

UNIT 3: God's Revealing Work

Section 2: Inspiration & Illumination

Theological Works:
Berkhof, Calvin, Chafer, Enns,
Erickson, Grudem, Hodge, Manly,
Ryrie, Tenney, Warfield

INTRODUCTION:

Here in section 2 of this unit we begin a lengthy discussion on God's work of revelation in His Word – the Holy Scriptures. In the coming weeks we'll look at the doctrines of inspiration & illumination, infallibility, inerrancy, authority, perspicuity, necessity, and sufficiency, as well as discuss the subjects of interpretation, canonicity, and textual criticism. The Scriptures are so important to our faith, so we must be familiar with these foundational truths and principles to defend our faith in a world that remains so antagonistic against the Lord and His Word. Hodge explains, "The object or design of revelation is the communication of knowledge. The object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching... The effect of revelation was to render its recipient wiser. The effect of inspiration was to preserve him from error in teaching."

Q1: What is meant by inspiration?

Q2: What are the main views of inspiration?

I. Defining Inspiration

A. Distinguishing Inspiration and Illumination...

1. Careful distinguishing of "Inspiration" and "Illumination"
 - a. Inspiration – The doctrine of inspiration refers to the origin or authorship of Scripture. It specifically refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in the production of Scripture. This is the doctrine which enables us to speak of the Bible as authored by both God and man.
 - b. Illumination – The doctrine of illumination refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

----- Excursus on 1 Cor 2:10-16 -----

Translation: v10-16

But to us, God revealed [ajpekavlyuen] *it* through the Spirit for the Spirit searches/examines [ejrauna~] all *things*, even the depths of God [kaiV taV bavqh tou~ qeou~]. For who among men knows the *things* of a man except the spirit of the man, the *thing* in him? Even so no one knows the *things* of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit, the One from God, so that we might have known the things having been freely given [carisqevnta] to us by God. Which things we also speak not in words taught in human wisdom but in *things* taught by the Spirit, **interpreting/combining spiritual to/by/with spiritual** [pneumatikoi~ç pneumatikaV sugkrivnontes]. But the physical/natural [yucikoVç] man does not accept [devcetai] the *things* of the Spirit for they are foolishness [mwriva] to him and he is not able to know/understand [gnw~nai], because they are spiritually discerned/appraised [pneumatikw~ç ajnakrivnetai]. **"But the spiritual discerns/appraises all things, but he, himself, is discerned/appraised by no one."** *For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him?* But we, ourselves, have the mind of Christ [nou~n cristou~].

Introduction:

Here is a section in which Paul is trying to "retool" the Corinthian's understanding of spirituality! We see that we will not come upon maturity by exercise of our own resources, but purely by God's grace (see I Corinthians 1-2)! Maturity is seen in Christ-likeness which is a product of God's grace in a Christian's life by the work of the Holy Spirit. **II Pet 1:2-3** summed up our discussion well... "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing 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." What is needed is not more knowledge but more application of what we have already been given! We do not know God's wisdom by our great abilities, but by His revelation (of a mystery) to us! Here we look more

specifically the role of the Holy Spirit in giving us understanding of God's ways! This includes **revelation, inspiration, and illumination!**

I. Spiritual Knowledge - Revelation

A. The Source – God

1. In **v6-9** – Paul is explaining that he (along with the apostles) speak a wisdom among the “mature” (Christians)... a wisdom that none of the lost have understood... No one is capable of knowing God's ways by exercising their own reasoning abilities or scientific methods...
2. **General Revelation** is enough to condemn the world, but not enough to save it! **Rom 1**
3. What is needed is **Special Revelation** – *ajpekavluyen* – uncovering/revealing/revelation
 - a. 1 aorist – denotes an activity completed at a point in time in the past – a done deed!
 - b. This tense, combined with contextual reasoning leads me to believe that Paul here is speaking about God's revelation to the apostles (“**we**”) (not some special revelatory insight that each of us is continually receiving) – *MacArthur agrees → we=apostles*
 - c. Remember also that Paul is trying to bring correction to a church which is out of line... divisiveness and teachers claiming authority over Paul... Paul reasserts the authority God has granted him here! (More on this later...)
4. Since this knowledge comes from the Lord, Paul has no place for pride!

