

DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION

October 11, 1982

I. Definition.

- A. It involves both inhale and exhale of Scripture, as seen in the Greek noun $\theta\epsilon\omicron\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$, theopneustos: "*God-breathed*" (2Tim.3:16).
- B. The inhale involves the Holy Spirit communicating to human authors His complete, coherent message (2Pet.1:20,21).
- C. In the exhale phase, the human author recorded (without waiving his human intellect, feelings, literary style, personality, vocabulary, or individuality) God's complete message with complete accuracy in the original autograph, i.e., in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

II. The origin of Scripture is not human viewpoint (2Pet.1:20,21).

- A. Peter says every prophecy was initiated by God.
- B. Not one Scripture is due to human derivation.
- C. Due to the Holy Spirit's supervision, no error crept in.
- D. By inference, Peter says only men under the control of the Holy Spirit can correctly interpret Scripture.
- E. The Holy Spirit used imperfect men to write the perfect Word of God; furthermore, He uses imperfect men to interpret Scripture perfectly.
- F. Peter applies this to prophecy, but it applies equally to all Scripture.

III. The extent of inspiration as per the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt.5:17,18; 24:35; Jn.10:35).

- A. Inspiration extends to the very words of Scripture (Mt.5:17,18).
- B. This doctrine is called verbal plenary inspiration.
- C. Inspiration includes:
 - 1. the unknown past (Gen.1:1,2; Isa.45:18; Ezek.28).
 - 2. ancient history, customs, events, etc. (Dan.11:4ff).
 - 3. law and what God expects of nations (Jer.18:9,10; the Mosaic Law).
 - 4. the failings of believers (Saul, David and Bathsheba, Solomon, the Exodus Generation, Peter's three denials, etc.).
 - 5. prophecy (Mt.5:17,18), both those that were uttered and fulfilled, and those yet unfulfilled.

IV. External proofs of inspiration. God has given empirical proofs of inspiration.

- A. The proof of fulfilled prophecy. Prophecy related to Christ's first Advent was fulfilled (Isa.53; Micah.5:2; Pss.22:14,17; 34:20; Zech.11:12,13; 13:7; Jer.31:15; Isa.9:1). Also Sodom (Ezek.28:22,23; Mt.11:20-29).
- B. Archaeological confirmation: Ninevah, the Hittites, Belshazar, etc.
- C. Preservation and restoration of the Biblical text.
 - 1. The New Testament passes the bibliographic test: the test of document transmission.
 - 2. Of the 150,000 variant readings of the Greek New Testament, 95% can be dismissed as having little authority and out of character, leaving 7,500 manuscripts. Ninety-five percent of the variations in these texts do not effect the sense (example: one may have "Jesus Christ" instead of "Christ Jesus").
 - 3. Of the over 400 remaining manuscripts (MSS), only about 50 are of great significance and not one of the variations in these texts alters a single doctrine, for no doctrine depends on just one verse.
 - 4. This makes the Bible unique due to the number of MSS (13,000 including portions). The true reading of every doubtful passage is in one or more of these ancient authorities.
 - 5. To be skeptical of the authenticity of the New Testament, one would have to reject all the ancient writings of Rome and Greece.
 - 6. The New Testament manuscripts and fragments agree with each other.
 - 7. No other body of ancient literature enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the

New Testament.

8. The New Testament also has support from early translations like:

- a. Syriac.
- b. Latin.
- c. Coptic: 9,000 of them.

9. The New Testament MSS are supported by early church scholars in their writings.

10. Also from lectionaries, sections of Scripture used for congregational readings and prayers.

D. Bibliographic tests for Old Testament reliability.

1. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew scrolls were dated 900AD, or 1,300 years after the last book of the Old Testament was written.
2. The absence of many Hebrew MSS is explained by the fact that copies not living up to the exacting standards of the copyists were destroyed.
3. This exactitude continued throughout the Masseritic period (500-900AD).
4. The Dead Sea Scrolls prove the validity of the Masseritic text and the Masseritic copying tradition.
5. The Septuagint and Samaritan texts also support it.
6. In addition, the Targums (500AD), Mishna (200AD), Gamaras and Midrash (100BC-300AD), and Exopla texts support it.

V. Objections to verbal plenary inspiration.

- A. Alleged contradictions (we have not found any, have we?).
- B. No original MSS (due to the copying tradition).
- C. Historical inaccuracy (these have all been disproved over the years).
- D. Total war commanded of Israel in the Old Testament (+R of God).

VI. False views of inspiration.

- A. Inspiration view: writers were inspired to write even as other men who wrote literature (liberal 19th century).
- B. Intuition view: writers were inspired in the sense that their natural wisdom was deepened to understand God's truth for their day.
- C. Existential, neo-orthodox view: (Barth) the Bible has errors in it, but becomes the Word of God when God confronts the reader through the Bible.
- D. The neo-orthodox view: the exegete must strip the Bible of myth to uncover the spirit of truth.
- E. Verbal dictation: the people who wrote the Bible were robots of the Holy Spirit. The writers were strictly under the Holy Spirit's control.
- F. The inspired concept: God inspired the concept. The author wrote it in his own words. Neo-evangelical view.

VII. The pre-canon revelation of God included:

- A. the Holy Spirit (2Sam.23:2; Ezek.2:2; 8:3; Micah.3:8; Heb.3:7).
- B. teaching angels (Deut.33:2; Ps.68:17; Acts.7:53; Gal.3:19).
- C. dreams and visions (Dan.10:9; Isa.1:1; 6:1).
- D. direct contact (Isa.6:8-10).

VIII. General revelation through creation (Rom.1:20; Act.17:28; Ps.19:16). The true zodiac. See Doctrine of God Consciousness.

IX. The Bible existed in the mind of Christ before the writing of Scripture (1Cor.2:16; Prov.8:22-36).

X. The challenge of inspiration (Prov.9:16).

- A. To the Pastor-Teacher (2Tim.4:1,2 "*Preach the Word*"; 1Pet.5:14).
- B. To the believer to be in Bible class (Mt.4:4; Eph.1:15-18; 3:14-19).

Reviewed: September 2, 1998