

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TODAY

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE: INSPIRATION = GOD-BREATHED

INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Consider these words of Peter...

2 Peter 1:19–21 (ESV)

¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ 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.

- 161 times Moses attributed what he wrote in Exodus as being what God said.
 - Jeremiah wrote two Old Testament books with a total of 57 chapters. Nearly 500 times he credits his writing to God.
 - In 48 chapters, Ezekial credits God 309 times.
 - In 14 chapters, Hezekiah credits God 84 times.
 - In two chapters, Haggai credits God 25 times.
 - In four chapters, Malachi credits God 25 times.
- Consider these words of David...

2 Samuel 23:2 (ESV)

² "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.

David wrote many Psalms including 15, 19, 23, 32, 51 and 139.

- In quoting Psalm 110, Jesus introduced the passage by saying....

Mark 12:35–36 (ESV)

³⁵ And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet." "

- When Peter quoted from two different Psalms (69 & 109) in Acts 1, he said...

Acts 1:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- John 14, 15 & 16 – Apostles of Christ promised by Jesus that the Holy Spirit would bring all the teachings of Christ to their remembrance (*See Lesson 4*).

- II Timothy 3:16-17 – What constitutes scripture?

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

- The writings of Paul considered scripture by Peter...

2 Peter 3:15–16 (ESV)

¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

- Paul lays claim to Holy Spirit inspiration...

Romans 9:1 (ESV)

¹ I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—

1 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

- John’s Revelation from the Spirit...

Revelation 1:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet

Revelation 4:2 (ESV)

² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.

Revelation 14:13 (ESV)

¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE: INSPIRATION = GOD-BREATHED**1 Corinthians 2:6–16 (ESV)**

⁶ Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE

FEBRUARY 26, 1984

John Piper

[2 Peter 1:20–21](#)

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

On June 27, 1819, Adoniram Judson baptized his first convert in Burma. His wife, Ann Hasseltine, described how Moug Nau had responded to the Scripture: "A few days ago I was reading with him Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He was deeply impressed and unusually solemn. 'These words,' said he, 'take hold on my liver; they make me tremble.'" God spoke through Isaiah the prophet 2,700 years ago and said, "This is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word . . . Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word" ([Isaiah 66:2, 5](#)).

THE BIBLE'S IMPACT IN HISTORY

For two thousand years the Bible has been taking hold of people's lives and making them tremble—first with fear because it reveals our sin, then with faith because it reveals God's grace. A single verse, [Romans 13:13](#), convicted and converted the immoral Augustine. For Martin Luther, a miserable monk, the light broke in through [Romans 1:17](#). He said,

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. (*Here I Stand*, p. 49)

For Jonathan Edwards it was [1 Timothy 1:17](#). He says,

The first instance, that I remember, of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading these words, [1 Tim. 1:17](#), "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul . . . a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. (*Works*, vol. 1, p. xii)

From century to century, from Egypt to Germany to New England, the Bible has been drawing people to Christ and making them new.

THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF MAN AND THE WORD OF GOD

Why? Why has the Bible had this abiding relevance and power? I believe the answer is found in our text. [2 Peter 1:20–21](#), "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but *men moved by the Holy*

Spirit spoke from God." This passage teaches that when you read Scripture, what you are reading does not merely come from a man but also from God. The Bible is the writing of many different men. But it is also far more than that. Yes, men spoke. They spoke with their own language and style. But Peter mentions two other dimensions of their speaking.

SPEAKING FROM GOD, MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

First, they spoke from God. What they have to say is not merely from their own limited perspective. They are not the origin of the truth they speak; they are the channel. The truth is God's truth. Their meaning is God's meaning.

Second, not only is what they spoke from God, but how they spoke it is controlled by the Holy Spirit. "Men, *moved by the Holy Spirit*, spoke from God." God did not simply reveal truth to the writers of Scripture and then depart in hopes that they might communicate it accurately. Peter says that in the very communicating of it they were carried by the Holy Spirit. The making of the Bible was not left to merely human skills of communication; the Holy Spirit himself carried the process to completion.

One recent book by three former teachers of mine (LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 15) puts it like this,

To assure verbal precision God, in communicating his revelation, must be verbally precise, and inspiration must extend to the very words. This does not mean that God dictated every word. Rather his Spirit so pervaded the mind of the human writer that he chose out of his own vocabulary and experience precisely those words, thoughts and expressions that conveyed God's message with precision. In this sense the words of the human authors of Scripture can be viewed as the word of God.

NOT JUST PROPHECY, BUT ALL SCRIPTURE

Someone might say that [2 Peter 1:20–21](#) only has to do with prophecy not with all Old Testament Scripture. But look carefully how he argues. In verse 19 Peter says that a prophetic word has been made more sure to him by his experience with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Then in verses 20–21 he undergirds the authority of this prophetic word by saying it is part of Scripture. Verse 20: "No prophecy *of scripture* is a matter of one's own interpretation." Peter is not saying that only prophetic parts of Scripture are inspired by God. He is saying, We know the prophetic word is inspired precisely because it is a "prophecy of Scripture." Peter's assumption is that whatever stands in Scripture is from God, written by men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

His teaching is the same as Paul's in [2 Timothy 3:16](#), "*All scripture* is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." None of the Old Testament Scriptures came by the impulse of man. All of it is truth from God as men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS?

But what about the New Testament? Did the apostles and their close associates (Mark, Luke, James, Jude, and the writer to the Hebrews) experience divine inspiration as they wrote? Were they "carried" by the Holy Spirit to speak from God? The Christian church has always answered yes. Jesus said to his apostles in [John 16:12–13](#), "I have yet many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. When

the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you things that are to come."

