind of Christ in written form: the New Testament Scriptures.

4. **The mode** of inspiration. The Scriptures are a product of the **direct, creative (supernatural) activity** of God.
- a) *The books of Moses.*
    - (1) Genesis 1-11. Creation of the world and of humans. Even Adam was not present to witness the first days of creation.
    - (2) Genesis 12-50. Possibly transmitted by oral tradition (Buswell), but Harrison (*Introduction to the OT*) suggests that family records were composed on separate tablets. He argues from the "*toledoth*" formulas at the beginning of sections. NOTE: Jacob and Joseph received communication from God in the form of dreams. In a later period, God revealed himself to Daniel in **dreams** and **visions**.
    - (3) Exodus 20. The "ten words" were written on stone tablets by the finger of God. Moses was privileged to have a "face-to-face" conversation with God on Mt. Sinai.
    - (4) Exodus - Deuteronomy. Moses kept a **record**, a journal during the period of the exodus from Egypt and wilderness wanderings - put into final form in the days of Joshua.
  - b) *Narrative Histories.* (Joshua - 2 Kings; 1 Chronicles - Nehemiah) The authors used **eyewitness information** gathered from **government records** and the court records of prophets. The Holy Spirit guided the author/editor in the selection of materials to include in the final product.
  - c) *Prophecy.* The prophets often received visions (e.g., Isaiah 6), but also claim to have received **direct, supernatural** revelation.
    - (1) Deuteronomy 18:18 "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put **my words in his mouth**. He will tell them everything I command him."
    - (2) Jeremiah 1:9 "Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "**I have put my words in your mouth.**"
    - (3) Isaiah 59:21 "'As for me, this is my covenant with them,' says the LORD. '**My Spirit**, who is on you, will not depart from you, and **my words that I have put in your mouth** will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever,' says the LORD."
  - d) *Gospels and Acts.* Matthew and John were in the original circle of disciples. Mark wrote what Peter preached. Luke, companion of Paul, *carefully* researched his work from **various sources**, including Mary (mother of Jesus), reports of the apostles, **eyewitnesses**, oral traditions, etc.
  - e) *Paul.* He claims to have had the "mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16)
  - f) *Other NT books.*
    - (1) 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2, 3 John. Account of **eyewitnesses**, in the 'inner circle' of Jesus' disciples.
    - (2) Hebrews - **unknown**, but probably Luke translating material written by Paul in Hebrew or Aramaic - since the letter is addressed to "the Hebrews."
    - (3) James - half-brother of Jesus; leader of the Jerusalem church (**eye-ear witness?**).
  - g) *Summary as to mode.* The inspiration of Scripture is interwoven with crucial human events at particular times and places in the flow of history. Sometimes the mode of inspiration was supernatural; at other times, it followed natural models with emphasis on eyewitness testimony of active participants in the inscripturation process.

5. **Incorrect understandings** of inspiration.
- a) General inspiration and artists. The word inspiration is used to speak of the genius of composers, sculptors, poets, and other artists, i.e., the "divine spark" of creativity needed to produce something of extraordinary beauty. This is an acceptable use of the word. Webster's *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* lists one definition of INSPIRE as, "to influence, move, or guide by divine or supernatural inspiration." We must distinguish between what artists do and what the Holy Spirit did in superintending the writing of the scriptures. If Leonardo Da Vinci was inspired to paint *The Last Supper*, it was not inspiration in the same sense as the inspiration of the prophets & apostles who wrote the words of the Bible.
  - b) Martin Scorsese, director of *The Last Temptation of Christ* made a bold statement - that even though he had never read any of the four gospels, his version of the life of Christ was just as inspired as those versions. He was arrogantly claiming to be on par with the apostles that were lead of the Holy Spirit to **record accurately** details of the life of Jesus Christ. NOTE: Scorsese's version differs radically from that of the gospel writers in important details. If inspiration guarantees accuracy, then either the gospel writers were not divinely inspired, or Martin Scorsese was not.

