

# Bibliology

Jonathan Anderson | Fall 2025



Institutes of  
Theology

# Two Forms of Revelation

## 1) General revelation

- Cf. Ps. 19:1-6
- General in two senses...
  - The scope of its message is universal.
  - The content of its message is general.

## 2) Special revelation

- Cf. Ps. 19:7-11
- *Special* in two senses...
  - The scope of its message is limited.
  - The content of its message is specific.
- Primarily God's self-revelation in Scripture.



# Topics Related to the Scripture

- Attributes of Scripture
  - Inspiration
  - Authority
  - Clarity
  - Sufficiency
  - Necessity
  - Relevancy
  - Inerrancy
- Canon of Scripture
- Preservation of Scripture
- Translation of Scripture





# The Breath of God

Bibliology: Inspiration





# I. The Biblical Definition of Inspiration



# A. The Key Passages

- *2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*
- Latin – *Inspiro* – “to breath in” (Latin Vulgate)
- Greek - *Theopneustos* – “God-breathed” (LSB)



## B. B. Warfield

The Greek term has ... nothing to say of *inspiring* or of *inspiration*: it speaks only of a 'spiring' or 'spiration.' What it says of Scripture is, not that it is 'breathed into by God' or is the product of the divine 'inbreathing' into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, 'God-breathed,' the product of the creative breath of God.

## Joel Beeke, *Reformed Systematic Theology*

The adjective *theopneustos* describes not the Bible's action upon us ("the Bible is inspiring"), but God's action in making the Bible ("the Bible is inspired").



# A. The Key Passages

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





## B. A Succinct Summary

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*

“...the common doctrine of the Church is, and ever has been, that inspiration was an influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of certain select men, which rendered them the organs of God for the infallible communication of his mind and will. They were in such a sense the organs of God, that what they said God said.”



# B. A Succinct Summary

B. B. Warfield

[Inspiration is] that particular operation of God in the production of Scripture which takes effect at the very point of the writing of Scripture... with the effect of giving to the resultant Scripture a specifically supernatural character, and constituting it a Divine, as well as human, book.



## B. A Succinct Summary

*Paul Enns, Moody Handbook of Theology*

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.





## B. A Succinct Summary

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*

God through his Spirit inspired every word penned by the human authors in each of the sixty-six books of the Bible in the original documents (i.e., the autographs). Inspiration describes the process of divine causation behind the authorship of Scripture. It refers to the direct act of God on the human author that resulted in the creation of perfectly written revelation. It conveys the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit whereby he used the individual personality, language, style, and historical context of each writer to produce divinely authoritative writings.



# C. The Key Ideas

## 1. The Bible's Authorship

- Divine authorship
- Human authorship

William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*

The “human element” in Scripture means that an inspired man in perceiving and conveying truth employs his own human mind, his own native language, the common figures of speech, and exhibits his own individual peculiarities, but without misconception and error upon the subject of which he treats because his human mind is actuated and guided by the divine mind.



# C. The Key Ideas

## 1. The Bible's Authorship

- Divine authorship
- Human authorship

## 2. The Comprehensive Scope

- Inspiration is plenary





# The Plenary Inspiration of Scripture

- The whole is inspired
- 2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture is inspired by God...*
- Including the New Testament (1 Tim 5:18, 2 Pet 3:15-16)

William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*

...the first position to be taken respecting the Bible is that all of it is inspired. The original autograph volume of inspiration was free from error. This does not mean that every sentence or proposition in Scripture contains a truth. The words of Satan to Eve (Gen. 3:4) were a falsehood. But those words were actually spoken, and they are recorded with infallible accuracy. Some of the reasonings and inferences of Job's friends were false, but they occurred as they are related by the inspired penman.



