Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Doctrine of Inspiration Explained
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
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We come now to a wonderful opportunity to consider the great doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scripture. We're going to look at the theology category that is called Bibliology, the study of the Word of God.

It was some years ago that I read an interesting interview. A very popular Christian song writer, many of whose songs we all sing and enjoy, was asked to explain how he was able to write a certain song. And this was the answer. "Regarding that song, it came quickly and we do not care to discuss the theology of it. In fact, we feel that to dissect the song would be tampering with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who inspired the song," end quote.

Well I think I understand what the writers of that song meant. But that really is a startling claim to say that they don't want to discuss the theology of the song, nor dissect the words of the song because that would be tampering with the Holy Spirit who inspired the song, may indicate that they don't quite understand what it means when something is inspired.

In defense of them, we learn that word a lot. We especially use it with regard to music. It's one thing to say I was inspired by the music. It's something else to say that was an inspiring rendition of the music. We mean we were lifted up and encouraged and our emotions were elevated in the experience of singing that song, or hearing that song. A writer could even say it was an inspiring experience for me to write that song. But to say that a song is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and therefore should not be dissected or tampered with, is to make the song equal to Scripture. Are we to say then that a song writer who writes a song is inspired in the same way that Luke was inspired when he wrote the gospel of Luke? Or Paul was inspired when he boat... wrote the book of Romans? Or Isaiah was inspired when he wrote the prophecy that is called Isaiah? What do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired? Do we mean it's an inspiring book because it inspires in us faith and religious feeling and understanding? And are people today still inspired when they write songs in the same way that writers of the Bible were inspired? Are books today inspired? How about sermons? Are they inspired?

The term "inspire" comes from the Latin, to breathe in...to breathe in. And it's a bit misleading, actually. In 2 Timothy 3:16 it says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." Really I think we've created a

problem here because of that English word "inspire." The actual Greek term is God breathed, *theopneustos*from which we get pneumatic, pneumonia, those kinds of things related to breath. But the actual word translated inspired in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God, given by inspiration of God," is "All Scripture is God-breathed." It is not us in-breathing, it is God out-breathing. It is God breathing out His words, not breathing into us in some inspiring fashion. We believe that the Bible came right out of the mouth of God. God breathed it out. He gave it, He said it. Is it right to claim the same thing for a song? Is it right to claim the same thing for a book, for a sermon, for an idea, for a thought, for a ministry, plan? Are we really experiencing direct revelation right out of the mouth of God?

Well we know we're not, don't we? I have never preached a God-breathed sermon. In that sense I've never been the recipient of divine revelation through the means of divine inspiration so that God breathed into me a sermon which I then preached to you. What about speaking in tongues? What about people who get prophecies and words of wisdom and words of knowledge? Is that God breathed revelation coming right out of the mouth of God? And is it equal then to any book of the Bible?

Well some are going to say you're pushing the point a little bit here. There are degrees of inspiration. Certain preachers can be inspired and certain song writers can be inspired and certain people who receive revelations and words of wisdom and knowledge from God, they're inspired...and I've had this discussion with many people through the years...they are inspired by they're not as inspired as the Bible writers. It's inspiration to a lesser degree. Some things are inspired to the maximum degree, that would be the books of the Bible and others are inspired to a lesser degree. But inspired means God-breathed. It means that God said it and there are no degrees to that. He either said it, or He didn't say it which is one reason why you want to be very careful when you say, "The Lord told me this...or, the Lord told me that." Through the years I can remember a number of conversations with people who believed the Lord was telling them all kinds of things. I remember one conversation in which a certain lady said to me, "I really don't care what the Bible says, I know exactly what God said to me." That's scary.

There are no degrees to what God said. Either He said it or He didn't say it. Either God breathed it out or He did not breathe it out. Either the words are God's words or they are not God's words. They can't be more or less from God.

