

The Doctrine of Inspiration

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for the “*the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made [me] overseer.*”

The Doctrine of Inspiration Defined...

The act of God whereby He, through the Holy Spirit, guided the individual human penmen of the Bible, bearing them along (II Pe. 1:21), enabling them to compose and record without error or omission His own revelation in the words of the autographs.

Proofs of Inspiration...

How does one determine that the Bible ***IS*** inspired of God? Some say that according to a Bible believer’s logic, the believer must prove the Bible to be true by the Bible itself. This, of course, the unbeliever says is ***circular reasoning*** and therefore to be rejected!

Is there evidence to establish the inspiration of God’s words as being His own? Yes! In fact, it was God that gave us the ***internal*** and ***external*** evidence to verify the inspiration of His words!

Internal Evidence

Of course, the Bible says that the Scriptures are, in fact, God’s own words (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). For the child of God this is sufficient (cf. Jn. 17:8; Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; I Thess. 2:13). However, the Bible also makes ***general*** and ***specific*** claims to inspiration in the following ways!

The General Claims of Inspiration in the Bible

The OT writers claimed to speak for the LORD (God Himself) by writing, “Thus saith the LORD...” **415** times in the OT alone. Consistently, passages within a specific book of the Bible would claim that another book of the Bible also has God’s written authority (cf. Dan. 9:2; Isa. 34:16; Acts 1:16; I Pet. 1:10ff.).

Other General Claims of Inspiration of the Scriptures:

- “And the **Lord** said unto Moses, **Write thou these words...**” (Ex. 34:27).
- “The **spirit of the Lord** spake by me and **His word** was in my tongue” (2 Sam. 23:2)
- “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the **Lord hath spoken**” (Isa. 1:2).
- “Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak ... Behold, I have put **my words** in thy mouth” (Jer. 1:7,9).
- “Thou shalt speak **my words** unto them” (Ezek. 2:7).

- “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which **was spoken by the Lord** through the prophet” (Matt. 1:22; 2:15).
- “David himself said **by the Holy Ghost**” (Mk. 12:36).
- “**He spake** by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began” (Lk. 1:70).
- “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which **God hath spoken by the mouth** of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Ac. 3:21).
- “...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth **out of the mouth of God.**” (Matt. 4:4)

The Specific Claims of Inspiration in the Bible

- Of Paul (II Tim. 3:15-17; I Cor. 2:13),
- Of Peter (II Pet. 1:21; 3:15-16),
- Of Satan (Matt. 4:6 ~ He recognized Psalms as Scripture. He knew it! He just hates it!),
- Of Christ (Jn. 10:35; 14:26; 16:13; Lk. 24:44; Matt. 5:17-18)

External Evidence of the Inspiration of the Bible

One particular evidence that sets the Bible apart from all literature is **prophecy**. As much as 40% of Scripture is prophecy. In fact, God told us that the prophecy of the Scriptures was given for a validation of its own inspiration (Isaiah 41:21-24; 42:9; 45:21; 46:11).

There are hundreds of fulfilled prophecies in the Scriptures. No other body of literature could make this claim.

Certainly what separates the Scriptures from those other “prophetic books” is that Scripture holds itself up to the standard of **100% fulfillment** of prophecies.

In addition, God designed mankind to discern truth in a major way by means of mathematical probability. That is a primary point of prophecy.

The fantastic number of fulfilled prophecies in the Bible show that it is no book authored by mere men.

Kent Brandenburg, a Pastor in California, wrote about the probability in mathematics concerning fulfilled prophecies. He quoted Mathematics experts that have come up with these statistics concerning the following prophecies:

- 7 prophecies against Tyre in Ezekiel 26:3-4, 7-8, 12, 14, 21 coming true: 1 in 7.5×10 to the power of seven.

