

The Doctrine of Inspiration

A Study

2Timothy 3:16&17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Introduction

Back in the 1970's, I read a very interesting magazine interview. A very popular Christian songwriter- several of whose songs we all sing and enjoy- was asked to explain how he came to write a particular song. And this was his answer:

“Regarding that song, it came quickly and we do not care to discuss the theology of it. In fact, we feel that to dissect the song would be tampering with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who inspired the song¹,”

Even though I *think* I understand what the writer of that song meant by what he said- nevertheless- what he said is a startling claim. For *anyone* to say that they don't want to discuss the theology of a Christian song, or to dissect (examine) the words of a song or a sermon or a book or a statement because that would be “tampering with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Who inspired it”- seems to say that since the Holy Spirit inspired it- that the song or sermon or book or statement or belief is therefore beyond (above) the *need* of discussion, or the *need* of examination, and the *need* to hold it accountable to Scripture because since it is inspired- it couldn't *possibly* have anything wrong with it. And that indicates a profound and frightening arrogance and misunderstanding of what the word, “inspired” means.

Now in the songwriter's defense- we use this word (inspired/ inspiration/inspiring) a lot. We especially use it with regard to music. It is common to hear somebody say things like, “*I was inspired by the music,*” or “*That was an inspiring rendition of the music.*” And what they really mean when they say those things is that they were “lifted up” or “encouraged,” or their human emotions were elevated in the experience of singing that song, or hearing that song. And there is certainly nothing wrong with that.

We even use this word to describe *anything* that motivates us- an outstanding athletic performance- for example- could be said to be “inspiring”. Even the Hallmark Card Company uses this word in their corporate slogan which says:

¹ Bill Gaither, “Christianity Today” October 1976

“Where Every Purchase is an Inspiration.”

But is using the word “inspiration” in this manner helping us to understand what God meant when He used this word to describe the means or the method by which He gave us the Scriptures? Probably not. Now please do not misunderstand what I am saying here. I do *not* believe that all people who misuse the word, inspiration, are *purposely* trying to undermine the authority of Scripture. But what I *am* saying is that because this word “inspiration” is used a lot, and because it is used incorrectly a lot- it has taken on a completely different meaning than was originally intended, and therefore- we need to understand what the correct use of the word “inspiration” is if we are to look at Scripture the way that God intended.

For example a writer could say, “*It was an inspiring experience for me to write that song.*” And that would be okay. But to say that a song or a sermon or a book or a “word” or “revelation” that an individual supposedly receives from the Lord is, in fact, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore is beyond being dissected or examined or held accountable to Scripture to test or assure its validity- is to make that human product equal to Scripture- and that is wrong.

Is a song writer today who writes a song “moved along” by God the Holy Spirit in the same way that Luke was when he wrote the Gospel of Luke? Or do we mean that what someone pens down or speaks in our day is equally inspired as was Paul’s Words in the Epistle to the Romans? Or Isaiah’s Words contained in the Biblical Book that bears his name?

What exactly do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired? Do we mean that the Bible is simply an “inspiring” Book because it lifts us up in faith or gives us a religious feeling or encourages us to do great things? Is that what “inspiration” means?

And is it true that people today write songs or books or sermons or speak things in the same way that the writers of the Bible were used by God to pen down the Scriptures? We need to honestly examine this issue to see just what we are talking about.

The Words- Not the Writers

First of all- we need to understand that it was not the *writers* of Scripture themselves who were inspired. This is a common error that many people make today. The Bible doesn’t say that the men who wrote Scripture were inspired- it says that the *Words* that these men wrote came by way of inspiration.

2Timothy 3:16a

All scripture is given by inspiration of God...

The word, “**by**” in this verse means that inspiration is the *method* “by which” the Scriptures were given to us. So, for example, it was not Peter himself who was inspired by God to write down Scripture- rather Peter was “moved along” by the Holy Spirit to pen down inspired Words.

2Peter 1:21

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.

Now the term, “**prophecy**” that is used in this verse comes from the Greek word that refers to “Revelation”. And in the previous verse- Peter links the usage of this particular “**prophecy**” to the Scriptures themselves or to the Word of God.

2Peter 1:20

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

So when put in its proper context- the “**prophecy**” that Peter is describing here is the Scriptures themselves – that Special Revelation which was received by way of inspiration and written down and preserved.

To Peter and the other Apostles, the word, “**prophecy**” pertained to all the Divine Revelation that made up the body of Teaching that we call now the Holy Scriptures- those specially inspired Words which came directly from God which made up the Gospel- which in turn was to be “preached” or “prophesied” to every creature.

But even at that- we must know that every word that Paul or Peter or Moses said or wrote was *not* inspired- only those *special* Words that we have today in the Books in the Bible- *those* Words were inspired. For example- Paul said this in **2Corinthians 13:1a**:

This is the third time I am coming to you...

Now we only have two letters from Paul to the Church at Corinth in the Bible- but here Paul says that this was the “**third time**” that he wrote to them. What are we to make of that? There are several options to consider- but one possibility is that the other letter (or letters) were simply not inspired and thus were rejected from being included in the Canon of Scripture.

Paul was also a preacher and an evangelist and no doubt had hundreds of sermons from which to preach along with thousands of notes and other writings- just like any other thinker and preacher. And even though he is the writer of 13 of the 27 New Testament Books- none of those other sermons, notes, and writings of Paul are included in the Holy Bible either. Why? Because they were not inspired by God. They may have been real good; they may have even been true; they may have been very *inspiring*- but they were not “God breathed” (inspired) and thus they are not included in Scripture.

2Peter 1:21a

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: ...

Here the Apostle Peter is comforting us by giving insight into the inspiration process by which Scripture came. The Scripture did not come to us by way of

human will or human ingenuity or human cleverness. This teaches us that Man did not originate Scripture.

2Peter 1:21b

... but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

This tells us that specially chosen men (holy men; separated and called out men) spoke (and wrote) only as they were "moved" by the Holy Ghost. The phrase, "**spake as**" is better translated as "**spake *only as***"- meaning that this is the *only* way that these holy men spoke and wrote these specific words.

The word "moved" is from the Greek word, *feroo* (**fe/rw**), which means: *to move along as wind moves along a sailing ship at sea.*

Defining the Word Correctly

The actual Greek word for inspiration is *theopneustos* (qeo/pneusto\$) from which we get words like "pneumatic", "pneumonia"- those kinds of things related to breath. But the actual word translated as "inspired" in **2Timothy 3:16**, when it says, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**" means that all Scripture is "God breathed."

But in order to fully comprehend the true meaning of the word, "inspiration", we must understand that when this word is used- it does *not* mean us "in-breathing" – as inhaling air- but it means for God to "out-breathe" or exhaling. So this word has nothing to do with people "inhaling" good and holy things from God so that we are motivated to do good and holy things- which is how this word is used most of the time.

No, this word is used very narrowly to describe that Divine Process or the Supernatural Method by which God gave us the Scriptures- God literally breathed (exhaled) the Words of Scripture out of His Own Mouth. In other words- the Bible itself makes the claim that all of Scripture (both Old and New Testaments) came from the very Mouth of Almighty God!

Why This Matters

The correct use of inspiration therefore is God "breathing out" His Words- not God "breathing into" us in some "inspiring" way. Now here is why all of this matters. Because *theopneustos* is the Greek word that Paul used in **2Timothy 3**, and because the correct meaning of *theopneustos* is "God breathed"- the Christian Church has taught for almost two thousand years that the Bible came right out of the very Mouth of God. God breathed it out. He gave it- He said it.

By default then- this makes the Words of Scripture unique and special Words. In fact, it makes these Words to be the most unique and the most special Words on earth. Nothing is like Scripture- because nothing else is God breathed.

Because all of Scripture is God breathed- then all Scripture possesses additional qualities that are only true of Scripture and are true of nothing else but

Scripture. In other words- the Christian Church teaches that because Scripture is inspired- then Scripture is also:

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|----------------------|---|
| Inerrant | <i>Does Not</i> Contain Any Error |
| Infallible | <i>Unable</i> to Contain Any Error |
| Authoritative | The Final Rule of Divine Truth, Faith, and Morality |
| Relevant | The Authority, Infallibility, and Inerrancy of Scripture Transcends Time and Culture |
| Eternal | Heaven and Earth may pass away but God's Word is Forever |

Is it right to claim any of these qualities for a song? Is it right to claim any of these qualities for a book, or for a sermon, or for an idea, or for a thought, or for a word spoken by any person in our day? Are we *really* experiencing direct Revelation right out of the Mouth of God today in the same way that these 40 writers experienced as they wrote down Scripture?

No, we are not. What about people who get "prophecies" and "words of wisdom" and "words of knowledge"? Are those things God breathed Revelation coming right out of the Mouth of God? And if so- are they then equal then to the Bible in being Inerrant, Infallible, Authoritative, and Relevant? If these things are equal in inspiration- then should we not then write them and should we not then add them to those other inspired

What is helpful in determining a correct view of Inspiration is to examine the history behind the Doctrine. We who live in the 21st Century do not have a firm grasp of how things developed over the 2,000 year history of the Christian Church- so many times- we jump to conclusions rather than understand the background. So to avoid that mistake a short history lesson is in order.

Who Speaks on Behalf of God?

One of the major contentions during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century was over the issue of just who or what is authorized to speak on God's behalf. Can *anyone* take this responsibility on himself? Can *anyone* who is saved self- appoint himself to this position? Does the pope alone have the authority to speak on behalf of God to the people? Or Does God speak to Man through His Word (Scripture)?

The Reformers taught that only Scripture itself can be trusted to be free from error or human contamination and so therefore- Scripture alone is the *Verbum Dei* (The Word of God) and the *Vox Dei* (The Voice of God) in the earth.

These men taught that God spoke to the fathers in several ways and in various portions through the prophets up until the time when God became Man. Since that time- God speaks only and solely through Jesus Christ- Who is far superior to any and all other methods of speaking.

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Jesus is far superior to any prophet; He is far superior to any priest, any angel, and any other method by which God spoke to Man. The Bible says that Jesus is the Instrument by which God made the worlds and He is also the Heir of all things that are made. Jesus is the blazing center of the Glory of God and He is the exact Representation of God's Image. The Scripture reveals that Jesus upholds all things by the word of His Power and that by Himself- Jesus Christ purged our sins.

All of this serves to teach us that there is nothing better; no one more spiritual; no Law more holy; no truth more profound than Jesus Himself.

And all that Jesus did and said Personally and all that the Spirit of Jesus taught the Apostles after His Ascension has been faithfully recorded for us in the 27 Books of the New Covenant and those Books- along with the 39 Books of the Old Covenant- is God's final and complete Revelation to Man.

So to read and to understand the Scripture- the Word of God- is the best and highest and most complete form of hearing from God. Every other attempt at hearing from God through any other source other than through Jesus as He is revealed in the New Testament is an insult to this *highest method* of speaking.

Sola Scriptura

The Reformers taught that men can and do err. They taught that popes and Church Councils and Elders and Deacons and Bishops and Pastors can and do err- sometimes grievously. They taught that all men- even well- meaning men- possess the ability to be very wrong about the things of God and since that is true- and since it is also true that only Scripture is inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, and relevant- then only Scripture should be used to develop Doctrine; godly reproof; correction; and instruction in righteousness.

This became known as the Doctrine of "Sola Scriptura", which is Latin for "by the Scripture alone" and was one of the major causes of the Protestant Reformation.

The Roman Church did not then and does not now accept this Doctrine. Most of the people of the modern Church do not accept this Doctrine. The Romans hold out that the pope alone has the sole right and authority as the "vicar of Christ" to develop Doctrine and to formulate Divine Truth and he is free to ignore; change; contradict; or add to scripture in any way in carrying out his commission.

Many in the modern Church teach that individual believers- by virtue of being filled with God the Holy Spirit- have a direct line to Heaven by which they hear directly from God and receive additional revelations and information. Their belief about this is very similar to what Rome teaches.

The Reformers, however, pushed the envelope and taught that Scripture and Scripture alone is the Authority and thus Scripture- rightly interpreted could override the pope, individual believers; and even Church Councils when they were in conflict with the written Word.

So the issue was and is:

Who has been authorized by Christ to develop Truth and Doctrine- the pope or the Scripture?

The Roman Church believes and teaches the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility. This false doctrine says that when the pope sits on throne of St. Peter and speaks about matters of faith and morals – speaking “ex cathedra”- or “from the chair” that what he says is actually God Himself speaking and is therefore unable to be wrong (infallible).

Those who believe that the pope has been given that Divine Authority are called “Roman Catholics” and those who believe that Scripture alone has that authority are called “Protestants”- because they are *protesting* the Roman Church’s unbiblical position on this issue.

The Covenant of Peace Church is fully Protestant and believes and teaches the Doctrine of Sola Scriptura while categorically rejecting the Roman Catholic Doctrine of Papal Infallibility as being both unscriptural and ungodly.