One way to understand that might be to think about the fact that we may refer to something as the highest or the best or the most. We call that a superlative. That's the end of the line. That's the highest mountain or the best watch or the most money. If this is true, there is no mountain higher, there is no watch better and there is no one with more money. There's no higher than the highest, better than the best, or more than the most. And so there are no more inspired or less inspired writings of God. God is absolute. God's Word is therefore absolute. God is a superlative. God

speaks in a superlative fashion. Inspiration has no degrees. He said it or He didn't say it. And there are no songs and there are no books and there are no visions and there are no revelations and there are no sermons that are the direct revelation of God.

In fact, to even consider that is a scary proposition since the entire Bible ends with the following words, Revelation 22:18, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book...meaning the book of Revelation...but this is the end of the revelation of God, the Canon, so it applies to anything added to this book which therefore would be added to Scripture in total since this is the final book...I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book." That's a very, very clear warning and that is how the Bible ends. Don't add anything to this book and to add anything to that book would be to add something to the Canon of Scripture which that book completes.

And so to say that one is inspired in a biblical sense is a really serious claim to make. Not a single sermon of mine has ever been inspired by God. I take the Word which is inspired by God, was inspired and given to me in this complete form and I endeavor to make that inspired message clear to you. But my effort is my effort. Hopefully it's aided by the work of the Holy Spirit in my mind, but the words that I give you are my words as I attempt to explain to you the meaning of that revelation from God. I remember a woman preacher being interviewed one time on the radio and the question...I don't think the questioner knew the direction the answer would go but he said, "How do you get your sermons up?...How do you get your sermons up?" And she said in a rather ethereal voice, "I don't get them up, I get them down." And he asked what in the world she meant by that and she went on to explain that they come down from heaven. Boy, I wish that were true, that would simplify your life a lot.

Songs that you write are simply reflections of what God has revealed in His Word. Sermons that you preach are simply efforts to make the already inspired and revealed Word of God clear to the listener. Books that you write follow the same path. And I would be a fool to claim that God inspired my sermons, or that God inspired a book I might write, or a song. All my sermons need editing. God doesn't need any editing. They are feeble at best in their attempt to take the Word of God and bring it to people through a human vehicle. And so we want to be careful that we protect the inspiration of Scripture.

Now with that kind of an introduction, let's talk about a definition of inspiration. I'm going to be a little bit like a seminary professor tonight, but we'll keep it down where I hope you can get it. I read in the L.A. Times the other day that I am able to get the hay down where the goats are. I'll take that responsibility, I just don't know if you want to be known as goats...but here we go.

What is the Doctrine of Inspiration? Let me just give you some categories to think in, okay? Revelation...revelation is the content...revelation is the content. It is God's disclosure of His truth. Inspiration is the vehicle. Revelation is the content, inspiration is how we did it. When we talk about divine revelation, we're talking about the content...the message, the truth that God revealed or disclosed. When we talk about inspiration we're talking about the method that God used. How He breathed it out. In revelation God makes Himself known. In inspiration the Spirit of God take the revelation and puts it through the mind of human writers in the Old and New Testament who write it down as it flows from God the Holy Spirit through their minds. What they write down is the exact and authentic words that constitute the message God wants written down. Revelation then is the message itself, and inspiration is the means by which it is given and ultimately recorded on the pages of Scripture.

Now let me speak a little more clearly to this issue by traveling around it a little bit and suggesting some things that inspiration is not. Biblical inspiration is not a high-level of human achievement. It is not a high level of human achievement. Through the years there have been critics of the Doctrine of Inspiration, that God breathed out every word into the mind of writers who wrote it down so that every word is actually right from the mind of God. There are some who said that's...that's not true. The Bible is just a high level of human achievement. And you'd have to say that if you wanted to deny divine authorship because you're left with this astounding book with this massive amount of wisdom. And so you'd have to say that this is a compilation of things that have been written by people who are at a high level of religious genius. They're...they're like any other geniuses. It's like Homer's Odyssey , or it's like Dante's Divine Comedy, or Shakespeare's Tragedies. It's a high level of artistry, of literary craft, like any master work. The Bible is a master work of human genius...but very human and very fallible. This view exalts human authorship to the level of genius but denies divine authorship all together.