B. The Agent – The Holy Spirit

1. See major emphasis on the Spirit here (**6x** in **v10-14**)
2. The Holy Spirit is able to give this revelation because He “searches” the depths of God
 - a. *ejrauna* – present tense – The Holy Spirit is continually aware of all of God's purposes (for He is equal with the other 2 persons of the Godhead)
 - b. The Holy Spirit fully comprehends the depth of God's nature and his plans of grace and therefore is fully competent to grant knowledge of God's ways – He explores God's purposes thoroughly in order to reveal them.
 - c. **III) The Ultimate Depth finder** – Ever active, accurate sounding of the depths of God
 - d. He not only searches the depths of God in order to bring us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (**Jn 16:12-15**), but also searches our hearts (brings conviction **Jn 16:8-11**).

C. Principle: Only the spirit knows the things...

1. Only man's spirit knows the things of man
 - a. There are limits upon man's knowledge... he might know much about himself, but that's about as far as it extends... unless knowledge is given him. Motives and intentions are at best guessed at without an individual disclosing those hidden things.
 - b. Unless a person reveals their thoughts, attitudes, intentions through word, gesture, or action they remain hidden... **At best we can make a “wild guess”**
 - c. Truth be told, we even lack full knowledge of our own ways at times – **Jer 17:9**
 - d. The things of the Lord can only be known by us if God imparts that knowledge
 - e. You won't gain spiritual understanding through human means–dependent upon the Spirit!
2. Only the Spirit of God knows the things of God
 - a. There is nothing beyond the Spirit's knowledge
 - b. He knows the DEPTHS of God... His knowledge is unfathomable
 - c. Unless the Spirit puts them on display for us to see, we would never know God's ways!

D. The Recipients – Us (The Apostles)

1. We received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, the One from God!
 - a. **v6** “**we** do speak wisdom among those who are mature” – Paul is describing his ministry
 - b. The Holy Spirit is not from the world and therefore He is not like the world!
 - c. The Spirit originates from God... Unity of the Godhead!
 - d. The knowledge He reveals is contrary to this world's ways

- e. “received” – 2nd aor. – a definite event in the past.
 - f. So also, the disclosure of that information comes in a different form than this world.
 - g. For the Corinthians to be comparing Paul’s message and ministry to that of the worldly philosophers/teachers of the day was to manifest their own foolishness!
2. **Reason:** *So that* we might **know** the things freely given to us by God!
- a. The Gr. Grammar indicates that this is a PURPOSE clause!
 - b. God wants us to know about Him, so He took the initiative in revealing these truths about Salvation to the apostles who then would communicate those truths to us!
 - c. Carisqevnta – “freely given” – to give according to grace! **Undeserved/Unearned!**
 - d. God being a God of order, and not wishing for us to be led into utter confusion gave us knowledge of Himself in an orderly way and then preserved it for us

II. **Spiritual Communication – Delivery/Inspiration & Reception/Illumination**

A. Inspiration

- 1. We speak not in words taught by human wisdom, but those taught by the Spirit
- 2. Paul’s communication is unlike the philosophers and orators in Corinth because his speech comes from a different source and has a different goal.
- 3. The wisdom of God appears to be foolishness to the perishing – **1:18**

B. Illumination

- 1. We interpret/compare/combine spiritual with spiritual
 - a. The Gr. phrase: pneumatikoi~ς pneumatikaV sugkrivnontec
 - b. A Few Gr translation difficulties:
 - (1) Sugkrivnontec – can mean “interpreting/explaining, comparing, or combining”
 - (2) pneumatikoi~ς – can be neuter or masculine...
 - c. Main Translation options:
 - (1) Interpreting/explaining spiritual things by spiritual things
 - o Interpreting spiritual truths by spiritual truths (Scripture interprets scripture)
 - o Interpreting spiritual truths by spiritual words (Spiritual thoughts into words)
 - (2) Interpreting/explaining spiritual truths to spiritual hearers
 - d. All of the above translations are possible... *so the decision moves to contextual argument, the situation in Corinth, and Paul’s own theology about the Spirit*
 - (1) **If combining truths with words** – further support for inspiration (context before)
 - o Suggests that God superintended even the way his truths would be communicated
 - o God fit the words together with the truths being revealed
 - o Someone might even use this to defend “verbal plenary” inspiration
 - (2) **If interpreting truths to spiritual hearers** – anticipates illumination (context after)
 - o Would restate Paul’s overall theme... the truths revealed and preached by Paul will only be received by those who have been regenerated!
 - o He knows that many will reject these truths, but this is no surprise... everyone without the Holy Spirit is unable to rightly understand God’s Word.
 - (3) **I think #2 is better... Helps set up Paul’s argument in the last verses of this chapter, and why he employs the methods he does...**
- 2. **Physical/Natural Man**
 - a. **“Soulish”** – one who lives purely on the material plane, absence of spiritual discernment
 - (1) These are living in the natural state, apart from the Holy Spirit
 - (2) They “just don’t get it” – blind to the truth
 - b. **Doesn’t accept/receive the things of the Spirit**
 - (1) Air of welcome... reception of a guest
 - (2) Spiritual truths do not find a home in the “unspiritual”

