

What does the Bible Says About the Inspiration of the Scriptures?

A. Inspiration

1. A simple definition: **The inspiration of Scripture refers to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in guiding human authors to write exactly what God wanted them to write, right down to every word in every part**
2. The two most prominent and important passages that reflect this are 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21:
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (READ): all Scripture is “**God-breathed**” (Greek *theopneustos*)
 - b. 2 Peter 1:20-21 (READ): there are three important statements made here:
 - 1) Scripture isn’t “**a matter of one’s own interpretation**”: more literally, “**come about from one’s own imagination**” (NET)
 - 2) Scripture wasn’t made “**by an act of human will**”: doesn’t mean the author’s will wasn’t involved, but rather the producing of Scripture wasn’t borne or carried along by human will (NET: not “**borne of human impulse**”)
 - 3) Scripture was made when men “**moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**”: more literally, “**carried along**” (same word as above); example: sailboat being carried by the wind
 - c. Inspiration applies to both the Old Testament and New Testament (2 Peter 3:16)—Peter equates Paul’s writings with Scripture
3. There are two words often associated with inspiration of Scripture:
 - a. The first is VERBAL which means that inspiration included the individual words the author wrote, not just the thoughts
 - b. The second is PLENARY which refers to something being full or complete which means that ALL of the Bible is inspired
 - c. So, verbal plenary inspiration means that all of the Bible, in each and every part, right down to the individual words is inspired, breathed out by God
4. One last important detail: inspiration does not mean that the author was merely a robot being manipulated by God to record His Word:
 - a. God did not bypass their mind, will, thoughts, or intelligence
 - b. We see these reflected in Scripture, along with the authors’ personalities, experiences, emotions, desires, etc.
 - c. This is why the writing styles, words, grammatical structure, and even content differs between each of the four Gospels, and why Paul’s letters read differently than Peter’s
 - d. The human authors were fully engaged in the process, but the Holy Spirit used their various traits and differences as He carried them along to produce the Scriptures

B. Inerrancy

1. Inerrancy means that Scripture is without error and completely true in everything that it affirms and teaches:
 - a. Inerrancy flows from the fact that God Himself is perfect, and therefore His word must be perfect
 - b. We see this reflected in Psalm 19:7-9 (READ)
 - c. Some claim the Bible is only inerrant when it relates to spiritual matters, but not other things like history or science; however, this contradicts God's nature—if we can only trust everything in His Word then how can we trust any of it?
2. There are some caveats to inerrancy:
 - a. Technically, it only applies to the original autographs (actual documents the authors wrote), but the principle still applies generally to copies that faithfully represent the originals (e.g. modern Bibles)
 - b. Inerrancy does not mean that there are no challenges like textual variants in ancient manuscripts, seeming contradictions, differences in details when the same account is recorded in multiple places (e.g. Gospels), etc.—most of the time these can all be fairly easily explained or resolved with proper study
 - c. Inerrancy isn't disproven by such things as metaphorical or symbolic language (, the recording of untrue things like Satan's lies, or seeming contradictions with scientific consensus (ex. "four corners of the earth", light created before the sun)

C. Infallibility

1. While inerrancy refers to the truthfulness of Scriptures, infallibility refers to the trustworthiness of the Bible:
 - a. Another way to say it is that God's Word cannot mislead, deceive, or fail, but can fully be trusted in all that it says
 - b. The most often cited passage regarding the infallibility of the Scriptures is 2 Peter 1:19: **"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts":**
 - 1) Peter was referring to Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain where God audibly confirmed from heaven, **"This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"** (Matthew 17:5)
 - 2) This event **"made more sure the prophetic word"**; in other words, it confirmed the reliability of everything the Old Testament said about Jesus—it was all coming true!
 - c. Other passages: Proverbs 30:5-6; Titus 1:2; John 17:17; 10:35
 - d. We see this repeated throughout the Bible where OT prophecies and promises were fulfilled over and over again, almost 300 alone in just Jesus Christ

2. The trustworthiness of the Bible has been overwhelming and repeatedly proven throughout history on everything from spiritual matters, to historical events, to philosophy, to personal behavior, and yes, even science.