This really doesn't work and it doesn't work for a lot of reasons. But I'll suggest a few things. The personality of Jesus Christ and the way He is described surpasses everything in human thought. Whoever would invent a person like Jesus Christ? No one could come up with that kind of person. He surpasses in purity, in love, in perfection, in righteousness anything ever found in any character in all of human literature. There is no one like Him anywhere in human literature nowhere. He is beyond the capability of any person to invent. And then when you realize that He is the theme of the entire Bible and you have a period of at least 1500 years and a little over 40 writers writing all over that space of time, that span of time, 1500 years, and all that they say directed about Him is consistent and coherent and transcendent, it's inexplicable that such a loosely connected assemblage of human geniuses would all craft the same person who is remarkable beyond any human imagination.

Furthermore, who would have written a book that damns the whole human race? Who would write a book, what collection of human geniuses would write a book that says there is no hope apart from this person Jesus Christ? All other religious books by all other religious geniuses aided and abetted by supernatural geniuses that we would identify as demons, contain salvation by works. They bow to human pride. There's no other person like Jesus Christ in any other religion in the world and always genius exalts itself. And if the authors of the Bible were human religious geniuses who had just achieved a high level of genius, why didn't the Bible writers produce other writings equal to the ones in the Bible? The fact of the matter is left to themselves they could produce some good things but not inspired Scripture. Paul wrote a lot of letters and he wrote 13 in the New Testament but he wrote a lot more than that that aren't in the New Testament. They were just Paul...Paul at his best but just Paul. In fact he wrote a couple to the Corinthians in addition to the two that are in the Bible, but they were not inspired by God. He was also a pastor like any pastor and an evangelist like any evangelist who was saying things that were true but they were not the directly inspired words out of the mouth of God. Inspiration cannot be just a high level of human genius. You can't come up with Christ and you don't damn the whole human race and leave them no hope but this perfect Christ.

Somebody else suggests that inspiration is extended just to the thoughts of the writers, that God just gave them noble ideas in their mind, planted thoughts. The first kind of inspiration is called natural inspiration, just human genius. The second kind is called though inspiration. This view suggested that God came along at some point and gave these writers an idea, a religious idea, spiritual idea and they were left free to express themselves as they liked. This is a denial of verbal inspiration. If this is true, we're really wasting our time doing exegesis of the text because the words aren't the issue. Like the gentleman said to me on the Larry King Show the other night, which I mentioned, "You're so caught up in the words you're missing the message of the Bible." That's a convenient view. The idea that there's some idea, concept, religious notion there that may or may not be connected to the words, but the Bible claims to be the very words of God. First Corinthians 2:13, "We speak not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches." Paul says when I give the revelation of God, when I write down that which God inspires in me, it is not words coming from man's wisdom, but which the Spirit teaches. In John 17:8 Jesus said, "I have given unto them the words which You gave Me and they have received them." The message was in the words, there is no message apart from the words, there is no inspiration apart from the words. More than 3800 times in the Old Testament we have expressions like "Thus says the Lord," "The Word of the Lord came," "God said," it's about the words. There are no such things as wordless concepts anyway. When Moses would excuse himself from serving the Lord, he said, "I need to do something else because I'm not eloquent." God didn't say, "I'll give you a lot of great ideas, you'll figure out how to communicate them." God didn't say, "I'll be with your mind." God said to him this, "I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you shall say." And that explains why 40 years later, according to Deuteronomy 4:2, Moses said to Israel, "You shall not add unto the word which I command you,

neither shall you diminish ought from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Don't touch anything I command you because this is from God.

In fact, the opposite is true. Bible writers wrote down words they didn't understand. In 1 Peter chapter 1 we are told there that the prophets wrote down the words and didn't understand what they meant. The prophets, verse 10 of 1 Peter 1, who prophesied of the grace that would come made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. Here they are writing about the sufferings of the coming Messiah, writing about the glory to follow the suffering of the Messiah, and then they're searching what they wrote. They're inquiring in the very words which they were inspired to write, to figure out what person and what time is in view. They couldn't even interpret fully the meaning of the words they were actually writing. God did not give ideas without words but in some cases He gave words without complete ideas.