- 5 prophecies against Samaria in Hosea 13:16 & Micah 1:6 come true: 1 in 4×10 to the power of four.
- 5 prophecies against Gaza & Ashkelon in Amos 1:8, Jer 47:5, Zeph 2:4-7: 1 in 1.2×10 to the power of four.
- 3 prophecies against Moab & Ammon in Ezek 25:3-4, Jer 48:47; 49:6: 1 in 10 to the power of three.
- 9 prophecies against Edom in Isa 34:6-15, Jer 49:17-18; Ezek 25:13-14; 35:5-7: 1 in 10 to the power of four.
- 8 prophecies against Babylon in Isa 13:19-22; 14:23; Jer 51:26,43: 1 in 5×10 to the power of nine.
- 9 prophecies about Jerusalem in Jeremiah 31:38-40: 1 in 8×10 to the power of ten.
- 7 prophecies about Palestine in Lev 26:31-33; Ezek 36:33-35: 1 in 2×10 to the power of five.
- 9 prophecies about Petra & Edom in Isa 34:6-18; Ezek 25:13-14; 35:5-7: 1 in 2×10 to the power of five.
- 4 prophecies about Thebes & Memphis in Ezek 30:13-15: 1 in 10 to the power of three.
- 4 prophecies about Nineveh in Nahum 1:8,10; 2:6; 3:10,13,19: 1 in 10 to the power of 2.

...The probability of these 11 prophecies coming true is 1 in 5.76×10 to the power of 59! *These odds are impossible to visualize!* Suppose this number were silver dollars. There would be enough silver dollars to fill 10 to the power of 28 suns! Or think of it like this. In the universe there are about 2 trillion galaxies, each containing about 100 million stars. From our 5×10 to the power of 59 we could make all of the stars in all of the galaxies 2×10 to the power of 5 times! Even more astounding is the fact that these are only 11 prophecies. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of others which have already come true.

False Theories of Inspiration

1. **The Intuition Theory:** this view teaches that the Biblical writers had a natural endowment and were religious geniuses who produced highly elevated religious literature. (*Man Centered ~ Unregenerated Liberals would hold to this view*)
2. **The Partial Inspiration Theory:** this view teaches that the Holy Spirit influenced the writers to record truth in the areas of faith and practice only, but not so much in matters of science or history. (*ie: Salvation inspired but Gen 1-11 not inspired because Science and History have proven such*)

3. **The Conceptual Theory:** this view teaches that the concepts or thoughts of God are inspired but not the words, which are left to the writers. (Neo-evangelicals hold to this)
4. **The Existential Theory:** this view teaches that the myths and tales of the Bible became the Word of God when God speaks through them to the reader at that existential moment of truth. (Experience oriented)
5. **The Dictation Theory:** this view teaches that God set aside the personalities of the writers and merely used them as passive pens-men. (Some fundamentalists believe this...certainly are accused of this if they don't)
6. **KJV Inspiration Theory:** this view teaches that the King James translators received some advanced revelation somehow and actually corrected the original language copyist errors. It teaches that the English is superior to the Greek or Hebrew. Thus, the KJV is inspired (God-breathed).

Biblical View of Inspiration

1. Inspiration renders the autographs (originals) **inerrant** and **infallible** (Prov. 30:5).

Inerrancy means that the Bible is “without error of any kind” in its *recording* (Psa. 119:138, 160; Prov. 30:5); whereas, *infallibility* means that it is “without error” in its teaching – the Bible is incapable of teaching error (Psa. 119:75, 138)!

“The very nature of inspiration renders the Bible infallible, which means that it cannot deceive us. It is inerrant in that it is not false, mistaken, or defective.”¹

“Infallibility is obviously restricted to the intended assertions of the Scripture understood in an ordinary grammatical exegesis of the text.”²

...Being inspired, inerrant, and infallible, the Bible is **authoritative** – Isa. 8:20!

2. Inspiration has to do *initially* with the **autographs** (the originals); but, because of the *providential preservation* of the words of the autographs, it applies to faithful **apographs** (copies).

In fact, it has been the long-standing position of the Lord's churches that inspiration had to do **both** with *the autographs* **and** with faithful *extant manuscripts* of the Received Text! Some will even go further by stating that they believe that inspiration can apply to faithful translations of God's words. Those that will say the latter will most often refer to this inspiration as “retained inspiration” “maintained inspiration” or “derivative inspiration.”³ I disagree with this for this has redefined the term “inspiration” (God-breathed) and applied it to words that are in fact not breathed out by God directly, as the originals were.

¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

² Clark H. Pinnock, *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), 13.

³ Van Kleeck, *Fundamentalism's*, 1.

3. Inspiration does not preclude the presence of human personalities in the style, terminology, and culture of the sacred writings.

This divine/human involvement in the Scriptures is called *confluent inspiration* which stands distinct from the *mechanical dictation* theory which views the writers as passive instruments (almost like machines).

In other words, although the words of Scripture were written by men, the Bible is the **product** of God.

4. Inspiration operated continually as God's inspired revelation unfolded (ie: "progressive revelation" Heb. 1:1-3) and extends to all parts equally. This is called *plenary inspiration* (II Tim. 3:16).
5. Inspiration has to do with the very words of the Bible, not merely the concepts. This is called *verbal inspiration* (Psa. 12:6; I Cor. 2:13; Jn. 12:49,50; Mt. 4:4).

This is the biblical doctrine of divine inspiration.

When discussing its own inspiration in II Tim. 3:16, Paul did not focus on the *mechanics* of inspiration but on the *product*.

God spoke in many diverse ways (*dreams, visions, angels, directly as on Mt. Sinai and on the Mt. of Transfiguration, etc.*) but the *result* in all cases was that the writings were God-breathed ~ God-breathed describes all Scripture!

Two primary Passages to be discerned: 2 Tim. 3:16 & II Pet. 1:16-21

There are primarily two passages that are regularly cited which best explain the entire doctrine of biblical inspiration.

The first is...

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Two principal words are found in this text which have a direct bearing on the issue at hand: "**inspiration**" and "**scripture.**"

The first word, "inspiration," comes from the single Greek word θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*) which is translated by the six-word English phrase "is given by inspiration of God."

The KJV translators took this rendering from Tyndale's 1525 translation of the English Bible. Tyndale's rendering was also then repeated in the Geneva Bible of 1560.⁴

⁴ Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 132.

The only other time *inspiration* appears in the English Bible (KJV) is in Job 32:8, “But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” Obviously, it is not used in the same theological sense as Paul’s word in II Timothy.

In II Tim. 3:16, “inspiration” literally means “God-breathed” or “breathed out by God” (see Matt. 4:4). The word conveys the idea of breathing as one speaks. The Bible is “the words of God.” The Scriptures are the **product** of His creative breath.

The *second* principal word found in II Tim. 3:16 is translated “scripture.” It comes from γραφή (*graphē*) and literally means “writing.”

- In the NT, *graphe* (used 51 times) **always** refers to the *Holy Scripture*, (ie: Mt. 21:42; Mk. 14:49; Lk. 24:27; Jn. 20:9; Acts 8:32; 1 Cor. 15:3f; Gal 3:8).
- Peter used *graphe* to refer to Paul's NT epistles to churches (ie: 2 Pet. 3:16).
- A few times it spoke of an individual *passage of Scripture* (ie: Lk 4:21; Ac 8:35; Jam. 2:8).

...Thus, by the time Paul had penned this word in the first century, γραφή had come to be recognized as a technical term for “*sacred* writings,” referring especially to the Jewish Sacred Writings, i.e. what Christians call **the OT**.

It should be clear that when first century readers who were familiar with the Jewish sacred writings saw this word (*graphē*), they knew exactly that which Paul was referring. Paul was saying that these “sacred writings” were God’s words ~ thus, authoritative, having been preserved by God.

