



Lecture # 4 Part 2

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

INSPIRATION DISCUSSED

WHAT IS INSPIRED, THE WRITER OR HIS WRITINGS?

Although the biblical concept of inspiration has been outlined in general, several important questions must be discussed about inspiration in particular. Is it the writers, their ideas, their writings, or a combination of these which is inspired? As was mentioned above, inspiration certainly includes the man and his ideas, but it must not exclude his writings.

James Orr believes that “**inspiration belongs primarily to the person and to the book only as it is the product of the inspired person.**”¹⁸ Other theologians would reverse that opinion, asserting, “Properly speaking, inspiration pertains to the holy Scriptures themselves. It may be said, however, that the writers too were inspired by God.”¹⁹ Regardless of which position is primary, it must be held that the person as well as his pen is under the direction of the Holy Spirit in the total process of inspiration.

Nevertheless, the New Testament reserves the word “**inspiration**” only for the product of that process, that is, the writings, or *graphē* (**2 Timothy 3:16**).²⁰

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ All (*graphē*) Scripture is **inspired** (*theopneustos*) by God and **profitable** (*ophelimos*) for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Failure to make that distinction leads some scholars, such as **Paul J. Achtemeier** and **William J. Abraham**, to the erroneous conclusion that the inspiration is the totality of the process of gathering traditions, proclamations, writing, and editing on an ongoing basis. Although God is actively involved throughout the total process of producing the Scriptures (**2 Peter 1:20–21**), the **inspiration** (*theopneustos*) and subsequent authority of those Scriptures is reserved for the written Scriptures themselves (**2 Timothy 3:16–17**), which are illuminated by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:14–16**).

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.



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2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

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.

As **I. Howard Marshall** aptly observes, “There is a gap between the process of inspiration and the text of the Bible which causes some disquiet, particularly when we remember that according to [2 Timothy](#) it is the Scriptures which are inspired rather than the process of composition.”²¹

That inspiration of necessity involves the very words of Scripture may be seen for **two reasons**:

(1) **Linguistically**, words are necessary for the adequate expression of thought.²² If God in any meaningful sense expressed Himself to the prophets, He had to use words. Words are the “**clothes of ideas**,” and a naked thought is a very nebulous entity at best. The desire for clarity in revelation would scarcely be consonant with the ambiguity of un-symbolized ideas. In fact, an idea without a symbol to express it is an unexpressed idea, and an unexpressed idea is scarcely a revelation or communication.

(2) **Biblically**, it is the repeated claim that “**words**” are God-given. Observe how many times Jesus and the apostles used the phrase “**it is written**” or similar expressions (see section # 5). The Bible literally abounds with the assertions that God gave the *very words* of the prophets (see section # 6). Moses was told, “**I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say**” ([Exodus 4:12](#)).

Exodus 4:12 (NASB)

¹² “Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

God charged Ezekiel, saying, “**You shall speak My words to them**” ([Ezekiel 2:7](#)).

Ezekiel 2:7 (NASB)

⁷ “But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.”



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Of the Decalogue it is said, “**And God spoke all these words**” ([Exodus 20:1](#)).

[Exodus 20:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ **Then God spoke all these words, saying,**

Paul claimed to speak “**in words ... taught by the Spirit**” ([1 Corinthians 2:13](#)).

[1 Corinthians 2:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³ **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*.**

Those references illustrate that the very words of the Bible were God-given.