



Lecture # 10 Part 1

Specific Claims of Inspiration in the Old Testament

The discussion to this point has centered on a few major texts that claim inspiration for the Bible. Now attention must be given to the specific claims of each section and book of the Bible individually.

Is the specific claim *in* these books the same as the claim *for* them by other books? To answer that question fully, the next several sections will discuss the claim of inspiration *in* the Old Testament (section # 4), the claim *for* the Old Testament *in* the New Testament (section # 5), the claim *in* the New Testament (section # 6), the doctrine of inspiration *for* the New Testament *in* the church to the Reformation (section # 8), the doctrines of inspiration since the Reformation (section # 9), and divergent views of revelation and inspiration in the modern world (section #9). The present section is concerned with carefully examining what the Old Testament claims in and for its own inspiration.

THE CLAIM FOR INSPIRATION IN EACH BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

AN EXAMINATION OF THE CLAIM FOR INSPIRATION

A brief examination of each of the books of the Old Testament will help to confirm in detail the thesis that each of the individual sections claims to be divinely authoritative. It should be noted that every book of the Old Testament does not have an explicit claim to divine inspiration. **Nevertheless, it can be demonstrated that most of them do have such a distinct claim, and that the remainder have either an implicit claim or a character that serves as an implicit claim to inspiration.**

Genesis

In Genesis God spoke to the patriarchs (cf. [Genesis 12](#), [26](#), [46](#)), and they made records in a permanent “family album” of divine dealings under the title “**This is the book [records] of the generations of ...**” ([Genesis 5:1](#); [Genesis 6:9](#); [Genesis 10:1](#); [Genesis 11:10](#); [Genesis 25:12, 19](#); [Genesis 36:1](#); [Genesis 37:2](#)).

Exodus

In Exodus the record reads, “**God spoke all these words**” ([Exodus 20:1](#)). “**And the tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing**” ([Exodus 32:16](#)). Moses said to the people, “**These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do**” ([Exodus 35:1](#)).



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Leviticus

The introduction to Leviticus says, “The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying ...” ([Leviticus 1:1](#)). “The Lord said to Moses” is found repeatedly (cf. [Leviticus 4:1](#); [Leviticus 5:14](#); [Leviticus 6:1, 8](#)).

Numbers

This book repeatedly records, “The Lord spoke to Moses” ([Numbers 1:1](#); see [Numbers 2:1](#); [Numbers 4:1](#); [Numbers 5:1](#); [Numbers 6:1](#); [Numbers 8:1](#)), and it closes by saying, “These are the commandments and the ordinances which the Lord commanded to the sons of Israel” ([Numbers 36:13](#)).

Deuteronomy

In Deuteronomy, Moses’ speeches are regarded as God’s word, saying, “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it” ([Deuteronomy 4:2](#)); it even sets forth tests of truth for divine utterances: “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken” ([Deuteronomy 18:22](#)).

Joshua

In this book, Joshua relates how “after the death of Moses ... the Lord spoke to Joshua, ‘This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I was with Moses, I will be with you’ ” ([Joshua 1:1–3:7](#)). “And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God” ([Joshua 24:26](#)).

Judges

After the death of Joshua, the book of Judges reveals that “the Lord said” ([Judges 1:2](#)), and again, later, “God spoke to Gideon” ([Judges 6:25](#)). The angel of the Lord appeared with a message on several occasions ([Judges 2, 5, 6, 13](#)).

Ruth

This book was probably appended to the book of Judges in its original position (see discussion in chaps. 1, 12), and, as a result, needs no explicit reference to God speaking. However, this book does give a record of divine activity, as it records an important link in the messianic chain, namely, the ancestors of David the king, Boaz and Ruth ([Ruth 4:21](#); cf. [Matthew 1:5–6](#)).

1 and 2 Samuel

The books of [1](#) and [2 Samuel](#), which were originally one book, have many references to the voice of God. Through Samuel, the traditional author of the book, these books record, “And the Lord said to Samuel” ([1 Samuel 3:11](#)). “Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel” ([1 Samuel 4:1](#)). Then [1 Chronicles 29:29](#) adds, “The acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the



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chronicles of Nathan the prophet, and in the chronicles of Gad the seer.” This support indicates the books are prophetic, and hence authoritative.

1 and 2 Kings

These books have no explicit claim to inspiration. Tradition ascribes them to Jeremiah the prophet (Baba Bathra 5a), which would automatically assume them to be prophetic. The emphasis on the divine ministry of the prophets, and the prophetic viewpoint of the books of Kings, would confirm the traditional view that some prophet wrote these books. Hence, they too would be divinely authoritative.

