

REVELATION



INSPIRATION

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ANIMATION



COLLECTION



TRANSLATION



ILLUMINATION



INTERPRETATION



APPLICATION



COMMUNICATION

THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, May 10, 2009

The Meaning of Inspiration

God has given mankind a written revelation of Himself. And the means by which that written revelation is given is through "inspiration". "Revelation" is the thing that has been given by Him, and "inspiration" is the means by which He gave it.

I. THERE ARE THREE KEY PASSAGES THAT HELP US TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ITS OWN DIVINE INSPIRATION.

- A. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The word that is here translated "inspiration" actually means "God-breathed"--which stresses the divine origin of Scripture. This affirms the complete authority of revelation ("all"), and its profitability as that which has its source in God.
- B. 2 Peter 1:20-21. The statement that holy men were "moved" by God in what they spoke (or wrote) parallels the idea of a ship "carried" by the waves (Acts 27:15). God used the full, intelligent, willing involvement of human writers; but insured that what they wrote was what He wanted said. In this way, the Bible affirms its own infallibility and inerrancy.
- C. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13. God gave His revelation not merely through mere "ideas"; but also through the very word forms in which those ideas were to be framed. Thus, the Bible affirms that its own authority extends down to the level of its individual words.

II. THE BIBLE'S "INSPIRATION" MEANS THAT IT IS THE VERBAL, PLENARY, INFALLIBLE, FULLY INERRANT WRITTEN REVELATION FROM GOD.

- A. Each element of this affirmation is necessary in order to protect a precise view of the nature of the Bible's inspiration from many of the false or inadequate ideas of its inspiration that have been held throughout history:
 - 1. "Verbal" stresses that inspiration extends to the very words of the Bible --and not merely to its abstract ideas (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17).
 - 2. "Plenary" stresses that all parts of the Bible are equally inspired--and not just certain portions or in varying degrees (2 Timothy 3:16).
 - 3. "Infallible" stresses that the Bible presents divine truth in *all* the facts that it affirms--and not merely with respect to matters of salvation; and that it will not fail in all its divine purpose (Matthew 24:35).
 - 4. "Fully inerrant" stresses that all parts of the Bible faithfully and accurately represent God's intended message to man; and that it is free of human error (John 10:35). This doctrine recognizes that the Bible reports false statements in some places (Genesis 3:4-5), or records fallible human teaching in some portions (Titus 1:12); but also that it presents these things *as such*, and is inerrant in its presentation of them.
- B. Thus, the Bible's claim for its inspiration is that its human writers were guided by God so that they wrote what they intended to write in their own words; but without error, and that they accurately communicated what God wanted man to know. All Scripture is "God-breathed"; and is thus--like our Savior--a Word from God that is both fully "human" and fully "divine".