c. **Foolishness to him**

- (1) Their view of God's truth is distorted and twisted
- (2) The people are revealed for who they are by their response to the Cross!

d. **Not able to understand/know**

- (1) "cannot" – logical impossibility... lack the perspective to be able to understand
- (2) **Rom 8:7-8** "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so... they cannot please God."
- (3) *Inability is highlighted here!*

e. They are spiritually appraised (no ability to receive)

- (1) pneumatikw~ς ajnakrivnetai – "Spiritually appraised"
- (2) **Paul and Luke – only ones to use this Gr. word**
 - o **Lk 23:14, Acts 4:9, 12:19, 17:11, 24:8, 28:18, I Cor 9:3, 10:25,27**
 - o Sifting process to get at the truth via investigation, coming to a judgment
 - o This word is used of a preliminary examination (**Grand Jury Trial**)
 - o **The Bereans: Acts 17:11** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining [ἀνακρίνοντες] the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

3. **The "Spiritual" Man**

a. **v15** has occasioned all sorts of interpretations... many going away from Paul's intent!

- (1) **This can bring about anarchy or tyranny...**
- (2) Some claim "exclusive right" to this appraisal due to their status as "spiritual" – leads to an elitism and special knowledge which Paul has been adamant against...
 - o **Fee**, "This paragraph has endured a most unfortunate history of application in the church. Paul's own point has been almost totally lost in favor of an interpretation nearly 180° the opposite of his intent." – leading to **spiritual elitism**
 - o **Luther** – In his works 1517-1519 he saw these verses as special endowments from God to pastors to aid them in their task... but later in 1525 he ends up refuting many "enthusiasts" about their "spiritual understanding"... he explains that "internal clarity" given by the Spirit must be tested by "external" criteria of the Scripture and the Church... "Holy Scriptures are a spiritual light brighter than the sun itself" – trying to correct similar problem that Paul was dealing with!
- (3) Some claim all Christians have the right to appraisal, and that each one's interpretation is equally valid – reader response hermeneutic – leads to multiplicity of understandings/meanings without any means of determining what was actually meant!
 - o **Especially combined w/ I John 2:27** "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

III) D.A. Carson in Exegetical Fallacies, "Occasionally a remarkable blind spot prevents people from seeing this point (that two incompatible interpretations of a text cannot both be right). I rode in a car with a fellow believer who relayed to me what the Lord had "told" him that morning in his quiet time. He had been reading the KJV of Matthew,; and I perceived that not only had he misunderstood the archaic English, but also that the KJV at that place had unwittingly misrepresented the Gr. text. I gently suggested there might be another way to understand the passage and summarized what I thought the passage was saying. The brother dismissed my view as impossible on the grounds that the Holy Spirit, who does not lie, had told him the truth on this matter. Being young and bold, I pressed on with my explanation of grammar, context, and translation, but was brushed off by a reference to **I Cor 2:10b-15**: spiritual things must be spiritually discerned—which left little doubt about my status. Genuinely intrigued, I asked this brother what he would say if I put forward my interpretation, not on the basis of grammar and text, but on the basis that the Lord himself had given me the interpretation I was advancing. He was silent a long time, and then concluded, "I guess that would mean the Spirit says the Bible means different things to different people."

