

God's Word is Inspired
II Peter 1:21

During the War of 1812, Francis Key Scott was held captive on a British war vessel watching as the fleet bombarded Fort McHenry in Maryland. The war had been going on for two years on the night in which he watched helplessly aboard. All through the night canons roared and cannon balls pommelled the beach and fort. In the early morning hours of dawn as the sun began to drench the war torn garrison Francis Key Scott saw the American flag still waving high on its standard. What he witnessed some would consider miraculous because of the relentless barrage of firepower from those ships. In a moment of inspiration the amateur poet penned the words to "Defense of Fort McHenry". It was published a week later. The lyrics were adapted to the tune of the popular song "To Anacreon in Heaven" and became known as "The Star-Spangled Banner". A century later under President Woodrow Wilson, the song would officially become the national anthem of the United States.

What is it about purple mountains and golden shores that inspire a person to create a poem or song?

What is it about the rays of the early dawn's sun or fading glow of a sunset that inspire an artist to put hues of color to canvas?

How does a musician get inspired to put strokes and dots to a series of lines giving it tempo and pitch and tone in order to create a concerto?

How is an author inspired to take letters and combine them into words to form sentences and paragraphs compiling them into sequential thoughts that formulate into a book compelling the reader to sit spell bound page after page?

Some historians and scholars believe that Thomas Jefferson was inspired by God to write the Declaration of Independence.

This past week I sent an email to a friend who has

been going through some health challenges. He told me that my words were inspiring.

Some people mention on Facebook the need some inspiration to do housework. Maybe that's you.

So what does it mean to be inspired? Is Biblical inspiration the same as those who for centuries have been inspired by events or scenes they have witnessed?

The internet offers this definition of inspiration: "the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative; a sudden brilliant, creative, or timely idea."

Webster's dictionary says that inspiration originally meant to breathe or blow upon or into, to infuse by breathing. It has a little foot note taking you to the word spirit, which it defines first as breath. It then says it is to cause, guide, communicate, or motivate as by divine or supernatural influence.

In the Greek the word is *theopneustos* and is a combination of two words *theo* which means God and *pneustos* which means to breathe or simply to be God-breathed.

Before we consider the Biblical definition let's turn in our Bibles to II Peter 1:21. With your finger in that passage, turn to II Timothy 3:16. And if you can keep your finger in two places at once or use a marker, turn to I Corinthians 2:10-13.

These are the primary verses that support the inspiration of Scripture. Before we consider those verses let's look at the objections to inspiration.

I. THE OBJECTIONS TO INSPIRATION

Over the years a number of theories have surfaced about what inspiration means from these passages.

A. The Concept Theory of Inspiration

People who believe this theory believe that God gave the authors of Scripture a concept or idea. The authors then sat down and wrote what came to mind. God superintended the ideas but not the words of Scripture. God inspired the concepts but not the words.

To Moses God gave the concept of the law.

To the Prophets God gave the ideas of prophecy and judgment.

To the gospel writers God gave them the thoughts about the life of Jesus.

They took the idea and then wrote.

You get the point.

B. The Theory of Natural Inspiration

This theory denies the supernatural element of Biblical inspiration. Those who hold this view believe that the writers of Scripture possessed unique or rare spiritual insight to write what they did. They were inspired in the same way someone is inspired to write a novel. Their spiritual insight allowed them to write on spiritual matters. This theory says men wrote according to their own will.

C. The Theory of Mystical Illumination

That sounds like they were tripping out on drugs. This theory takes natural inspiration a step further and believes that the authors were Spirit filled and guided to write Scripture but were not in fact superintended in any way by the Spirit. They claim that other Christian writings like those of the early church fathers like Augustine or Clement or Jerome were just as inspired as the Bible. They also believe that the writings of Scripture are not infallible even though they are religious literature containing messages from God.

D. The Theory of Degree Inspiration

This theory holds that some passages of Scripture are more inspired than other passages of Scripture. They hold that some may have more relevance to us

today than other passages. All of it is inspired but not equally so.

So who gets to choose which is more inspired?

