

## "Inspired"

When the Bible speaks of being inspired, it means that it comes from God. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore the inspiration of the Holy Bible.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We search the Bible, because we know that the Bible provides the one, true and trustworthy source of God's wisdom and instructions. We go to the Word of God, because it's the only way to eternal life. Some modern-day prophets claim God spoke to them but offer no proof of inspiration. We can, however, trust the Bible. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Occasionally someone speaks of a book being inspirational, meaning the book had a positive impact on their thinking and lives. I love inspirational books like Tom Sawyer or Greg Tidwell's book, *The Effective Edge*. You know you pick them up, and they're so good you can't put them down. You read them with a smile and appreciation. But being inspirational isn't the same thing as being inspired of God. While one can learn a lot from an inspirational book, in the end it's still coming from a human being. When the Bible speaks of being inspired, it means that it came from God Himself; God breathed it out to us and for us.

One of my teachers and a translator of the New Testament, Hugo McCord said, that "The Bible was given by inspiration of God as the Holy Spirit worked within select men, revealing to them the thoughts of God and enabling them to use the appropriate words to communicate divine truth without error. God put the Holy Spirit into the writers of the Bible and, through Him, guided them in writing of the Bible. Thus 'inspiration' may be defined as that process by which God breathed His Spirit into men, enabling them to receive and communicate divine truth without error. The Bible is God speaking!" Brother McCord is right! And we must pay attention.

Now if you want to study more about the inspiration of the Bible, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Peter 1:16-21, and then we'll study the inspiration of Scripture.

Our reading today comes from 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 16 through 21. Here Peter is describing how he got the message that he preached.

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased" — and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

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. 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.

Yes, men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. That's how Peter describes it by inspiration himself. Lets pray together. Oh Father we're thankful that Your word has come to us through the writings of the apostles and the prophets. We're thankful Father that we can know Your will and come to understand more and more about You and Your love and Your plans for us. Father help us to love You and to serve You always. And may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

If we wish to understand the idea of inspiration, we must go to the Scriptures themselves. The Bible actually has a lot to say about inspiration. There are three passages in the New Testament that are especially valuable.

First, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 verses 10 to 13, "these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 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. 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. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." Paul argued that when he taught and what he taught, this came from God through the Holy Spirit, not through human wisdom. He didn't borrow these things from the worldly religions or from Jewish rabbis; the Holy Spirit was their source.

Second, Paul said in 2 Timothy 3 verses 16 to 17, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." When Paul says "all scripture," he's unquestionably referring to the Old Testament but not exclusively. You see, Paul had earlier given a definition of Scripture that included passages in the New Testament.

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5 verse 18, "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.'" Now here Paul quoted from both the Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 25 verse 4 and Luke 10 verse 7) and he called them both Scripture. Now while Paul spoke of the "sacred writings" or "Holy Scriptures" in 2 Timothy 3 and verse 15 referring to what Timothy learned as a child, Paul here is now speaking of "all" Scripture in chapter 3 verse 16. The use of the word "all" suggests Paul understood clearly that there was more to the inspired Scriptures than the Old Testament. Furthermore, Paul's said what he wrote came from God and had God's authority. He told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 37, that "the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord."

Third, Peter said in 2 Peter 1:20 to 21, "knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Prophecy did not come by an act of human will, but men of God spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them. The phrase "of one's own interpretation" doesn't refer to how men today interpret or understand Scripture, but rather how the prophets delivered it. While false prophets set forth their own ideas, the Holy Spirit moved the men of God to speak what God wanted to be said.

The Lord God spoke through men not only with their words but also their lives. One can hardly read the Psalms without also wanting to look closely into the life of David. One can hardly read the book of

Philippians about joy and not remember how Paul was imprisoned when he wrote it. One can hardly read of Hosea's struggles with an unfaithful wife and not see how God was revealing His heart and love to an unfaithful Israel. God moved and spoke through His servants.

