DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit and Inspiration

Lesson 8

John Walvoord has said, "*The importance of the inspiration of the Scriptures, while tacitly denied by some in modern times, is easily demonstrated. It is a matter of tremendous import whether the Scriptures are a supernaturally produced Word of God or whether they are a collection of the works of men, containing errors one must expect in any human work.*"[1] In this lesson we will look at the Holy Spirit's role in the inspiration of Scripture and see how that practically applies to our lives today.

I. DEFINITION OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE SPIRIT

A. *The Holy Spirit:* "A proper statement of the meaning of inspiration is, therefore, that God so supernaturally directed the writers of Scripture that without excluding their human intelligence, their individuality, their literary style, their personal feelings, or any other human factor, His own complete and coherent message to man was recorded in perfect accuracy, the very words of Scriptures bearing the authority of divine authorship."[2]

B. *The Holy Spirit:* John Walvoord discussing the meaning of the word "inspired" or "God breathed" in 2 Tim. 3:16 as most translations have it says, "[the] RSV is no improvement on AV, for *theopneustos* means *out*-breathed rather than *in*-breathed by God—divinely *ex*-spired, rather than *in*-spired. . . B. B. Warfield showed decisively in 1900 that the sense of the word can only be passive. The thought is not of God as breathing through Scripture, or of Scripture as breathing out God, but of God as having breathed out Scripture. Paul's words mean, not that Scripture is inspiring (true though this is), but that Scripture is a divine product, and must be approached and estimated as such."[3]

C. *The New Bible Dictionary:* "Biblical inspiration may be defined as God's superintending human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His message to man in the words of their original writings in the Bible. God superintended but did not dictate. His superintendence was sometimes very direct and sometimes less direct but always active, so that He guarded the writers from writing inaccurately. He used human authors including their own individual styles. They were not stenographers receiving dictation. The result of this combination of human and divine authorship was a record that in the original manuscripts was without error."[4]

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[1] John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit,* pg. 55.

[2] John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit,* pg. 58.

[3] *The New Bible Dictionary,* Logos Bible Software under "inspiration."

[4] Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit,* pg. 42.

II. THOUGHTS TO PONDER ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION

A. *New Bible Dictionary:* "Man's part in the producing of Scripture was merely to transmit what he had received. Psychologically, from the standpoint of form, it is clear that the human writers contributed much to the making of Scripture—historical research, theological meditation, linguistic style, *etc.* Each biblical book is in one sense the literary creation of its author. But theologically, from the standpoint of content, the Bible regards the human writers as having contributed nothing, and Scripture as being entirely the creation of God. This conviction is rooted in the self-consciousness of the founders of biblical religion, all of whom claimed to utter—and, in the case of the prophets and apostles, to write—what were, in the most literal sense, the words of another: God himself."[5]

B. *The Holy Spirit:* "Behind the human writers was the divine author of revelation, the Holy Spirit. Peter, referring to the Old Testament prophecy, declared that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). The agents were men; the source was God; and the single author moving the human instruments was the Holy Spirit. The word *moved* indicates that the Spirt bore the human writers along as He directed their writings. The same word appears in Acts 27:15 of the strong wind that irresistibly carried and directed the ship on which Paul was being taken to Rome."[6]

C. *The New Dictionary of Theology:* "Since the God who created Scripture by sanctifying the authorial efforts of his servants is true and no deceiver, biblical infallibility becomes an article of faith. It was no more necessary that the Bible, being human, should be wrong sometimes than it was for Jesus, being human, to go astray in conduct or teaching. Those who confess a sinless Christ (see Sinlessness of Christ) cannot consistently dismiss this analogous belief in an inerrant Bible."[5]

D. *Nelson's New Bible Dictionary: "*Two terms often used in discussion of the inspiration of the Bible are "plenary" and "verbal." "Plenary," a term meaning full or complete, means that each book, chapter, and paragraph of the Bible is equally derived from God. "Verbal" inspiration emphasizes the truth that the wording of the text, as well as the ideas conveyed, is supernaturally inspired by God through the Holy Spirit.

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[5] *The New Bible Dictionary,* Logos Bible Software under "inspiration."

[6] Charles Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit,* pg. 43.

[5] Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, c1988), 629.

"Inerrancy" is a term used along with plenary verbal inspiration to convey the view that the Bible's teaching is true on everything of which it speaks. The words of Scripture, in the original writings, teach the truth without any admixture of error. The Bible is not just a useful body of human ideas. It makes clear the mind of God Himself.

"Infallibility" is a term often used as a synonym for inerrancy. However, the root meaning of infallibility is "not liable to fail in achieving its purpose." Truth, or inerrancy, is affirmed of the content of the Bible; infallibility refers to the effectiveness of the wording in conveying reliable ideas, as well as the effectiveness of those ideas when used by the all-powerful Holy Spirit (Is. 55:11)."[6]

III. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION

A. **Numb. 24:2-3** And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. 3 He took up his discourse and said....

B. **II Sam. 23:2-3** "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 "The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God.