Thus, in the 1st century, *Graphē* (translated “scripture” or “scriptures”) was used to describe the thirty nine books of the OT – the same twenty four which exist in the Jewish Bible.⁵

- When the Lord rebuked the Sadducees for their “not knowing the scriptures,” He cited Ex. 3:6 as a scriptural illustration of their biblical ignorance (Matt. 22:29-33).
- In Matt. 21:42, Jesus quoted Psa. 118:22-23 and referred to that citation as “in the scriptures;” and in
- Lk. 4:21, He quoted Isa. 61:1-2 as “this scripture.”
- He also made reference to the prophecy of Mic. 5:2 as “the scripture” (Jn. 7:42).
- In Jn. 10:34-35 “scripture” is used interchangeably with “law” and “word of God.”
- The fullest use of “scriptures” is found in Lk. 24: 44-45 where Jesus referred to all three divisions of the Jewish Sacred Text: “the law of Moses” (the Torah), “the

⁵ The difference in these two numbers is due to different arrangements in the English and Jewish Bible. For example, the Jewish Bible arranges the twelve books of the Minor Prophets, found in our English Bible, into one book. The text itself is the same.

prophets” (the Nebi’um), and “the psalms” (known also as “the writings” the Kethubim) – the TeNaK.⁶ Luke followed this statement by our Lord categorizing these three divisions as “the scriptures” (Lk. 24:45).⁷

- In Acts 8:32,35, Philip referred to Isa. 53 as “scripture.”
- Paul referred to Gen. 21:10 as taken from “the scripture” (Gal. 4:30).
- James quoted Lev. 19:18 as “the scripture” (Jam. 2:8).
- See also Matt. 22:29; 26:56; Mk. 14:49; 15:28; Jn. 5:39;13:18; 17:12;19:24,28,36-37 where either Jesus or one of the Gospel writers used “scriptures” in an apparent reference to the OT.
- **Scripture** was the term first century Christians and Jews regularly used when they spoke of the OT writings (Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; Gal. 3:8; 4:30; Jam. 2:23; I Pet. 2:6).

Then, NT writers, using this same term, applied it to their writings with obvious import. One has only to compare II Tim. 2:2 with II Tim. 3:14-15 where Paul made no distinction between *what he taught* Timothy (which was later inscripturated in the pastoral epistles) and *what Timothy read in the Scriptures*.

In I Tim. 5:18, Paul cited a passage in Deut. 25:4 and a passage in the Gospels (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7), using the term *Scripture* for both. He, thus, equated a NT passage in the Gospels with the Torah itself. This should not be surprising since Jesus suggested that more Scripture was to come in Jn. 14:26; 16:12-13, including “whatsoever I have said unto you” (the Gospels) and “things to come” (John’s book of Revelation), respectively.

Peter equated the writings of the Apostles with those of the OT “holy prophets” (II Pet. 3:2). He also spoke of Paul’s writings as “scriptures” (II Pet. 3:15-16). Thus, it becomes obvious that the term **scripture** belongs equally to the OT writings, the Gospels, the NT epistles, and Revelation. It is **all** Scripture, and it is **all** inspired –the **product** of the breath of God.

The 2nd passages to be discerned is...

2 Peter 1:16-21 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

⁶ This is also spelled, TeNaCH and is an acrostic used by Jews for the Torah (the Law), the Prophets (Nebi’um) and the Writings (Kethubim).

⁷ A similar reference to the whole OT is found in Luke 24:27, also referred to as “the scriptures.”

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.

In this second primary text regarding biblical inspiration, the Apostle Peter called “the word of prophecy” (a veritable synonym for *the Word of God*)⁸ “more sure,” i.e. more sure than even Peter’s own personal experience (cf. vv.16-18).

In other words, even though Peter wrote here of a vivid, dynamic, even perfectly valid personal experience, (*ie: his witness to the transfiguration of Christ and the Voice of God heard by him and the others with him*); yet he declared that the “word of prophecy” was “more sure” than personal experience.

Furthermore, in this passage Peter made it quite plain that the writers of the Bible were “moved by the Holy Ghost.” To explain this, he used a **nautical term** with which the fisherman, Peter, would have been very familiar. He used the word φερόμενοι (*pher-o-men-oi* – the present **passive**⁹ participle of φέρω *phero*) which means here “being borne along,” referring to a ship being born along by the wind.

This same word (in a different tense) is translated “driven” in Acts 27:17 where the ship Paul was sailing upon was totally controlled by the wind – it was at the mercy of the storm. Thus, Peter told his readers that these holy men were *borne along by the Spirit in their writing of the sacred text* just as the wind would bear a boat across the sea.