An Unforeseen Consequence

Sadly, much of the modern Church has blindly accepted the notion that God speaks today in the same various and sundry ways that He did *before* He chose to speak only through His Son- Jesus Christ. And this error has put many so called Protestant and Evangelical Churches out of sync with that of historic Protestant teaching- especially the Doctrine of Sola Scriptura- and has inexplicably placed them firmly in the camp of the Roman Church about this issue of who has the Divine Authority to day to speak on God’s behalf.

By teaching and believing that the so-called and self- appointed and unaccountable “prophets” have the authority to speak in God’s Name today- and by accepting that God still speaks to men in dreams, visions, and angelic visitations- **for the same purpose that God used these methods before He chose to speak only through Jesus Christ**- the modern Church has accepted (at least in part) the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility and has outright rejected the Doctrine of Sola Scriptura.

Of course the difference today is that this Divine Authority does not rest with the pope- but every believer- by virtue of being filled with God’s Spirit- has the ability; the right; and the authority to speak on God’s behalf –even to the point of

obtaining new revelation (through direct contact with God and /or dreams, vision, and other supernatural manifestations)- in direct violation of Scripture; the very purpose of Scripture itself; and The Doctrine of Sola Scriptura.

Being faithful to the Doctrine of Sola Scriptura- requires that one must believe that since God could speak through none greater than His Own Son- He has chosen not to speak to Man through any other means other than through inspired Scripture.

This requires us to reject the methods employed by many in the modern Church of "hearing from God" and causes us to be faithful to obtain Revelation and Doctrine from Scripture and from Scripture alone.

By suggesting that God still speaks directly to certain people today by any other method other than through Scripture requires that we make the same tragic mistake that the Roman Church made over 500 years ago by minimizing and diluting the Divine Authority of Scripture and by falsely elevating the desire of God to speak any other way other than through His Word- which is the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Although many do so unknowingly and with the best of intentions- for any Church; people; or organization to believe that God desires to speak through any other means other than through inspired Scripture today places them in union with the Roman Catholic Church and at odds with historic Protestantism on this issue.

Errors About The Doctrine of Inspiration

There are basically four major errors in which people and/or Churches have misconstrued or misunderstood about what the Doctrine of Inspiration actually says:

1. The "Inspiration by Degrees" Error
2. The "Human Achievement" Error
3. The "Mechanical" Error
4. The "Denial of Verbal Inspiration" Error

Let's examine each one.

1. The "Inspiration by Degrees" Error

To speak in superlatives is to describe things in degrees. We say that some things are "good" while other things are "better" and still other things are "best". That is speaking in superlatives. There are some who believe that inspiration is described in superlatives or that inspiration is given by degrees. These people teach and believe that there are degrees of inspiration.

The logic of this error goes something like this:

Certain preachers can be inspired and certain song writers can be inspired and certain people who receive revelations and words of wisdom and knowledge from God- they're inspired too-

but they are just not *as* inspired as the Bible writers. In other words- it's inspiration- but to a *lesser* degree.

This error teaches that some things are inspired to the *maximum* degree (the Scriptures) while other things are inspired- but just to a *lesser* degree (prophecies/direct audible contact with God/ etc.)

This faulty logic allows for certain people to say things "in God's Name" that are factually wrong and still maintain their credibility- because although what they say is supposedly inspired by God- it just isn't *as* inspired as Scripture is- thus it is able to be a Word from God and still be wrong or in error.

To try to make sense of this confusing concept- the people who believe this- teach that some people speak the Word of God "in their flesh" (saying things that are provably incorrect) while other people speak the Word of God "in the Spirit" (saying things that are true). The result of teaching this very confusing doctrine is that people are able to speak in God's Name- things that God didn't say- without any damage being done to their credibility.

So even though these people (more often than not) speak factually incorrect things- because of the "inspiration by degrees" error- it doesn't cause any alarms to go off.

And that would be bad enough- but this false teaching of inspiration by degrees also allows for some people to say things that are evil and wicked and ungodly and unscriptural and not raise any alarms either-depending on how "holy" or "anointed" these people are portrayed.

By rejecting the Doctrine of Sola Scriptura- the emphasis of Divine Authority is moved away from inspired, infallible, and inerrant Scripture and placed upon either the personality of the individual or the words that they speak- either one being far more unreliable than Scripture at best.

No Degrees to Inspiration

But the greatest problem with this theory is that for something to be inspired means that it is God-breathed. It means that God said it and there are no degrees or variations to that. God either said it or He didn't say it- which is one reason why you want to be very careful when you say, *"The Lord told me this...or, the Lord told me that."*

Through the years I can remember a number of conversations with people who believed the Lord was telling them all kinds of things. I remember one conversation in which a certain lady said to me,

"I really don't care what the Bible says, I know exactly what God said to me."

There are no degrees to what God said. Either God said it or He didn't say it. Either God breathed it out or He did not breathe it out. Either the Words are God's Words or they are not God's Words. There is no such thing as something being "almost inspired but not quite" or something being "somewhat inspired but

not totally". Words are not able to be more or less from God- they are either from God or they are not from God.

Good, Better, and Best

One way to understand this might be to think about the fact that we may refer to something as being the highest or the best or the most. We call that a superlative. *"That's the end of the line."* *"That's the highest mountain or the best watch or the most money."* And if those statements are true- then there is no mountain higher than *that* mountain; there is no watch better than *that* watch; and there is no one with more money than *that* person. Now if we find a mountain that *is* higher- or a watch that *is* better or someone who has more money- then the mountain that we *thought* was the highest is no longer the highest- and the watch that we thought was the best is no longer the best and the person that we thought was the richest man is no longer the richest man. So regardless of the sincerity of the individual who makes those claims- the truth or the veracity of the statements is proven or disproven by the facts.

And so logic dictates that there's no such thing as anything being higher than the highest; or better than the best; or more than the most. And we arrive at the truth about these issues- not with emotion or by judging the sincerity of the individual who is making the claim- but simply by the provable facts.

But as far as eternal matters go- we must understand that there are no superlatives- there are no degrees as to that which God has spoken. *Everything* that God has said is the highest; *everything* God has said is the best; and *everything* God has said is the most. There are no *more* inspired or *less* inspired Words of God. And this is true because God is Absolute. God's Word is therefore Absolute too. God is a superlative in and of Himself and God speaks in a superlative fashion. This is why the Word of God is eternal.

1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

So we can see that part of the definition of inspiration is that inspiration has no degrees. God either said it and that makes it the highest; the best; and the most (superlative) or God didn't say it and it is the word of a Man. And the Word of God is Eternal and True and Reliable and Trustworthy and Authoritative and Inerrant and Infallible- which makes it Scripture while the word of Man is faulty and frail

and weak and unreliable and untrustworthy and finite and may be true or may not be true and is *not* Scripture.

And so- by default- that means that Scripture is unique and different and set apart from all the other words written by all the other men found in all the other books. And it also means that there are no songs and there are no books and there are no visions and there are no dreams and there are no sermons and there are no statements that are direct Revelation from God because these things are *not* on the same level as the Scriptures.

Is it Scripture or Not?

You can't have it both ways. A "word" cannot be from God and not be True. A "revelation" cannot be from God and not be Authoritative. A "statement" cannot be from God and not be Infallible. A "pronouncement" cannot be from God and not be Inerrant. A "dream" cannot be from God and not be Eternal. A vision cannot be from God and not be Relevant. An angelic visitation cannot be from God and not be Divine.

But if that word and revelation and statement and pronouncement and dream and vision and angelic visitation is True and Authoritative and Infallible and Inerrant and Eternal and Relevant and Divine- then it should be written down and preserved and added to the back of the Bible as the 67th Book and taught to each succeeding generation because it is Scripture.

And yet curiously- most people who engage in these things almost will always say that what they receive is on a lower plane than Scripture- that it is not on equal par with the Bible. But then what is it? Is it Scripture or not? Is it from God or not? How can something that God said be of lesser value and credibility and importance than something else that God said? How can something that came out of God's Mouth be less valuable than something else that came out of God's Mouth? I hope you can see how confusing this becomes.

Everything that is Inspired is also True; Infallible; Inerrant; Authoritative; Eternal; Relevant and Divine. There is nothing that comes to Man from God's Mouth or Heart or Mind that in any way does not possess all of those Qualities at all times. If something does *not* possess all of those Qualities all of the time- then it didn't come from God. But if it does possess all of those Qualities all of the time- then it is Scripture.

And that means that *everything* that is Inspired- is Scripture. If it is not Scripture- then it isn't Inspired. But if it is not Inspired- then it isn't from God. Thus every true Divine Revelation from God to Man is Scripture.

A Sober Warning

In fact, to even consider that anything that we produce today would be on the same level as inspired Scripture is a testimony to the pride and arrogance of Man and is a frightening proposition- since the entire Bible ends with the following words,

The Revelation 22:18&19

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Now it is true that John was referring specifically here to **The Book of the Revelation**- but that Book is the final Book in the collection of Books referred to as The Canon of Scripture- so this warning therefore applies to *anything* added to this Book which therefore would be added to Scripture in total since this is the final Book of the Canon.

And this is a very clear and sober warning to everyone not to add to or take away from the written Words of God- the Scriptures. Don't add anything to this Book and to add anything to this Book would be to add something to the Canon of Scripture which this Book completes.

And so to suggest that anything that *we* write or that *we* say or that *we* sing today is inspired in the Biblical sense is a very serious claim to make. And I suggest to you that a claim like this is only made for one of two reasons:

- ✓ It is made with a gross misunderstanding what the word, "inspiration" actually means
- ✓ It is made with an unwarranted and elevated opinion about their own ability and words

The former is an honest mistake- based in a misunderstanding about what the word, "inspiration" means- but the latter is a sin and is done on purpose to build up the credibility and importance of the speaker/writer- when they don't deserve it.

Not one single sermon of mine has ever been inspired by God. I pray that my sermons are *inspiring*- to God's Glory- but they are not God breathed. And I know this is true because not one of my sermons are infallible. Some have had to be changed and all have had to be edited. Not one single sermon by *any* preacher has ever been inspired by God- not in the Biblical sense of that word. The good and faithful preacher does not get direct Revelation from God. We already have all the direct Revelation from God that we are ever going to get and every bit of that direct Revelation is packaged very nicely for us in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible.

The good and faithful minister simply takes the already inspired Revelation of God (the Word of God) which has been given to us in written form- the Holy Bible- and he endeavors- by lots of hard work and by being empowered and enabled and gifted by the Holy Spirit- to make those inspired Words clear and understandable to his listeners. He studies so that the interpretation that he gives is accurate and true and reliable to what the original writers actually wrote- and something by which God can be glorified; lost sinners may be convicted; and believers may be edified. That is called preaching- *expositional* preaching.

The *Need* For Interpretation

Every Verse in the Bible has a very specific meaning. A Verse may well have hundreds of different *applications*- but every Verse only has one single *meaning*. Finding that one single meaning is called "interpretation"- and it is a very important and worthy exercise.

The men who were moved on by God the Holy Spirit to write the Inspired Scriptures had something very specific in mind when they wrote them down. If we could ask these men what they meant when they wrote a particular Verse or Passage- the problem would be solved. But because every one of the Biblical writers are dead- we cannot ask them what they meant by what they wrote. And because the Bible was not written in English- but was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic- every genuine Truth seeker is brought to one inescapable fact- the Bible must be interpreted.

Every single copy of the Bible that we use today in America (KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, etc.) is an English *translation* of the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic Scriptures. In addition, these translations also include some degree of *interpretation* and even *commentary* by the editors and scholars who participated in the translation process.

In some instances, the degree of translation and interpretation made by the scholars is adequate. But on many occasions- those who are earnestly desiring to know and live out Divine Truth will require a deeper understanding of the Words, Verses, Passages, Chapters, and even entire Books of the Bible so that the believer can obtain a full understanding of what the Holy Spirit actually inspired. That is when the Science of Interpretation is useful.

Right and Wrong Interpretation

But this is the point at which most of the understanding and most of the misunderstanding of Scripture occurs. Interpretation is one of the greatest assistances that a believer can have – as long as that interpretation is right and correct. A *wrong* interpretation of the Scriptures, however, is a curse and will lead to destruction. So Biblical interpretation should not be approached with a flippant or cavalier attitude. It is the single most important work ever engaged by Man- to rightly understand what God Almighty has spoken.

Today, the average believer puts in very little labor trying to grasp the meaning of what God spoke. As a result- we live in a time when great misunderstanding about what God said and what God meant by what He said abounds. The result of all this misunderstanding is that ancient heresies which the Christian Church confronted, thoroughly analyzed, and successfully rejected many centuries ago are making a comeback in our day. False teaching and gross misuse of Scripture is common in the modern Church.

