

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

What Does the Bible
Mean When It Says It
Is Inspired by God?

INSPIRATION (PART 1)



SERIES OVERVIEW

- **INSPIRATION: PART 1. What Does the Bible Mean When It Says It Is Inspired by God? PART 2. How Do We Know that the Bible Is Really Inspired by God?**
- **CANONIZATION: PART 1. What Books Belong in the Bible, and Who Decides? PART 2. How Do We Know that the Books in the Bible Are the Right Ones?**
- **TRANSMISSION: PART 1. If the Original Writings Are Gone, Do We Really Have the Bible? PART 2. What Is Textual Criticism, and Why Does It Matter?**

DEFINING “INSPIRATION”

- **ORIGIN:** The Greek word translated “inspired by God” (*theopneustos*, “breathed out by God”) speaks to the divine origin of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; Ps 33:6; Matt 4:4).
- **PROCESS:** The word can also be translated as “God-spirited,” which describes well how God revealed his word (2 Tim 3:16; Ps 33:6; 104:30; 1 Cor 2:10–13; 2 Pet 1:19–21).
- **RESULTS:** The results of inspiration were the oral and then the written word of God (i.e., Scripture = OT and NT; Matt 10:19–20; 1 Cor 2:13; Eph 3:1–5; 2 Pet 1:19–21; 2 Tim 3:16).

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- **LIMITATION:** God himself wrote little of the Bible (e.g., Exod 31:18?); he used fallible people to create infallible Scripture (2 Pet 1:19–21; Luke 1:1–4; 1 Cor 1:14–16).

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Some people argue that if humans had any part in the production of Scripture, Scripture is subject to error: (1) Humans err. (2) Humans produced the Bible. (3) The Bible errs. The argument fails, however, because (1) humans do not always err and (2) humans were not the only ones involved in the production of the Bible.

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- **PERFECTION:** Since God oversaw the production of the Bible and he never makes mistakes, Scripture—including each word of it—is free of error (John 10:34–35; Ps 18:30; 19:7).

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Inerrancy, however, applies to the original writings, not to the copies.

Inerrancy also does not demand the use of modern conventions; Scripture is inerrant even when it uses non-literal (symbolic) and phenomenological language (e.g., “sunrise” and “sunset”).

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- **ILLUSTRATION:** The incarnation of Christ illustrates how the divine and the human can coexist without the divine part succumbing to human fallibility (Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5).

DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS

- **AUTHORITY:** Since Scripture is God-breathed, it is—at least in principle(s)—universally authoritative (2 Tim 3:16; 4:1–5; John 10:34–35; 12:47–50; 1 Cor 14:37; 2 Thess 3:14).
- **SUFFICIENCY:** Since Scripture is God-breathed, it is sufficient, that is, fully capable of preparing us for life here and in eternity (2 Tim 3:16–17; John 16:13; Eph 3:3–5; 2 Pet 1:3).
- **OBLIGATION:** Since Scripture is God-breathed, we must handle it with the utmost respect and care—reading, interpreting, and applying it accurately (2 Tim 2:15).