

# Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

## Class 3: The Doctrine of Scripture, part 2

### *Inspiration & Authority*

*"... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

**John 17. 3**

## **I. The Inspiration of the Bible**

*... from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God ...*

**2 Timothy 3. 15-16**

*Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours **searched and inquired carefully**, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

**1 Peter 1. 10-12**

*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

**2 Peter 1. 16-21**

### **A. What Inspiration Is NOT**

- It is not a state of increased motivation or excitement
- It is not a trance
- It is not a violation of personality
- It is not passive manipulation



### **B. What Inspiration IS**

1. Inspiration is the "*breathing out*" by God of His Word. The Bible is "*God-breathed*" (2 Timothy 3.16); that is, in all of its parts it has (as its source) God Himself.

*Inspiration extends to all chronological, historical, and geographical matters, indeed to the words, even the vowels and diacritical marks.*

Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics (vol 1)

2. A thoughtful, engaged process superintended by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 10.12). The inspiration of the Biblical writers involved many means ...

- Dictation
- Visions, dreams
- Even careful search & inquiry

*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.*

**Luke 1. 1-4**

3. God, thru His Holy Spirit, taking these men as His instruments to write exactly what He wanted written. The men who wrote the Scriptures were “carried along” (2 Peter 1.21) by the Holy Spirit.

- God was the “superintendent” of Scripture
- The human authors were not co-authors, and yet they were not passive!



*Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness ...*

**Hebrews 3. 7-8**

*...again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”*

**Hebrews 4.7**

### Two terms to know ...

- a. *Concursive inspiration* = God’s power worked with human personalities but did not override them
- b. *Plenary inspiration* = everything in the Bible is inspired

## II. The Authority of the Bible

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

**2 Timothy 3.16-4.2**

- The authority of the Bible is the necessary consequence of the inspiration of the Bible. That is, if God is the ultimate authority in the universe, and He has spoken in His Word, then His Word is authoritative.

*... the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. <sup>2</sup> You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. <sup>3</sup> But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.*

**Exodus 7. 1-4**

*All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

**Isaiah 66.2**

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

**Revelation 22. 18-19**

*If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.*

**1 Corinthians 14.37**

- See also 2 Peter 3.2; 2 Thes. 3.14; 2 Cor. 13. 2-3

There are 2 ways in which we speak of the Bible's authority:

1. **Inherent** (which means = *existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute*). On the basis of the Bible's inspiration, it is authoritative.
2. **Canonical** – The Bible is the authoritative standard, rule, norm for Christian faith & practice.

Inspiration > inherent authority > canonical authority