The bottom line is that the average believer in the average Church today has very little idea about *what* he believes and has little idea of *why* he believes it. This problem has gotten so bad that today, most people have no idea why Doctrine and

Truth are even worth pursuing. To describe holy, inspired, inerrant, infallible, Divine Revelation as being Objective, Propositional, Authoritative, and Absolute is considered by many to be "mean spirited"; "legalistic"; "militaristic"; "unloving", autocratic, dictatorial and even "unchristian". Mindless arguments such as "*We don't need Doctrine- we just need Jesus*" and "*I don't need to study Scripture- I have the Spirit*" serves only to compound the problem.

The lines about which the Christian Church engaged in many serious and important battles over its 2,000 year history which clearly identified Truth from error; right from wrong; and holy from profane are being blurred daily and very little is being done in the average Church to stop this trend.

The real issue is *not* whether we need to know what God said and what God meant- because clearly we do- the Bible must be interpreted- the *real* issue then is exactly *how* do we rightly and correctly and fully interpret Scripture so that the true meaning of what God inspired comes through?

Exegesis and Eisegesis

Exegesis- *Exegesis* comes from the Greek word, *exegeisthai*, (ἐξηγεῖσθαι) which means: ***to explain; to interpret***. From *ex-*, "out of" + *hegeisthai*, "to lead, to guide." Thus an exegesis is, at root, "a leading or guiding *out of*" a complexity. Exegesis involves an extensive, careful, and detailed examination of the inspired Words of both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible- in their proper grammatical and historical and literary context- **for the purpose of discovering the correct interpretation of what the writers meant when they wrote the Scriptures.**

Eisegesis- *Eisegesis* comes from the Greek word *eisegeisthai* (εἰσεγεῖσθαι) which means: *to lead in; or to put in*. Eisegesis is the process of interpreting the inspired Words of both the Old and New Testaments- without any regard to their historical, grammatical, or literary context- **for the purpose of putting into the Scriptures one's own ideas and concepts.**

Those who engage in Eisegesis would say that the actual context of the Text is of little or no value in arriving at the correct meaning of a verse or passage. And those engaged in Eisegesis would further contend that the ability to rightly interpret the Bible does *not* lie in a careful and prayerful examination of the Words of Scripture themselves- but rather that ability lies in the mind and the heart of the interpreter- who is free to minimize or even ignore historical, grammatical, and literary considerations from the Text.

Many times, those engaged in very sloppy Exegesis or even outright Eisegesis will justify their actions by saying, "*The Lord gave me the understanding of this verse*" or "*The Spirit spoke the meaning of this passage to me.*" Of course, the purpose of making statements like this is an attempt at assigning Divine Credibility to their effort and to stifle any rebuke or correction.

The great danger of *Eisegesis* is best understood when it is contrasted with *Exegesis*. While *exegesis* "draws out" the true meaning from the Biblical Text itself,

Eisegesis occurs when a reader puts his/her own, private, individual ideas and/or concepts "into" the text.

As a result, *Exegesis* tends to be very objective, stable, trustworthy, and verifiable when employed effectively while *Eisegesis* is regarded as highly subjective and unstable.

Exegesis attempts to determine the historical context within which a particular verse exists - the so-called "sitz im leben" or "life setting". *Eisegesis* completely ignores this aspect of Biblical study.

Part of our American culture is that what *we* think or what *we* personally believe is of great value to us. And in many areas of life- that is proper and productive. But in the area of Biblical Interpretation- what *we* think or what *we* believe is not only completely worthless- it is a great hindrance. It really doesn't matter what *we* think or believe about a particular verse or passage. What matters is what did Moses or Paul or Jesus or John or the other writer mean when *they* said what they said or when *they* wrote what they wrote.

2 Peter 1:15-21

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 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.

Expositional Preaching

Once the believer has employed all of the tools necessary to properly *exegete* the Scriptures- his job is not finished. Except for personal edification- the goal of properly understanding Scripture is to share that information with others. This "sharing" is called Preaching and should be done for the following reasons:

- ✓ To Accurately and Fully Portray God To The People
- ✓ To Accurately and Fully Represent What God Has Said

It is a sad fact that without accurately and fully portraying God's Character and Nature to the people- they will invent a "god" who is made in their own image

and is after their own likeness. We do this by default- we don't even mean to do it- but we redefine God all the time. We assign certain character traits to God as a result of what we *think* God is like rather than portraying God in the way that He has revealed Himself to be in Scripture.

This is where you hear statements like, *"My Jesus would never do that"* or *"I don't think God is that way"* instead of statements like, *"God said that this is what He is like"* or *"Scripture reveals that God is like this"*. By refusing to portray God by anything other than by what God Himself reveals about Himself in Scripture- we will portray Him accurately and fully.

The same thing is true about what God has said. The only way that we know what God has said is to study the Scriptures and to rightly interpret what is written. We have no other way. Without that- we will invent other words or we will assign meaning to words that God didn't say. Again- that is just human nature. But by accurately and fully representing what God has actually said through proper exegesis- we will eliminate that problem.

Once God has been accurately and fully portrayed to the people and once what God has said is accurately and fully represented- then the people are confronted with Divine Truth. And that is the goal of preaching and teaching. What the people do with that Divine Truth is another issue- but the goal of all ministry in the Christian Church is to accurately and fully portray God's Character and Nature and to accurately and fully represent what God has said.

Romans 10:14-15

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Why Expository Preaching is Especially Glorifying to God

The great Evangelist of the 18th Century- George Whitefield- believed in preaching and gave his life to it. And through his preaching- God did a mighty Work of Salvation on both sides of the Atlantic. His biographer, Arnold Dallimore, chronicled the astonishing effect that Whitefield's preaching had in both Britain and America in the eighteenth century when he wrote,

"It (Whitefield's preaching) came like rain on the parched land and made the desert spring forth with the flowers of righteousness."

Dallimore lifted his eyes from the transformed wasteland of Whitefield's time and expressed his longing that God would do this again. And so he cried out for a new generation of preachers like Whitefield. And these words help express what we must long for in the coming generations of preachers in America and around the world. Dallimore said,

"Yea...that we shall see the great Head of the Church once more . . . raise up unto Himself certain young men whom He may use in this glorious employ. And what manner of men will they be? Men mighty in the Scriptures, their lives dominated by a sense of the greatness, the majesty and holiness of God, and their minds and hearts aglow with the great truths of the doctrines of grace. They will be men who have learned what it is to die to self, to human aims and personal ambitions; men who are willing to be 'fools for Christ's sake', who will bear reproach and falsehood, who will labor and suffer, and whose supreme desire will be, not to gain earth's accolades, but to win the Master's approbation when they appear before His awesome judgment seat. They will be men who will preach with broken hearts and tear-filled eyes, and upon whose ministries God will grant an extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, and who will witness 'signs and wonders following' in the transformation of multitudes of human lives."²

Mighty in the Scriptures; Aglow with the great Truths of The Doctrines of Grace; dead to self; Willing to labor and suffer; Indifferent to the accolades of Man; Broken for sin; and *Dominated by a sense of the Greatness, the Majesty, and Holiness of God*. Whitefield believed that preaching is "the heralding of God's Word" from that kind of heart. But to understand this- we must know what Preaching is *not*.

- ✓ Preaching is not Conversation
- ✓ Preaching is not Discussion
- ✓ Preaching is not Casual Talk about Religious Issues
- ✓ Preaching is not simply Teaching

True Preaching- Expositional Preaching is the heralding of a Message permeated by the sense of God's Greatness and Majesty and Holiness. The topic may be anything under the sun- but it is always brought into the blazing Light of God's Greatness and Majesty in His Word. That was the way Whitefield preached.

In the last century no one embodied that view better than Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who served the Westminster Chapel in London for 30 years. When J. I. Packer was a twenty-two-year-old student, he heard Lloyd-Jones preach every Sunday evening in London during the school year of 1948-1949. He said that he had "*never heard such preaching*." (That's why so many people say so many minimizing and foolish things about preaching today- they have never heard true preaching. They have no basis for judgment about the usefulness of true preaching.)

Packer said it came to him "*with the force of electric shock, bringing . . . more of a sense of God than any other man*" he had known.³ That's what Whitefield meant.

"Oh, that God would raise up young preachers who leave their hearers with a spiritual sense of shock at the sense of God—some sense of the infinite weight of the reality of God." That is my longing for our day—and for you. That God would raise up thousands of broken-hearted, Bible-saturated preachers who are dominated by a sense of the greatness and the majesty

² Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, Vol. 1 (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), p. 16.

³ Christopher Catherwood, *Five Evangelical Leaders* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1985), p. 170.

and the holiness of God, revealed in the gospel of Christ crucified and risen and reigning with absolute authority over every nation and every army and every false religion and every terrorist and every tsunami and every cancer cell, and every galaxy in the universe.”⁴

Piper goes on to say,

“We must understand that God did not ordain the Cross of Christ or create the lake of fire in order to communicate the insignificance of belittling His Glory. The Death of the Son of God and the Eternal Damnation of unrepentant human beings are the loudest shouts under Heaven that God is infinitely Holy; sin is infinitely offensive; Wrath is infinitely Just, and Grace is infinitely precious, and our brief life—and the life of every person in your church and in your community—leads to everlasting joy or everlasting suffering. If our preaching does not carry the weight of these things to our people, what will? Veggie Tales? Radio? Television? Discussion groups? Emergent conversations?”⁵

God planned for his Son to be Crucified (**The Revelation 13:8; 2Timothy 1:9**) and for hell to be terrible (**Matthew 25:41; The Revelation 20:15**) so that we would have the clearest witnesses possible to what is at stake when we preach. What gives preaching its seriousness is that the mantle of the preacher is soaked with the Blood of Jesus and singed with fire of hell. That’s the mantle that turns mere “talkers” into “preachers”.

Yet tragically- some of the most prominent Evangelical voices of the modern Church seek to diminish the horror of the Cross and the horror of hell- one stripped of its power to bear our punishment, and the other demythologized into self-dehumanization and the social miseries of this world.⁶

⁴ John Piper, Sermon, “Why Expositional Preaching is Especially Glorifying to God”

⁵ Ibid

⁶ From the American scene consider this breathtaking comment by Joel Green that flies in the face of what the church has believed is central to the gospel and what is grounded in clear scriptures (**Isaiah 53:4-6, 8-10; Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:3**): “Whatever meaning the atonement had, it would be a grave error to imagine that it focused on assuaging God’s anger or winning God’s merciful attention . . . [T]he Scriptures as a whole provide no ground for a portrait of an angry God needing to be appeased in atoning sacrifice. . . . Whatever else can be said of Paul’s understanding of the death of Jesus, his theology of the cross lacks any developed sense of divine retribution.” Joel Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 51, 56. From the British scene Steve Chalke calls the teaching that Christ bore the wrath of God in our place “cosmic child abuse”: “The fact is that the cross isn’t a form of cosmic child abuse—a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offense he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement ‘God is love’. If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus’ own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.” *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2004), pp. 182-183. N. T. Wright argues that “most” (does he mean “all”?) of the references to hell in the New Testament are not talking about a place of eternal conscious suffering, but that we need a “reconstruction” or “restatement” of the doctrine of hell “in the present day” 1) in terms of humans using their “gift of freedom” to “dehumanize themselves completely,” and 2) in terms of social injustice and misery: “There is an equally proper and yet more necessary biblical doctrine of hell in terms of human social and corporate life on this earth.” *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 95-96.

For the most part- the modern Church is not overrun with a sense of seriousness about God. There is no surplus in the Church of a sense of God's Glory. There is no excess of earnestness in the Church about Heaven and Hell and Sin and Salvation. And therefore the joy of many Christians is very thin or is utterly dependent on things of this world that perish.

By the millions- people are amusing themselves to death with DVDs, and 107-inch TV screens; games on their cell phones; and slapstick worship- while the spokesmen of an evil totalitarian world religion write letters to the West in major publications saying,

“The first thing we are calling you to is Islam . . . It is the religion of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil with the hand, tongue and heart. It is the religion of jihad in the way of Allah so that Allah’s Word and religion reign Supreme.”⁷

And then these spokesmen publicly bless suicide bombers who blow up children in front of Falafel shops and call it the way to paradise. This is the world in which we preach.

And yet incomprehensibly, in this Christ-diminishing, soul-destroying age- books and seminars and divinity schools and church growth specialists are bent on saying to young pastors, “*Lighten up.*” “*Get funny.*” “*Do something amusing.*” John Piper responds:

“To this I ask, Where is the spirit of Jesus? “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (**Matthew 16:24&25**). “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell” (**Matthew 5:29**). “Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (**Luke 14:33**). “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple” (**Luke 14:26**). “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead” (**Matthew 8:22**). “Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (**Mark 10:44**). “Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (**Matthew 10:28**). “Some of you they will put to death . . . But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives” (**Luke 21:16-19**).

Would the church growth counsel to Jesus be, ‘*Lighten up, Lord. Do something amusing.*’ And to the young pastor: ‘*Whatever you do, young pastor, don’t be like the Jesus of the Gospels. Lighten up.*’ From my perspective- which feels very close to eternity these days- that message to pastors sounds increasingly insane.”⁸

Expositional Preaching is Based in a Portrayal of the Glory of God

⁷ Quoted from *The Islam/West Debate: Documents from a Global Debate on Terrorism, U. S. Policy and the Middle East*, edited by David Blankenhorn in *First Things*, March 2006, #161, p. 71.