The writers of sacred Scripture were totally controlled *by the Holy Spirit*, being guided *by Him* to the very words of God’s inscripturated revelation. **Thus it is proper to speak of inspired writings, rather than inspired men.**

Warfield refines it even more clearly:

It was through an operation of the Holy Ghost on these men which is described as ‘bearing’ them. The term here used is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes beyond all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is ‘borne’ is taken by the ‘bearer,’ and conveyed by the ‘bearer’s’ power, not its own, to the ‘bearer’s’ goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why ‘the prophetic word’ is so sure. Though spoken through the instrumentality of men, it is, by virtue of the fact that these men spoke ‘as

⁸ In I Peter 1:20, Peter spoke of the “prophecy of Scripture.”

⁹ The passive voice represents the subject as being the recipient of the action. i.e: in the sentence, "The boy was hit by the ball," the boy receives the action.

borne by the Holy Spirit,' an immediately Divine word.¹⁰

However, the fact that personality traits and individual, even cultural, backgrounds of the authors show up in their respective writings serves to prove that these writers were not in some sort of trance. They did not lapse into a supernaturally imposed state of unconsciousness, only to awaken to discover a mystical text before them, written by their own hand. They were fully aware of their having written a text and of what they wrote, even as they wrote it.

This makes it quite evident that *inspiration is a supernatural miracle* and cannot be reduced to the product of strict human effort.

Therefore, the Bible is not like *any* ordinary book, standing in a category exclusive to itself.

Comparing the two texts...

What happened in II Pet 1:21 will never happen again. It did not happen in 1611 or in any subsequent year in which another edition of the KJB was updated. II Pet. 1:21 has not happened at any other time since the writing of the originals.

We would do well to take our view of inspiration from II Tim 3:16 where the term is actually mentioned, instead of overriding our view with II Pet 1:21 where there is no mention of the term inspiration.

Listed below is a comparison of the two passages, and how they are teaching two different things:

II Timothy 3:16	II Peter 1:21
The PRODUCT	The PROCESS
“inspiration” is used	“moved by Holy Ghost” is used
“inspiration” is an adjective (not a verb) describing “scripture”	“moved” is a verb (not an adjective)
HOLY WRITINGS (“Scripture”)	HOLY MEN
Never Repealed	Never Repeated
What IS given	What was given
Held in our Hands	Historical Event

The term “inspired” was not one time ever used by the writers of scripture when they spoke of their actual writing of the words, notice these examples:

¹⁰ Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority*, 137.

- Eph 3:3 “How that by **revelation** he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words.” Note: Paul uses the term revelation and not inspiration.
- II Pet 1:10-11 “...the Spirit of Christ which was in them did **signify**, when it **testified** beforehand the sufferings of Christ...unto whom it was revealed.”
Note: No mention of inspiration but Spirit testified what was revealed
- Also II Pet 3:15-16 and many others.

...To say that “God inspired” the penmen is to use phraseology that the Scriptures never use, and should be avoided by the Lord’s churches, “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Paul goes on to imply that what Timothy had, like all Scripture *is* (not was) given by inspiration of God.

Therefore: “Inspiration” is a very technical theological term which I believe should be limited to those words originally written by the human penmen whom God bore along to bring them to the exact wording of His revelation. Their words, being His words, were pristine and required no editing of any kind. They were also without any mistake or error of any kind. It is recognized that the individual copies (the Apographs) are not always copied perfectly (thus, textual variants exist). Thus, inspiration must be limited to the *autographa* [none of which exist today] or to those *original language words* [Apographs] “kept” by the Lord’s churches (cf. Matt. 28:20; Jn. 17:8; Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; I Thess. 2:13; Col. 4:16; Rev. 2:25; 3:3,8; 22:7,9,18-19; et. al.] also known as the Ecclesiastical [church] text, or the Textus Receptus!

However, ***this is not to say that faithful translations are not the authoritative word of God.*** They most certainly are!

In my view, the word “Inspiration” refers to the *autographs*. They are ***pure*** (*perfect*) because they are God’s words (Psa. 12:6). They cannot be added to or taken away from in any detail (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Pro. 30:6; Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18,19). I believe that “inspiration” can be *retained* in faithful and accurate copies (*apographs*) of God’s words. I also believe that one can refer to a faithful and accurate translation as God’s Word in the receptor language!