1 and 2 Chronicles

These books lack an overt claim to inspiration, but they do present an authoritative history of Israel, Judah, and the Temple from the priestly point of view. The books *assume* authority rather than stating or claiming it. And because the books are descriptive rather than didactic, there is no need for an explicit reference to their message as being a **“thus says the Lord.”** There is, however, an implicit, yet clear, **“thus does the Lord,”** which is even more discernible than in Kings (cf. [2 Chronicles 35:20–21](#)).

Ezra-Nehemiah

Continuing the Temple-centered history of Judah, Ezra-Nehemiah declares definitely that God was responsible for the restoration of the deported nation. Although the book makes no explicit claim for its inspiration, there is again the clear assumption that it is a record of God’s *deeds*, and such a record is no less authoritative than a record of God’s words.

Esther

The book of Esther fits into the same category as Ezra-Nehemiah. Even though the name of God is absent from the book (except in acrostic form),¹ nonetheless, the presence of God is certainly evident as He protects and preserves His people. The book implicitly claims to be a *true record* of God’s providence over His people, which is what inspiration means (see chap. 2 discussion).

Job

In Job, not only does the author claim to give a view into the very council chamber of heaven ([Job 1–2](#)), but he records the actual words of God spoken out of the whirlwind ([Job 38:1ff.](#)). Between chapters 2 and 38, an accurate record of what Job and his friends said is presented.²

Psalms

A book addressed primarily *to* God, [Psalms](#) can hardly be expected to say, **“God said,”** or, **“Thus says the Lord.”** There is, however, within the very selection and structure of the psalms, a divine approval of the theology and truth which is reflected in the varied spiritual experiences of the psalmists. It is apparent that God moved particular men to record their select experiences, with His approbation, for future generations. The



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last five psalms sum up the divine exhortation **“Praise the Lord.”** This is a book in which *God declares how men should praise Him*. In fact, [2 Samuel 23:1–2](#) says that David, who wrote many of the psalms, was Spirit-directed in his utterances.

Proverbs

This book is introduced as **“The proverbs of Solomon”** ([Proverbs 1:1](#)). That Solomon claims these words of wisdom to be the Word of God is evident when he writes: **“Have not I written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, to make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may correctly answer to him who sent you?”** ([Proverbs 22:20–21](#)). It will be remembered that Solomon’s wisdom was God-given for that very purpose—to help his people (cf. [1 Kings 3:9 ff.](#)). [Proverbs 25](#) and following are **“proverbs of Solomon which ... Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed”** ([Proverbs 25:1](#)) but are nonetheless Solomon’s. [Proverbs 30](#) and [31](#) each claim in the first verse to be an **“oracle,”** or **“utterance”** (NKJV) from God (cf. [2 Chronicles 9:29](#)).

Ecclesiastes

This book has clear and authoritative exhortations (cf. [Ecclesiastes 11:19](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:1, 12](#)) which lead to this definite conclusion: **“When all has been heard ... fear God and keep His commandments because this applies to every person”** ([Ecclesiastes 2:3](#)). That is, the teaching of this book claims to be the word from God on the subject.

Song of Solomon

Although it has no explicit claim for its divine inspiration, this book was thought to be inspired by the Jews on the grounds that it gave a picture of the Lord’s love for Israel. Others have suggested that it is God’s word about the sanctity of marriage.³ Whatever the interpretation, the implication is that the book is a revelation from God about the intimacy and purity of love (whether human or divine).

The Prophets

The prophetic books may be summarily treated, because the record is replete with distinctive claims as to the divine origin of the individual messages. [Isaiah 1:1–2](#): **“The vision of Isaiah ... for the Lord speaks.”** Jeremiah (to which Lamentations was originally appended) [Jeremiah 1:1–2](#): **“The words of Jeremiah ... to whom the word of the Lord came.”** [Ezekiel 1:3](#): **“The word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel.”** Daniel received visions and dreams (e.g., [Daniel 7:1](#)) as well as angelic messages from God (e.g., [Daniel 9:21 ff.](#)). Hosea through Malachi were all one book (The Twelve) in the Hebrew Bible (see discussion in chap. 1), but each one has an explicit claim, as [Amos 1:3](#) and the opening verse in each of the following books indicate: [Hosea](#), [Joel](#), [Obadiah](#), [Jonah](#), [Micah](#), [Nahum](#), [Habakkuk](#), [Zephaniah](#), [Haggai](#), [Zechariah](#), [Malachi](#).



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Although many of these revelations were given originally in oral delivery, they were eventually preserved in written form. Numerous references to such written utterances from God are provided in Scripture (cf. [2 Chronicles 21:12](#); [Isaiah 30:8](#); [Jeremiah 25:13](#); [Jeremiah 29:1](#); [Jeremiah 30:2](#); [Jeremiah 36:2](#); [Jeremiah 51:60](#); [Ezekiel 43:11](#); [Daniel 7:1](#); [Habakkuk 2:2](#)).