

The Inspiration of Scripture

"The Bible is fundamental to evangelical theology because it provides the sole infallible and ultimate authority for a truly Christian worldview. That the Bible should play such an exclusive role is only reasonable, since from beginning to end it consistently claims to be God's Word to man." – John MacArthur

The Authority of Scripture

• The Bible claims divine origin

- Old Testament: Prophets consistently declared, "Thus says the LORD," making their words synonymous with God's own (Exodus 24:3; 1 Kings 22:19). To believe the prophets was to believe God Himself.

- New Testament: Writers affirmed the Old Testament as God's Word and treated it as their foundation (Romans 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Their teaching was not their own ideas but the very words of God.

- Authority: Scripture is called "holy Scriptures," "the oracles of God," "the word of truth," and "the sacred writings" (Romans 1:2; 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15). These titles highlight its unique authority for doctrine, correction, and training (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The Inspiration of Scripture

• Scripture is God-breathed

- God disclosed Himself through Scripture, His most complete and understandable self-revelation (1 Corinthians 2:6–16).

- The Holy Spirit moved the biblical authors so that what they wrote was fully God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

- Inspiration means every word in the original text was chosen under God's direction and recorded without error, omission, or defect.

Revelation and Inspiration

• God reveals Himself in two ways

- General Revelation: God's witness through creation, providence, and human conscience (Psalm 19:1–6; Romans 1:18–20; 2:14–15). It shows His wisdom, power, and care, yet it cannot save. General revelation is affected by sin and will pass away (Romans 8:20–23; Isaiah 40:8).

- Special Revelation: God's personal disclosure through His acts (Exodus 3; Matthew 3:17), dreams and visions (Genesis 37; Isaiah 6), the incarnation of Christ (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1–2), and the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16). Unlike general revelation, special revelation reveals Christ and salvation and endures forever (Romans 10:13–17; Matthew 24:35).

Definition of Inspiration

• God inspired every word of the 66 books of the Bible

- Each text is at once God's Word and the human author's word. No distinction can be made between the divine and human components.

- Inspiration affirms divine authority in both general concepts and specific expressions.

- Inspiration extends to the very choice of words and grammar, applying equally to history, poetry, prophecy, and doctrine.

The Process of Inspiration

- **Inspiration preserves God's will in Scripture**

- Prophecy did not originate from human interpretation but from God's will (2 Peter 1:20–21).
- The Holy Spirit carried along the writers so that God's knowledge would be perfectly revealed.
- God providentially prepared each writer—through family, personal experiences, education, language, and writing style—to be His chosen instrument.

Proofs of Inspiration

- **Old Testament Proofs**

- The OT is repeatedly identified as God's Word (Exodus 17:14; 34:27).
- Prophets introduced messages with "Thus says the LORD," showing their words carried divine authority.
- Psalm 119 exalts the Word of God 24 times, underscoring its authority, purity, and permanence.

- **Jesus' View of Scripture**

- Jesus affirmed the authority of the OT by quoting it as final authority (Matthew 4:1–11).
- He treated OT people and events as historical fact (Matthew 19:3–9).
- Jesus declared that His words carried the same permanence and authority as Scripture (Matthew 24:35).
- He promised His apostles the Spirit would guide them into further truth beyond what He taught during His ministry (John 16:12–14).

- **Apostles' View of Scripture**

- The apostles treated the OT as God's Word (Romans 3:2; Hebrews 3:7).
- They recognized their own writings as Scripture (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:16).
- Paul emphasized that he spoke the Word of God, not his own ideas (2 Corinthians 4:5).
- Peter explicitly acknowledged Paul's letters as Scripture, putting them on the same level as the OT (2 Peter 3:16).

Why It Matters

- **The Bible is the foundation for knowing God and salvation**

- It is God's authoritative Word over every area of life and belief.
- Without Scripture, there is no true theology or Christian worldview.
- God's Word is perfect, reliable, unchanging, and eternal.

Memory Verse

2 Peter 1:19–21 – "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."