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## II. The necessity of Inspiration

- A. If belief in the supernatural *inspiration* of the Scriptures is discarded, is it logically possible to maintain the factual and doctrinal substance of Biblical faith?
1. Theoretically, YES. Benjamin B. Warfield has written, "Were there no such thing as inspiration, Christianity would still be true, and all its essential doctrines would be credibly witnessed to us in the *generally trustworthy reports* of the teaching of our Lord and of His authoritative agents ... and in the historical witness of the living church."
  2. Practically, NO. To say that under certain circumstances (such as the biblical ignorance of the Dark Ages) Christianity could survive without *inspiration* is not to say that it could survive in a healthy manner.
- B. What specific needs does the doctrine of *inspiration* fulfill?
1. *Inspiration* is the element which gives detailed certitude to the facts and doctrines of the Bible.
  2. *Inspiration* is the element by which the individual is brought into immediate relation with God.

## III. The evidence of Inspiration

- A. Internal evidence (i.e., from Scripture itself)
1. The testimony of Paul - 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) "All Scripture is *breathed out by* (KJV - *given by inspiration of*) **God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."
  2. The testimony of Peter - 2 Peter 1:21 "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*."
  3. The testimony of Paul - 1 Cor. 2:8-16
 

<sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written, "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him*"—

<sup>10</sup>these things God has *revealed to us through the Spirit*. For the *Spirit* searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the *Spirit*, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup>The natural person does not accept the things of the *Spirit of God*, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup>"*For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?*" But we have the mind of Christ.
  4. The testimony of John > Jesus. John 16:12-14
    - a) TEXT: (ESV) <sup>12</sup>"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the *Spirit of truth* comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

**Note: John 15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the *Spirit of truth*, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.



b) COMMENTS:

- (1) This is a promise to the disciples - who will later be Scripture-writing apostles.
- (2) *Aph heautou* (αὐτοῦ αὐτοῦ) means "on his own authority."
- (3) Just as Jesus did not speak from his own authority but that of the Father in John 14:10, the ***Spirit*** will not speak from his own authority but that of Jesus. So, revelation from Jesus Christ is given through the ministry of the ***Holy Spirit***.
- (4) We can say that Jesus *pre-authenticated* the writings of the NT.

5. The testimony of John > Jesus. John 12:48-49; 14:10b.

- a) TEXT: (ESV) "48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on ***my own authority***, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. [14:10b] The words that I say to you I do not speak on ***my own authority***, but the Father who dwells in me does his works."
- b) COMMENT: Jesus authenticated the authority of His own message - as being from the Father.

B. External evidence (from facts which support the claim of Scripture)

1. The historical accuracy of the Bible
2. The archaeological accuracy of the Bible
3. The prophetic accuracy of the Bible
4. The scientific accuracy of the Bible

**IV. False Theories of Inspiration**

- A. *Dictation Theory* (Mechanical) - authors of Scripture were merely passive secretaries who recorded what the Holy Spirit dictated to them.
  1. The writers deny this.
    - a) Luke 1:3 (NIV) "With this in mind, since I myself have ***carefully investigated*** everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus."
    - b) 1 Cor 7:12 (ESV) "To the rest I say (***I, not the Lord***) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her."
  2. The authors use variety in their grammar & vocabulary - a reflection of their own personalities.
  3. The Scriptures are a divine-human composition - similar to Jesus being both divine and human.
- B. *Rubber Stamp Theory* - human authors wrote the text of the Bible and then God placed His stamp of approval on the finished product.
- C. *Degree Theory* - some parts of the Scriptures are more inspired than other parts: e.g., the words of Christ (often printed in red) versus the genealogies and lists of names.
  1. Jesus assigned equal accuracy to everything in the OT - "not one iota, not a dot" (Matt 5:18).
  2. Who should decide which parts are more inspired than the rest? To take this path would lead to unchecked subjectivism.
- D. *Concept Theory* - "Any man ... is bound to conclude that it is the truths which are inspired and not the words, which are merely the vehicles of truth." (J. B. Phillips, *Ring of Truth*, pp. 21-22)
  1. There is a bit of truth in this view. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for observing the letter of the Law rather than its spirit. [This is hermeneutics, not text form.]
  2. Thoughts are expressed in words; subtle changes in the words can be important to meaning.
  3. Jesus emphasized both the words and even the letter of Scripture in His teaching. (Matthew 5:18 and John 6:63 "The **words** that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.")