In Matthew 24:25 the Scripture is very clear, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words...My words shall not pass away." When God speaks He speaks with words and the Bible are the...is the representation in writing of the words that came from God...the words that God spoke.

Thoughts are married to words like a soul is connected to a body. One writer says, "As for thoughts being inspired apart from the words which give them expression, you might as well talk of a tune without notes, or a sum without numbers. We cannot have geology without rocks or anthropology without men. We cannot have a melody without music, nor can we have divine record of God speaking without words. Thoughts are conveyed by words and the thoughts of God were conveyed by the words of God and passed on to us through the means of God breathing those words into the minds of the writers to write exactly what He wanted them to write and collecting it all in the Bible.

Others have some other interesting spins on the Doctrine of Inspiration. And some say that inspiration is only with reference to spiritual and moral teaching. This is called partial inspiration, that is that part of the Bible is inspired, the spiritual part, the moral part, that's inspired. The historical part, you don't have to worry about that, but the geographical part, you don't have to worry about that, the scientific part, you don't have to worry about it, the Bible doesn't have to be accurate in all categories, it just has to be accurate when it talks about spiritual and moral things. And this explains the errors in the Bible and the legends in the Bible and all the notions in the Bible that are just false. All inspiration, these folks suggest, guarantees is the sacred, it doesn't guarantee the secular.

Well that's a problem because either God wrote it or He didn't. And if God can't be trusted for history and He can't be trusted for geography, and He can't be trusted for science, then why would we trust Him for the spiritual? If God can't be trusted to tell us the truth about history and the truth about the

material world that we live in, then why would we want to entrust our eternal souls to Him and on what basis so we sure He can be trusted?

Why should we believe the spiritual which cannot be verified if we can't believe the historical, the physical, the material which can be verified? Critical...as soon as you allow the Bible to be untrustworthy at all, you will progress to a total rejection of the Bible. And why would you trust God for what you cannot see and cannot prove if He lied about what you can see and you can prove? That's a needless view to take because when the Bible speaks historically, it is true. It has been verified. Never has anything historically in the Bible been proven to be wrong, or scientific, or geographical.

Now there's another view of inspiration. This is the view that inspiration is an act of God on the reader. This is basically a human book written by some religious geniuses. Some of the ideas may have floated down from God. You can sort of pile all those previous ones together into one view. But what God does is He existentially moves on the reader. All of a sudden when you're reading this dead book, it comes alive to you because the Spirit of God inspires you and awakens you. This is frankly theological existentialism...sometimes called neo-orthodoxy. This is not an infallible Word from God, this is not right out of the mouth of God. But God does a really good thing. He...He...as you read it and it comes before your eyes and your heart, He zaps it, He..He zaps the Word because He gives you some sort of ecstatic experience. He gives you a moment of contact with this divine reality. You...You feel God somewhere along the line. It's not authoritative, by the way, it's just kind of a spiritual goose bump and you get it when you read the Bible. It maybe hits you in one way very different from everybody else, that's how it is for all of us. We're all living in the moment, the existential moment, the being of this moment and in that moment all of a sudden something jumps off the page of the Bible and there's a Wow factor and that's inspiration.

The same people who say that say, "However, don't think for a moment that the Bible is actually telling you historical truth. In fact the same people who believe in existential inspiration believe also in demythologizing the Bible. Demythologizing the Bible? That's right, that's a huge liberal movement that went on for years and years, centuries actually and demythologizing the Bible means getting all the myths out of the Bible. And what are the myths? The Trinity, the pre-existence of Christ, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the substitutionary death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ, the Second Coming of Christ, eternal judgment, we have to demythologize the Bible, we've got to get all of that out. Now you just take the rest of it and hopefully at some point as you read it, God will zap you and you'll have an ecstatic religious experience. This is what Francis Schaeffer used to call the leap of faith, a leap into nowhere. One writer says, "Such men refuse to believe that God performed the miracle of giving us by inspiration an

infallible Bible but are ready to believe that God daily performs the greater miracle of enabling men to find and see in the fallible word of man some infallible word from God." And how could you have a divinely correct experience through a humanly wrong book? God would be validating lies. God would be validating deception. The book itself, the Bible, is not benign, it claims to be the Word of God. It is either the Word of God or it is the biggest hoax ever. And you mean God is going to give you a legitimate spiritual experience through a hoax? Why would God do that?