# C. The Key Ideas

## 1. The Bible's Authorship

- Divine authorship
- Human authorship

## 2. The Comprehensive Scope

- Inspiration is plenary
- Inspiration is verbal



# The Verbal Inspiration of Scripture

- The parts are inspired
- The very words of Scripture are inspired by God
- Jesus and the apostle make biblical arguments based on the words used in Scripture
  - Specific words or wording used (e.g. Matt 22:42-45)
  - Singular vs. plural (e.g. John 10:35, Gal 3:16)





# C. The Key Ideas

## 1. The Bible's Authorship

- Divine authorship
- Human authorship

## 2. The Comprehensive Scope

- Inspiration is plenary
- Inspiration is verbal

## 3. The Original Autographs



## Francis Turretin

[We cannot] readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their entire preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words (especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament [will] or contract) in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament [will] and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted; especially when he could easily foresee and prevent such corruptions in order to establish the faith of his church?



## Francis Turretin

Although we give to the Scriptures absolute integrity, we do not therefore think that the copyists and printers were inspired, but only that the providence of God watched over the copying of the sacred books, so that although many errors might have crept in, it has not so happened (or they have not so crept into the manuscripts) but that they can be easily corrected by a collation of others (or with the Scriptures themselves).





## Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.



# D. The Common Objections

1. Denial of supernatural or anything miraculous
2. Supposed historic, geographic or chronological discrepancies
3. Supposed scientific errors
4. Supposed theological contradictions



# II. The Divine Process of Inspiration



# A. The General Principle

- 1 Peter 1:21 "...men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
- "Moved by" (*Pheromenoi*) - carry from one place to another; cause an entity to move from one position to another (BDAG)

B. B. Warfield,

[This] does not refer to mere guidance, but the prophet being taken up and carried from one place to another.





## MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*

In the writing of Scripture, it was the prophet communicating God's Word through his pen. It was also the Spirit moving continually to convey God's Word through the prophet. In the end result, that which was written was fully the words of the human authors in their language and style and from their personal perspectives, but it was under the direct superintendence of God by his Spirit producing on the page the very words of God. The ultimate product is the divine, inspired, inerrant, and authoritative words of God on every page of all sixty-six books of the Bible.



## B. Some Specific Modes

1. Direct Dictation (e.g. Ex 20; Jer 26:2; Rev 2:1, 8, 12)
2. Miraculous Revelation (e.g. OT prophets; Rev 4:1)
3. Historical Research (e.g. Luke 1:1-4)
4. Spirit-aided Memory (e.g. John 14:26)
5. Godly Wisdom (e.g. Proverbs)
6. Life Experience (e.g. Psalms, Ecclesiastes)