⁸ Ibid

Whatever a person believes about both the *necessity* of preaching and the *nature* of preaching- flows from their sense of the Greatness and the Glory of God and how an individual awakens *to* that Glory and lives *for* that Glory.

From **Genesis** to **The Revelation**- nothing in the Bible is more Central in the Mind and Heart of God than His Own Glory- the collective Summation of all God's Particularities. At every point in God's Revealed Word- wherever God makes plain the ultimate Goal of His Thoughts and Actions- it is *always* the same- to uphold and display His Glory.

- God predestined us for His Glory (**Ephesians 1:6**).
- God created us for His Glory (**Isaiah 43:7**).
- God elected Israel for His Glory (**Jeremiah 13:11**).
- God saved His people from Egypt for His Glory (**Psalms 106:8**).
- God rescued them from exile for His Glory (**Isaiah 48:9-11**).
- God sent Christ into the world so that Gentiles would praise God for His Glory (**Romans 15:9**).
- God commands His people that, whether they eat or drink, to do all things for His Glory (**1Corinthians 10:31**).
- God will send Jesus a second time so that all the redeemed will marvel at His Glory (**2Thessalonians 1:9-10**).

And because all of this is true- the primary Mission of the Church is:

Psalms 96:3

Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

These and a hundred other places drive us back up into the ultimate allegiance of God. Nothing affects preaching more deeply than to be struck- almost speechless- by the Great Passion that God has for His Own Glory. What is clear from the whole range of Biblical Revelation is that God's ultimate Allegiance is:

- ✓ To know Himself Perfectly
- ✓ To love Himself Infinitely
- ✓ To share that knowledge and love with His people

Therefore- over every Act and Thought of God flies the Banner:

Isaiah 48:11

For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

From all eternity- the ever-existing; never-becoming; always-perfect God has known Himself and loved what He knows. He has eternally seen His Beauty and savored what He sees. His understanding of His Own Reality is flawless and His exuberance in enjoying it is infinite. He has no needs, for He has no imperfections.

He has no inclinations to evil because He has no deficiencies that could tempt Him to do wrong. He is therefore the holiest and the happiest Being that is or that can be conceived. We cannot even fathom a happiness that is equal to or greater than the happiness of Infinite Power delighting Infinitely in Infinite Beauty in the Personal Fellowship of the Trinity.

And to share this experience—the experience of knowing and enjoying His Glory— with His elect- is the primary Reason behind why God created the world. God desires that unworthy sinners- saved by His Grace- would know Him and enjoy Him the same way that He knows and enjoys Himself. Indeed the Purpose behind every Act and Thought of the one true living God is that the very Knowledge that God has of Himself and the very Joy that God has in Himself will be *our* Knowledge and *our* Enjoyment. This is the ultimate Meaning of Jesus' Prayer in **John 17:26** where He asks His Father

And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

And if you ask, "How does God's Goal to share this experience (of knowing Himself and enjoying Himself) relate to the *Love* of God- the answer is:

God's Goal to share that Experience is the Love of God.

God's Love is His Ultimate Commitment to share the Knowledge and Enjoyment of His Glory with us. For example- when the Apostle John says that God is Love (**1John 4:8, 16**), he means that it is God's Nature to share the Enjoyment of His Glory with His elect- even if it costs Him the Life of His Son.

And this means that God's Goal to display His Glory and our delight *in* that Glory are in perfect harmony. You do not honor fully what you don't enjoy. God is not glorified fully in merely being known. He is glorified by being known and enjoyed so deeply that our lives become a display of His infinite Value and Worth. That is what God put in the Bible and that is what needs to come *out* of the Bible and into the ears and minds and hearts of God's people.

That is why we need to preach and teach the Scriptures. And that is why we need to preach and teach them rightly and fully. And that is why the Word of Truth needs to be rightly divided.

2Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The Cross and the Word that is Preached

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The Greek phrase, that is translated into English in verses 18 as “**the preaching of the Cross**” and in verse 21 as, “**the foolishness of preaching**” is best translated as “**the Cross that is preached**” and “**the foolishness of the word which is preached**”. The emphasis on the first translation is incorrectly placed upon the method (preaching) and/or the person (the preacher); while the emphasis on the latter translation is correctly placed on the Cross and the Word of God which is preached by the preacher. It isn't that the preacher or that preaching itself is considered to be foolish by the lost world- but rather it is the offense of the Cross and the absurdity of the inspired Word where all the problems arise and that is considered to be “foolish” to the lost unregenerate world.

The word that was translated into English as “foolish” or “foolishness” in this passage is the Greek word, *mooria* (μωροία), which actually means: *folly; absurdity; senseless; insanity; and barbaric ignorance*; and is used as an insult for people who obviously have not been sufficiently educated.

Verses 22 & 23 shows us that it is precisely because the Jews seek after a supernatural sign in order to be saved and precisely because the Greeks seek Salvation through developing their own human wisdom which causes both groups to reject the Cross and the Word which is their only hope.

That is why preaching the despised Cross and the absurd Word is so important. It is the method which pleases God to use to save believers.

Once the Word is correctly presented to the people- they can be judged or blessed based upon their reaction to an accurate and full portrayal of God and an accurate and full representation of what God has said.

For example- if God is accurately and fully portrayed- then we know that He is worthy of our worship and deserving of our obedience. If Sin is correctly represented- then the sinner knows to repent. He may not repent- but he understands that repentance is demanded by God. If Salvation is accurately and fully represented- then the lost soul *may* be saved and the saved soul *may* grow in his assurance.

But if God is not correctly portrayed or if what God has said is not correctly represented- then those who hear may not know to worship or to obey God and they may not know to repent. Thus God is dishonored and Judgment is sure to come to the person

1 Corinthians 14:6-9

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

Preaching does not guarantee that we will see results. Preaching the Truth does not guarantee that anyone will even listen. Many, many godly preachers were completely ignored during their entire ministry (Noah, Jeremiah). But we are commanded nonetheless to preach the whole Gospel rightly, fully, and without fail to every creature- not so that we can see the results that we want- but so that God may be glorified and the people will know.

Exodus 10:2

And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.

1 Kings 8:60

That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

Psalms 83:18

That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

Isaiah 45:1-9

1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.

9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Jeremiah 44:29

And this shall be a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:

Daniel 4:17

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Philippians 3:10-17

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

1John 2:3-6

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Ezekiel 2:2-7

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

Ezekiel 3:17-21

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

After all the exegesis of a particular verse/passage has been done- the Pastor/Teacher then must put this information into a form which he then can teach others also.

2Timothy 2:2

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Giving the Sense; Causing Them to Understand

Preaching that is done for the purpose of informing the people more about the Character and Nature of God (accurately and fully portraying God) so that they can know and understand that He is worthy of worship and deserving of obedience- and preaching that is done for the purpose of accurately and fully representing what God has said is called Expository Preaching.

Nehemiah 8

Expository preaching can best be defined by looking at verse 8:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

This, in a nutshell, is what Expository preaching is all about. The Hebrew word that was translated here as "distinctly" is *parash* (vr^P*), which means: *to declare; to separate; to interpret; or to distinguish*.

Ezra the priest prepared himself to preach and teach the people. He studied long and hard to show himself approved (2Timothy 2:15)

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

So we see that in order to preach God's Word properly- Ezra "prepared his heart". And he prepared his heart for three separate things:

1. To personally seek the Law of the Lord
2. To actually Obey God's Word himself
3. To teach God's Word to the people

Notice that it wasn't until Ezra had done the first two things did he then actually get up and preach. This is the pattern that all preachers should follow today and without doing this- all we are doing is speaking words into the air. In this case- according to history- Ezra prepared himself for *fourteen years* prior to this meeting described in **Nehemiah 8**! He didn't just get up and wing a sermon on becoming a "better" person- Ezra brought forth the actual meaning of the Words of the Law to the people out of a clean and pure heart and from a life that actually obeyed God's Word. This is expository preaching.

God Inspired Words- Not Concepts

But we must remember that the words that the good and faithful minister gives to you are not inspired- they are *his* words as he *attempts* to explain to you the

true and accurate *meaning* of that inspired and holy and direct Revelation from God.

This true and accurate meaning of this direct Revelation from God can only be arrived at through the study of the actual Words themselves that God inspired to be written. This brings us to the second truth about inspiration- it was the actual literal Words of Scripture which were inspired- not concepts or hidden codes or secret pictures apart from the actual words themselves.

A few years ago, a very popular New Age guru was on the Larry King Program and was giving his take on the inspiration of Scripture. This man rebuked a minister, who was defending the Doctrine of Inspiration by saying:

“You’re so busy studying the meaning of the *words* of Scripture - that you are missing the *message* of Scripture.”

Now this statement might be a good sound bite- but it goes to the heart of the matter. Is it true that there is a “message” in Scripture apart from the Words of Scripture? Did God speak to Man through some hidden “code” or some secret “message” apart from the actual Words that He breathed out of His Mouth? No- He did not.

The Doctrine of Inspiration teaches that God did not speak to Man in concepts- He spoke to Man using Words- specific, special, inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative, and relevant Words which have specific meaning and which are able to be obeyed or rejected. And it was through those specific Words that God chose to communicate Truth to Man.

So it is not concepts or pictures that are inspired. God didn’t breathe out concepts – He breathed out Words- Words which have set and established meanings- Words which deserve to be investigated and studied so that their accurate meaning can be taught and understood and loved and obeyed.

1John 2:3-5

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that *saieth*, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (emphasis mine)

This passage clearly teaches that the *assurance* of our Salvation is based upon our obedience to the Word of God. So obedience brings forth assurance. But how do we know if we are obeying God’s Word if we do not clearly understand the meaning of what God has spoken? Do we wing it? Do we just “try hard and hope for the best”? Are we allowed by this passage to believe that we are saved anyway even if we don’t obey God’s Word and even if we don’t understand God’s Word? Isn’t our obedience to God’s Word predicated upon our ability to understand God’s Word?

This is why all ministers are required to faithfully study and to faithfully preach and teach the whole counsel of God without regard to the consequences. We

all will stand before God and be judged based upon our obedience to that which God commanded- so we do not need and cannot use the opinion of the pastor/teacher- what we need is the true and correct interpretation of the Words of the Lord so that we may clearly hear them; and clearly understand them; so that we have the opportunity to either obey them or to rebel against them.

Ezekiel 2:1-3:11

1 And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.

2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day.

4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD.

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

6 And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.

8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein;

10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

3:1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5 For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

10 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

The Grammatical Historical Method of Interpretation

Since it is the meaning of the inspired Words themselves which hold the key to what God actually said in Scripture- the only way for us to rightly divide the Word of Truth is to interpret them based upon two exact methods:

1. Grammatical
2. Historical

1. Grammatical

Grammatical interpretation of Scripture means that we follow the established rules of interpretation when we try to grasp what God has said. Therefore, we treat a noun as a noun; a verb as a verb and a preposition is a preposition. When Scripture says, for example:

... he shall be great in the sight of the Lord...

We need to know who "he" is being addressed here lest we think that perhaps this statement is about all saved people; or all Jews; or all tall people, etc. Another example is when Isaiah prophesied:

... with his stripes we are healed.

Many have incorrectly interpreted that to say that *physical* healing is guaranteed in every case to all saved people based upon this verse. This is what it means when the phrase, "Healing is part of the Atonement" is used.

Thank God that He can and does heal the sick bodies of both saints and sinners. But to teach that *all* saved people should *always* be healed every time they are sick because physical healing is "part of the Atonement" is a misinterpretation of what Isaiah was prophesying here. And then to take this misinterpretation one step further and teach that if a saved person is *not* healed- it is because there is sin in that person's life or because he didn't "exercise faith" enough or that he did something else wrong- is to absolutely pervert the right way of the Lord and to butcher this verse.

If Divine healing were part of the atonement- then only lost sinners would get sick- and that is clearly not the case. Wonderful saints of God get sick all the time

and they are not always healed. Sometimes believers stay sick for extended periods of time- and sometimes they even die from their illnesses.

Original Sin Causes Sickness- Not Individual Transgression

It is true that sin causes sickness- but it is the Original Sin of Adam that brought forth sickness and death (and separation from God) upon *all* mankind. But it is not true to suggest that God is punishing the sick individual with sickness because of some sin that he personally committed. Isaiah was not teaching this- and to suggest that he was is to twist the Scriptures to fit a man-made Doctrine (Healing is part of the Atonement).

The Hebrew word that was translated into English in **Isaiah 53:5** as “healed” is the word, *rapha* (ap*r), and *can* indeed mean physical healing when used in certain ways- but when analyzed in the proper context of this particular passage- Isaiah was clearly speaking about those who are *sinful* being restored into a right relationship with God through the promised Messiah in Salvation- not physical healing- which would not affect anyone’s relationship with God one way or the other. It is clear that the “healing” that Isaiah was referring to here is **not** physical but spiritual.