C. **Ezek. 3:24-27** The Spirit then entered me and made me stand on my feet, and He spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself up in your house. 25 "As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them so that you cannot go out among them. 26 "Moreover, I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be mute and cannot be a man who rebukes them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 "But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you will say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.

D. **Ezek. 11:5** Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and He said to me, "Say, 'Thus says the Lord, "So you think, house of Israel, for I know your thoughts.

E. **Joel 2:28** "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

F. **Mic. 3:8** On the other hand I am filled with power—With the Spirit of the Lord—And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.

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[6]Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison and Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995)

G. **Zech. 7:12** "They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts.

H. **Mt. 22:43** He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying . . .

I. **Mk. 13:11** "When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

J. **II Tim. 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

K. **II Pet. 1:20-21** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

New Testament Quoting Old Testament Reference	Old Testament Passage Quoted
Mark 12:36 "David himself said in the Holy Spirit. . ."	**Psa. 110:1** A Psalm of David. The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."
Acts 1:16 "The Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David. . ."	**Psa. 69:25** May their camp be desolate; May none dwell in their tents. **Psa. 109:8** Let his days be few; Let another take his office.
Acts 4:25 "The Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David your servant, said. . ."	**Psa. 2:1-2** Why are the nations in an uproar, And the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His Anointed:
Acts 28:25-27 "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah. . ."	**Isa. 6:9-10** And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."
Heb. 3:7 "Just as the Holy Spirit says. . ."	**Psa. 95:7-8** For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness;
Heb. 10:15-17 "The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying. . ."	**Jer. 31:33-34** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

IV. ERRORS CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION

A. Error – Continuing Revelation (God spoke to me, told me . . . , said to me . . ., gave to me a Word, gave me a revelation, gave me a vision, told me to disobey His Word, gave me a prophecy, etc.) **(See Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19**).

B. Error – Neo-Orthodox views. Some deny the miracles of the Bible. Others claim that the Bible is the work of men compiled by many authors over the centuries. Still others contend that the Bible contains God's Word but isn't God's Word until you have an experience or encounter with it (existentialism). The word "Neo-orthodox" means new orthodoxy. A good rule of thumb to remember is, "If it's new, it isn't orthodox." The basic problem with these views is they deny what the Bible claims for itself (**See Gal. 1:6-9**).

C. Error – "Elitist Illumination" is the practice of many false teachers or sects who claim, "I (or we) am/are the only one/s who can interpret the Scriptures correctly." They claim, "You need me to tell you what the Bible means by what it says." These people are deceivers and should be avoided. The Roman Catholic Church teaches this error **(See I Cor. 2:6-16; I John 2:27**).

D. Error – Denial of inerrancy, infallibility, or inspiration of the Bible, i.e. saying the Bible has mistakes or is not God's Word. This is erroneous because it makes God and the writers of Scripture out to be liars. The Scriptures claim that the Bible is God's perfect eternal truth **(See Psa. 119:160; Jn. 17:17; II Tim. 3:14-17; II Pet. 1:20**).

E. Error – Elevating a certain translation over and against the original languages. A translation is only as good as it represents the original documents in their original language. The original languages always have priority and final say in what the text means. The King James Version, for instance, is not more authoritative or accurate than the original Hebrew and Greek texts.

F. Error – Claiming that other religious writings, both ancient or modern, should be added to the Bible. This is one of the signs of a cult. Cults often claim to have writings that are inspired like the Bible. If pressed, they usually claim their writings are more inspired and if there is any conflict with what the Bible says their new writings are to be preferred. Inspiration is an absolute quality. Something is either inspired or not but there are no degrees of inspiration.

G. Error – Saying that "all truth is God's truth." This is an error because it often puts what men "say is true" on an equal plane with the inspired and infallible Word of God. There is a great qualitative difference between what men think is true and the inspired revelation of God. When we elevate the fallible opinions of men to the same place as Scripture, we undermine biblical authority. Therefore, all that is found in the Word of God is God's truth, but not all that men say is true. History is full of "truths" taught by men that men now deny.

H. Error – Saying the Old Testament no longer applies. This is an error because the Scriptures explicitly declare that all of God's Word is profitable and applicable to Christians today (**See Mt. 5:17-19; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-11; II Tim. 3:16-17**).

I. Error – The Scriptures are partially inspired by God.

J. Error – The Scriptures are all inspired by God but contain errors.

K. Error – The Scriptures contain the Word of God as you experience their impact on your life.

L. Error – The Scriptures are infallible and inspired, but not inerrant.

M. Error – The Scriptures are our sole rule of faith and practice, but contain errors.

V. APPLICATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ROLE IN INSPIRATION

A. When the Scripture speaks God speaks.

B. When the Scripture speaks we can believe it.

C. Because God wrote the Scriptures we know they will always be relevant and never outdated.

D. Because God wrote the Scriptures we know that all statements in the Word of God are true and accurate–even if men disagree.

E. Because the Scriptures are the Word of God we know God's will for our lives, the future, and God Himself by reading and studying them.

F. Because the Holy Spirit inspired the Word of God, we can be sure that anyone who says God spoke to them or told them to do something contrary to the Word of God, is lying.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?"