



Lecture # 4 Part 1

THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

From the biblical description of the process of inspiration, the necessary constituents of a theological definition of inspiration may be derived. **There are three:**

- 3. *Scriptural authority*** is the final product of God’s causality and the prophetic agency. Hence, the Bible is a divinely authoritative book. God moved the prophets in such a way as to breathe out (**literally, “sperate” “voiceless”**) their writings. In other words, God spoke to the prophets and is speaking in their writings. Although some might argue that the prophetic model of inspiration is inadequate,¹⁰ in order to shift the basis of the believer’s authority from Scripture to some other locus, **Carl F. H. Henry** rightly observes that “the church is neither the locus of divine revelation, nor the source of divine inspiration, nor the seat of infallibility. Rather, the church has the task of transmitting, translating, and expounding the prophetic-apostolic Scriptures.”¹¹ **The cause of inspiration is God, the means is the men of God, and the end result is the word of God in the language of men.**

Therefore, this definition of inspiration is suggested: *Inspiration is that mysterious process by which the divine causality worked through the human prophets without destroying their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely authoritative and inerrant writings.*

INSPIRATION DISTINGUISHED FROM REVELATION AND INTERPRETATION

REVELATION CONCERNS THE ORIGIN AND GIVING OF TRUTH

(1 CORINTHIANS 2:10)¹²

1 Corinthians 2:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.**

Still another concept must be distinguished in the process of divine communication. It is interpretation (**hermeneutics**). The **Hebrew word** for revelation, ***galah***, “**to uncover**,” and the **Greek word *apocalyptein***, “**to unveil**,” are roughly identical in meaning. Along with their synonyms in the Old and New Testaments, these terms convey the idea of “**the removal of obstacles to perception**,” or “**the stripping away of that which keeps one from seeing an object as it is.**”

This notion was contained in the **Latin *revelare* (to reveal)**, from which the English word ***revelation*** is derived.¹³ In other words, revelation involves “**disclosure**” rather than “**discovery.**” As it relates to Scripture, all these terms refer to a ***divine disclosure.***



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Sometimes it may be a disclosure of a person (as in Christ, the Living Word of God, [Galatians 1:6](#)), while at other times it may be of *propositions* (as in Scripture, the written Word of God, ¹⁴ [John 10:35](#)).

[Galatians 1:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting **Him** who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

[John 10:35 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁵ If he called them gods, to whom **the word of God** came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

In the ultimate sense, God gives the revelation or disclosure of truth; man can have an interpretation or discovery of that truth. Some scholars, such as **John Macquarrie** and **Leon Morris**, have attempted to extend revelation to the experiences of believers in subsequent generations, calling it “**repetitive revelation**” as opposed to “**primordial**,” “**classical**,” or “**formative**” revelation in the Scriptures. ¹⁵ However, such a view not only confuses revelation and interpretation, but it also broadens the locus of revelation from the Scriptures alone to the ongoing experiences of the Christian community.

INSPIRATION RELATES TO THE RECEPTION AND RECORDING OF TRUTH ([2 PETER 1:20–21](#))

[2 Peter 1:20-21 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

God revealed truth to men who received and recorded it. Inspiration is the means God used to achieve His revelation in the Bible. Inspiration involves man in an active sense, whereas revelation is solely the activity of God. In inspiration, the prophet received from God what he in turn related to others. Inspiration as a total process includes both the prophet and the product of his pen.

INTERPRETATION FOCUSES ON THE APPREHENSION AND UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH ([1 CORINTHIANS 2:14–16](#))

[1 Corinthians 2:14-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.



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The Greek term *hermeneuein* (**to interpret**) is applied to the interpretation of Scripture in the **study of hermeneutics**.¹⁶ Whereas revelation is an objective disclosure of God, and inspiration includes the process and product God used in communicating, interpretation emphasizes the apprehension and understanding of God's revelation to man. In **revelation God unveils truth**; by **interpretation man understands that truth**. Even though the three concepts are interrelated in the total process of God's communication, they are quite distinguishable.

They form three necessary links in the chain "**from God to us**":

- (1) revelation is the fact of divine communication,
- (2) inspiration is the means of divine communication, and
- (3) interpretation is the process of understanding that divine communication.¹⁷