Again, **of course God can heal sick bodies**- but to translate this particular verse to mean that physical healing is what Isaiah was talking about is to completely ignore the grammatical usage of the word, *rapha* as it is used in this passage and it is to place upon this verse a meaning which God did not say. To then take it even further and say that physical healing is “part of the atonement” based upon this verse is exactly what the Holy Ghost warned about in **2Peter 1:20**:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Peter was telling the first century Church and us here that no one has the right to make the Scriptures fit his/her own preconceived ideas- but that our ideas of what the Scripture means must bow to what the Scripture actually says- not the other way around.

And if you consider that the purpose of preaching is to give the “distinct meaning” of that which came out of the Mind and heart and Mouth of Almighty God- to cause the people to “**understand the reading**”- then this example (that is very common) cannot even be considered true biblical preaching at all.

2. Historical

The Historical method of interpretation comes into play when considering the “context” of a particular verse or passage. Context answers the following questions:

- ✓ Who was speaking?
- ✓ To whom were the words addressed?

- ✓ Is this verse or passage teaching a *moral* Truth- which is eternal- or is it teaching a *temporary* Truth which only applied to a certain people for a given period of time?

Grammatical tools alone will not suffice; neither is the Historical method by itself enough. We need to utilize both the Grammatical *and* the Historical methods of interpretation in order to arrive at what God actually said.

The Holy Spirit's Work in Understanding Truth

Because the Scriptures are special and unique from all other writings- all Scripture comes from the very Heart and Mind and Mouth of Almighty God- we must constantly remind ourselves that the understanding of Scripture is not purely an academic exercise- but is a Divine work of the Holy Spirit. In other words- every time sinful human beings can grasp that which Almighty God has said- it is a miracle- and it is a gift from a gracious God to undeserving believers so that we may bring Glory and Honor to God by loving and obeying what God had said.

The Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds to **“guide us into all Truth”** and we must follow that leading.

John 16:13-15

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Illumination Does Not Eliminate Study

We must rejoice that God the Holy Ghost will **“guide us into all Truth”** and we should humbly pray each time that we read and study the Bible that God will do just that. But we must guard against thinking that this miraculous “illumination” does not abrogate our responsibility to study and be taught and to learn Sound Doctrine through the academic labor shown above. The modern Church sins grievously about this issue.

It is commonly believed and taught today that the work of the Spirit in “guiding us into all Truth” eliminates our duty to obey the other parts of Scripture which teaches us to apply these academic tools so that we may rightly divide the Word of Truth- but that is not true. Statements like these are numerous and popular today:

“I don't need to study- I am filled with the Spirit”

Or

"God showed me the true meaning of this verse"

Or

"I don't care what the Bible says- I know what God told me"

These statements and others like them are not examples of spiritually mature people being led by God's Spirit- they are statements made by very immature and disobedient people who are using the Holy Spirit as an excuse to disobey the other parts of Scripture which command us to study God's Word.

2Timothy 2:14-26

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Verse 15 has some very important words for us to know and comprehend and which will show us just how important our labor is in interpreting Scripture. For example- the word- "study"- actually means: *to put forth effort; or do our best to set aside uninterrupted, consistent and dedicated time for the purpose of examining God's Word.* The word, "shew" means: *to demonstrate; manifest or prove without*

doubt. The word, "approved" means: *to meet or exceed God's expectations- not Man's.* The word, "workman" means: *a skilled craftsman.* The word, "ashamed" actually means: *condemned.* And the word, "divide" means: *to interpret.* So **2Timothy 2:15** actually says:

Put forth effort or do your best to set aside uninterrupted, consistent, and dedicated time for the purpose of examining God's Word; so that you may demonstrate, manifest, or prove without doubt that, because of your study, you meet or exceed Gods' standard as a skilled craftsman- and one that will not be condemned by God and who is able to properly interpret the Scriptures.

The other words in this passage which denote action on our part also prove to us that Divine Truth is not flexible and subjective and which changes meaning from one person to the next but these words prove to us that Supernaturally inspired Truth is absolute and tangible and definable and measurable and constant and which can be both taught and learned by human beings.

Scripture Alone

Songs are not inspired like Scripture was inspired. Songs- good songs- wonderful songs- edifying songs- are simply human reflections of what God has revealed in His Word. Sermons are simply human efforts to make the already inspired and revealed Word of God clear to the listener. Books follow the same path.

Anyone would be placing way too much emphasis on their own credibility and they would be diminishing the uniqueness of Scripture to claim that God inspired their sermons or their books or their songs in the same way that God inspired Scripture.

All sermons need editing. All songs and all books need editing and changing and correcting. But that which God breathed does not need any editing. All human products are feeble at best in their attempt to take the Word of God and bring it to people through a human vehicle. And so we want to be careful that we protect and defend the Doctrine of the Inspiration of Scripture.

2Peter 1:3&4

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

All that God *wanted* to say to Man pertaining to both life and godliness has already been said and written down and preserved for us in Scripture. There is nothing else about our life in Christ or godliness that can be added to what God has already said. Every moral, spiritual, or theological dilemma that we face today is

resolved by simply *applying* the already existing Divine Truth to that situation- not in creating new Truth or in revising existing Truth.

All that pertains to building bridges or that pertains to technology or science or things like that are still being discovered and spoken and added to what we already know to be true- so those things can and do change and alter and revise themselves- but nothing about our life in Jesus Christ or anything that pertains to godliness can possibly be added to what has already been spoken and written down for us in Scripture.

The Bible begins with Creation and ends with the Redeemed worshipping God forever in Heaven- and every spiritual issue including the Character and Nature of God; the Person of Jesus Christ; and the elements of the Gospel are dealt with in between. Every single spiritual and moral and theological question that any person under any situation who lives in any culture on any nation on earth during any time frame is asked and answered in the 66 Books of the Scriptures.

Our Duty is to Know; Love; Proclaim; and Obey Divine Truth

Our job today therefore; our duty; our responsibility is not to get *new* or *different* or *better* Information from God; it is not to establish new Truth; it is not to formulate new Doctrine; it is not to acquire new direct Revelation; it is not to redefine or to alter or to change the existing Truth that God has Sovereignly revealed- no, our responsibility today is to take the already revealed Word of God and love it and study it and understand it and apply it and obey it and teach it and defend it and proclaim it to all the world.

Romans 10:14&15

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Revelation versus Inspiration

Revelation is the content. Revelation is God's Own Personal *disclosure* of Truth. Inspiration is the *vehicle* by which Revelation comes to Man- God breathed it out. Revelation is the content- Inspiration is *how* we got Divine Revelation. Now while Inspiration only comes in one way- God literally exhaled it- Revelation comes to Man in two parts:

1. General Revelation
2. Special (Specific) Revelation

1. General Revelation

General Revelation is that Divine Revelation of God that can be clearly seen in Creation.

Psalms 19:1

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Psalms 50:6

And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

Psalms 95:1-6

1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

Psalms 97:6

The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

From Creation- we can get *general* information about the Character and Nature of God. For example- we know that God is Omnipotent and the rightful Owner of all that is made from Creation. But although this Revelation only gives us general information about God- it is enough to cause certain responses and expect certain responsibilities from Man that are only reasonable and to which God holds all of Mankind accountable such as:

- Since God is the Creator and Owner of all that is Made- He is *entitled* to do with His Creation that which pleases Him
- Since no one can do what God does- God is worthy of our worship and since He is worthy of our worship- no one else is worthy of our worship

From nothing other than General Revelation- God can and does judge all Man guilty or innocent of their proper responses to Himself.

Romans 1:20-32

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

- 21** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22** Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
- 23** And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
- 24** Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
- 25** Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
- 26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:
- 27** And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.
- 28** And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
- 29** Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
- 30** Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
- 31** Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
- 32** Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Mediate and Immediate General Revelation

General Revelation is true and is from God and is reliable and trustworthy- but General Revelation is *not* inspired- it is not God breathed. This is true- because General Revelation is not written down- it is observed or intuitively known by Man- and only words can be "God breathed" (inspired).

General Revelation comes in two forms:

1. Mediate
2. Immediate

1. Mediate General Revelation

Mediate General Revelation is Divine Revelation about God that comes by way of a "mediator" such as Creation (Nature). The Creation of God as acts as a messenger to "speak" to Man about the Majesty and Power and Wisdom and Sovereignty of God.

Psalms 19:1

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.**

We know that the Heavens do not literally "declare" God's Glory- in the sense of the way a human being declares something- but nevertheless- the Heavens do declare Gods' Glory in the sense that they manifest it or make it known to Man.

Notice also that the Heavens do not declare its *own* glory- but rather God's Glory. No part of Creation (except Man) seeks glory for itself. But all of Creation gives honor to its Creator. Also notice that Creation does not reveal general information about God to itself- but all Revelation is given by God to Man. This is Mediate General Revelation. The Heavens (God's Creation) acts as a messenger (mediator) to "declare" or "proclaim" or "reveal" general information about God to Man.

2. Immediate General Revelation

Immediate General Revelation is that General Revelation about God that comes directly to Man without the use of a mediator- such as God revealing Himself directly to Adam or to Abram or to Moses.

Genesis 2:15-17

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 12:1-4

1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Exodus 6:2-8

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

General Revelation is either Mediate or Immediate- but it is not inspired until and unless that General Revelation is actually written down. In several places (predominately in the Old Testament) Immediate General Revelation *was* written down by holy men (Moses, etc.) and at that point- that *General* Revelation became part of the second type of Revelation- *Special* Revelation.

2. Special (Specific) Revelation

Now whereas General Revelation is enough for people to know many things about God- and it is enough to require proper responses toward God- and it is enough for God to judge men by this General Revelation- it pleased God to give us more than General Revelation. God also gave us Revelation that is "Special" or "Specific" in order to more fully elaborate what He desires for us to know and understand about certain issues such as Sin; Salvation; The Church, etc.

Unlike General Revelation- all of this Special or Specific Revelation contains words and is therefore inspired or "breathed out" by God Himself and was written down and preserved for us in the 66 Books of the Holy Bible as God the Holy Ghost "moved" upon 40 men over a 1500 year time frame and is the focus of this study.

Revelation versus Inspiration- Part 2

So when we talk about God's Special or Specific Divine Revelation- we're talking about the Content of the entirety of Scripture; the Message; the Truth that God revealed or disclosed to Man- by the method or vehicle of Inspiration. When we talk about Inspiration we're talking about the *method* that God used to give us this Special Revelation- just *how* He breathed it out.

In Revelation- both General and Specific- God makes Himself known to His Creation. In Inspiration- the Spirit of God takes only the Specific Revelation of God and puts it through the mind of human writers in the Old and New Testament who write it down as it flows from God the Holy Spirit through their minds. What they write down is the exact and authentic Words that constitute the complete Message God wants us to know.

Specific Revelation then is the detailed and special Message itself, and Inspiration is the means by which that detailed and special Message is given and ultimately recorded on the pages of Scripture.

Summary to the “Inspiration by Degrees” Error

There can be no degrees to Inspiration. It is all or nothing. Either God said it or He didn't. Like Creation- Specific Revelation is finished and complete. All of God's Special or Specific Revelation has already been given by way of Inspiration and penned down for us by holy men who were moved along by the Holy Spirit and has been supernaturally preserved for us and has been compiled and assembled into one location and nothing was left out that needed to be said.

Therefore, it is incorrect to use the word, “Inspiration” or “Inspired” to mean any product that has not already been included in the 66 Books of the Canon of Scripture.

2. The “Human Achievement” Error

The second error that those who detract from true Biblical inspiration make is that they teach that Biblical inspiration is simply an example of a high-level of human achievement.

All through the years- there have been critics of the Doctrine of Inspiration- that God breathed out every Word into the mind of writers who wrote it down so that every word is actually right from the Mind of God. There are some who said that the Bible is nothing more than just a written product that came from human religious geniuses- but certainly not something inspired by God Himself.

They may even go so far as to say that the Bible is a brilliant literary work produced by brilliant men- but they quickly add- that it is no more inspired than other brilliant literary works, like those from Shakespeare, Homer, or Thomas Jefferson.

And you'd have to say that- if you wanted to deny Divine Authorship- because you're left with an astounding Book that has a massive amount of Wisdom in it. And so those who deny true inspiration are left with nothing but a compilation of things that have been written by people who are at a high level of religious and literary genius.

These people pretend to be impressed with Scripture as they lavish praise upon it by saying that the Bible is “art” or that it is “a very high level of literary craft” or that the Bible is “a master work of human genius”- but nonetheless a product of human beings. But the truth is that by saying this- these critics are actually completely rejecting Divine Inspiration- which is a blatant insult and *not* a compliment. So this false view exalts human authorship to the level of genius- but categorically denies Divine Authorship altogether.

Now this second error falls apart very quickly for a number of reasons.