The Old Testament repeatedly claims to be from God. God told Moses to write the commandments of the Lord in a book in Exodus 34 and verse 27. Now the Old Testament repeats hundreds of times such expressions as "The Lord says," or "thus says the Lord," and "the word of God came saying...." Jesus called the Law of Moses the "word of God" in Matthew 15 verse 6. Scholars estimate that there are over 2,600 such claims that Scripture is God's word.

David said in 2 Samuel 23 and verse 2, that "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." God said to Isaiah, "I have put My words in your mouth" (Isaiah 51 verse 16). The Lord told Jeremiah, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1 verse 7) and "Because you have spoken this word, Behold, I am making My words in your mouth fire and this people wood, and it will consume them" (Jeremiah 5 verse 14). God made His will known by testifying through the prophets according to 2 Chronicles 24 and verse 20. The clear testimony of the prophets and the writers of the New Testament as well, was that the teaching of the Old Testament came from God.

While the Old Testament sometimes designates a human speaker or author to a passage, the New Testament attributes those same words to God. For instance, Psalm 2 verses 1 and 2 is attributed to David, but Peter claimed that these verses came "by the Holy Spirit" in Acts 5 verses 25 to 26. What the psalmist said in Psalm 95 and verse 7, the Hebrew writer says came by the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 3 and verse 7. What the sons of Korah wrote in Psalm 45 and verse 6 and an unknown Psalmist said in Psalm 102 verses 25 and 27, the New Testament attributes to God in Hebrews 1 verses 8 to 12. You see God speaks through Scripture, so that one may easily recognize that whatever the Scriptures instruct us, the Lord is actually behind those instructions.

The New Testament views the entire Old Testament as 'the oracles of God' (Romans 3 and verse 2). Christ and his apostles quote Old Testament texts, not merely as what Moses, or David or Isaiah said but also as what God said through these men. The idea of God speaking and the idea of Scripture are interchangeable in the Bible. For instance, Paul refers to God's verbal promise to Abraham as words which the Scripture spoke to him in Galatians 3 and verse 8. Now this shows how completely Paul equated the statements of Scripture with the utterances of God.

The New Testament likewise claims inspiration for itself. Jesus claimed that His words were not His own but came from His Father in John 7 verses 16 and 17. He also explained in John 12:49 to 50, "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

Jesus promised the apostles that they would receive the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit would inspire their message and their defense before authorities in (Luke 12 verses 11 and 12); the Spirit will also teach them what to speak and remind them of Jesus' words (John 14 and verse 26); and the Spirit of truth will guide them into all the truth (John 16 and verse 13). Now according to Jesus the Holy Spirit's function was to reveal to the apostles the truth given to Him by the Father.

When Paul wrote to the various churches, he argued that what he wrote was indeed "the commandment of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14 and verse 37). And Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians, because they "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" (I Thessalonians 2 and verse 13). Now in Galatians 1 verses 11 to 12 Paul said, "For I

would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

We should look at Scripture the way Jesus did. Jesus relied solely upon the Hebrew Scriptures as the basis of authority for those under the Law. Christ never referred to the extra-Biblical literature of the day and candidly rejected the Jewish traditions that contradicted Scripture in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. For Jesus Scripture is enduring. When Jesus says, "It is written," He means that what has been written is still written and in force and binding. Jesus shows the enduring nature of Scripture with statements such as: "Have you not read...?" (Matthew 21; Mark 12) or "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matthew chapter 22). You see what God said through Moses and the prophets was still true hundreds of years later in the days of Jesus.

Jesus believed every part of Scripture is worthy of acceptance (Luke chapter 24 verses 44 to 45). And Matthew 23 verses 34 to 36 Jesus speaks of the first and last martyrs in the Bible ("from Abel to Zechariah"). Well, this is a reference from Genesis to Chronicles, the first and last books of the Hebrew Bible.