b. Let's first consider it as Paul's statement of truth

- (1) But He who is Spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one

- (2) **v15** would be seen as a contrast to **v14**
 - (3) The spiritual appraise all things (a gifting by the power of the Spirit) – has the moral standard and enabled conscience to rightly appraise things.
 - (4) Appraised by no one would mean not judged by the world’s standards
 - (5) “The one who sees can appraise himself and the blind, but the blind cannot”
 - (6) **Rom 8:33** “who will bring a charge against God’s elect”
 - (7) **But**, I think Paul’s purpose here is not to make statements about accusations relating to salvation (as is his purpose in **Rom 8**) but the validity of truth claims!
 - (8) **And truth claims must stand up to the test of scrutiny...** Especially seen in the “pastoral epistles” where statements of truth must be tested by “sound doctrine”
 - (9) **Even Paul subjects himself to this test in Gal 1:6-10 ← read this**
 - o Also, you see where some of the problem interpretations derive their meaning when seeing this verse as Paul’s statement of truth... IF you read this verse, this way, you must be careful in application.
 - o **Fee**, “Here is another sentence that, taken out of its context, has suffered much in the church. There are always some who consider themselves full of the Spirit in such a way as to be beyond discipline or the counsel of others. Such a reading of the text is an unfortunate travesty, since these people are usually among those most needing such discipline.”
- c. **Thiselton (NIGTC)** sees this phrase as a quotation, *much to applaud this understanding*
- (1) “*But He who is Spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one*”
 - (2) **v15** would be seen as another pitfall standing alongside **v14**
 - (3) There are those who think their “spirituality” has set them at a place above critique or scrutiny... they “know all” and “cannot be brought under investigation”
 - (4) Paul would be quoting this with the intention of showing the incorrectness of these “spiritual people” – their own appraisal of themselves... not the truth!
 - (5) Someone who has “the mind of Christ” would speak from humility, not boastful pride
 - (6) Those who see themselves as invulnerable or immune to evaluation are not demonstrating the “mind of Christ”
 - (7) **Recognition that just as I am made capable (by the Spirit who indwells believers – Rom 8:9) to evaluate truth-claims, my truth-claims are also open to evaluation!**
- d. For who has known the mind of the Lord that he will instruct him?
- (1) **Is 40:13** – a statement describing God’s greatness... his surpassing wisdom
 - (2) **Ro 11:34** – a statement aimed at humbling man in light of God’s greatness
 - (3) **Here** – a statement utilized to show what having “the mind of Christ” will lead men to... HUMILITY – not boastful arrogance!
 - (4) **Neither the “soulish” nor the “self-appraised spiritual” can sit in judgment of God’s way – The message of the cross also impacts not only their knowledge but also their attitude!**
4. But we have the mind of Christ!
- a. Paul once again asserts his authority... the proper attitude towards revelation...
 - b. With knowledge comes great humility and an attitude like Christ’s
 - c. **Phil 2:5-11** – the attitude of Christ – humility, submission
 - d. **James 3:13-18** – wisdom from above – humility, good works, mercy, peace
 - e. **Unlike revelation and inspiration (given only to the biblical writers), illumination is for all Christians... but we must be careful on how we define it!**
 - (1) It does not mean we know and understand everything (**Deut 29:29**)
 - (2) It does not mean we don’t need human teachers (**Eph 4:11-12**)
 - (3) It does not mean that study is unnecessary (**II Tim 2:15**)
 - (4) It does mean that only Christians are able to rightly understand Scripture!
 - (5) **The spirit does not give them special status among believers, but special status when compared to the world! God’s people are identified by their values and worldview being radically different from the world! We are marked by the cross forever!**

----- End of Excursus -----

B. Theologians on Inspiration

1. **Ryrie**, “God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings.”
2. **Enns**, “Inspiration may be defined as the Holy Spirit’s superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God’s Word written—authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs.”
3. **Warfield**, “Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness.”
 - a. The doctrine of the genuine church through the centuries has believed that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that whatever it says God says and therefore is not a book, in which one may, by searching, find some word of God, but a book which may be frankly appealed to at any point with the assurance that whatever it may be found to say, that is the Word of God.
 - b. Luther declared that the whole of the Scriptures are to be ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and therefore cannot err. Calvin demands that whatever is propounded in Scripture without exception shall be humbly received by us – that the Scriptures as a whole shall be received by us with the same reverence which we give to God, “because they have emanated from Him alone, and are missed with nothing human.”
 - c. The Church has brought these truths out plainly in its creeds. As a matter of fact, all of the creedal/confessional statements made by the *protestant* church have been based on the assumption of the divine authority of the Scriptures (grounded in inspiration)
4. **Chafer**, “The theological use of the term inspiration is a reference to that controlling influence which God exerted over the human authors by whom the Old and New Testament were written.”
5. **Manly**, “The whole bible is truly God’s Word written by men.”
 - a. The Bible is truly the Word of God, having both infallible truth and divine authority in all that it affirms or enjoins.
 - b. The Bible is truly the production of men. It is marked by all the evidences of human authorship as clearly and certainly as any other book that was ever written by men.
 - c. This twofold authorship extends to every part of Scripture, and to the language as well as to the general ideas expressed.