- ✓ The Person of Jesus Christ

- ✓ The Damnation of Lost Man
- ✓ No Other Book Like the Bible

The Person of Jesus Christ

Who would ever *invent* a Person like Jesus Christ? No one could just make up this kind of Person. A Person Who was fully God and fully Man in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction? A Person Who existed always and yet was born as a Man at a particular time in a particular place? A Person Who always lives and yet He dies? The Omnipotent Eternal God - wrapped in frail human flesh?

Look at what length the early Church went to- to describe just the Nature of this Man named Jesus:

“I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.”⁹

And...

- “29. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 30. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.
- 31. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world.
- 32. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
- 33. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.
- 34. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.
- 35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God.
- 36. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
- 37. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;
- 38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead;
- 39. He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty;

⁹ Part of the Nicene Creed AD. 325

40. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
41. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
42. and shall give account of their own works.
43. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.”¹⁰

And...

“Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.”¹¹

The Church went to great lengths in order to avoid any error about Jesus that might cause some to stumble and because there has never been anyone like Jesus. Words like “incarnate” and “advent” had to be invented to describe the one- time event of when God became Man.

Jesus is the single most loved, admired, adored, worshipped, hated, vilified, rejected, misunderstood, maligned, and controversial Figure in all of human history and for anyone to *invent* such a figure would be preposterous.

Jesus surpasses in Purity, in Love, in Perfection, and in Righteousness anything ever found in any character in all of human literature throughout all of history. There is no one even remotely like Jesus anywhere in human literature. Jesus is completely beyond the capability of any person to invent.

And when you realize that this Jesus is the main focus of most all the controversies over the last 2,000 years and is the source of more wrong information than any other character in any other book- a writer would be insane to invent such a misunderstood and hard to comprehend character.

And in addition, when you consider that Jesus is the main theme of the entire Bible- which spans over 1500 years and which had 40 writers- many of whom never met each other- you can see that the odds that Jesus was a Character Who was simply invented by human beings- regardless of their literary capabilities- is absurd.

And as you examine what all 40 of the writers have to say about Jesus and see how their words all are coherent and transcendent- and offer no inconsistencies

¹⁰ Part of The Athanasian Creed AD. 500

¹¹ Part of The Council of Chalcedony AD. 451

about His Character and Nature- it is inexplicable that such a loosely connected assemblage of human geniuses would all coincidentally craft the same Person with the very same Qualities- Who is remarkable beyond any human imagination.

And finally, when you consider that there are over 400 specific Old Testament Prophecies about Jesus- including the genealogy of His parents (His mother and step father)- and the town in which He would be born- things that no one could possibly control or alter after the fact- and then when you consider that all of these Prophecies were written down and were published and circulated throughout the world- 200 years before Jesus was born; and then when you consider that every one of these Prophecies were fulfilled to the letter (including the method of His execution which was prophesied 1,000 years before that method was even invented) you have a literary product that is far beyond the capacity of any human being to invent.

The Damnation of Lost Man

Another reason why we know that the Bible is truly inspired and is not simply the product of religious geniuses is because the Bible details the eternal damnation of lost man from cover to cover. Who in their right mind would write a book that damns the entire human race who lives outside of God's Grace? That is not the way to get the masses of people to join your religion. What collection of human geniuses would ever collaborate to write a book that says that there is absolutely no hope of eternal life for anyone apart from this Person- Jesus Christ?

It is interesting to note that all the other religious books- which were written by all the other religious geniuses- aided and abetted by supernatural powers (demons); all contain the false concept of "Salvation by Works". All of them. Without any exception. None of them teach a Salvation that is by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone. None of them teach a Salvation that cannot be earned by human effort and one that is based entirely on the disposition of a Sovereign God.

"Salvation by Works" is the notion that Man can somehow "earn" his own Salvation through various good deeds or by keeping certain religious sacraments or rituals. All other religions and all other human philosophies ascribe to this false notion- except the 66 Books of Inspired Scripture. The concept that human beings can develop their own personal righteousness to the point that allows them access to Heaven is common among all religious writings- except the Bible- which alone teaches that all men are sinful and *unable* to develop their own righteousness and that Salvation is wholly an Act of Mercy and Grace by a Sovereign God.

This fact alone proves that the origin of all of these other religious writings outside of the Scriptures was from the same source (human) and was not Divine- because all of these literary works bow to the altar of human pride.

No Other Book Like the Bible

There is no other Person like Jesus Christ in any other religion or philosophy in the world. And if the writers of the Bible were simply brilliant men who had achieved a high level of religious genius- why didn't the Bible writers produce *other* books that were equal to the Bible? Why was the Bible their only product? The fact of the matter is- left to themselves- the writers of Scripture *could* produce some good things- but not inspired Scripture.

Paul wrote a lot of letters. He wrote 13 which are included in the New Testament. But Paul wrote a lot more manuscripts which are *not* in the New Testament. But they were just Paul- Paul at his best- but just Paul. In fact he wrote a couple of letters to the Corinthians in addition to the two that are in the Bible- but they were not inspired by God and they are not included in the Canon.

Paul was also a pastor like any pastor and an evangelist like any evangelist who was saying things that were true but they were not the directly inspired Words out of the mouth of God. Inspiration cannot be just a high level of human genius. You can't come up with Christ and you don't damn the whole human race and leave them no hope but this perfect Christ.

Summary of The Human Achievement Error

- ✓ If the Bible was simply the product of human religious geniuses- they would have written Scripture to include some form of the concept of "Salvation by Works"- which is in all other religious writings on earth.
- ✓ If the Bible were the product of human religious geniuses- they would have wanted to *include* rather than *exclude* the majority of the people on earth and would have never written a book which damns the entire human race who lives outside the Grace of God.
- ✓ If the Bible were the product of human geniuses- they would have never invented a figure like Jesus- Who- 2,000 years later- is still the single most controversial Figure in all of human history.
- ✓ If the writers of Scripture were men who were simply operating on a high level of human achievement- they would have written many more books beside the Bible.

3. The "*Message of Scripture versus the Meaning of Words*" Error

Other people, who reject the Truth that the Bible came right out of the Mind and Heart and Mouth of Almighty God, suggest that Divine Inspiration is extended only to the *thoughts* of the writers- that God just gave these men noble "ideas" or "concepts" in their minds- or that God planted thoughts into their heads.

This is a heresy called "natural inspiration"- which is just another way of saying that the Bible is the product of human genius. But the second kind is called "thought inspiration" – which gets into very esoteric and mystical aspects which

lead into the so-called "mind sciences" (Christian Science, Rosicrucian, etc.) and other terrible heresies.

This view suggests that God came along at some point and gave the Biblical writers an idea; a religious concept; a spiritual pattern; and that is all that God actually did. And then after God gave these men their ideas or their thoughts or their concepts- these writers were then free to express those ideas in any way that they liked.

So in this false view- the writers put in hidden or secret "codes" or "concepts" or "formulas" into the Bible itself in the form of mathematical equations or by the use of specially structured sentences and it is in these hidden "codes" or secret messages which actually contain the true Word of God- and not in the literal Words of Scripture themselves.

And even though there has been an increase in interest in this false teaching in recent years- this error is actually quite ancient and is an attack against the "verbal inspiration" of Scripture made popular by the Gnostic mystics of the late first century- who both John and Paul fought against.

In this view- the goal of the believer would be to find the "key" that unlocks the secret "code" or the hidden "message" that is in the Bible rather than studying the actual Words of Scripture themselves.

People who ascribe to this theory would make statements like,

"You're so caught up in the *Words* of the Bible that you're missing the *message* of the Bible."

The Message is in the Words

But the idea that there is some hidden or secret "idea" or "concept" or "message" in the Bible that may or may not be connected to the actual Words of the Bible is ludicrous and contradicts the claim that the Bible makes about itself. There is no doubt at all that the Bible makes the claim that it is the Word of God.

1Corinthians 2

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Here Paul says that when he gives the Revelation of God to us; when he writes down that which God inspired in him- Paul says that it is *not* words coming from man's wisdom- but special and unique Words which the Spirit teaches.

In **John 17:8** Jesus said,

...I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Here Jesus says that the Message was in the Words- and there is no message apart from the Words- there is no Divine Inspiration apart from the Words.

More than 3,800 times in the Old Testament, we have expressions like **“Thus saith the Lord,”** and **“The Word of the Lord came”** and **“God said”**, and the Words and Sentences and Paragraphs which immediately follow such expressions declare to us exactly what God said. So God prefaces those sentences and paragraphs with the opening, **“Thus saith the Lord”** precisely to get our attention and because God desires for us to read and study and learn and to know what He said so that we will love what He said and be obedient to it. The Message of God to Man is contained only in the Words of Scripture and found no other place.

Wordless Concepts Do Not Exist

There are no such things as wordless concepts anyway. When Moses would excuse himself from serving the Lord, he said in essence,

“I need to do something else because I’m not eloquent.”

What was God's response to Moses? God didn't say, *"I'll give you a lot of great ideas and you'll figure out how to communicate them."* God didn't say, *"I'll be with your mind."* God said to him this,

Exodus 4:11b-12

11 ... Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

And that explains why 40 years later, according to **Deuteronomy 4:2**, Moses said to Israel,

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

What Moses actually said was, "Don't add to or take away from any of the Words that I spoke to you- because these Words are straight from God".

Never Ideas Without Words- But Sometimes Words Without Ideas

This concept that Moses laid down here is so true that even when the writers didn't understand what they were writing- they knew that what they wrote was inspired and that they must not alter the Words in any way. This was especially true in the Old Testament.

In **1Peter 1:10-12**, the Bible says:

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

These Old Testament prophets foretold of the Grace that would come and they made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as they predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that were to follow. Here they are writing about the sufferings of the coming Messiah; writing about the glory to follow the suffering of the Messiah; and then they're searching- trying to understand what they wrote. They're inquiring in the very Words which they were inspired to write- trying to figure out what person and what time God was speaking about. Because of when they lived- these men couldn't fully interpret the meaning of the Words they were actually writing- but they all knew that the Revelation of God was contained in the

Words which they were inspired to write- and nowhere else. So we can see that while God *never* gave ideas to men without words- He did, in some cases, give Words without complete ideas.

In **Matthew 24:35** the Scripture is very clear,

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

When God created Man- He made him with the capacity to communicate most effectively through words. Pictures and concepts can only convey a small portion of what needs to be communicated- but words are the highest form of communication which contains the fullness of Revelation. That is why there is far more brain activity going on when a person reads than there is when a person looks at art or watches television.

Without Words- Complete Communication is Impossible

When fallen Man desired to build contrary to God's Will- God stopped them by confusing their language so that they could not comprehend each other through verbal communication.

Genesis 11:1-9

1 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Even though the tower that they had begun to build was standing before them- because they could not communicate with words- they were frustrated in

their effort to continue. Without a clear understanding of the meaning of words- complete communication is impossible. And where there is no complete communication- there can be no action made toward accomplishing the end result.

When God speaks to Man- He desires for Man to comprehend what He is saying. And Man is held accountable to that which God has said. We know this because we are blessed by obeying what God has said and we are judged by disobeying what God says.

So God speaks with Words that can be written down and preserved so that these Words can be read; studied; analyzed; understood; and obeyed by every succeeding generation.

“Partial” Inspiration

Some say that Divine Inspiration is only with reference to spiritual and moral “teaching”. This is called “partial inspiration”- that is that *part* of the Bible is inspired- the *spiritual* part; the *moral* part- that’s the only part that is actually “breathed out” by God.

Those who hold to this error teach that the historical part of Scripture- the part that names names and gives dates and times and events and geographical information- that’s the part that was written by Man and is sometimes true and other times false. These people say that the historical parts; the geographical parts; the scientific parts- you don’t have to worry about these parts because the Bible doesn’t have to be accurate in all categories to still be God’s Word- it just has to be accurate when it talks about *spiritual* and *moral* things.

In their view- this explains the so-called “errors” and the “legends” and the “contradictions” in the Bible. This false view teaches that all that Divine Inspiration guarantees is the sacred- it doesn’t guarantee the secular.

God is Trustworthy

The problem with this view is that either God authored Scripture or He didn’t. And if God can’t be trusted for history; and He can’t be trusted for geography; and if God Almighty cannot be trusted for science- then why in the world would we ever trust Him for the spiritual?

If God can’t be trusted to tell us the truth about history and the truth about the material world that we live in- then why would we ever want to entrust our eternal souls to Him- and on what basis are we so sure He can be trusted at all about anything?

Why should we believe the spiritual which *cannot* be verified if we can’t believe the historical, the physical, and the material which *can* be verified? Why would you trust God for what you *cannot* see and *cannot* prove if He lied about what you *can* see and what you *can* prove?

This view of “partial” inspiration is a needless view to take because when the Bible speaks historically- it is true. It has been verified. History, literature, archeology, and science has done nothing but verify the names, dates, places, and

events that are recorded in Scripture. In fact- the credibility and reliability of Scripture gains with the passing of time and the advent of new discoveries.