E. The Theory of Partial Inspiration

This theory holds that passages speaking about salvation and faith are inspired but others passages that speak of things like history or science or geography are not inspired and in fact may contain error. It teaches that we can trust the Bible on spiritual matters but not any other subject.

This view rejects verbal inspiration or inspiration that extends to the words of the Bible and they reject plenary inspiration which is the view that inspiration extends to all the Bible.

They teach that even though it is imperfect in some areas it is still a viable source that can lead to salvation and spiritual growth.

I believe that history is an essential part of teaching about salvation. After all if you can't trust the history of the crucifixion how can you be sure that Christ died on the cross for the sins of mankind?

F. The Theory of Divine Dictation

In this theory, the writers entered into a trance-like state and dictated from God all the words of the Bible. It would be like a court recorder taking down everything that was said. In this trance God told them what to write down. If that were the case all of Scripture would be the same in language and in style and in format.

G. The Neo-Orthodoxy Theory

This is a very liberal view believing that the Bible is not the Word of God, but becomes the Word of God through a special encounter with God. It holds that the Bible's message is hidden, historical events

aren't important. For example it doesn't matter whether Jesus rose from the dead, what matters in your personal experience.

How would you like to read those Bibles?
 You couldn't tell which parts were inspired.
 You had to have some esoteric or mysterious experience to understand it.
 You couldn't trust historical events or scientific observations.
 If you hold to any of those theories, can you even really trust God about anything if you don't know which parts are inspired? Can you even really trust the people who claim they know which parts are inspired if some of them are not? Seems to me that it can be interpreted anyway the person wants based on personal preference or cultural mandates.

Paul in writing to the Thessalonians made a very important point about God's Word when he wrote: "And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe."
 (I Thessalonians 2:13)

So what do we believe about the inspiration of the Bible?

For that we will look at the origin of inspiration.

II. THE ORIGIN OF INSPIRATION

Let's go back and read the three passages we referred to in the beginning of the message.
 II Peter 1:21
 II Timothy 3:16
 I Corinthians 2:10-13

From our passage in II Peter 1:21 let's look at two thoughts important to inspiration.

A. God's Voice in Inspiration – His Servants

"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God."

Last week we looked at verse 20 which says that Scripture didn't come from the writers own interpretation meaning they didn't originate from the prophets own interpretation. When God gave them a word, they wrote it as God gave it, they didn't add commentary to it. They didn't get a word from God and then set about interpreting what they thought He meant. We don't get the luxury of making Scripture say what we think it should say.

In verse 21 we read that Scripture wasn't born in the idea of the writers. The news is filled with all many stories about important issues.

We hear opinions about what should be done regarding health care.
 We hear opinions about what should be done regarding school shootings and gun legislation.
 We hear opinions about prison reform.
 We hear opinions about immigration.
 We hear opinions about correcting moral issues.
 People write about those things. It comes from their own will on the matter that concerns them.

The authors of Scripture didn't look at some social injustice or moral concern and decide to write about it. The passage says they spoke from God.

The president of a company makes a new policy. He or she hands that policy on down to the managers who take the policy to the employees. The managers don't get to rewrite the policy based on their bias or understanding. They don't get to cut out some of the message or add to the message. They deliver the message exactly as it was given to them by the president.

Scripture did not originate with men. It originated with God. They were His voice of the inspired Word. They were his servants, these 40 authors of the 66 books all contained in what we call the Bible. They spoke from God, without adding to it or taking

away from it. God is the origin and His servants were the voice.

But how did they come to write it? Was it because they were more spiritually attuned than other people? Did they have some mysterious encounter? Were they part of some divine body snatching experience where they were put in a temporary trance becoming a human recording device dictating everything God said word for word?

Consider God's vehicle of inspiration, His Spirit.
B. God's Vehicle of Inspiration – His Spirit

Here is where the definition of inspiration comes to bear. Remember that the dictionary definition originally meant to breathe out or into. And then from the Biblical definition to be God-breathed which comes from the Greek word *theopneustos*. When we speak of the Bible being inspired we mean that God divinely influenced human authors of the Scriptures to write the very words of God.

Now, you might be wondering how He did that, because that sounds a lot like dictation.

Our passage says that “men were moved or carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

To understand how God used men to write His Words in a way that was not like dictation, we need to understand what the term “moved” or “carried along” means.