C. Key Elements to Inspiration:

1. Must affirm Divine Authorship
2. Must affirm an active Human Element in the writing process
3. Inspiration refers to the act of God in the composition of the autographs
 - a. Some take exception to this point, explaining that since we have no autographs in possession that this discussion has no practical bearing whatsoever...
 - b. Berhof, “We would certainly expect that the Holy Spirit, who so carefully guided the writers of Scripture in the interest of future generations, would also guard and watch over His revelation, in order that it might really serve its purpose. Hence Reformed theologians have always maintained that God’s special providence watched over Scripture.
 - c. For those who ask about the variations in manuscripts: Kenyon explains, “The number of manuscripts of the oldest writings of the Church is so large, that it is

practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of those ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world.” (more on this later when we talk about textual criticism)

4. Inspiration is a form of, and leads to, verbal revelation
5. All of written Scripture is the Word of God (not just some parts)
6. Must affirm the truthfulness of the product (**Jn 17:17**)
7. Concursus (Superintendence) – Human and divine elements are not at odds; they are in agreement. Specifically, God concurs with the humans’ choice of words, topics, etc. God always guided the writers so that they wrote exactly what He wanted.

II. The Bible on Inspiration

- **Chafer**, “The question is not what men—even great scholars—think is a workable theory as to the manner in which the Bible was written; it is what the Bible declares concerning itself.”

A. *Jesus’ View of Scripture*

1. Jesus was obedient to Scripture
 - a. **Matthew 4:1-11** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.
 - b. **Matthew 5:17-18** "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 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.
2. Jesus saw Himself as the fulfillment of Scripture
 - a. **Luke 4:17-21** And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹ TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." ²⁰ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

- b. **Luke 24:27** Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures... **v44** Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
 - c. **John 5:39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;
3. Jesus appealed to Scripture in argument (even to particular words)
- a. Again see Mt 4:1-11 – victory during Satan’s temptations...
 - b. **Matthew 12:1-8** At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads *of grain* and eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw *this*, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath." ³ But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, ⁴ how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? ⁵ "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? ⁶ "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."
 - c. **Matthew 22:29-45** But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ³² 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB' ? He is not the God of the dead but of the living." ³³ When the crowds heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching. ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. ³⁵ One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' ⁴⁰ "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." ⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "*The son of David.*" ⁴³ He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, ⁴⁴ 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET "'? ⁴⁵ "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" ⁴⁶ No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question
4. He encouraged others to know and obey the Scriptures
- a. **John 5:39-47** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. ⁴¹ "I do not receive glory from men; ⁴² but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³ "I have come in My Father's name, and

you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.⁴⁴ "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only* God?⁴⁵ "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.⁴⁷ "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

- b. **Luke 18:18-23** A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone."²⁰ "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'"²¹ And he said, "All these things I have kept from *my* youth."²² When Jesus heard *this*, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."²³ But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich.
 - c. **Matthew 23:1-4** Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,² saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;³ therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things* and do not do *them*."⁴ "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger.
v23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.
5. He treated Scripture as true
 - a. **John 10:35** "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)" – *Scripture is the Word of God, it cannot be annulled*
 - b. **John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

B. Paul's View of Scripture

1. **2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
 - a. *πᾶσα γραφή* – "all Scripture" – the greek word *graphe* is singular here (normally plural when it refers to the Scriptures) but here it is a reference to the "totality of God's Word – the Entire Scripture)...
 - Paul wrote 2 Timothy at the close of his life (somewhere between 64-68 AD).
 - Some have argued that this is a reference only to the OT, but he may have also meant some NT documents since these were (basically) immediately recognized as Scripture by the people of God (more on this when we speak of canonization).
 - **Case in point** – **2 Peter 3:15-16** "and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures [τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς], to their own destruction."
 - **Another** – **1 Timothy 5:18** "For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," (**Deut 25:4**) and "The laborer

is worthy of his wages." (**Luke 10:7**). – *OT and NT verses quoted together! There was probably only 5-6yr that separated the writings of Luke and 1 Timothy!*