Archeology Has Confirmed Scripture

For example, since the printing of the King James Version (1611), there have been over 1 million archeological discoveries in the Middle East which involve some aspect of people, places, and events specifically mentioned in Scripture. Yet after 1 million archeological discoveries, not one person, event or location mentioned in Scripture has ever been corrected or proven to be wrong. Not one! No other religious document in history can make that claim- except Scripture.

Science, History, and Geography Has Confirmed Scripture

Never has anything historically, scientifically, or geographically in the Bible ever been proven to be wrong. No other ancient manuscript can make that claim beside the Bible.

Creation in Six- 24 Hour Periods

Of course the biggest objection to the inspiration of Scripture from the Scientific and Historical Communities lies in the claim that the Bible makes that God created everything out of nothing in six- 24 hour periods.

Using unverified and controversial methods and set forth through an already known political agenda- some in the Scientific community teach that the universe and the earth are billions of years old and that Man evolved from lower primates millions of years ago. But God can be trusted with this issue also and God has said that God created all that is in six different periods consisting of 24 hours each.

Genesis 1:5

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis 1:8

And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Genesis 1:13

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Genesis 1:19

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Genesis 1:23

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Genesis 1:31

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

The controversy surrounds the meaning of the word, "day" as used in these verses. The Hebrew word for "day" is *yôm* - A masculine noun which can mean a day; a set amount of time; or a year. As used in this case- *yom* absolutely means a twenty- four hour cycle. How do we know this is true? Because of what God said about the seventh "day" or the seventh *yom*.

Genesis 2:2&3

2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

During the time before Jesus was resurrected from the dead- the faithful Jew was commanded to observe the 'sabot" or the Sabbath" which was the seventh day or the seventh *yom*. This observance began at sundown on what we know to be Friday and ended at sundown on what we know to be Saturday- a twenty four hour period!

If *yom*, was used in the first chapter of **Genesis**, was anything other than a twenty four hour time period- and was in actuality a period of hundreds, thousands, millions, or even billions of years- then the Jew would have had to keep that very same amount of time in observance of the sabot (Sabbath) in order to please God and clearly no one in Scripture did that.

4. "God Moves Upon the Reader" Error

Now there's a fourth error concerning Inspiration. This is the view that Inspiration is an Act of God on the *reader*- not the writer of Scripture. This view says that the Bible is basically a human book written by some religious geniuses- some of the ideas *may* have floated down from God in an abstract way. But what God does is He *existentially* moves on the reader. So all of a sudden, when you're reading this dead book- it comes alive to you because the Spirit of God inspires you (the reader) and awakens you.

"Mystical Zapping" Versus Divine Inspiration

In actuality – this view is nothing more than theological existentialism- sometimes called "neo-orthodoxy". Neo- Othodoxy says that the Bible is not an infallible Word from God- that it is not right out of the Mouth of God. But even though the Bible is not inspired- these people say that God does a really good thing with this dead, dry, lifeless book in that He "zaps" the Word as you read it and He gives the reader some sort of ecstatic experience. This "experience" gives the reader

a moment of contact with this "Divine Reality"- and the reader "feels" God somewhere along the line.

In their view- the Bible is certainly not authoritative- it's just has the ability to give the reader a kind of a spiritual "goose bump" and it is read. This "experience" differs from one person to the next and can never be planned or learned- it "hits" you in one way very different from everybody else. So people who ascribe to this foolishness are all living for the "moment"- the existential "moment"- and in that "moment"- all of a sudden- something jumps off the pages of the Bible and there's a "Wow" factor and these people say that this is what inspiration is.

Same Song- Second Verse

What is interesting about this wrong view of inspiration is that even though the people who believe this say that Scripture has the power to "zap" them- these same people would *never* say that Scripture is authoritative enough in any way to govern and judge their lives and behavior. So even though these people seem to be really high on the Bible- in actuality they join with the many others who reject verbal inspiration.

DeMythologizing Scripture

In fact, it is the very same people who believe in "existential inspiration" who also believe in "demythologizing" the Bible- or taking out or explaining away all of the miracles of which the Bible clearly testifies. What are some of the "myths" that these people seek to change; alter; remove; or ignore?

- ✓ The Trinity
- ✓ The Pre-Existence of Christ
- ✓ The Virgin Birth
- ✓ The Deity of Christ
- ✓ The Miracles of Christ
- ✓ The Substitutionary Death of Christ
- ✓ The Resurrection of Christ
- ✓ The Ascension of Christ
- ✓ The Second Coming of Christ
- ✓ Eternal Judgment

This is what Francis Schaeffer used to call "the leap of faith"- a leap into nowhere. One writer says,

"Such men refuse to believe that God performed the miracle of giving us by inspiration an infallible Bible but are ready to believe that God daily performs the greater miracle of enabling men to find and see in the fallible word of man some infallible word from God."

And how could you have a divinely correct experience through a humanly wrong book? If that were true- God would be validating lies. God would be validating deception.

The Bible Claims to be the Word of God

2Timothy 3:16&17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2Peter 1:16-21

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 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.

The Book itself- the Bible- is not benign- it is not neutral. The Bible claims to be the Word of God. So that is either true or it is a lie- but it isn't neutral. It is either the Word of God or it is the biggest hoax ever. What these people say is that God is going to give you a legitimate spiritual experience through a hoax. Why would God ever do that?

This lie is slick and sounds very sophisticated. But you have philosophers like Soren Kierkegaard- the Danish theologian of the 19th century who said,

“Only the truth that edifies is truth for you.”

He was a modern post-modernist. If the whole biblical record is a lie, how could we accept the truthfulness of some spiritual experience induced by reading it?

5. The “Mechanical Dictation” Error

This last error about inspiration teaches that the writers of Scripture were nothing more than robots and that God *imposed* His Word upon them and they simply were vessels like a pencil or computer who wrote whatever God dictated to

them. This is an interesting error because it *does* teach that God inspired the words- but this error- unlike the others- eliminates human involvement altogether.

This error teaches that Moses and Paul and the other writers periodically were caught away into a spiritual "place"- a sort of "trance"- whereby God came down and gave them Words and then these men acted as unwitting "accomplices" to write them down.

Another version of this error teaches that the writers of Scripture acted as nothing more than secretaries taking dictation from their boss- Who in this case was God Himself.

This error ignores the human side of Scripture- which is just fine to many people. Many people in the Church today have a very hard time with the concept that human beings were involved in any way with the development of; the compilation of; the preservation of; and the interpretation of the Word of God. To these people- any human involvement in writing Scripture at all- would mean that Scripture is not from God and that any human involvement at all in interpreting Scripture always and in all cases creates "man- made" religion and doctrine.

God Didn't Give Us Scripture By Himself

There are only a few religious writings that exist on earth today that make the claim that they came directly from God Himself without any human involvement at all.

- The Golden Tablets of Joseph Smith
- The Baghavad Gita (Hindu)

These spurious writings make the claim that they came directly from Heaven- from God Himself- without any human involvement. But when placed under close scrutiny- both of these writings show inconsistencies and outright contradictions and errors that a Sovereign Supreme Being would never make. So the track record for documents that claim to come directly from God is not very good.

The only "writing" that the God of Heaven God gave to Man without any human involvement was the original Ten Commandments.

Exodus 31:18

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

The location of those tables of stone given to Moses are not known to us today- so we are not in possession of any writing that came directly from God.

None of the Books of the Bible came directly from God in the same sense as did the Ten Commandments. All 66 Books of the Bible were written by Man and

involved human beings in their development and their preservation and accumulation. All sixty-six Books contain the “personality” of their writers- along with word usage which was common to that individual- complete with words and phrases and terms that were common to those particular people at that particular time.

The “Mechanical Dictation” error rejects all of this while somehow trying to maintain that God inspired the Words of Scripture. The problem with this teaching lies in the reality of how we actually received these sixty-six Books. The Books which make up the Canon of Scripture didn’t float down from Heaven; God didn’t send them to us by way of an angel. The fact of the matter is that human beings wrote these Books. All of them. And these writers lived at different stages of history and spoke different languages and dwelt on different lands and were familiar with different customs and ways of speaking and writing that were unique to them.

And all of that comes through in their writings- so we cannot deny the reality that men wrote the Bible. The Doctrine of Inspiration teaches that even though men wrote each Book- that God so moved upon these men as to cause every Word to be exactly what God wanted.

Those who believe in mechanical inspiration come to the conclusion that the writers went into a sort of trance or some kind of transcendent visionary mode and in that mode they became nothing more than a human machine- writing down words which God caused them to write. This “mechanical” theory of inspiration came from the Roman Catholic Church- which teaches that Scripture came by way of simple dictation. This false theory was made at the Council of Trent which was held in the late 16th Century to refute the “heresy” of the Protestant Reformation.

“ . . . this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety, and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ’s own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.” The Council of Trent page 18

Could Have- But Didn’t

It is true, that God *could* have used this method of dictation to pen down His Word- and we still would have had an inspired text. God was certainly able to choose this method- but the fact remains that He didn’t. And the reason that we know this to be true is self evident- because a simple reading of Scripture reveals the many variations of literary style that are contained in the sixty-six books.

There are many variations in the use of the three languages that make up Scripture (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) from writer to writer; and distinct personalities are clearly obvious. Emotional attitudes come pouring through the writers as they write. God used writers, says the New Testament,

... as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21)

These men were not left out of the process. They were right in the middle of the process. They were included in the very act of writing. In fact, they were writing their own heart attitudes; their own thoughts; their own insights; their own experiences; their own understanding- all somehow under the total control of God.

This truth becomes apparent in several passages that are critical to our understanding. Let's look at three of them.

Hebrews 1:1&2

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Using the literal Greek- this verse actually reads:

“God- after He spoke along ago to the fathers in (by/through) the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in (by/through) His Son whom He appointed heir of all things to whom also He made the worlds.”

It Was God That Spoke

First of all- God has spoken. That is the key to any Biblical understanding of inspiration- God has indeed spoken. The Creator Himself removed the obstacles to our finite understanding of Him by *revealing* Himself through the inspired Words of Sacred Scripture. This passage in Hebrews reveals to us that God has spoken by the prophets- (and by that, He means the *writers* of Scripture)- in many portions. The Greek word for “portions” or “sundry times” that the writer of Hebrews used here is, *polumeros*- which literally means: many *sections*; or many *books*- 66 to be exact- 39 in the Old and 27 in the New.

God spoke in many *sections* and in many “ways”- (*polutropos*). What does that mean? It means that God chose to speak to Man by way of visions, prophecies, parables, typology, symbols, ceremony, theophany (the appearing of God to Man) and an audible voice...and all these methods or sections or ways was recorded in the Old Testament.

All the various and sundry times that God spoke and wanted it written down- it *was* written down. It was God speaking to the fathers in (by/through) the prophets (the writers of Scripture) through many different sections, segments,

books and in many ways- all collected together in the 39 Books of the Old Testament.

Old Testament Versus New Testament Revelation

Every single Word of the Old Testament is inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, relevant, and eternal. But much of the Old Testament is a *partial* Revelation of God that cannot be fully comprehended without the fullness of the complete Revelation offered in the New Testament. Conversely, the final and completed Revelation of God offered in the New Testament cannot be fully appreciated and understood without the knowledge of the Old. So each Testament (Old and New) are dependant upon each other for full use by Man.

God spoke to Man *before* the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ in various ways and at different times. But after God took on human flesh and walked among men- God chose to speak to Man by a single way and through a single voice- His own Son.

Hebrews 1:2a

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,...

Then the writer gives us the resume of this Jesus:

Hebrews 1:2b- 4

2b...whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

This writer is saying here that since it is true that Jesus is far superior to any prophet; any vision; any dream; any supernatural manifestation; any partial Truth- that every human on earth needs to hear from Jesus now. Consider all that this writer says that Jesus is. This writer says that Jesus:

- ✓ Has been appointed by God as the Heir of everything that is made (**Hebrews 1:2b**)
- ✓ Is also the Instrument by which God made all things (**Hebrews 1:2b**)
- ✓ Is the Brilliance of the Glory of God (**Hebrews 1:3a**)
- ✓ Is the exact Representation of God's Own Image (**Hebrews 1:3a**)
- ✓ Upholds everything by the Word of His Power (**Hebrews 1:3b**)
- ✓ By Himself purged all of the sins of all of the people who will ever be saved (**Hebrews 1:3b**)
- ✓ Is now seated at the right Hand of the majesty on High (**Hebrews 1:3b**)
- ✓ Is far superior to any and all angels (**Hebrews 1:4a**)
- ✓ Obtained a far greater authority than the angels (**Hebrews 1:4b**)

These are the Characteristics of the Voice that now speaks to us today. No other prophet, angel, or mouthpiece can lay claim to these Characteristics- only Jesus. These Characteristics give Jesus the Heavenly Credibility that is needed for all men to trust what He says and to be held accountable to what He says.

