



Lecture # 8 Part 3

THE CHARACTER AND CONTENT OF INSPIRATION

THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

3. Moral truths of Scripture are often based on or are inseparably connected with scientific or factual truths.

(a) The depravity of man and his consequent physical death is based on the truth of a literal Adam ([Romans 5:12](#)).

[Romans 5:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹²“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

(b) The doctrine of the incarnation is inseparable from the historical truth about Jesus of Nazareth ([John 1:1, 14](#)).

[John 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[John 1:14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(c) Jesus' moral teaching about marriage was based on His teaching about God's joining a literal Adam and Eve together in marriage ([Matthew 19:4-5](#)).

[Matthew 19:4-5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, ⁵and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?"

In each of those cases the moral or theological teaching is devoid of its intended meaning apart from the historical or factual space-time event. If one denies that the literal space-time event occurred, then there is no basis for believing the scriptural doctrine built upon it.

4. Jesus often made a direct comparison between important spiritual truths and Old Testament events He presented as historically true.

For instance, using a strong comparison Jesus said, “*Just as* Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, *so shall* the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” ([Matthew 12:40 NASB](#)).



Lecture # 8 Part 3

Both the occasion and the manner of that comparison make it clear that Jesus was affirming the historicity of Jonah in connection with the truth about His death and resurrection. **He certainly was not saying, “Just as you believe that mythology about Jonah, so I would like to tell you about the historicity of My death and resurrection.”**

In the same way that Jesus closely associated the literal truth about Himself with that of Jonah, He also connected the truth of His literal second coming (cf. [Acts 1:10-11](#)) to the literal truth about Noah’s flood.

Acts 1:10-11 (NASB)

¹⁰ And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

¹¹ They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

He said, **“The coming of the Son of Man will be *just like* the days of Noah”** ([Matthew 24:37](#)).

Matthew 24:37 (NASB)

³⁷ "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

Both the content and emphasis of these comparisons reveal that Jesus believed in the historicity of those Old Testament events.

5. Jesus asserted that if He could not be trusted in historical matters, then He should not be trusted in heavenly matters either. Just after speaking to Nicodemus about physical birth and winds, Jesus said to him, **“If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”** ([John 3:12 NASB](#)).

In short, if the Bible cannot be trusted when it speaks about temporal things that we can see, how can it be trusted when it discusses eternal things that cannot be seen ([2 Corinthians 4:18](#))?

2 Corinthians 4:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

So if the Bible does not speak truthfully about the physical world, it cannot be trusted when it speaks about the spiritual world. The two are intimately related.

Inspiration includes everything the Bible touches



Lecture # 8 Part 3

Not only does inspiration include all the Bible **explicitly teaches** but it also includes everything the **Bible touches**. For instance, probably nowhere is the central idea of a biblical passage to teach explicitly about angels or demons. They are virtually always brought in incidentally. Yet everything the Bible says about them incidentally is still absolutely true. For the incidental teachings of Scripture are no less true than the essential teachings. Whatever the Bible declares is true, whether it be a major point or a minor point. The Bible is God's Word, and God cannot err in any point. All the parts are as true as the whole that they comprise.

Some have suggested that only the main purpose of the Bible is true, but not every minor point. They say the meaning of Scripture is to be understood in the light of its saving purpose. And because the central purpose of Scripture is to get men saved ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)),¹⁸ then whatever is not essential to that central purpose does not really matter.¹⁹

[2 Timothy 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

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

This position is both inadequate and unbiblical for several reasons.

1. Purpose does not determine meaning. Meaning is *what* is said; purpose is *why* it is said. But why something is said does not determine the meaning of what is said. The meaning of many passages of Scripture is understood apart from knowing why they were uttered in the first place.

Consider the following:

[Exodus 23:19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹“You shall bring the choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. “You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother.”

[Deuteronomy 22:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.”

Everyone who knows the words of those sentences knows exactly what they mean, even if they do not have the foggiest idea about the author's intended purpose. The command not to boil a kid or young goat in its mother's milk would have the same meaning if it appeared in a cookbook, although the significance of the passage is obviously enhanced by its being in God's Book.

Likewise, the meaning of the exhortation not to mix wool and linen would mean the same thing in a home economics or textiles book, even though it would have no religious significance in that setting.²⁰



Lecture # 8 Part 3

2. It is not the *purposes* of the biblical authors that are inspired; the *propositions* of Scripture are inspired. The locus of inspiration is in the written text ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), not in the author's mind behind the text.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

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

It is the words that are inspired ([1 Corinthians 2:13](#)), not merely the ideas behind them.

1 Corinthians 2:13 (NASB)

¹³which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

Just as beauty is in the painting and not behind it, even so meaning is expressed in the words of Scripture and not behind them. Hence, it is both wrong and inappropriate to look for the purpose(s) of authors behind their words. Their purposes are expressed in their propositions. It is incorrect to seek the intention of biblical writers beyond their writings; their intentions can be found in their written affirmations. Their meaning is expressed in their written message.