# III. The Wrong Views of Inspiration



# A. The Dictation Theory

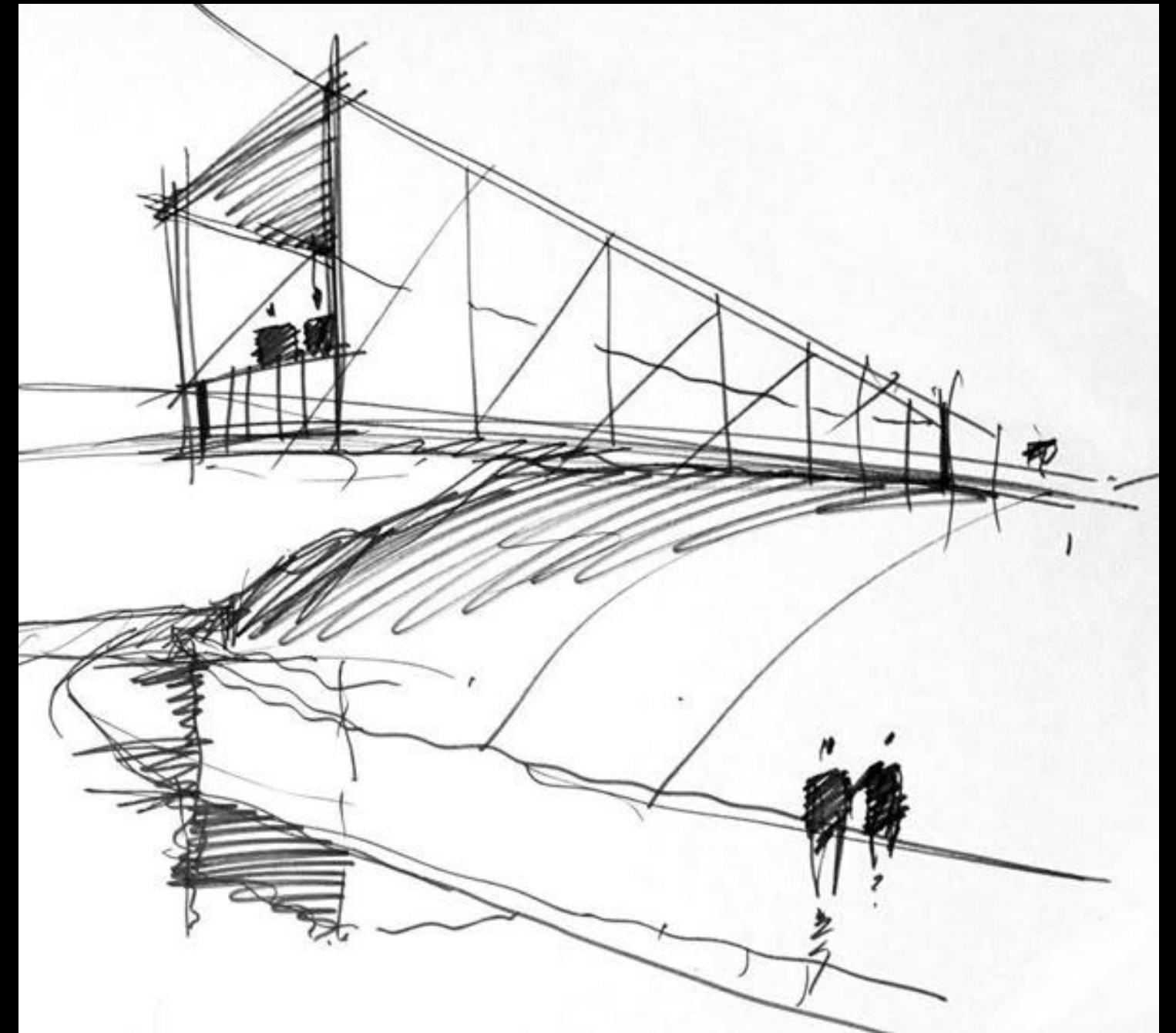
- God “dictated” all that was written
- The biblical authors were basically transcriptionists
- Ignores the variety of writing styles, vocabulary, etc.





## B. The Partial or Conceptual Theory

- Partial: Spiritual truth is inspired but not other geographic or scientific details
- Conceptual: God gave ideas or concepts only. Human authors filled in the details.





# C. The Natural Theory

- Authors were “moved” by the world, etc. but not by the Holy Spirit
- Inspired like a song writer



# D. The Neo Orthodox or Post-Modern Theory

- Reject propositional truth
- Emphasize one's "experience" with Scripture rather than the truth of Scripture



# D. The Neo Orthodox or Post-Modern Theory

Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*

The neoorthodox view emphasizes that the Bible is not to be exactly equated with the Word of God because God does not speak in mere propositions. God does not reveal mere *facts* about Himself; He reveals *Himself*. The Bible is not the *substance* of the Word of God, but rather the *witness* to the Word of God. It *becomes* the Word of God as the reader encounters Christ in his own subjective experience.





