

PART I. THE MIRACULOUS WORD OF GOD

1. Inspiration: God Breathed His Word.

The first major doctrine that we will look at in our study of Bibliology is Inspiration. The doctrinal concept of inspiration, simply put, is this. The original words of the Bible were given to its human writers by God. Therefore, the Bible was penned by men; but is the Word of God. The key verse on inspiration 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:"

The Greek word translated, "inspiration of God" in this verse is, *theopneustos* which means, "God-breathed." The idea of inspiration is that God breathed out the very words of Scripture, and men wrote these words down, without error or omission. Scripture came out of the mouth of God to the pen of man.

A. How is the Bible God-breathed?

1. God-breathed in the sense that the words of Scripture came out of God's mouth.

"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." (Matthew 4:4)

In Matthew 4:4 Jesus tells us that mankind is to live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Therefore, it is logical to believe that there must be a

place to find these words. Jesus taught and believed that the Scriptures are the words of God. Therefore, every word that we are to live by; every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, can be found in the Bible.

2. God-breathed in the sense that God's words are life-giving.

In the Garden of Eden, the Bible says "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7).

Just as God breathed life into the first man, God breathed life when he breathed the Scriptures into men, through the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "Men [and] brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake..." (Act 1:16a) The Spirit of God moved on the writers of the Bible and spoke through them. These words are living and powerful! They are God's life-giving breath! Notice the following:

"For the word of God is quick, (living) and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68)

The words of Scripture were written by men, but breathed out by God. They are living words!

3. God-breathed in the sense that God moved men to write His words, not their words.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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." - (2 Peter 1:20-21)

These verses speak of Old Testament prophets and what they said, but also of how the Scriptures recorded what they said. The word "moved" (but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost) comes from the Greek word, *phero*. According to Dr. William Mounce, "...in 2 Pet. 1:21 *phero* takes on the meaning of someone 'being moved' or 'borne along.' Fisherman Peter was familiar with the idea of a boat 'being moved along' by the wind (cf. Acts 27:15, 17), so he could understand how those who penned the Scriptures were 'carried along' by the Holy Spirit."⁶ For God to move men in such a way that they literally spoke, and wrote His words, must have been a very powerful thing. It is interesting that, *phero* is the same word used in Acts 2:2 to describe a sound like a *rushing* mighty wind.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (Acts 2:2)

And it is the same word that describes Paul's ship being driven through the sea by the wind during a storm.

"And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let [her] drive." (Acts 27:15)

God's Holy Spirit moved on the writers of the Bible like a wind, a mighty wind, driving them to write exactly the words that God wanted. They wrote (or sometimes spoke and had a scribe write) the words of God. Perhaps

⁶ Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words.
Page 84, "phero" (2) (a).

someone wanted to write his own words along with God's. He could not. The force of God's Spirit like a rushing wind drove him in the direction God wanted. He was moved to write God's words, not his own. The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible says, "...they were 'borne along,' or impelled, by the Holy Spirit's power, not acting according to their own wills, or simply expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him."

C. Is this "mechanical dictation?"

"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." (1 Corinthians 2:13)

The Scriptures are made up of words taught to men by the Holy Spirit. These words did not come from man's will (2Peter 1:21) or from man's wisdom (1Corinthians 2:13). These words came out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4). So, are we saying that the writers of Scripture were like robots who, like a machine, wrote what God told them to without interjecting any of their own thoughts or emotions? Absolutely not! Notice the following example:

"But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:17-20)

Paul was obviously full of emotion when writing this letter to the believers in Thessalonica. He "endeavored...to see (them) with great desire." He would have come to see

them many times, "but Satan hindered us." This is not a mechanical, unemotional process of dictation. It is Paul expressing his thoughts and feelings. Yet, they are the thoughts and feelings that God wanted him to express. They are the words that God had chosen. They are the words of God.