How does God now in these last days speak to Man through this Jesus? Through the inspired Words of Scripture. God now speaks to Man through Christ in three areas:

1. The actual literal Words that Jesus Himself spoke and which were recorded for us in the Four Gospels (**Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**).
2. The inspired Words that came by way of the Spirit of Jesus and which are recorded for us in the 23 Books of the New Testament. (**John 16:4-16**)
3. The inspired Words which the Spirit of Christ inspired the Old Testament writers to pen down. (**1Peter 1:11**)

The Bible teaches in **Hebrews 1:1&2** that God no longer speaks to Man in the various and sundry ways and means and methods that He did under the inferior Old Covenant- but God has chosen to speak His final, complete, and finished Revelation through a far *superior* instrument than prophets, visions, signs, and wonders- and that *superior* instrument is through Jesus Christ- Who is God made flesh.

Why would God use a prophet to speak *partial* Truth today if He could use Himself to speak in Truth in fullness? Why should God's people seek to hear from an inferior, earthly voice- if we can hear from a much more superior Heavenly Voice? Since God was made flesh; took upon Himself the sins of us all; and died and rose again; and since God placed His Own "seal of approval" upon Jesus through the Resurrection- this causes all men to look to Jesus and to hear from Jesus if they hope to hear from God.

Luke 9:35

And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

Hebrews 2:6-12

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

The writer of Hebrews tells us clearly that God is still speaking- only He has chosen now to speak to Man only through His Son. It is God speaking again. It is God's self-disclosure. The Old Testament is not a collection of wisdom from ancient men- it is the very Voice of God through all the means by which He spoke. What God said and what God wanted "inscripturated" was written down by the writers of the Old Testament. In the New, He did the same and what He wanted written down is written down by the New Testament writers.

2Peter 1:20&21

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 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.

The key word to look at here is the word "moved". This verse tells us that men were "moved" by the Holy Spirit. This word has the connotation that these men were: carried along; borne along; like a leaf floating downstream. They were in the process, "carried along".

1Corinthians 2

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul makes the claim here that the Apostles were personally taught things by the Spirit and those were the things that they received and then wrote down. That's what it means to be "carried along"; to be "moved along by the Holy Spirit" to write these things down.

2Peter 1:21

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.

Peter says here:

"No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will."

Prophecy here is a word that simply embraces all of Scripture- it refers to all the Scripture- not just prediction as we think often of prophecy today. This word, "prophecy" as used in this case means: *the message which was given by way of inspiration*- or in other words- the Scriptures. To "prophecy" in this case actually means: *to stand before and speak the inspired Words, (prophemi); to speak before men; to disclose what the inspired words mean; to talk in front of someone; to tell forth all that God has already spoken- all that God has said; all that God has told in the Scripture.*

"All of it (Scripture) comes not by an act of human will, but by men moved by the Holy Spirit who speak from God."

Therefore if you back up again to verse **2Peter 1:20**:

"No Scripture, or no prophecy of Scripture, is a matter of one's own personal (private) interpretation."

Now examine the word, "interpretation". It is the Greek word *epilusis*. This word is used to describe a "releasing" of something that was bound or an "unveiling" of something that was hidden. The "genitive case" usage of this Greek word

indicates the source. So the idea here that Peter was conveying to believers here in **2Peter 1:20** is that:

“No prophecy of Scripture finds its release; or finds its unveiling; or finds its source in any one person. No prophecy is made by an act of the human will. All Scripture comes by the Holy Spirit as men are moved along, carried along like a ship raising its sails filled with the Holy Spirit, carried in the direction He desired so that they write down what God has spoken.”

2Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The literal Greek phrase that the Apostle Paul used here is “*pasa graphe theopneustos*”, or all of the writings- (referring to those special Words that were written down by the writers of Scripture) all Divine writing is God breathed; it is the very breath of God. That’s why in **Romans 3:2**, Paul refers to Scripture as being “the oracles of God”.

So we can see that the Bible itself makes the claim that God is the author of what the Bible says. This claim is not made once or twice- but many different writers made the claim all throughout the various Books of the Bible that what they spoke and what they wrote down was nothing other than the inspired; inerrant; infallible, authoritative; relevant; and eternal Word of the living God.

For example- Moses made the claim that God Almighty gave him the exact Words that he spoke and wrote down eleven separate times. Joshua made that same claim twice. Samuel made that very claim twice; the prophet Nathan agreed with this claim when he told David in **2Samuel 7** that David would not build the House of God.

The prophet Isaiah said 43 times that God Almighty gave him the words that he wrote down. Jeremiah made that same claim 147 times. Ezekiel made this claim 126 times; Amos 13 times; Micah twice; Haggai 4 times; Zechariah 18 times.

So we are to understand inspiration then as that Revelation of God given to us in writing by the Spirit of God putting that message in the writer’s mind; mingling it Sovereignly and Supernaturally with the writer’s own experience; his own vocabulary; and out of that comes every Word that God wanted written.

The Testimony From Jesus

The most important testimony about Inspiration and the Divine origin of Scripture, of course, is that from Jesus Christ Himself. What did Jesus say about Scripture? What was the view of Christ when it came to Scripture? What did Jesus think about the Scriptures? From studying all that Jesus said- we know that Jesus testified about ten aspects concerning the Scripture:

1. That He was the Theme of all Scripture
2. That the Testimony of Christ Given in Scripture was Accurate and Reliable

3. That He Came to Fulfill the Existing Scriptures- Not to Change Them
4. That Every Word of Scripture Was Important
5. That Scripture Was on Equal Legitimacy As His Own Words
6. That Scripture was Powerful in Temptation
7. That the Scripture Accounts Were True
8. That Scripture Was Sufficient to Save
9. That the Source of all Error Comes From not Knowing the Scriptures
10. That Scripture Was Credible

1. That He was the Theme of all Scripture

John 5:39

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

2. That the Testimony about Christ Given in Scripture was Accurate and Reliable

Luke 24:13-27

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, **What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?**

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass therein these days?

19 And he said unto them, **What things?** And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, **O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:**

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-47

44 And he said unto them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.**

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, **Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:**

47 **And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

3. That He Came to *Fulfill* the Existing Scriptures- Not to Change Them

Jesus *never* corrected anything that was written about Himself. He *never* edited any Scripture or later them in any way. He knew that He had come to earth to fulfill the existing Scriptures- what was written about Him.

Matthew 5:17&18

17 **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**

18 **For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

Jesus never said or even intimated that anything that was written about Him in Scripture needed to be added to or taken away from. He simply yielded Himself to fulfilling what had already been written about Himself hundreds and even thousands of years earlier.

Matthew 26:24a

The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: ...

Later in that same chapter, Jesus commanded Peter to put up his sword and to not resist what was about to happen to Him precisely so that the Scriptures could be fulfilled:

Matthew 26:50-54

50 And Jesus said unto him, **Friend, wherefore art thou come?** Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, **Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.**

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

4. That Every Word of Scripture Was Important

Matthew 5:17&18

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The word, "jot" is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, "yod" and refers to the smallest and the seemingly most insignificant portion of the Law that God gave in the Old Testament Scriptures. Its Greek counterpoint is the "iota" which is the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet. The "tittle" is the small stroke which is added to certain letters or words of the Hebrews alphabet which distinguishes them from other letters or words that they resemble.

The meaning of Jesus here is clear. By making this statement, Jesus was saying that there was nothing that had been written down about Him in the existing Old Testament Scriptures that was not true and accurate and reliable and trustworthy and which did not need to be changed or altered- but which only needed to be fulfilled. And that every single word or portion of the Scriptures which some may find insignificant were equally as important as those areas on which everyone agreed was important. In other words- there is no such thing as any part of Scripture being unimportant or insignificant.

John 10:35b

... the scripture cannot be broken;

The Scriptures cannot be broken or divided into "important" parts and "unimportant" parts. All of Scripture is important and must be taken as a whole. You can't break it anyplace. All sixty- six Books of the Scriptures are cohesive, comprehensive, complete and whole. Jesus compared lifetime of Scripture to the duration of the universe:

Luke 16:16&17

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

We all know that death comes whenever sin invades. Where there is sin- there is also death. The Word of God is pure and it endures forever. It is untouched by sin, which means it is perfect- which means therefore that it can never die.

Jesus emphasized the importance of every single word of Scripture:

Luke 18:31

Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

Jesus based His interpretation of the Old Testament on a single word- proving that words- and the correct definition of those words- really does matter:

Matthew 22:23-33

23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.**

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

What was Jesus' proof that His interpretation of the Resurrection was correct? Because of what God said to Moses in **Exodus 3:6**:

... I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...

The Sadducees didn't believe in the Resurrection and Jesus said that they were wrong by interpreting this one verse of Scripture. Jesus proved that His interpretation of the Resurrection was true by discussing the eternity of God by using the present tense of the verb "to be" (I am) from one verse of Scripture! This is how much emphasis Jesus Himself placed on seemingly insignificant parts.

5. That Scripture Was on Equal Legitimacy As His Own Words

Jesus placed Scripture on an equal plane with His Own Words. So because this is true- you've got to watch out for "red-letter" Bibles because they might lead you to *assume* that the red letters- that which is spoken by Jesus- is more important or more inspired than the other parts- but that is not true. *All* of Scripture is equally inspired and so all of Scripture is equally important. For example- Jesus said in **Matthew 5:18**:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

And then He said in **Matthew 24:35**:

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

By making both of these statements – Jesus was equating what He said to what was written in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. "Scripture" (Old Testament Law) will not pass away and "My words" will not pass away. They are equal. His Words are not *more* important than any other portion of Scripture- they are equal to every other portion of Scripture. They are all equal- neither will pass away.

6. That Scripture Was Powerful in Temptation

In **Matthew 4** and **Luke 4** when Jesus was tempted by satan himself- He answered with Scripture.

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, **It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

7. That the Scripture Accounts Were True

All throughout His ministry- Jesus referred to Scripture repeatedly by saying things like,

“Have you not read?”

“Have you not heard?”

“Did you never read?”

“Is it not written?”

“It is written”

On the cross, Jesus personally fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies when He said, **“I thirst.”** Jesus uttered those words because that is what **Palm 22** indicated that He would say. During His earthly ministry- Jesus confirmed the following accounts in the Old Testament by His Own Words:

- ✓ The Creation of Adam and Eve
- ✓ The Murder of Abel
- ✓ Noah and the Flood
- ✓ The Role of Abraham
- ✓ Circumcision
- ✓ The Destruction of Sodom
- ✓ Lot's Wife
- ✓ The Salvation of Lot
- ✓ The Call of Moses
- ✓ The Law of Moses
- ✓ The Manna from Heaven
- ✓ The Brazen Serpent

And there are many more. Suffice it to say that Jesus affirmed the Truth of the Old Testament through His Own Words.

8. That the Scripture Was Sufficient to Save

Luke 16:19-31

19 **There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:**

20 **And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,**

- 21** And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
- 22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
- 23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
- 24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
- 25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.
- 26** And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.
- 27** Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
- 28** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
- 29** Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
- 30** And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
- 31** And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Jesus was saying here that what Moses and the prophets taught in the Old Testament was all that anyone needed to stay out of hell. And if people will not believe what the Scriptures say- they will not believe because of some great sign or wonder or miracle that is done for them.

9. That the Source of all Error is in Not Knowing the Scriptures

In **Mark 12**- Jesus showed the Jews that the source of all their error came from not knowing the Scriptures.

Mark 12:10

And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

Mark 12:24

Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

Mark 12:27

He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

Mark 12:35-37a

35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, **How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?**

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?...

10. That Scripture was Credible

One tenth of the Words that came out of Jesus that are recorded in Scripture were from the Old Testament. He quoted the Old Testament 180 times out of the 1800 verses reporting what He said. One tenth of the time He referred to the Old Testament. And He said He is the Truth; that He is the eternal Word; that He is our "model" as far as how we should approach the Bible.

What Should We Say to These Things?

The summation of all that we have studied is that we must arrive at one of three possible conclusions to the Doctrine of Inspiration- based upon the Testimony of Jesus Christ:

1. There are no errors in the Bible
2. There *are* errors in the Bible- but Jesus didn't know about them.
3. There *are* errors in the Bible- and Jesus *did* know about them and He covered them up.

There is only one possibility. If there are errors in the Bible and Jesus didn't know about them- then He is not God- because God is Omniscient and that means that God knows everything. If Jesus is not God- then Salvation is not true- we are yet in our sins and nothing matters anyway.

If there *are* errors in the Bible and Jesus knew about them and covered them up- then Jesus Christ is the devil- because it is the devil who comes to lie and deceive (**Genesis 3:1; John 8:44**). But Jesus is not the devil- Jesus is God and there are no errors in Scripture.

The authority of Christ really settles the issue of an inspired Text. Scripture then becomes the binding word of Christ.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The Scripture is the Word of Christ- the "**Testimony of Jesus Christ**" (**The Revelation 19:10**). Jesus takes ownership of all of Scripture and therefore we should be confident of it all. May God be praised!

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.