4. Jesus and the apostles often argue points of doctrine on the basis of specific words and grammatical constructions.
- E. *Partial Theory* - only the doctrinal ideas are inspired, claimed to allow the Scripture to be inaccurate in matters of science and history but that it contains mistakes, errors, and discrepancies.
- F. *Natural Theory* - inspiration is something that every man possesses to some degree, so we should not expect more from the Biblical authors than we could expect from ourselves.
- G. *Literalist Theory* - that words communicate something in isolation from the message and must be translated word-for-word. The Bible must be taken "literally" in the sense that there are no figures of speech found in it.
  1. Language is a flexible medium and we can communicate the same message in a variety of ways.
  2. The duplicate passages of the Bible do not preserve an exact word-for-word form (e.g., 2 Sam 7 // Psalm 18; synoptic gospels, etc.).
  3. This view leads to absurd hermeneutical approaches such as gematria (letter value counting), ATBASH (letter substitution) or the Bible Code of Michael Drosdin (reading in, around, under, over, through and between the lines of SCR), to get a different message than what lies on the surface.
- H. *Karl Barth's View* - the words of Scripture are not inspired. They **become** Scripture (revelation) to us as we enter into communion with God. The Bible is inspired insofar as, in particular passages and on particular occasions it conveys to us the "Word of God."
  1. The writers of the Bible do not share that view. Isaiah 55:10-11 *For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, 11 So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish what I desire, and it shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*
  2. God's Word was recorded by inspiration and is inspired of God whether I accept it as such or not. [Ezekiel 2:5 *"And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them."*] The Word of God is not anything less if I choose to ignore it. If a tree grows in the forest and nobody takes note of it, it is still a tree.
- I. *Mechanical Theory* - The letters of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are inspired in a purely mechanical sense. Some even indicate that the shape of the Hebrew square letters is inspired. Biblical numerologists assume some form of the view that the letters are inspired.
  1. Orthography is not essential to the meaning of words and in the ancient languages (before the development of reference dictionaries) orthography was never a completely settled matter.
  2. The apostles do not take this approach in their use and interpretation of the OT. They argue on the basis of words, sentences, and propositions.
  3. The idea runs directly contrary to the teaching of scripture. The power of the Word of God is in the Spirit of his Word, not in the letter or letters. 2 Corinthians 3:6 *"He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

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#### V. The Orthodox Theory of Inspiration:

- A. Definition: The Word of God was inspired *verbally* and *plenary* as recorded in the *autographs*. Each word of the entire Bible was inspired as originally written.
- B. *Plenary* (or full). This deals with the *extent* of the inspiration of Scripture.
1. The entire OT is clearly included.
    - a) 2 Tim 3:16 - "all scripture"
    - b) Acts 24:14 - "the law and the prophets"
    - c) Luke 24:44 - "the law, the prophets and the psalms" = 3-fold division of OT
    - d) John 10:35 - "the *scripture* cannot be broken"
  2. We believe the *entire NT* to be included for the following reasons.
    - a) There is an evident analogy between the periods of revelation under the Old and New Covenants. Compare Hebrews 1:1-2 [NIV] "*In the past* God spoke to our ancestors *through the prophets* at many times and in various ways,<sup>2</sup> but *in these last days* he has spoken to us *by his Son*, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe."
    - b) Jesus pre-authenticated the apostolic message. An 'apostle' was sent as a messenger with the implied authority of the sender. The apostles preached and acted with authority and performed miracles and supernatural signs as evidence of their divine mission.
      - (1) John 14:25-26 [ESV] "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, he *will teach you all things* and *bring to your remembrance* all that I have said to you. "
      - (2) John 16:13-14 [see above, pp. 7-8]
    - c) The NT writers treat it as being on the same level as the OT.
      - (1) 2 Peter 3:1-2 "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*,<sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of *the holy prophets* and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *through your apostles*."
      - (2) 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes Luke and calls it Scripture. "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and '*The laborer deserves his wages*.' " [Deut. 25:4 and Luke 10:7]
      - (3) 2 Peter 3:15-16 Peter quotes Paul and calls it Scripture. "And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother *Paul* also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> as he does in *all his letters* when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which *the ignorant and unstable twist* to their own destruction, as they do *the other Scriptures*."
      - (4) 1 Thessalonians 2:13 "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when *you received the word of God*, which you heard from us, *you accepted it* not *as* the word of men but as what it really is, *the word of God*, which is at work in you believers."
  3. Plenary does not mean that all parts of the Bible are equally relevant to a person at a given moment in his life.