In other words, a faithful translation can be accurately translated from the perfectly preserved inspired words of God (*apographs*).

Application

Based upon the above definition of inspiration and scriptural citations, the following theological applications become perfectly valid. Believing what the Bible teaches about inspiration, the following theological terms need to become a part of

the Christian's theological vocabulary.

1. **Verbal Inspiration** This is the teaching that *the very words* of Scripture are inspired. Inspiration has to do with *words*, not thoughts; so, while a message is certainly derived from the words, it is *the words* that are revered. *Words* are inspired. *Words* are breathed out by God.

The thoughts are in the words. ... Our Lord says that David by the Spirit called the Messiah, Lord, i.e. *David used that word*. It was in the use of a particular word, that Christ said (Jn. 10:35), that the Scriptures cannot be broken. ... Paul, in Gal. 3:16, lays stress on the fact, that in the promise made to Abraham, a word used is singular and not plural, 'seed,' 'as of one,' and not 'seeds as of many.' Constantly it is the very words of Scripture which are quoted as of divine authority.¹¹

I am asked whether I believe the words of the Bible to be inspired, I answer, To be sure I do, – every one of them: and every syllable likewise. Do not you? Where, (if it be a fair question,) where do you, in your wisdom, stop? The book, you allow, is inspired. How about the chapters? How about the verses? Do you stop at the verses, and no go on to the words? ... No, Sirs! THE BIBLE (BE PERSUADED) IS THE VERY UTTERANCE OF THE ETERNAL; - AS MUCH GOD'S WORD, AS IF HIGH HEAVEN WERE OPEN, AND WE HEARD GOD SPEAKING TO US WITH HUMAN VOICE. Every book of it, is inspired alike; and is inspired entirely...THE BIBLE IS NONE OTHER THAN THE VOICE OF HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE. EVERY BOOK OF IT, – EVERY CHAPTER OF IT, – EVERY VERSE OF IT, – EVERY WORD OF IT, – EVERY SYLLABLE OF IT, – (WHERE ARE WE TO STOP?) – EVERY LETTER OF IT – IS THE DIRECT UTTERANCE OF THE MOST HIGH!...Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the many blessed men who wrote it. – The Bible is none other than the Word of God: not some part of it, more, some part of it less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne; –absolute, –faultless, –unerring, – supreme.¹²

Many Bible passages can be studied which show the emphasis God places on *words*. We would be well-advised to examine each of these portions of Scripture: Exodus 20:1; 24:4; Deuteronomy 6:6; 12:28; 17:19; 18:8; 27:3; 31:12; 32:1, 45-46; Joshua 8:34-35; 24:26; I Samuel 8:10; II Samuel 23:2; Psalm 12:6; Proverbs 30:6-7; Jeremiah 1:9; 7:27; 23:36; 26:2; 30:2; Ezekiel 3:10; Daniel 10:9-11; Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 24:35; Luke 4:4; John 6:63; 8:47; 17:8; ; I Corinthians 2:13; I Timothy 4:6; II Peter 3:2; Jude 17; Revelation. 1:3; 22:18-19.

This is markedly different from the term *concept inspiration* a view which teaches that only the *ideas* of God are inspired, not the words. Many neo-evangelicals, some Protestant Fundamentalists, and even some Baptists have felt compelled to define *inspiration* this way because of the so-called "findings of science." By emphasizing the concepts or thoughts over precise words, they could argue that while certain *facts* may be in error, the *ideas* are inerrant. This

¹¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted, 1997), 164.

¹² John Burgon, Sermon III, pp. 75, 76, 89 in Ian Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Productions LTD, 1997), 43-44.

would allow for mistakes of science or history or geography to creep into the text supposedly without harming inspiration. The biblical notion of words, not ideas, being inspired will directly impact a proper view of preservation, as shall be seen later.

