

Inspiration and the Holy Spirit

1. Inspiration is a theological term that refers to how the Bible was written. Examine 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 and share your thoughts on inspiration and Scripture.

All Scripture is inspired by God (**Greek adjective: theopneustos**) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Tim 3:16)

The Greek adjective “theopneustos” is found only once in the New Testament and is a compound word made up of the noun “theos” (God) and the verb “pneō” (breathe). Taken into account, the literal translation of the Greek is “All Scripture is God breathed.” Here God’s spoken word is equated with His written word.

It may be worthwhile noting that in his first epistle to Timothy, Paul used the term “Scripture” to mean both Old and New Testaments: “For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’” (1 Tim 5:18)

“You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing” is a quote of Deuteronomy 25:4 and “the laborer is worthy of his wages” is a quote of Luke 10:7.

Furthermore, the apostle Peter considered Paul’s epistles as Scripture (2 Pet 3:15-16). Thus, when the term “Scripture” is used in the New Testament, it is referring to both Old and New Testaments.

Because the Bible does not explain the process of inspiration, there is much theoretical discussion on how the Bible was conceived.

Some believe that the writers of the Bible completely surrendered their mind and will to the Holy Spirit Who penned the Bible through them.

Another hypothesis recognizes that God spoke through human beings but the fallibility of the human agent introduced errors into the Scriptures; thus, some believe that biblical hermeneutics requires discernment as to what part of the Bible is divine and what is not. However, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 explicitly indicate that **all** of Scripture is inspired by God.

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. (2 Pet 1:20-21)

2 Peter 1:20-21 forms the basis of what most theologians believe. “Moved by the Holy Spirit,” the writers of the Bible wrote divine revelation within the context of their background, burdens and personality. Although written by a fallible human being, the result was the inerrant record of God’s word.

2. What evidence is there of the Holy Spirit being responsible for the making of the Bible?

From Its earliest beginnings, God was actively involved with Its composition by choosing Moses to write the Pentateuch (Ex 17:14; 34:27-28; Josh 1:7-8). Specific to the Mosaic Covenant, it appears that God dictated the provisions of the covenant and wrote portions of it Himself, the Ten Commandments, on clay tablets (Ex 31:18; 32:16).

Through various prophets of His choosing, God spoke through or dictated portions of the Old Testament (Jer 1:1-10; 30:1-3; 36:1-2, 27-28).

Inspiration and the Holy Spirit (page 2)

Less apparent is the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring Scripture; however, there are three patterns that demonstrate the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the Bible.

I. The use of the "Spirit of God. In several instances, the Holy Spirit spoke through various prophets (Isa 59:21; Zech 7:12). In one case, the Holy Spirit came upon an Israelite warrior, Amasai, to express his devotion to David as God's chosen (1 Chron 12:18). In another, the Spirit of God came upon the pagan prophet Balaam who was used to bless the nation of Israel (Num 24:2, 4).

David, in mentioning that "the Spirit of the Lord' spoke through me", ascribes the divine origin of revelation that comes to him. In 2 Samuel 23:1-7, an unusual chiasm illustrates the equivalency of the Holy Spirit speaking to the word of God:

A) David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel,

B) "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said,

C) The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God, Is
as the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springs
out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.'

B') Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all
things, and secured; For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make it grow?

A') But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, Because they cannot be taken in hand; But
the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they will be completely burned
with fire in their place."

This chiasm, found in 2 Samuel 23:1-7, is structured in the following manner:

A) David speaks in the third person about himself.

B) David speaks in the first person.

C) The Lord speaks.

B') David speaks in the first person.

A') David speaks in the third person about evil men.

II. New Testament passages attribute certain Old Testament passages to the Holy Spirit.

Old Testament	New Testament
Psalms 2:1-2 is recognized as a psalm by David.	Acts 4:24-26 - The apostles ascribe Psalms 2:1-2 to the Holy Spirit.

Inspiration and the Holy Spirit (page 3)

Old Testament	New Testament
Psalms 41:9 is recognized as a psalm by David.	Acts 1:16 - Peter attributes Psalms 41:9 to the Holy Spirit.
Psalms 95:7-11 is attributed to the psalmist.	Hebrews 3:7-8 – The author of Hebrews ascribes the quotation of Psalms 95:7-11 to the Holy Spirit.
Psalms 110:1 is attributed to David.	Matthew 22: 43-44; Mark 12:35-36 – Jesus indicates that David spoke this psalm while under the Holy Spirit.
In Isaiah 6, Isaiah sees and speaks to God (Is 6:1, 5, 8-10).	Acts 28:25-27 - In speaking to the Jewish religious leaders, Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 and stated that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah.
Jeremiah 31:31-37 – In recording “thus said the Lord” Jeremiah documents the provisions of the New Covenant.	Hebrews 10:15-17 – The author of Hebrews attributes the contents of the covenant to the Holy Spirit.

III. The reference of the Holy Spirit’s teaching function.

At the Last Supper, Jesus comforts the disciples that His presence will remain with them through the Holy Spirit: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said** to you.” (John 14:26)

To the Corinthians, the apostle Paul establishes the basis of his authority to teach Scripture, because he was taught by the Holy Spirit: “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. 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, 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.” (1 Cor 2:11-13)

To the Ephesians, the apostle Paul attributes the Holy Spirit as the instrument of revelation of the mystery that Gentiles, through the proclamation of the gospel, can be receive into the fellowship of Christ with equal footing with Jewish Christians: “For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has **now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit**; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.” (Eph 3:1-7)

Inspiration and the Holy Spirit (page 4)

While prophets of old did not understand when their prophecies would unfold or the meaning of the Messiah's suffering, the apostle Peter states that the message of salvation came to humanity through men under the power of the Holy Spirit: "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which **now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**—things into which angels long to look." (1 Pet 1:11-12)

There is ample evidence of the Holy Spirit's role in the inspiration of the Bible, and in particular, the revelation of the New Testament.

References:

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