



Lecture # 9 Part 2

THE CHARACTER AND CONTENT OF INSPIRATION

Accommodation or adaptation?

Some have asserted that in the process of communicating their message, the biblical writers accommodated their teaching to some erroneous beliefs of their day. Some even believe that that kind of accommodation is a necessary part of conveying infinite truth in infinite terms.²²

Several things render those conclusions false.

First of all, they confuse accommodation to human error with adaptation to human finitude. Just because God condescends to man's level to communicate His truth to them does not mean He has to compromise His truth in doing so. Adaptation to human limitations does not necessitate accommodation to error.

A mother may answer a four-year-old child's question about where babies come from by saying, "**Babies come from their mothers' tummies.**" **That is not false, but it is truth adapted to the child's level.** A few years later, when the child asks how the baby got there, it would also be true to say, "**Daddy placed a seed there and it grew.**" Neither is this the whole story, but at least it is not the stork story, which is false.

God uses **anthropomorphisms** when speaking to **man** (*anthropos*), but He does not use myths ([2 Peter 1:16](#)).

Anthropomorphisms:

- a)** attribution of human characteristics to nonhumans: the attribution of a human form, human characteristics, or human behavior to nonhuman things, e.g. deities in mythology and animals in children's stories

[2 Peter 1:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

In short, God adapts His truth to limited human understanding, but He never accommodates Himself to human error.

The biblical view of inspiration "**does not assert that prophets and apostles were infallible, nor that in their own learning they were exempt from limitations imposed by their cultures. What it asserts, rather, is that the writers did not teach the doubtful views of the cultures in which they lived.**"²³ In fact, there is abundant evidence in the New Testament that Jesus never accommodated Himself to the false beliefs of His day.



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Some of the following examples will serve to illustrate.

1. Jesus rebuked those who believed **“tradition”** rather than the Word of God ([Matthew 15:1-3](#)).

Matthew 15:1-3 (NASB)

¹ Then some Pharisees and scribes *came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,
² "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."
³ And He answered and said to them, **"Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"**

2. Jesus set His words over against the false beliefs of Jewish teachers six times by using emphatic words: **“you have heard ... but I say to you”** ([Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43](#)).

Matthew 5:21 (NASB)

²¹ **"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'**

Matthew 5:27 (NASB)

²⁷ **"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';**

Matthew 5:31 (NASB)

³¹ **"It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE';**

Matthew 5:33 (NASB)

³³ **"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.'**

Matthew 5:38 (NASB)

³⁸ **"You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'**

Matthew 5:43 (NASB)

⁴³ **"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'**

3. Jesus rebuked the famous teacher of the Jews, Nicodemus, saying, **“Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?”** ([John 3:10](#)).

John 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"**



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4. Jesus bluntly declared to the Sadducees, “**You are mistaken ...**” ([Matthew 22:29](#)).

[Matthew 22:29 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁹ **But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.**

5. Jesus’ severe words of [Matthew 23](#) are scarcely accommodating: “**Woe to you, blind guides ...**” ([v. 16](#)); “**you fools ...**” ([v. 17](#)); “**you serpents, you brood of vipers ...**” ([v. 33](#)).

[Matthew 23:16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶ “**Woe to you**, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, *that is nothing*; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.'

[Matthew 23:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷ “**You fools** and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold?

[Matthew 23:33 \(NASB\)](#)

³³ “**You serpents, you brood of vipers**, how will you escape the sentence of hell?