Then the apostle Paul confirms this when he says of his own apostolic teaching in [1 Corinthians 2:12-13](#), "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but *taught by the Spirit*." In [2 Corinthians 13:3](#) he said that Christ speaks in him. And in [Galatians 1:12](#) he said, "I did not receive [my gospel] from man nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." If we take Paul as our model for what it meant to be an apostle of Christ, then it would be fair to say that the New Testament as well as the Old is not merely from *man* but also from *God*. The writers of the Old Testament and New Testament spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE DIVINE AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE

The doctrine that emerges is this: *The Holy Spirit is the divine author of all Scripture*. If this doctrine is true, then the implications are so profound and far-reaching that every part of our lives should be affected. I want to talk about those implications this morning. But for our own strengthening and for those still wavering on the outskirts of commitment let me first sketch out the *basis* of our persuasion.

COMING TO A REASONABLE FAITH IN SCRIPTURE

Most people come to a reasonable trust in the Bible as God's word something like this. It happens in three stages.

1. WE ARE GUILTY BEFORE GOD

First, the testimony of our own conscience, the reality of God behind nature, and the message of Scripture come together in our hearts to give us the inescapable *conviction that we are guilty* before our Creator. This is a reasonable conviction because the persuasion that there is a Creator above this world and the persuasion that we are guilty for not honoring and thanking him as we ought are not irrational leaps in the dark; they are forced upon us by our experience and our honest thinking about the world.

2. JESUS WINS OUR CONFIDENCE

The second step on the way to a reasonable persuasion that the Bible is God's word is that Jesus Christ is shown to us. Someone reads or tells us the story of this incomparable man who talked and acted like so much more than a man. We see the authority he claimed to forgive sin and command demons and control nature, we see the purity of his moral teaching, his utter surrender to the will of God, his brilliant calm under cross-examination, his righteous fury against hypocrites, his tenderness toward little children, his patience with the humble seekers, his innocent submission to torture, and we hear from his lips the sweetest, most-needed words ever spoken: "I have come to give my life as a ransom for many."

And so by the self-authenticating force of his incomparable character and power Jesus wins our confidence and our trust and we take him as Savior from our sin and Lord of our life. And this is not an irrational persuasion. It's the way all of you go about making reasonable decisions about whom you will trust in life. Will you trust this babysitter with your children, or this lawyer to give you good counsel, or this friend to keep your secret? You look, you listen, and eventually you are persuaded (or not) that here in this person is solid ground for your confidence.

3. WE FOLLOW THE TEACHING AND SPIRIT OF JESUS

Once the character and power of Jesus have captured our trust, then he becomes the guide and authority for all our future decisions and persuasions. So the third step on the way to a reasonable persuasion that the Bible is God's word is to let the teaching and the spirit of Jesus control how we assess the Bible. This happens in at least two ways. One is that we accept what Jesus teaches about the Old and New Testaments. When he says that Scripture can't be broken ([John 10:35](#)) and that not an iota or dot will pass from the law till all is accomplished ([Matthew 5:18](#)), we agree with him and base our confidence in the Old Testament on *his* reliability. And when he chose twelve apostles to found his church, gives them his authority to teach, and promises to send his Spirit to guide them into truth, we agree with him and credit the writings of these men with the authority of Christ.

The other way the teaching and spirit of Jesus control our assessment of the Bible is that we recognize in the teachings of the Bible the many-colored rays of light refracted out from the prism of Christ whom we have come to trust. And just as Christ enabled us to make sense out of our relation to God and bring harmony to it, so also the many rays of his truth in every part of the Bible enable us to make sense out of hundreds of our experiences in life and see the way to harmony. Our confidence in Scripture grows as we realize that Jesus affirmed it and as we realize that its teachings are as incomparable as Jesus himself. Time after time they help us make sense out of life's puzzles: failing marriages, rebellious children, drug addiction, warring nations, the return of leaves in spring, the insatiable longings of our hearts, the fear of death, the coming into being of children, the universality of praise and blame, the prevalence of pride, and the admiration of self-denial. The Bible confirms its divine origin again and again as it makes sense out of our experience in the real world and points the way to harmony.

I hope, therefore, that one of the doctrines which we cherish at Bethlehem enough to die for it (and live for it!) is that *the Holy Spirit is the divine author of all Scripture*. The Bible is God's word, not merely man's word.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL OF LIFE

O, that we had all day to talk about the wonderful implications of this doctrine! *The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture*. Therefore, it is true ([Psalm 119:142](#)) and altogether reliable ([Hebrews 6:18](#)). It is powerful, working its purpose in our hearts ([1 Thessalonians 2:13](#)) and not returning empty to the One who sent it ([Isaiah 55:10–11](#)). It is pure, like silver refined in a furnace seven times ([Psalm 12:6](#)). It is sanctifying ([John 17:17](#)). It gives life ([Psalm 119:37](#), [50](#), [93](#), [107](#); [John 6:63](#); [Matthew 4:4](#)). It makes wise ([Psalm 19:7](#); [119:99–100](#)). It gives joy ([Psalm 19:8](#); [119:16](#), [92](#), [111](#), [143](#), [174](#)) and promises great reward ([Psalm 19:11](#)). It gives strength to the weak ([Psalm 119:28](#)) and comfort to the distraught ([Psalm 119:76](#)) and guidance to the perplexed ([Psalm 119:105](#)) and salvation to the lost ([Psalm 119:155](#); [2 Timothy 3:15](#)). The wisdom of God in Scripture is inexhaustible.

How precious to me are thy thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand.¹

¹Piper, John. "The Holy Spirit: Author of Scripture." *Desiring God*. February 26, 1984. Viewed November 15, 2016. <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-holy-spirit-author-of-scripture>