

"What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?"

Student Questions and Concise Answers

2 Tim 3:16 (KJV) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2 Pet 1:19–21 (KJV

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Inspired or Inspiration is a term used in the discussion of the nature of the canon of Scripture that concerns the influence of the Spirit of God upon the biblical writers to produce a divinely authoritative Scripture.

1. What is the theological definition of inspiration?

Contemporary evangelical theology emphasizes that inspiration extends comprehensively to Scripture. "Plenary" stresses that all of Scripture is God's breathed-out Word, while "verbal" emphasizes that inspiration extends even to the very words and sentences.

2. How does inspiration relate to biblical inerrancy?

The relationship between inspiration and inerrancy is fundamental to how theologians understand Scripture's nature, though scholars disagree about the precise connection.

3. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 say about inspiration?

2 Timothy 3:16 declares that ***"all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."***

The Bible in its entirety claims to be the inspired, infallible, inerrant, complete, sufficient, and final Word of God.

4. How did God inspire the biblical authors?

Rather than treating authors as passive conduits, God produced the authorized text while employing the genuine contributions of human authors, who brought their backgrounds, educations, vocabularies, and styles to the writing task. God superintended the writers without dictating most of the biblical text, carefully controlling what was written through this oversight rather than word-for-word direction.

5. "What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?"

When people speak of the Bible as inspired, they are referring to the fact that God divinely influenced the human authors of the Scriptures in such a way that what they wrote was the very Word of God. In the context of the Scriptures, the word "inspiration" simply means "God-breathed."

6. "What is verbal plenary inspiration?"

The Bible is God's Word to humanity. It was written by human authors, but God prompted and guided them to write what they did. Every word, word form, and word placement in the Bible's original manuscripts was divinely and intentionally written.

The term verbal plenary inspiration should not be taken to mean that the words in the Bible themselves are "holy."

7. "What are the different theories of biblical inspiration?"

There are four views of inspiration:

1. The neo-orthodox view of inspiration emphasizes the transcendence of God.
2. The dictation view of inspiration sees God as the author of Scripture and the individual human agents as secretaries or writers taking dictation.
3. The view of limited inspiration sees Scripture as primarily man's work with limited help from God.
4. The view of plenary verbal inspiration is the view that every single word in the Bible is the very word of God. Therefore, the proper view of biblical inspiration is the orthodox view of the church⁷, which says that the Bible is the plenary, verbally inspired Word of God.

8. "What is the dictation theory?"

The dictation theory states that God "dictated" His Word to the writers of Scripture, who were nothing more than human stenographers for the Holy Spirit. The dictation theory says that the Spirit wrote through the agency of human writers who were fully under God's control. With the authors in a state of relative passivity, God dictated every word written with pinpoint accuracy.

Regardless of how God inspired the text of Scripture, the most important principle for all of us is that it is inspired.

9. "What is the biblical doctrine of illumination?"

Simply stated, illumination in the spiritual sense is "turning on the light" of understanding in some area. Throughout the ages, people in every culture and religion have claimed some kind of revelation or enlightenment from God (whether true or not). When that enlightenment deals with new knowledge or future things, we call it prophecy. When that enlightenment deals with understanding and applying knowledge already given, we call it illumination.

The illuminating and leading work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a confirmation that we are indeed children of God.

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