# IV. The Compelling Evidence for Inspiration



# A. The Biblical Evidence

## 1. The Definitive Claims of the Bible

a. The Clear Statements of Scripture

b. The NT Author's View of the OT (e.g. 2 Tim 3:15-17; 2 Peter 2:20-21)

c. Jesus Christ's View of the Scriptures

- Matt 5:17-18
- Matt 22:29-32
- OT History (Matt 19:4-5, 23:35, 24:37, etc.)
- NT – John 14:26, 16:12-15





# A. The Biblical Evidence

1. The Definitive Claims of the Bible
2. The Unique Nature of the Bible
  - a. Its Clear Unity
  - b. Its Fulfilled Prophecy



# B. The Historical Evidence

1. The Martyrdom of the Prophets and Apostles
2. The Testimony of the Church



## Clement of Rome – Speaking of Paul's letters to Corinth

“You have searched the Scriptures, which are true, which were given by the Holy Spirit.”

“Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle. What did he first write to you in the ‘beginning of the gospel?’ Truly he wrote to you in the Spirit.”



## Gregory of Nyssa

“The Scripture, ‘inspired by God,’ as the apostle [Paul] calls it, is the Scripture of the Holy Spirit, and its intention is the profit of men.... Thus it is by the power of the Spirit that the holy men who are under divine influence are inspired, and every Scripture is for this reason said to be ‘inspired by God,’ because it is the teaching of the divine breath.”



## Augustine

Accordingly, He who sent the prophets before His own descent also despatched the apostles after His ascension... Therefore, when those disciples have written matters which He declared and spake to them, it ought not by any means to be said that He has written nothing Himself; since the truth is, that His members have accomplished only what they became acquainted with by the repeated statements of the Head. For all that He was minded to give for our perusal on the subject of His own doings and sayings, He commanded to be written by those disciples, whom He thus used as if they were His own hands.





## Heinrich Bullinger

“The doctrine and writings of the prophets ... took not their beginning of the prophets themselves, as chief authors; but were inspired from God out of heaven by the Holy Spirit of God: for it is God, which, dwelling by his Spirit in the minds of the prophets, speaketh to us by their mouths.”



## John Calvin – Commentary on 2 Timothy 3:16

“Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have received from their hand, but, speaking at the suggestion of God, they boldly and fearlessly testified, what was actually true, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spoke.... We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it.”



## Westminster Confession

[Lists the 66 Books of the Bible]...All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.



# B. The Historical Evidence

1. The Martyrdom of the Apostles
2. The Testimony of the Church
3. The Preservation of the Scripture



# C. The Spiritual Evidence

## 1. The Authentication of the Spirit





## John 10:24-28

The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." <sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. <sup>26</sup> But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."



## 1 Corinthians 2:10-14

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.



## Westminster Confession

"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts."



# C. The Spiritual Evidence

1. The Authentication of the Spirit
2. The Transformation of our Lives



## J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology*

“God authenticates Holy Scripture to us as his Word—not by some mystical experience or secret information privately whispered into some inner ear, not by human argument alone (strong as this may be), nor by the church’s testimony alone (impressive as this is when one looks back over two thousand years). God does it, rather, by means of the searching light and transforming power whereby Scripture evidences itself to be divine. The impact of this light and power is itself the Spirit’s witness “by and with the Word in our heart.”





## 1 Thessalonians 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.”



# V. The Clear Implications of Inspiration



# A. For Interpreting the Texts in Bible

1. The Bible is a Divine Book – God's Word
  - a. Receive it as Authoritative Revelation
  - b. Interpret Scripture with Scripture – One Author
2. The Bible is a Human Book
  - a. Use an Appropriate Bible Translation
  - b. Use the Normal Rules of Language
  - c. Understand the Importance of Context





# B. For Recognizing the Attributes of the Scripture

Because the Bible is God's Word, we recognize its:

1. Authority
2. Clarity
3. Sufficiency
4. Necessity
5. Relevancy
6. Inerrancy



# C. For Prioritizing the Bible in our Lives

- Are you committed to reading the Bible?
- Are you committed to studying the Bible?
- Are you committed to believing the Bible?
- Are you committed to obeying the Bible?





## 1 Thessalonians 2:13

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