When Jesus interpreted Scripture, he commonly used the literal method (Matthew 12 and verse 40), considering events of the Old Testament to be real history. Jesus took Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the great fish as historical. Jesus used the punishment of Lot's wife as a means to warn his disciples not to turn back (Luke 17 verse 32). There is no evidence that He ever regarded the creation, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, or any other story of the Bible as a myth or a fable.

Jesus said in John 18 verse 37, "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Well, what does Jesus have to gain by dealing in myths or fables? Nothing! But He has a great deal to lose by present, by giving out inventions of men as if they were fact. You see Jesus frequently corrected erroneous religious teaching when he found it. He was indeed committed to the truth. So, what did He have to say about the authenticity of the Genesis account of creation, or of the flood, or of Jonah's big fish, or of Daniel's writing of the book of Daniel? Surely, he was aware of these matters.

You see Jesus underscored the truthfulness of Genesis, the Genesis account of creation when He referred to the "beginning" of creation as the time when a man and a woman were created and joined together by God in marriage. Jesus said, "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and (shall) hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mark 10 verses 6 to 9). By quoting from Genesis, Jesus acknowledged its authority and truthfulness. By using the words "What God has joined together..." He recognized God to be the author of these Genesis writings.

For Jesus, all Scripture is utterly true and trustworthy. He said in John 10 verse 35, that "Scripture cannot be broken." Jesus is here arguing that Scripture is both authoritative and reliable. If the Son of God, who's lived through all eternity and has witnessed all the events of the Old Testament regards the scriptures as true and utterly trustworthy, what need have we of further witnesses? We too can believe every word of every sentence of every verse of every chapter of every book is inspired of God and utterly trustworthy. And this is why we can look to it today as the unchanging and eternal standard of truth and morality. This is why we can without fear follow its instructions, knowing that they come from God. Since we believe in Jesus Christ, let's put our faith in His word!

Jesus exalted His own teaching to such a high level that He would be ashamed before God and the angels of anyone who was ashamed of His words (Luke 9 verse 26). And anyone who goes beyond the

teaching of Jesus, whether in the specific doctrine of His deity or in any other essential matter, does not have God. He who abides in His teaching has both the Father and the Son (2 John verse 9). The Word of God must never be taken lightly. Because it is divine revelation, it has lasting force in our lives just as it did with Jesus. Let's pray together. Oh Father we're grateful for Your word. Help us to always pay attention to it. And to apply it to our lives. This is our pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Whether the Bible arose from men alone or whether God inspired it is perhaps the most crucial question of our time. Some are asking whether the Bible is verbally inspired and whether it's inerrant. Some believe the Bible to be inspired of God but say it contains flaws and contradictions. They say the Bible is infallible in its essential message pertaining to our salvation but contains mistakes in its details. If the Bible is merely human, arising from myths and legends, it has no authority in our lives and should be granted no greater honor than other ancient literature. On the other hand, if the Bible is from the one true and living God as it claims, then it possesses unconditional, divine authority over us.

Since the Bible is from God and accurately transmitted to us, then we may surely trust every letter of every word, every word of every sentence, every sentence of every verse, every verse of every chapter, and every chapter of every book. We regard its promises to be true, its commands to us to be binding, its approved examples as a light to our path, and it's implications to be truth indeed, and its warnings and admonitions to be taken to heart. This is no ordinary book; there's none like it in all of history. It is God's Word.

Why do I believe the Bible? Because it accurately predicts the future in the most specific terms. The prophecies of the Messiah, the Lord's prediction of His own death and resurrection, and the Lord's prediction of the fall of Jerusalem provide unquestionable evidence that the words of Scripture come from God Himself. No other book in all of history has so many specific prophecies that have come to be true. Only God can see the future, and only God could give us this book. Oh, give me the Bible, because it is inspired of God!

We hope you've enjoyed today's study about inspiration. This month we're offering a free booklet, "Give Me the Bible." And if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses.

As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.