

# LESSON #1: INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY

## INTRODUCTION:

*Question: Why should we take time to study how the Bible got from God's mind to your lap?*

1. You need to be fully convinced that the Bible really is from the Almighty God.  
You need to be convinced for the sake of your own soul. On top of that, you also need to be convinced for the sake of the next generation. If you tell your kids, "We believe the Bible because it is what we do in this family," your children will walk away from the faith the moment they leave your house.
2. It will keep you from error in understanding the doctrine of the Bible.
3. It will keep you from ignorance.
4. You need to understand the differences between translations.
5. You need to have an appreciation for the fact that the blood of your brothers and sisters in Christ was spilled so that you can have a Bible in your lap.

***"We believe that the Holy Bible, as originally written, was verbally and plenary inspired and the product of Spirit controlled men, and therefore is truth..."***

***(Grace Baptist Church Statement of Faith)***

## **#1: INSPIRATION: The process that God used to get his words onto a piece of paper.**

*“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)*

Two Illustrations:

- Wind carrying along a sailboat
- A musician playing different instruments

*Question: Were the authors inspired?*

*“All Scripture is breathed out (inspired) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” (2 Timothy 3:16)*

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:17–18)*

The word “iota” most likely refers to the smallest Hebrew letter and “dot” most likely refers to a tiny hook that distinguishes some Hebrew letters from others. D.A. Carson says, “In any event Jesus here upholds the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures right down to the ‘least stroke of a pen’ ...”

“God aims to communicate with us through words. He cares, therefore, that the words not be ill-chosen to accomplish his purpose. So the Holy Spirit worked in and through the human authors so that the words were really their own way of writing, but expressed God’s meaning with the words he willed for them to use.” (John Piper)

“Verbal”-the words are inspired, not the author

“Plenary”-all of the Bible is equally inspired

## **#2: INERRANCY-Without error**

God defines himself as truth:

- I am the way, the truth, and the life... (John 14:6)
- Let God be true though every one were a liar... (Romans 3:4)
- ...in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2)
- ...in which it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18)
- And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)

If we believe that our Bible has errors, we are faced with two massive problems:

1. How do you determine where the errors are and are not? If you cannot trust part of the Bible, how can you trust any of it?
2. If all of the Bible is inspired by God but part of the Bible has errors, then God is a liar.

If the Bible is inspired then it must be inerrant.

## **#3: “We believe that the Bible, AS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN...”**

This could also be written: “We believe that the Bible, in the original manuscripts...”

The Bible never claims that the copies would be inerrant. In fact, we know that they do contain some mistakes because among these copies there are variations in spelling, word placement, and so on. At times words have been changed, added, or subtracted. On top of that, the Bible does not claim that translations into different languages would be without error.

If you claim that Bible translations are inspired and inerrant, then you run into many problems:

1. Which translation? (The American Bible Society estimates that there have been over 900 partial and complete English translations of the Bible since the 1500's.)
2. How is it that we choose which translation?
3. What do you do when language changes?

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| KJV 1611   | KJV 1769   |
| Speake     | Speak      |
| Haue       | Have       |
| Vnderstand | Understand |
| Prophesie  | Prophecy   |
| Remooue    | Remove     |
| Bestowe    | Bestow     |

4. How do you determine which translation is inspired and inerrant in other languages? (Or is English the only language that has inspired and inerrant translations? Note: If that is the case, then dozens of other questions need to be asked.)

Piper makes this argument: If we try to argue that modern versions and translations are inspired and inerrant, we are all of the sudden 'awash in a sea of subjectivism.' In other words—what basis do we have to measure a translation's faithfulness? There are clearly translations that have all kinds of error, but how do you say, 'this translation is inerrant and that one is not'?

**#4: TEXTUAL CRITICISM: The science of discerning what was written in the original manuscripts.**

#### Manuscripts of the New Testament:

- Between 100 AD and 1,500 AD all manuscripts were hand copied.
- We have over 5,800 (some partial, some complete) manuscripts of the NT (and the number keeps growing).
- We have nearly 1,000x the number of manuscripts than most ancient Greek books.

There is no other ancient Greek book with a manuscript that was written closer than 500 years after the original.

- Caesar's Gallic Wars was written about 50 BC.
  - We have about 10 manuscripts available.
  - The oldest manuscript was copied around the year 900 AD.
- The Gospel of John was probably written around the year 80.
  - The oldest fragment we have is from the year 130 AD!
  - We have 13 manuscripts from the first 250 years alone!

#### Review:

1. Based on the testimony of itself, we believe that the Bible is inspired (breathed out) by God.
2. If the Bible is inspired by God then it must be without error.
3. The original manuscripts are inspired and inerrant, not the copies or translations.
4. The New Testament is reliable. It has been preserved (which is exactly what God said he would do)!

Questions still to answer: How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God? Just because the Bible says it is the Word of God that doesn't mean it is the Word of God. (But that is still a few weeks down the road.)

#### Next Week:

1. Can we trust the Old Testament?
2. What books belong in the Bible?
3. What about the Apocrypha?