- b. θεόπνευστος – qeo"+pneusto" "God-breathed/God-spirited" – breathed out by God!
 - Our English word "inspire" carries the idea of "breathing into something"
 - Technically the Greek word carries the idea of "breathing out something"
 - Perhaps better said "All scripture is *expired* by God"
 - c. καὶ ὠφέλιμος – "and profitable"
 - Some claim the phrase should read "All inspired Scripture is also profitable" but this phrase goes against the Gr grammar. Instead of reading qeopneusto" it would have been written qeopneusth.
 - Also, it is more natural to read these two words as predicate adjectives joined by the conjunction "and" (*also* is a possible translation of καὶ but it's more often *and*)
 - So the correct reading is: All Scripture *is* God-breathed and profitable.
 - The profit of the Scriptures is seen as they teach, reprove, correct, and train! The Bible is not merely to be placed on the bookshelf – it is to be applied to our lives!
2. **1 Thess 2:13** "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."
 3. **1 Cor 2:10-13** "For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*." – *already explained above!*

C. Peter's View of Scripture

1. **2 Peter 1:19-21** "So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰ 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 [present passive participle of φέρω] by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
2. Peter clearly supports both human and divine elements in the work of prophecy – The Holy Spirit's role is to *move* humans (as wind moves a sailboat) to *speak* God's words. The truthfulness of scripture is guaranteed by the fact of divine authorship!
3. Same verb in **Acts 27:15** "and when the ship was caught *in it* and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it* and let ourselves be driven along [imperfect passive of φέρω]."
4. **Warfield** explains, "The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were His things, not theirs."
5. Scripture contains the *interpretation* of doctrines from God's point of view as opposed to the interpretations of doctrines from men. By interpretation we mean *overall explanation of various subjects to which the Bible speaks such as God, Christ, humanity, etc.*
6. **Voddie Baucham**: Why I choose to believe the Bible: "It is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses that reports to us supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and its writings claim to be divine rather than human in origin."

III. Theories of Inspiration

A. *Natural or Intuition*

1. There are some that view “inspiration” as an artistic ability or natural endowment which God gifted individuals with and therefore were chosen to write the Bible. The writers of the Bible had an extraordinary perception, and were in no need of any supernatural help.
2. This view makes the Bible no different in its origin than any other inspirational religious or philosophical literature... It denies any supernatural element in the composition of Scripture, being spoken of as a purely human endeavor.
3. But the Bible makes claims regarding itself that far exceed this explanation – see, for example, II Pet 1:20-21.

B. *Illumination or Mystical & Neo-orthodox*

1. This theory explains that the human authors were enabled by God to write the Scriptures by an endowment by the Holy Spirit. Their normal powers were heightened.
2. Here, inspiration is explained as a human reflection written in response to an encounter with God... The experience which led to the writing was from God, but the work of inscription is merely human.
3. But the Bible explains that its *content* came from God’s communication to men, not merely men’s improved abilities and capacities to think and communicate. The Bible indicates that the human authors express the very words of God, not merely their own.
4. The Neo-Orthodox view (Karl Barth is here) argues that inspiration is an act upon both the author and reader of Scripture. The Bible *becomes* the Word of God as the reader encounters God in an existential encounter.
5. Barth argued that inspiration does not refer to the composition of Scripture or God’s relationship to the authors, but the Holy Spirit’s use of Scripture in a person’s life. He taught that the Bible is only as important as it leads us to contemplate Christ, so parts of the Bible that do this “more clearly” are more important than other parts which can be found to contain errors. All that matters is that we are led to contemplate Christ.
6. But how do we know who Christ is, if the scriptures which speak of Him can be in error? How do we know we are contemplating the true Christ if the revelation that tells us about Him is in error?
7. Also, here inspiration and illumination are being combined wrongly and confused... *see above discussion...* Mystical Inspirationists emphasize subjective, existential encounter of the individual, not the product of the Scriptures.
8. The Neo-orthodox person needs to be told that the Scriptures are true regardless of whether he/she responds to them (see **Jn 8:47, 12:48**).

