

Apologetics: Lesson Six  
The Inspiration of the Bible: Part I

What is Revelation and Inspiration?

- Intro: 1. Many ideas abound in the world today about revelation and inspiration.  
2. This week, we will look at what these words truly mean, as well as some false ideas surrounding them.

I. What is revelation?

- A. Revelation is simply the revealing of something previously hidden or secret.<sup>45</sup>
1. No one can know your thoughts unless you choose to reveal them.
  2. Thus, your expression of the thoughts is a revelation, or a revealing.
- B. There is no way to know God unless He reveals Himself to us.
1. There is no way to know a person unless they reveal themselves.
  2. The same thing is true with God: if He did not want us to know Him, we would have no way of knowing Him.
- C. God has revealed His existence in two ways.
1. Natural (or general) revelation.<sup>46</sup>
    - a. This is God revealing Himself and His existence through the things in this world.<sup>47</sup>
    - b. His existence is revealed through the design of the universe, the movement of things in the universe, the moral code within man, as well as other things.
  2. Special<sup>48</sup> (or Divine)<sup>49</sup> revelation.
    - a. While natural revelation helps us to know the existence of God, it does not reveal anything about His will, His character, His nature, or anything else beyond His existence and creative powers.
    - b. In order for us to know anything else about Him, He must reveal it to us more directly.
    - c. This He has done in His book, the Bible.

II. What is Inspiration?

- A. Inspiration is the means or method by which God has revealed His true self to humans.<sup>50</sup>
1. This was done by direct revelation to some people.
    - a. Peter said “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” to which Christ responded, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in Heaven” (Matthew 16:16-17).
    - b. Moses was given direct revelation of all of the events that occurred in Genesis,

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<sup>45</sup> Encarta ® World English Dictionary: “revelation.” (Microsoft Corporation 2005).

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, Wayne. *Fortify Your Faith*. (Apologetics Press, 1974). Pg 47.

<sup>47</sup> Natural or general revelation include the things discussed in the lessons on the existence of God earlier in this book.

<sup>48</sup> Northrop, Chuck. *Inspiration, Is the Bible From God or Man?* 1993.

<sup>49</sup> Jackson. *Fortify*. Pg 47.

<sup>50</sup> Northrop, Chuck. *Class Notes: Apologetics*. (Bible Institute of Missouri, 2009).

- for Moses was not alive during any of the events he recorded in that book.<sup>51</sup>
- c. John, the apostle, was given direct revelation of things that would “shortly come to pass” and recorded it in the book called Revelation.<sup>52</sup>
2. Other times it was a bringing to their minds, flawlessly, all the things they needed to say.
    - a. Christ told His disciples that when He left, He would send the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance all the things they had been taught (John 14:26, 16:12-15).
    - b. Christ told them not to worry about what to say, for their words would be given to them by the Holy Spirit (Luke 12:10-11).
  3. Because of this, we can trust the Scriptures to be correct in all ways.
    - a. God would not have allowed anything false to be put down in Scriptures, or preached by these inspired men.
    - b. That means that even the historical records are completely accurate.<sup>53</sup>
- B. Some false views of the Bible’s Inspiration.
1. Dictation.<sup>54</sup>
    - a. This view suggests that every single word in the Bible was given to the writers of the Scriptures to copy down.
    - b. If this view were true, we would not be able to see any of the personalities of the writers showing forth, because they would only be like a secretary.
    - c. The fact that the New Testament writers all had different levels of ability in Greek shows through in their writings, as does their personalities.
    - d. Thus, dictation is not how the Bible was inspired.
  2. Thought Inspiration.<sup>55</sup>
    - a. This view states that the thoughts given to the writers are inspired, but not the words themselves.
    - b. If this is the case, how can we really trust anything that the writers said?
    - c. “What good are ‘infallible ideas’ if channeled through ‘fallible words’?”<sup>56</sup>
    - d. Any idea or thought that we have is brought forth in words, and conceived with words in our heads. Thus, when God inspired the thoughts, He also inspired the words to convey those thoughts!<sup>57</sup>
  3. Partial inspiration.<sup>58</sup>
    - a. This is the idea that parts of the Bible are inspired, and others are not (or at least, others are less inspired).
    - b. This is the view that was held by the Jews.

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<sup>51</sup> Moses was not born until the events that are recorded in Exodus. The book of Genesis covers approximately 2500 years of history previous to the birth of Moses.

<sup>52</sup> Revelation 1:1 says that the things revealed to John were things that would “shortly come to pass.”

<sup>53</sup> A good portion of the Old Testament is historical, as is the book of Acts, and to some extent the gospels. Sir William Ramsay tried to disprove Luke as a historian, and after retracing the routes in Acts, came to believe that the Bible is indeed inspired.

<sup>54</sup> Northrop. *Class Notes*.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Jackson. *Fortify*. Pg 52.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

- c. They viewed the Pentateuch as wholly inspired, and then the prophets a little less so, and poetry and history even less, if at all.<sup>59</sup>
  - d. Some take this view today to avoid doctrinal issues found in the epistles of Paul (such as the role of women in the church, mechanical instruments of music in the church, and others).<sup>60</sup>
  - e. The problem is, Jesus quoted from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Psalms quite frequently showing that they all had equal authority as far as inspiration goes.
  - f. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into “all truth” which they revealed to us in the epistles (John 16:13).
  - g. Paul said that “all Scripture is inspired by God” (II Timothy 3:16-17).
  - h. Therefore, the Scriptures are not partially inspired.
4. Natural Genius Inspiration.<sup>61</sup>
- a. This view says that the writers of the Bible were inspired in the same way Shakespeare was inspired.<sup>62</sup>
  - b. This then implies that nothing in the Bible is really from God, but just the product of a really creative set of humans, over the course of 1600 years.
  - c. This means that the New Testament writers lied when they claimed to get their message from God (I Thessalonians 2:13).<sup>63</sup>
  - d. This view would make the Bible worthless.
- C. The True View of Inspiration.
1. Verbal Inspiration.
    - a. This means that every word in the Bible was inspired.
    - b. Not just part of the words, but all of the words.
    - c. God used the vocabulary and style of each writer to express His intent, but every words correctly expressed what God wanted expressed!
  2. Plenary Inspiration.
    - a. This means that every word in the Bible is equally inspired.
    - b. There is no “levels of inspiration” in the Word of God.
    - c. Even passages that may seem to have nothing to do with God are also inspired.<sup>64</sup>

- Concl: 1. Now that we understand what inspiration is, we must go about proving it.
2. Last week we went about showing that from a historical point of view, the Bible has endured and thrived through great attempts at its destruction.
  3. Next week we will look at showing that the Bible could only come from God.

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<sup>59</sup> Clarke, Ted. *Class Notes: Life of Christ - Luke*. (Bible Institute of Missouri, 2008).

<sup>60</sup> Some today wish to ignore the writings of Paul, James, Jude, and Peter under the guise of ‘only teaching the words of Jesus.’ But, as was shown earlier in this lesson, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to allow the apostles to remember, speak and write His teachings

<sup>61</sup> Jackson. *Fortify*. Pg 52.

<sup>62</sup> Northrop. *Class Notes*.

<sup>63</sup> See also Galatians 1:1; II Peter 1:21.

<sup>64</sup> This would include Paul’s statement to Timothy to bring his coat and the books (II Timothy 4:13). This will be addressed in another lesson.