



**Lecture # 7 Part 1**

## THE CHARACTER AND CONTENT OF INSPIRATION

### THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

#### *The use of variety of expression*

Because God said the same thing in different ways, or at least from different viewpoints, at different times, inspiration cannot be meant to exclude a diversity of expression. The four gospels relate the same story in different ways to different groups of people and sometimes even quote Christ as saying the same thing with different words.

Compare, for example, Peter's famous confession at Caesarea Philippi:

**Matthew** records it: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"

**(Matthew 16:16)**.

**Mark** records it: "Thou art the Christ" **(Mark 8:29)**.

**Luke** records it: "The Christ of God" **(Luke 9:20)**.

Even the Decalogue, "written by the finger of God" **(Deuteronomy 9:10)**, is stated with variations the second time that God gave it (cf. **Exodus 20:8-11** with **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**).<sup>9</sup>

#### **Deuteronomy 9:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> "The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them *were* all the words which the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.

#### **Exodus 20:8-11 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

<sup>9</sup> "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

<sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

<sup>11</sup> "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

#### **Deuteronomy 5:12-15 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> 'Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

<sup>13</sup> ~'Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

<sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.



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<sup>15</sup> ~'You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

There are many variations between the books of Kings and Chronicles in their description of identical events, yet there is no contradiction in the story they tell.<sup>10</sup>

If such important utterances as Peter's confession of Christ and the inscription on the cross (cf. [Matthew 27:37](#); [Mark 15:26](#); [Luke 23:38](#); [John 19:19](#)) and such permanent and special laws as the one "written with the finger of God" can be stated in different ways, then there should be no problem in extending to the rest of Scripture a diversity of expression within the concept of a verbal inspiration.

[Matthew 27:37 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>37</sup> And above His head they put up the charge against Him which read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

[Mark 15:26 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>26</sup> The inscription of the charge against Him read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

[Luke 23:38 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>38</sup> Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

[John 19:19 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

### *The use of individuality and personalities*

**Inspiration does not exclude** the use of different personalities, with their own literary styles and idiosyncrasies, in recording the written word of God. To observe this, one need only compare the powerful style of **Isaiah** with the mournful tone of **Jeremiah** in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, **Luke** manifests a marked medical interest,<sup>11</sup> **James** is distinctly practical, **Paul** is theological and polemical, and **John** has an obvious simplicity.

God has communicated through a multiplicity of human personalities with their respective literary characteristics.

The traditional biblical authors include a **lawgiver (Moses)**, a **general (Joshua)**, **prophets (Samuel, Isaiah, et al.)**, **kings (David and Solomon)**, a **musician (Asaph)**, a **herdsman (Amos)**, a **prince and statesman (Daniel)**, a **priest (Ezra)**, a **tax collector (Matthew)**, a **physician (Luke)**, a **scholar (Paul)**, and **fishermen (Peter and John)**.



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With such a variety of occupations represented by biblical writers, it is only natural that their personal interests and differences should be reflected in their writings.

### *The use of non-biblical documents*

Undoubtedly the doctrine of inspiration does not mean to exclude the use of human documents as a source of divine truth, because the use of such is exactly what the Bible does claim. [Luke's gospel](#) may have been based on the research he had done in the written sources of his day (cf. [Luke 1:1-4](#)).

#### [Luke 1:1-4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,  
<sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,  
<sup>3</sup> it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;  
<sup>4</sup> so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

The writer of Joshua used the Book of Jasher for his famous quotation about the sun's standing still ([Joshua 10:13](#)).<sup>12</sup>

#### [Joshua 10:13 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. **Is it not written in the book of Jasher?** And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day.

The apostle Paul quoted unhesitatingly from a heathen poet ([Acts 17:28](#)) in his well-known Mars Hill address.

#### [Acts 17:28 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and exist, **as even some of your own poets have said,** 'For we also are His children.'