C. *Dynamic Forms...*

- All of these theories argue that the Bible *contains* the Word of God but is not itself God’s Word and therefore may contain error. Many of these will explain that the Bible is completely true in the spiritual truth it communicates but not necessarily in its historical or scientific assertions.
1. *Conceptual Inspiration*
 - a. This view explains that God gave the human writers ideas & notions, which they attempted to put together into words and phrases. The basic idea behind scripture came from God, but the exact words are from humans.

- b. Many times this is held by those who are strongly against “dictation theory” – in order to avoid that theory, they believe God only inspired the “thoughts” while the human writers chose the “words” to express those thoughts...
- c. William Abraham holds a modern view that illustrates this theory (though he does reference the H.S. slightly) and demonstrates its consequences: “The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scripture like a good teacher motivates his students to do good work. The work, however, remains the sole product of its human authors. It is therefore not infallible, but due to the inspiring work of the omniscient and infallible Holy Spirit, the resulting product is reliable as the best that human beings could produce at that time.”
- d. In this view, it is believed that God provided the general ideas and trends of revelation but gave the human author freedom in the manner of expressing it. Therefore, inspiration only applies to the doctrines knowable to the human authors.
- e. But it is not possible to inspire general ideas infallibly and yet not inspire the words of Scripture. Ideas can be conceived of and transmitted only by means of words – it is impossible to dissociate the one from the other... **Erickson**, “The words-versus-thoughts issue is an artificial one. The two cannot really be separated. A particular thought or concept cannot be represented by every single word available in the given language... The more precise the thought becomes, the more limited is the number of words that will serve the purpose. At some point only one word will do, if the match of word to thought is to be precise... At times greater specificity might have been distracting. At other times specificity was important. By creating the thought and stimulating the understanding of the Scripture writer, the Spirit will lead him in effect to use one particular word rather than any other.”
- f. Also the manner of giving words or revelation to the prophets and the degree of conformity to the very words of Scripture by Jesus and the Apostles indicate inspiration of the biblical text, even the words.

2. *Partial Inspiration*

- a. This view, claims that only parts of the Bible are inspired (the whole Bible is not). So, some parts of the Bible are completely without error and can be trusted, while other parts, not being inspired, can be found to err. Usually parts that could be known without supernatural revelation are not considered to be inspired.
- b. The modern day expression of this theory is found in the view that the Bible is “inspired in its purpose” – in other words, we can trust the Bible when it tells us about salvation, but we may expect that errors have crept into the other parts. The “intent” of the Scriptures is inspired but not the “content.”
- c. Biblically this is not the testimony of the Scriptures themselves – the Scriptures claim “all Scriptures are inspired by God” – 2 Tim 3:16. And what makes you believe that one portion of scripture is trustworthy if other parts are found to not be?
- d. Practically this prompts a question: What parts are inspired, and which are not? Who is qualified to tell the difference and make an authoritative decision?
- e. Also, how can doctrine be separated from history? For example, the narratives about Jesus’ virgin birth contain both history and doctrine.

3. *Degree Inspiration*

- a. In this view, while the whole Bible is “inspired,” certain portions of the Bible are more inspired or differently inspired than others. This perspective allows for errors of various types in the Bible, corresponding to the degree of inspiration a passage has.
- b. Some from this “camp” hold to a belief in the Bible’s inspiration and infallibility, but reject inerrancy. This affirmation of infallibility and simultaneous rejection of inerrancy is a problematic, contradictory position (we’ll see this in a future section).
- c. No indication of degrees of inspiration is given in the Bible, and what’s more, the Bible claims to be without error and incorruptible (II Tim 3:16, Jn 10:35, I Pet 1:23).