But it's so sophisticated that you have philosophers like Kierkegaard saying things like, "Only the truth that edifies is truth for you." He was a modern post-modernist. If the whole biblical record is a lie, how could we accept the truthfulness of some spiritual experience induced by reading it?

Well there are a lot of wrong views. One final one, number five in my little list, is that it's mechanical dictation. This kind of goes the other way, that every word comes from God and the writers of the Bible were robots...mechanical dictation, this is what's called dictation inspiration. Because we say that God wrote every word, the liberals love to say, "That's great, that's great, you believe in dictation inspiration, that the writers were in some kind of a trance, that they were put into some kind of transcendent visionary mode and in that mode they became nothing more than a human machine writing down words which God caused them to write." It is true, God could have used dictation, could have. And we would have had an inspired text. But He didn't do that. There are many variations in style. There are many variations in the use of the language from author to author, distinct personalities are clearly obvious. Emotional attitudes come pouring through the writers as they write. God used writers, said the New Testament, who were carried along by the Holy Spirit, they were moved along by the Holy Spirit. They weren't out of the process; they were in the middle of the process. They were included in the very act of writing. In fact, they were writing their own heart attitudes, their own thoughts, their own insights, their own experiences, their own understanding under the total control of God.

That becomes apparent in several passages that are critical to our understanding. Let me show you three of them. Hebrews is a good place to start, Hebrews 1:1 and 2. There's a lot more to be said about these passages then we're going to say tonight. But in Hebrews chapter 1 verses 1 and 2, we have a good indication of the divine author of Scripture. "God after He spoke along ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son whom He appointed heir of all things to whom also He made the world." First of all, God has spoken, that is the key to a biblical understanding of inspiration...God has spoken. The Creator Himself removed the obstacles to our understanding of Him by revealing Himself...God has spoken by the prophets...and by that He means the writers of Scripture...in many portions, *polumeros*, many sections, many books, 66 to be exact, 39 in the Old, 27 in the New. He spoke in many sections and in many ways, *polutropos*. What does that mean? Through visions, prophecies, parables, typology,

symbols, ceremony, theophany, an audible voice...and all this was recorded in the Old Testament. All the times that God spoke and wanted it written down, it was written down. It was God speaking to the fathers in the prophets through many different sections, segments, books and in many ways, all collected together in the Old Testament. Now in these last days He's spoken to us again in His Son, and this is a reference to the New Testament. It is God speaking again. It is God's self-disclosure. The Old Testament is not a collection of wisdom from ancient men, it is the very voice of God through all the means by which He spoke, what He said and wanted inscripturated was written down by the writers of the Old Testament. In the New, He did the same and what He wanted written down is written down by the New Testament writers.

Two other texts just to call to your attention, 2 Peter 1...2 Peter 1 and verse 20. "But know this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." The key word that I'd like you to look at here is the word "moved...moved." It tells us at the end of verse 21 that men were moved by the Holy Spirit, carried along, borne along like a leaf floating downstream. They were in the process, carried along. In 1 Corinthians again, chapter 2 and verse 10, Paul writes, "But for us God revealed them," that is His glorious truths, He disclosed His revelation, "For to us God revealed them," is added but actually the whole of His revelation, "through the Spirit for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God, for who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him. Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world but the Spirit is from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God which things we also speak not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit." All of that is simply saying that they were taught things by the Spirit and those were the things that they received and wrote down. That's what it means to be carried along, to be moved along by the Holy Spirit to write these things down. Verse 21 again says, "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will." Prophecy here is a word that simply embraces all of Scripture, refers to all the Scripture, not just prediction as we think often of prophecy, it means the message, it means to stand before and speak, *prophemi(?)*, to speak before, to disclose, to talk in front of someone, to tell forth all that God has spoken, all that God has said, all that God has told in the Scripture. "All of it comes not by an act of human will, but by men moved by the Holy Spirit who speak from God." Therefore if you back up again to verse 20, "No Scripture, or no prophecy of Scripture, is a matter of one's own interpretation."