- C. **Verbal.** This deals with the extent of inspiration **within** Scripture.
1. The very **words** (and *letters*?) of Scripture are inspired.
    - a) John 6:63 "The **words** that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."
    - b) Deut 18:18-20 "I will raise up for them a prophet like you **from among their brothers**. And I will put **my words in his mouth**, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die."
    - c) Matthew 5:18 "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."
  2. Sometimes the central point of a passage hinges on the meaning of one word or form of a word.
    - a) Matthew 22:43-44 [ESV] He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, *calls him Lord (kurion)*, saying, 44 "The **Lord (Yahweh>kurios)** said to **my Lord (adoni>kuriô mou)**, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"? [citing Psalm 110:1-2]
    - b) John 8:57-58 "So the Jews said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' 58 Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.' (*egô eimi, ἐγὼ εἰμῖ*) The present tense of the verb is important.
    - c) Galatians 3:16 "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to **offsprings** (seeds)," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your **offspring** (seed)," who is Christ." The argument focusses on the number of the noun 'seed.' [Citing from several passages in Genesis. See Gen 13:15, 17:8, etc.; Hebrew (sg) *zera*\*>Greek *spermati*; not Hebrew (pl) *zera*\**îm*(?)>Greek *spermasin*]
- D. **Autographs.** Inspiration applies only to the original manuscripts as penned by the prophetic and apostolic writers. It does not apply to the copies made from those manuscripts.
1. **Problem.** We do not possess any of the originals - only copies of the originals which are not perfect copies. They contain some (minor) errors.
    - a) Modern Greek and Hebrew texts are at least one step removed from the originals.
    - b) Perhaps God providentially prevented mankind from keeping the originals. Humans tend to worship things thought to be most holy. As God directed Moses to ascend mountain Nebo to die there, so God has removed the Scripture originals from us.
  2. **Solution.** God has **preserved** His word from extinction and from wholesale corruption. We have faithful copies, but not perfect copies.
    - a) Textual criticism permits us to recover the form of the originals with a high degree of accuracy.
    - b) Douglas Stuart (1980. *Inerrancy and Common Sense*, p. 98) states "It is fair to say that the verses, chapters and books of the Bible would read largely the same, and would leave the same impressions with the reader, even if one adopted virtually every possible alternative reading to those now serving as the basis for current English translations."
    - c) Textual criticism preview. (1) God's word is preserved in SCR in **multiple forms and places** (e.g., 4 gospels). (2) God gave us common sense that allows us to detect and correct errors. (3) We have many very ancient manuscripts and versions of the Bible. (4) Textual criticism,

as a scientific discipline, allows us to restore the texts' original forms nearly completely so that our modern Greek and Hebrew Bibles are *virtually* identical to the autographs. (5) No major or minor doctrine of SCR rests solely on a passage in doubt.

3. It is *technically* inappropriate to apply inspiration to our English Bible, but it is *practically* appropriate to treat them as directly inspired, since the quality of the copies is so high.

#### VI. Some questions regarding inspiration

- A. Was Jesus (or Stephen or John the Baptist) inspired in this *technical* sense? No, since they left no inspired writings.
- B. If a biblical autograph were written by an amanuensis (i.e., a professional scribe), will we conclude that he was "born along" by the Holy Spirit to keep him from error?
  1. Jeremiah employed Baruch, the scribe, and we know that Paul employed scribes.
  2. The prophets and apostles could have checked the final product for accuracy.
- C. If every word of the Bible is *inspired*, can we claim that everything written is true?
  1. No. Satan's deception of Eve was a lie.
  2. Inspiration guarantees that the human author *accurately recorded* that conversation as revealed to him by God through the Holy Spirit.
- D. Was everything written by the human authors of Scripture inspired?
  1. No. For example David's letter to Joab requesting that Uriah be placed at front line of battle was not inspired (2 Sam. 11:14).
  2. Paul wrote a letter to the church of the Laodiceans which is not part of our canon - and by implication, was not inspired in the same sense as the canonical books. Colossians 4:16 "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."
  3. If the apostles wrote other letters to friends and family members, we do not assume that those were inspired in this sense of the word.