D. Mechanical or Dictation

1. In this view, the biblical author is a passive instrument in the transmission of the revelation of God. This theory describes God Himself as having written every word in the Bible. The personality of the author is set aside to preserve the text from fallible human aspects.
2. But if God had dictated the Scripture, the style, vocabulary, and writing would be uniform. But the Bible indicates diverse personalities and manners of expression in its writers.
 - a. In many places the human authors refer to themselves in the 1st person.
 - Deut 1:1,5,19-20,20; Lk 1:3, Jn 21:24-25, Acts 1:1
 - Gal 2, Eph 3, 1 Pet 5:1, 2 Pet 1:16-18, Rev 1:9
 - b. Some biblical authors indicate that they conducted research in the writing of Scripture.
 - I Chron 29:29, 2 Chron 9:29, 13:22, 20:34, 32:32
 - Lk 1:3
 - c. Many books of the Bible claim human authorship.
 - Lk 1:1-4, Acts 1:1, Col 4:18, 2 Thess 3:17, Philemon 1:9
 - d. The difference in the Biblical books is evident to even the elementary Greek student...
e.g. John vs Paul vs Peter

E. Verbal, Plenary

1. **Chafer**, “By verbal inspiration is meant that, in the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers’ characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error. By plenary inspiration is meant that the accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority.”
2. In this view, both divine and human elements are considered present in the production of Scripture. The entire text of Scripture (including the very words) are a product of the mind of God expressed in human terms and conditions.
3. This theory explains that the human authors used their own words which reflect their distinctive concerns, emphases, personalities, and vocabularies, but the H.S. guided the whole process by picking the particular persons who would use the right words and also by leading them to do so in such a way as to guard against error.
4. With this theory we allow room for a variety of material that God moved human authors to include in the Bible: (1) Material Direct from God (dictated) like the 10 commandments (2) Researched Material (Luke 1:1-4) (3) Prophetic material (4) Historical material (5) Other material such as truthfully recording the lies of Satan (Gen 3:4-5) or quotations from the writings of unsaved people (Titus 1:12, Acts 17:28)...

5. The fact that Jesus and the apostles even commented on specific words in the Scriptures further upholds their belief in “verbal plenary” inspiration (every word)... (Jn 10:35 – plural number in Ps 82:6, Matt 22:32 – tense of verb in Ex 3:6, Matt 22:44 – possessive suffix Ps 110:1, Gal 3:16 – singular form in Gen 12:7)
6. This description reminds us of “divine concurrence” – God’s providential working through human actions.
 - **Grudem**, “In cases where the ordinary human personality and writing style of the author were prominently involved, as seems the case with the major part of Scripture, all that we are able to say is that God’s providential oversight and direction of the life of each author was such that their personalities, their backgrounds and training, their abilities to evaluate events in the world around them, their access to historical data, their judgment with regard to the accuracy of information, and their individual circumstances when they wrote, were all exactly what God wanted them to be, so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were fully their own words but also fully the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as his own.”

CONCLUSION:

Charles Ryrie explains that different understandings of “inspiration” has led to increased precision in stating this biblical doctrine:

Formerly all that was necessary to affirm one’s belief in full inspiration was the statement, “I believe in the inspiration of the Bible.” But when some did not extend inspiration to the words of the text it became necessary to say, “I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.” To counter the teaching that not all parts of the Bible were inspired one had to say, “I believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the bible.” Then because some did not want to ascribe total accuracy to the Bible, it was necessary to say, “I believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, inerrant inspiration of the Bible.” But then “infallible” and “inerrant” began to be limited to matters of faith only rather than also embracing all that the Bible records (including historical facts, genealogies, accounts of Creation, etc.), so it became necessary to add the concept of “unlimited inerrancy.” Each addition to the basic statement arose because of an erroneous teaching.

This is what we have endeavored to do: provide a comprehensive definition of the Biblical doctrine of inspiration. Basil Manly Jr explained that an “uninspired Bible, whatever its excellencies might be, would have three serious defects. (1) It would furnish no infallible standard of truth (2) it would present no authoritative rule for obedience, and no ground for confident and everlasting hope (3) it would offer no suitable means for testing and cultivating the docile spirit, for drawing man’s soul trustfully and lovingly upward to its heavenly Father.”

Our definition is just description of the self-testimony of the Scriptures. **Calvin**, “It is necessary to attend to what I lately said, that our faith in doctrine is not established until we have a perfect conviction that God is its author. Hence, the highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of Him whose word it is.” **Erikson** exclaims, “We have a sure guide. And we are motivated to study it intensively, since its message is truly God’s word to us.” In coming weeks, we’ll look at the implications of inspiration as we further study our doctrine of Scripture – inerrancy, authority, sufficiency, etc...