The word was used to describe a sailing vessel moved along by the wind. Acts 27:15, 17 gives us an example. Paul was a prisoner on his way by ship to Rome when the vessel became entangled in a violent storm. Peter uses the same word.

It says they were driven along by the winds. That's what it means that these men were driven along by the Spirit when they authored Scripture. That the Spirit carried them along means that God used each

author with his own distinct or unique personality and writing styles and vocabulary to write the Bible. The tense in the Greek means they were continually carried along.

That's why the dictation theory doesn't make any sense, because we see differences in all the books of the Bible based on the author's personality, etc.

John Phillips writes that “those who wrote the Bible were caught up by the Holy Spirit and carried forward at His will... Thus, the Holy Spirit came upon them. They sat down, pen in hand, to write a letter, or record a historical event, or phrase a song. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit of God took hold of them, caught them up and bore them along. Their thoughts were their own – but not their own. Their words were their own – but not their own. They used their narrative, mother tongue, along with all its grammar and idioms. They used their individual, distinctive personalities, dialects, vocabularies, and patterns of thought. They were not dictating machines. The Spirit bore them along. He breathed life into what they wrote. He controlled their every word. He ensured that every jot, and every tittle were the words He wanted used and that the thoughts they expressed were the thoughts He wanted expressed. The Bible is made of the very stuff of eternity. It is infallible, inerrant, infinite and indestructible... It is living, authoritative and divine.”

So when we read that Scripture was God-breathed this does not mean something He breathed into but rather was breathed out by God.

Paul who was an intellect writes differently than Peter the sailor, who writes differently from Matthew the tax collector, who writes differently from Moses or David or Nahum. God used their uniqueness to accurately convey His words, not just His concepts or ideas to give us the Bible. Even Jesus confirmed the accuracy of all Scripture when He stated in Matthew 5:17-18 that He didn't come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. He then went on

to say that not the smallest letter or least stroke would disappear. Down to the smallest detail this is the very Word of God.

Charles Ryrie in his book *Basic Theology* wrote “God carried men along so that they wrote His message in the Bible.” He superintended their writing so that His message was accurately conveyed in each word, not dictating but directing.

Now, when we take into consideration II Timothy 3:16, we see the extent of inspiration. Inspiration encompasses all of Scripture, which means every word is inspired, not just some of it as some of the theories contend. Some interpret this passage to say “All Scripture that is inspired by God is profitable”. Did you catch the subtle difference? This is saying that only some of God’s word is inspired and only those words are profitable, again leaving the interpretation up to the reader to determine which is inspired and profitable. The passage says that “all Scripture is inspired”.

The vehicle of inspiration is the Holy Spirit through human authors.

The extent of inspiration is all of Scripture. It did not come by the creative work or will of man. It wasn’t an ah ha moment in the middle of the night.

Understand that the point of the passage isn’t about its interpretation but about its origination.

God’s voice in inspiration were His servants writing as He directed through the Spirit who carried them along. God is the origin of Scripture, every word being inspired by His Spirit. God as its originator gives it authority. And if it has authority, what was God’s objective in giving it to us?

III. THE OBJECTIVE OF INSPIRATION

First of all, the inspired Word of God is powerful.

A. The Inspired Word of God is Powerful

1. His Word is powerful to save Romans 1:16

This verse conveys the fact of God’s omnipotence in salvation, that He alone has the power to save us, not in anything we think we can add. His power to save in the gospel of Jesus Christ is sufficient, it’s all we need.

Man has an innate desire to change. He tries all things, but in the end he can’t do a thing. Only God can do that. In Romans 5:6 Paul writes that while we were helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. Only God’s Word can bring about the kind of change we desperately need.

If you are here and have never experienced the power of His gospel in your life, let His Word prove powerful to save you.

Believe that you are a sinner.

Believe that Christ died in your place for your sin.

Believe that faith in Christ can save you.

His Word is powerful to save.

2. His Word is powerful to sanctify John 17:17

Once you are saved God’s Word helps guide us into spiritual growth, making us more like God in character as we yield to His Spirit’s work in us. It’s a daily process as we make daily progress toward that goal. God’s Word gives us a standard to follow. His Word makes us holy.