A thought in the mind of the human author of Scripture	> INSPIRATION > Part D	Autograph texts of the human authors of Scripture
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### The Implications of REVELATION and INSPIRATION

**QUESTION:** Given that God revealed Himself to human authors who recorded accurately this **REVELATION**, guided by the **INSPIRATION** of the Holy Spirit, what are the implications of this for the Scriptures?

**ANSWER:** REVELATION + INSPIRATION >> INERRANCY + AUTHORITY

#### I. The *Inerrancy* of the Bible.

- A. Definition of ***inerrancy***. Each writer was borne of the Holy Spirit so that he recorded with ***complete accuracy*** all that the Spirit desired him to record.
- B. The necessity of ***inerrancy***. Each succeeding generation of the church has found it necessary to refine and qualify this doctrine more fully in the face of heresy.

Word of God >> Inspired >> Verbally >> Plenarily >> Infallible >> Inerrant >> Authoritative

#### C. The evidence for ***inerrancy***.

1. It is a deduction from God's character. His Word does not lie because He does not lie. There is complete harmony between the character of God and His Word.
  - a) God is **truth**.
    - (1) Romans 3:4 "Let God be **true**, though everyone were a liar."
    - (2) John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the **truth**: your word is **truth**."
    - (3) Psalm 19:9b "The rules of the Lord are **true** and righteous altogether."
  - b) God is **perfect**.
    - (1) Psalm 19:7 "The law of the Lord is **perfect**."
    - (2) Matthew 5:48 "You therefore must be **perfect**, as your heavenly Father is **perfect**."
  - c) Conclusion. Scripture, a product of God's breath, shares the qualities of God's nature.
2. It is an induction from the teachings of Jesus.
  - a) John 17:17 "Your word is truth."
  - b) Matthew 5:18 "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."
  - c) John 10:35 "... and scripture cannot be broken."
3. It is the historic belief of the church.
  - a) Church fathers (Clement, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, etc.) believed in inerrancy.
  - b) Reformation leaders (Luther, Calvin, authors of the Westminster Confession) defended and advocated inerrancy.
  - c) Even Vatican II accepted this position: "Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers affirm, should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must consequently acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and **without error**, teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures."
4. Ultimately, belief in inerrancy is a matter of faith.

#### D. Problems in regard to ***Inerrancy***

1. Problem #1: The Bible is a **human** (and divine) book. How can anything **human** be perfect?
  - Response: That the Bible is **human** does not require that it be fallible (i.e., fails to achieve its purposes).

- This question relates to the "part-whole" fallacy. That I may sometimes misspell words does not mean that I can never compose a document in which none of the words are misspelled.
  - There is an analogy between the Living Word, Jesus Christ, and the Written Word. Jesus was human, yet the SCR affirms his sinlessness.
  - If the Bible were ONLY a human product, then we should expect error - but the writers were guided by the Holy Spirit as they wrote. Therefore, we do not expect errors.
2. Problem #2. It is philosophically naive, say critics, to assert categorically that a document is inerrant when many of its statements are beyond verification.
    - Response. It is not philosophically or logically naive to assert inerrancy *if* the Bible has demonstrated inerrancy everywhere that it *can* be verified.
  3. Problem #3. There are many apparent contradictions and errors in the Bible, say critics. So it is historically and scientifically naive to assert that the Scriptures are inerrant.
    - Response. The long history of alleged 'contradictions' and 'errors' *being disproved* ought to warn to us to refrain from abandoning faith in the Bible's inerrancy at the drop of a hat. James 1:6b-8 "Someone that doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he will receive anything of the Lord **8** being a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways."
- E. The evangelical doctrine of inerrancy recognizes the following.
1. **Biblical sources** are sometimes incomplete and give the appearance of error. E.g., 1 Sam. 13:1 "Saul was *one* (\_\_\_) year(s) old when he began to reign." When Saul became king over Israel he was older than one. Obviously, there is a textual problem here. Some translations fill in the lacuna with a number, such as forty.
  2. **Extra-biblical sources** can be incomplete or errant. E.g., Jewish historian Josephus records some historically incorrect items and sometimes appears to be just guessing. The Moabite Stone differs from the Bible's account of relations between Israel and Moab. Remember that the Moabite Stone was created to glorify the king of Moab and presents details according to his perspective (and according to conventions that we may not understand).
  3. Scribal errors have come into the text through lapses in the process of transmission. E.g., graphic confusion of letters.
    - Genesis 10:4 "And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and **Dodanim**."
    - 1 Chron. 1:7 "And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and **Rodanim**."