Now let me tell you about the word "interpretation," quickly. It is the word *epilusis...epilusis*. It can be the word releasing...releasing. And the word here almost means particularly inspiration. The genitive case usage indicates source. So the idea here is no prophecy of Scripture finds its release, finds its source in any one person. No prophecy is made by an act of the human will. All Scripture comes by the Holy Spirit as men are moved along, carried along like a ship raising its sails filled with the Holy

Spirit, carried in the direction He desired so that they write down what God has spoken.

One other passage, and again I'm giving you just a once-over-lightly on these texts. Second Timothy 3:16, a very familiar one, "All Scripture is God-breathed." That's where we started. "All Scripture," *pasa graphe theopneustos*, all writings, Scripture, all divine writing is God breathed, it is the very breath of God. That's why Romans 3:2 calls the Scripture a divine oracle, the oracles of God. God is the author of what the Bible says. You find this testimony given by many, many Bible writers, obviously. You read through the Old Testament over and over again, just a good exercise, read Jeremiah 1 say through Jeremiah chapter 3 and see how many times Jeremiah says, "Thus says the Lord...Thus says the Lord." He begins his prophecy, chapter 1 verse 4, "Now the Word of the Lord came to me saying..." He received the words that came right out of the mouth of God.

And so, we are to understand inspiration then as that revelation of God given to us in writing by the Spirit of God putting that message in the writer's mind, mingling in its...mingling it sovereignly and supernaturally with his own experience, his own vocabulary and out of that comes every word that God wants written. God has no problem using anything or anyone that He has made to achieve His own ends.

Scripture gives ample testimony that it is the Word of God. But I want to close tonight, and there's a lot more I could say about that, but I want to close tonight with the most important testimony, I think. And that is the testimony of Jesus Christ...the testimony of Jesus Christ. What was the view of Christ when it comes to Scripture? What did He think about the Scripture?

First of all, and I'll give you a little list of things, first of all He acknowledged that He was the theme of all Scripture. John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and these are they which bear witness of Me." Christ understood that He was the theme of all Scripture and that the Scriptures spoke accurately of Him. From the very beginning all the way through, the Scripture spoke accurately of Him. Luke 24:44, He opens the Old Testament and He teaches those on the road to Emmaus everything concerning Himself out of the Old Testament. So He is saying that as far as the Scripture goes it is a true and accurate representation of Me and I am, in fact, the theme of it all.

Second thing, He came to fulfill Scripture. That is He never came to correct it. He didn't come to edit it. He didn't come to alter it. He came to fulfill it. "Think not that I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets." There's nothing to be tampered with, there's nothing to be changed, there's nothing to be set apart, "I have come not to destroy it but to fulfill it." In Matthew 26:24 He says, "The Son of Man goes even as it is written of Him." I'm on a divine schedule, I'm doing exactly what has been written. He commanded Peter to put away his sword in that same chapter, Matthew 26, because He

said, "Peter, how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" He was fulfilling the Scripture in everything that He did.

Jesus then therefore said that He is the theme of all Scripture which is an accurate presentation of Him. That He came to fulfill Scripture and there was nothing in it that should be destroyed. On the other hand, every single part of it had to be fulfilled. He said, "Not one jot or one tittle would ever pass from that law until all of it was fulfilled." To Him Scripture was as a whole the revelation of God. That's why in John 10:35 He said, "Scripture cannot be broken." You can't cut it anywhere. You can't break it anyplace. It is cohesive, comprehensive, complete and whole. He compared Scripture's duration to the duration of the universe. And we all know that death comes when sin invades. Where there is sin there is death. The Word of God is pure and it endures forever. It is untouched by sin, which means it is perfect.