3. His Word is powerful to succeed Isaiah 55:10-11

Just as the rain and snow have an intended purpose to water the earth so that grain can grow so that a baker can make bread to eat so God has an intended purpose in His Word that will be carried out and no attempt on our part will alter or thwart His plans. Nothing will change His Word or its intended outcome. It will accomplish its purpose. That is the

power of His Word.

His inspired Word is powerful.

His inspired Word is profitable.

B. The Inspired Word of God is Profitable

II Timothy 3:16-17

1. It aligns – it's profitable for doctrine/teaching

Used in the active sense it refers to the act of teaching. Used in the passive sense it refers to what is taught. That's the case here. Because all of God's Word is inspired, authoritative, inerrant, and infallible it teaches sound doctrine. It teaches us the truth. John 17:17 says "God's Word is truth."

The Bible provides for us fundamental and foundational truth on which our lives can be built. Paul begins his letters by teaching doctrinal truth. Once foundational truth has been taught, he applies that truth to daily living by making it practical. Teaching without sound doctrine becomes merely philosophical opinions. In order to know how to act you first need to know what to believe.

2. It alerts – it's profitable for reproof

We don't like that word very much. We don't like it when someone rebukes us, scolds us sharply, reprimands us. We don't like to be rebuked by a boss or a teacher or a coach. We don't like it when we are told we are doing something wrong. I think that's why in part you don't hear much about church discipline these days. We don't want conflict or we argue that what I do is my own business so get lost. We would rather hear at a boys and good job. We want to hear that we're winners.

This word in the Greek is passive and looks to the result of the rebuking as the Holy Spirit brings about conviction in the person who has been rebuked. When you engage in the powerful Word of God either by reading it or hearing it this reproof

becomes a personal conviction so that moved by the Spirit, the powerful Word of God influences you to change in character and then He helps you in the process of change. The goal is not the act of reproof but the result, to become more like Christ.

But the Word of God doesn't just reprove, it doesn't just show you where you have gone wrong it takes it a step further. We see it in the next point because it not only alerts you to wrongs done and that a change needs to take place it also shows you how to alter your behavior.

3. It alters – it's profitable for correction

The powerful Word of God shows you how to get back on track. The word means to set up straight or set right. One author describes this as the healing nature of Scripture to help get us back on track. It's like setting broken bones so they can heal correctly.

Psalms 19:7 says that God's Word revives the soul.

After David's sin of adultery and murder, God rebuked him through the words of the prophet Nathan. Reflecting on that experience David wrote Psalm 51. It reveals the correcting path David took to get back in a right relationship with God. We see His repentance and His desire to have a cleansed heart and then the aspiration to declare to others God's praise.

God's powerful Word doesn't just convict us, it corrects us, alters us so that we live lives pleasing to God.

When I take a wrong turn my GPS will say "recalculating" and then it tells me which road to turn on to get back on the right path.

That's what God's powerful Word does. That's why it's profitable.

If you have never trusted Christ, God's Word will show you how to get on path with Him.

If you are saved and have sinned, it will show you how to get back on the right spiritual path.

4. It applies – it's powerful for instruction in righteousness

It's a word that refers to discipline and following the previous word the Bible shows you then how to stay on track. It lights my way and guides my path. It's long term in nature and emphasizes the development of godly character in spiritual growth over a life time of following God. It is the practical nature of God's Word.

5. Its aim – its powerful for equipping for good works

An ad in the newspaper may say that an apartment or house for rent is fully furnished. It has everything.

God's Word fully furnishes us with what we need to do His will and His work. We can be confident that God gives us everything we need for Christian living. He doesn't tell us to do something and then not equip us. It would be like the Tiger manager telling Miguel Cabrera to go up and hit a home run and then not give him a bat.

We need to be confident that God's powerful Word will supply us with what we need. In verses 3 and 4 Peter spoke of those great and precious promises in God's Word that are ours through God in Christ.

Because all of God's Word is inspired we can count on its truth to transform us. Since we know it's His Word, how much time are we spending in it, and then what are we doing with what we know? It's profitable to equip.