- 2. *Plenary Inspiration*** This is the teaching that inspiration “*extends to all parts alike.*” All the Bible is inspired *every part* of it. Although some passages may be of more consequence than others, none is more inspired. That was the point made by Paul in II Tim. 3:16 when he said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God....”

The KJV translation is much more accurate than the one suggested by the *American Standard Version* (1901) which says, “Every Scripture inspired of God is *also* profitable....”¹³ Some modern translations leave the distinct impression that some Scriptures are inspired, whereas, others may not be; that, only those inspired are profitable. Such is a poor translation, perhaps influenced by bad theology.

- 3. *Inerrancy*** Inspiration renders the Bible inerrant which means that the Bible is without error of any kind in its original recording (Psa. 119:138, 160; Prov. 30:5). All God’s words are “pure” words (Psa. 12:6) – what else would they be? These “pure” words demand inerrancy throughout. Thus, there are no mistakes of any kind or of any sort extant in the Bible as originally penned. While mistakes may creep into a given particular Hebrew or Greek Bible manuscript through copyist error or deliberate tampering, the words of God preserved in the totality of the *Traditional Text* or *Received Text* are without error. God has given His word by inspiration one time; He has providentially preserved it pure throughout the ages in the multitude of reliable copies.

Philosophically, and theologically, the argument for the case of the inerrancy of Scripture goes back to the authorship of Scripture. If the One Who is Perfect Truth wrote the Bible, then it follows that the Bible must be Perfect Truth.¹⁴

- 4. *Infallibility*** Being infallible, the Bible is incapable of teaching error (Psa. 119:75, 138; Pro. 30:5)! *Infallibility* means that it is “without error” in its teaching. Chafer said, “There may be problems of *interpretation*, but no problem of *trustworthiness.*”¹⁵ Lindsell adds, “The very nature of inspiration renders the Bible infallible, which means that it cannot deceive us. It is inerrant in that it is not false, mistaken, or defective.”¹⁶ While there may be apparent *discrepancies* which must be resolved (and they can be), there are no *errors* and thus, no false teaching or wrong doctrine.

¹³ The NASB (1963) corrects this in the main body of the text; however, a footnote permits the same reading as that of the 1901 edition. The footnote says, “Or, possibly, *Every Scripture inspired by God is also....*”

¹⁴ Strouse, *The Lord God Hath Spoken*, 55

¹⁵ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, 179.

¹⁶ Lindsell, *Battle*, 31.

Though infallible, the Scriptures can be misunderstood or misapplied. Pinnock's warning is wise, "Infallibility is obviously restricted to the intended assertions of the Scripture understood in an ordinary grammatical exegesis of the text."¹⁷ Therefore, the goal of Bible-believers is not to form a doctrinal consensus among themselves since truth is not voted up or voted down by majority rule. Instead, Bible-believers discover what the Bible actually teaches. Then, once that is discovered, all arguments cease, because the Bible is infallible.

5. **Authoritative** Being inspired, inerrant, and infallible, the Bible is necessarily authoritative. Isaiah denounced anyone who did not speak according to "the law and to the testimony" (i.e., the Scriptures) as having "no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). What the Bible teaches is binding upon all and is supreme. While two Christian men may disagree as to *what* the Bible specifically teaches, they must both agree that *whatever* the Bible teaches, *the Bible* is right. It is their sole authority¹⁸ in all matters of faith and practice – a teaching which has distinguished Baptists since the days of Jesus and the apostles.¹⁹ In biblical discussions between Bible-believers, this concession must be understood and never surrendered. Once it can be determined what the Bible teaches, all argument and discussion ceases, for the Bible is final and absolute and of sole authority in all matters of both faith and practice.

¹⁷ Clark H. Pinnock, *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), 13.

¹⁸ It has been argued to this writer that it is better to speak of the Bible as one's "sole authority" than his "final authority." Final authority implies a series of authorities which finally arrives at the Bible. Sole authority asserts that there is no other authority other than the Bible when it comes to faith and practice. This is a thought worthy of discussion for those who reverence the sacred Scriptures.

¹⁹ The Protestants discovered in the Reformation what Baptists had always believed. They *came to* what Baptists *had never left*.