D. Preservation

1. Preservation of the Scriptures refers to God preserving and protecting His Word as it was copied and transmitted throughout history
2. While we don't see this process explicitly described in the Bible, we do see the principle of God preserving His Word reflected in the Scriptures:
 - a. Isaiah 40:8: **"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."**
 - b. Matthew 5:18: **"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."**
 - c. Peter referred to **"the living and enduring word of God"** (1 Peter 1:23)
3. Preservation is important because we don't have the original documents and letters of the Biblical authors; what we have are copies of copies of copies hand made over thousands of years:
 - a. This begs the question, How do we know that what our Bibles say today is what these authors originally wrote?
 - b. First and foremost, we have the promises we just read that God's Word will stand forever; therefore, if what we have today doesn't reflect what the authors originally wrote God has failed to protect His Word
 - c. Second, ancient manuscript evidence proves that what we have today in our Bibles matches the original writings to an astonishing and miraculous degree:
 - 1) The Bible is the most well-preserved collection of ancient writings in history—by over 100 fold
 - 2) There are between 10,000 and 17,000 early Hebrew manuscripts and fragments of the OT, and over 5800 Greek and 18,000 non-Greek manuscripts and fragments of the NT
 - 3) While there are hundreds of thousands of variants within these fragments and documents, textual scholars (even liberals) estimate that the Greek and Hebrew Bible text we use today matches the original Greek and Hebrew word for word from 99 to 99.5 percent

E. Authority

1. The authority of the Scriptures refers to the principle that as God's Word, the Bible is the ultimate and final authority when it comes to what we believe and do:

- a. We see this evidenced by the Bereans when they used the Scriptures to the Gospel Paul preached to them (READ Acts 17:11)
 - b. This is why Paul commanded Timothy to “**preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction**” (2 Timothy 4:2)
 - c. In John 14:23, Jesus said, “**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him**”—since the Bible is God’s written word it follows that we are to obey it if we love Jesus
2. Some limit the Scriptures authority to only our faith and practice, but the Bible addresses more than just our faith and how we practice it:
 - a. The Bible addresses other things like history, geography, geology, cosmology, psychology, philosophy, biology, anthropology, and a host of other “ologies”
 - b. Since the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God should it not be our authority when it speaks on these issues?

F. Sufficiency

1. For something to be sufficient means that it provides everything that is necessary for a specific purpose, and that nothing else is needed
2. When it comes to the Scriptures this means at least the following:
 - a. They are sufficient for knowledge about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit
 - b. They are sufficient for salvation
 - c. They are sufficient for faith and doctrine
 - d. They are sufficient for godly living
3. We see this principle reflected in both the OT and the NT:
 - a. Psalm 1 (READ)
 - b. Psalm 19:10-14 (READ)
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (READ)
 - d. 2 Peter 1:2-11 (READ) - notice Peter’s emphasis on knowledge of God and Jesus Christ)
4. Unfortunately, many don’t believe the Scriptures are sufficient:
 - a. In Paul’s day, the Colossians thought they needed special hidden wisdom gained through gnostic practices
 - b. Today, the largest church denomination in the world (Catholicism) claims that their church traditions are equally as important and on par with the Scriptures in determining doctrine and practice; this is essentially a rejection of the sufficiency of Scripture
 - c. Even within the Evangelical Church we see a growing number seeking spiritual wisdom, understanding and practice from other world religions, mystic and occult practices, and those who claim to be modern day Apostles and Prophets (e.g. NAR)

- d. When it comes to emotional and psychological issues, many turn to secular psychology and psychologists for answers rather than the Scriptures

G. Takeaways

1. The Bible is Trustworthy:
 - a. Because Scripture is God-breathed, it is without error and incapable of misleading us
 - b. And, this goes beyond just Spiritual truth—when it speaks on history, science, human nature, behavior, philosophy, psychology...indeed every aspect of life, it can be trusted!
2. The Bible is our ultimate authority (aside from God):
 - a. Because the Bible is God's Word, and is inerrant and infallible, it should be our ultimately authority when it comes to our faith and practice
 - b. However, because it speaks on more than our faith and practice, we should also recognize its authority in other areas like those we've already mentioned above
 - c. For example, when it comes to topics like Creation, history, and human nature and behavior, many have chosen to trust the claims of secular science, historians who reject the Bible, and humanistic psychology and psychiatry over the Bible
3. The Bible is sufficient for life and godliness:
 - a. In 2 Peter 1:3, Peter wrote, "...that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."
 - b. READ Psalms 19:7-11