It was Jesus who emphasized the importance of every word...every word and every letter when He said, "Not a jot or tittle will ever fail." He said in Luke 18:31, "All the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished." He even based His interpretation of the Old Testament on a single word...a single word. The words do matter. Jesus was answering the Sadducees in Matthew 22 and He said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry...talking about the angels...nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God saying,'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?'" He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And His proof is that God said, "I am...I am the eternal living one." And furthermore, He is not only the eternal living one but all will live eternally as well. They didn't believe in a resurrection and He proved His point or certainly to our satisfaction proved His point by talking about the eternality of God in the verb to be in the present tense.

He placed Scripture also on an equal plane with His own words. You've got to watch out for red-letter Bibles because they might lead you to assume that the red letters, that which is spoken by Jesus, is more important than the other part, but they are not more important, however His words are equal. Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words shall not pass away." Scripture will not pass away and My words will not pass away. They are equal. His are not important, they are equal, neither will pass away. He acknowledged the power of the Word of God in temptation in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 when He was tempted He answered with Scripture. He referred to Scripture repeatedly by saying, "Have you not read...have you not heard...did you never read...is it not written...it is written?" On the cross He personally fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies when He said, "I thirst." Cause that's exactly what Psalm 22 indicated He would say. He confirmed the following accounts in the Old Testament by His own words, the creation of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel, Noah and the Flood, the role of Abraham, circumcision, the destruction of Sodom and Lot's

wife, the salvation of Lot, the call of Moses, the Law of Moses, the manna from heaven, the brazen serpent...I could go on and on and on. He affirmed the truth of the Old Testament.

Jesus established the sufficiency of Scripture to save when He said in Luke 16:29, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." That's all they need to keep them from hell. He showed them that the source of all error comes from not knowing the Scripture. Mark 12, "It is not...is it not for this cause that you error, you know not the Scripture, you do greatly error."

One tenth of the words that came out of Jesus that are recorded in Scripture were from the Old Testament. He quoted the Old Testament 180 times out of the 1800 verses reporting what He said. One tenth of the time He referred to the Old Testament. And He said He is the Truth, that He is the eternal Word, He is our model as far as how we approach the Bible.

Now finally this presents a three-fold possibility. One, there are no errors in the Bible based on the testimony of Jesus. Two, there are errors in the Bible but Jesus didn't know about them. Three, there are errors in the Bible and He did know about them and He covered them up.

There's only one possibility. If there are errors in the Bible and He didn't know about them, He's not God. If there are errors in the Bible and He knew about them and covered them up, He's the devil. But He is God and He is not the devil and there are no errors in Scripture. The authority of Christ really settles the issue of an inspired text. Scripture then becomes the binding word of Christ. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." The Scripture is the Word of Christ. He takes ownership of it all. In it 1 Corinthians 2:16 says, "You have the mind of Christ." When you bring the Word of God, you bring every thought captive to Christ, 2 Corinthians 10:5. Christ takes ownership of the whole Scripture and so should we confidently based on His testimony.

Much more to say but that's our time for tonight. Join me in prayer.

We thank You, Father, for the confidence that the Scripture brings to us on its own, that it is its own greatest defender for in it You truly speak. We don't know how the miracle of inspiration actually took place; we can't understand the pathology of that, the spiritual pathology of that. But we know it's true. We know that the writers wrote their own experience, their own insights, their perspectives and yet you made sure every word came from Your mind so that what we have is truly the Word of God. And may we know that this Word gives life, sustains life and one day will usher us into that eternal life that awaits us in Your presence. The entrance of Your Word gives light and that light is our life. We thank You for the Word, we thank You for the work it does, may it do its mighty work in us continually as we let us dwell in us richly. We pray in our Savior's name. Amen.

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