Paleo-Hebrew Letters		Post-Exilic Letters	
𐤀 [D]	𐤁 [R]	d [D]	r [R]

4. Ancient editors **updated** the text of the Bible at points. E.g., Genesis 23:2 "And Sarah died at **Kiriath-arba** (that is, **Hebron**) in the land of Canaan."
5. The **phenomenological language** of Scripture must not be interpreted as teaching as literal fact something that is figurative. E.g., Isaiah 11:12 "He shall ... gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four **corners** of the earth."
6. The Scriptures employ **literary figures**, such as hyperbole and litotes, which must not be interpreted literally. If Abraham's children are to be literally more than the sand of the sea, then the Lord's return must wait many more millennia.
7. The standards of **citation** in antiquity were not like those of today. NT writers often did not cite

word-for-word the OT text, but faithfully reflected the idea of the OT passage.

8. The progress of divine revelation may give the appearance of contradiction between the OT and NT. Some things were **programed for obsolescence**.
  - a) We no longer offer animal sacrifices; Christ sacrificed Himself for our sin, "once for all time."
  - b) 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 "Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will **pass away**; as for tongues, they will **cease**; as for knowledge, it will **pass away**. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, 10 but **when the perfect comes**, the partial will pass away."
  - c) Galatians 4:3-5 "In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. <sup>4</sup> But **when the fullness of time had come**, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

## II. The authority of the Bible

- A. Definition. The **authority** of Scripture is the characteristic which demands total obedience. The Bible is our judge, norm, standard and control. It is our ONLY rule for faith and practice of our faith.
- B. The necessity of **authority**
  1. There have been traditionally three primary sources for human authority: reason, tradition and church dogma or human law. All three fall short of commanding our total obedience, although each has its place within limits.
    - a) *Reason*. Proverbs 16:25 "There is a **way** that **seems right** to a man, but its end is the way to death."
    - b) *Tradition*. Ezek. 33:17 "Yet **your people say**, 'The way of the Lord is not just,' when it is their own way that is not just."
    - c) *Church dogma or human law*. Acts 5:29 "But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.' "
- C. The claims of the Bible for **authority**
  1. Jesus claimed authority for the OT. Our loyalty to him requires us to accept its authority as well.
    - a) He submitted to the authority of the OT in His **conduct**, especially during his temptation in the wilderness. Matthew 4:4-9 He answers the devil (4x), saying "It is written ..."
    - b) He submitted to the authority of the OT in His **ministry**. Matthew 26:53-54 "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the **Scriptures be fulfilled**, that it must be so?"
    - c) He submitted to the authority of the OT in His **controversies** with the Pharisees. Mark 12:24 "Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the **Scriptures** nor the power of God?' "
  2. The apostles claimed authority for their own teaching as recorded in the NT.
    - a) Paul vigorously defended his apostleship and gave this credential in most of his epistles. Galatians 1:1 "Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but **through Jesus Christ** and **God the Father**, who raised him from the dead—
    - b) The authority of the apostles as authoritative representatives of Christ was **authenticated** by God with signs, wonders and miracles.
    - c) The authority of the apostles was **accepted by the early church** and non-authoritative writings were excluded from the canon.