In his masterwork on Bibliology, Our God-Breathed Book, The Bible, Dr. John R. Rice wrote, "If God foreknew everyone who would trust Him for salvation and determined that that one should be called, then justified and later glorified, did God give no attention to the formation of character and language and personality of those who would write the Bible? Bible writers used the style God had created in them to write the words He gave, had planned long before. When the word, already settled forever in Heaven, was written down, the words of God in the style God had planned for them became written Scripture." ⁷

D. God did dictate.

While not done in a mechanical manner, the Bible gives multiple examples of God dictating His Word to the writers of Scripture. Here are just a few.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me." - (Exodus 8:1)

"Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?" - (2 Samuel 7:5)

"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth,

⁷ Our God-Breathed Book--The Bible P.199

the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." - (Jeremiah 2:2)

In fact, the phrase "Thus saith the LORD" occurs 413 times in the King James Version of the Bible. In Jeremiah 36:27-32 the prophet dictated a new copy of the book of Jeremiah to his scribe, Baruch. In his anger, the king of Judah had cut and burnt the original. In the story of Jeremiah's rewriting of the book that bears his name, as well as in the examples of those who were told to speak, "Thus saith the LORD," we have God telling them what to say and even, what to write. "Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." (Jeremiah 30:2)

E. How Inspiration Happened.

Though we have these examples of dictation, there is an interesting fact that we should consider. The Bible does not specifically say that when the Scriptures were actually written, God dictated them. In other words, when God said, "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book," the Bible never explains whether or not God dictated His words to Jeremiah and his scribe as the book was being written. God just told them to write down what He had said previously.

Based on what we have studied so far though, we have an idea of how verbal inspiration worked. God would speak through David, or Paul or Solomon, etc. and his Scribe would write down what he was saying. Sometimes, the Bible writer would write the words himself as God moved him. The Holy Spirit would teach the writers what words to use (1Corinthians 2:13). Jesus said, "But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said

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unto you.” (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit brought the words of Jesus to the memory of the Apostles who wrote Scripture, and He taught them “all things.” He moved through them and they wrote exactly what He wanted. Their own thoughts and personalities were involved, but because the Scriptures are God’s eternal words; their own thoughts and personalities were what God had put in them. The Bible is God’s word from beginning to end.

F. Inspiration, With Or Without A Scribe:

Inspiration (with scribe writing)	Inspiration (without scribe writing)
1. Words come from God	1. Words come from God
2. Through the Holy Spirit, they come to the original writers.	2. Through the Holy Spirit, they come to the original writers.
3. The writer dictates to his scribe the words he is moved by the Holy Spirit to dictate.	3. The writer writes the words down as he is moved by the Holy Spirit
4. God superintends the process so that the words are recorded without error or omission.	4. God superintends the process so that the words are recorded without error or omission.

G. Important Terms To Know:

VERBAL INSPIRATION - The very words of Scripture were inspired by God.

PLENARY INSPIRATION - All the words were inspired by God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"

INERRANCY - Because all of the words in the Bible are inspired by God, the Bible contains no error. Therefore it is inerrant or without error.

SPOTLIGHT ON INERRANCY

Inerrancy means without error. This doctrine is based on *Inspiration* and the *Perfect Nature of God*. Because God is perfect in His nature, He cannot make something with errors. Because every word in the Bible is inspired, or breathed out of the mouth of God, every word in the Bible must be perfect. Therefore, the Bible cannot contain error. This does NOT mean:

1. That the Bible never quotes a character who says something that isn't true. If it did, everything Satan says in Scripture would be true. However, because of inerrancy, the Bible quotes Satan exactly, even though what he says is a lie.

2. This also does not mean that there have never been copying errors, or attempts to distort Scripture. We are confident that our Bible is uncorrupted, but there have been deliberate, and careless corruptions made in the history of the Bible. Fortunately, God preserved His true word for us. We will study more about this later.

Inerrancy then, means that Scripture accurately records, without error, the words of God and the words of others. It is important to note that it is clear from context when what is being said is God directly speaking, man speaking for God, or man speaking for himself. At any rate, all is accurately recorded without any error at all.

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The important things to remember from this lesson are that the Bible is:

1. A God-breathed book
2. that came out of the mouth of God, to man,
3. in its entirety;
4. without error or omission.

Verbal inspiration is so exact that it includes the smallest letters, and parts of letters that make up the original words of the Bible. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot (smallest letter) or one tittle (tiny part of a letter) shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." - (Matthew 5:18)