

Inspiration

Inspiration is the process in which God communicates His thoughts to man. Inspiration comes from the Greek word *'theopneustos'* or God-breathed. Inspiration can be both *oral* and *written*. Paul says [“which also we speak”](#) (1 Cor. 2:13), referring to inspired speech. The word “traditions” (*'didaches'*) is also used several times in the New Testament, not only for the added sayings of men (Matt. 15:1-7), but for what the apostles exhorted the saints by inspiration, first orally, then in writing while the canon was in building and not yet complete (Rom. 6:17; 2 Thess. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:2). The word *'didaches'* could also be translated “directions” or “instructions”. We have those same “instructions” with us today, in the completed canon of scripture. However, all scripture is inspired; not just the New Testament.

[“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”](#) (2 Tim. 3:16)

[“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”](#) (2 Pet. 1:21)

How does inspiration work? We don't know exactly. It is really a supernatural act of God. We do know that it involves a human element and a divine element. The divine element is the Spirit of God. We read in 2 Pet. 1:21 that the Spirit of God moved Holy Men to give prophecies. He explicitly states that it did not come by the will of man! That is, the inspired words ultimately came from God. The human element was that “holy men of God spake as they were moved”. The historical information (especially in the Old Testament) was passed down orally for decades or even centuries, but when it came time for that same information to be spoken or written through inspiration, the Spirit *moved* these men to do so.

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Did the inspired writers know what they were writing? There is a difference between the New Testament and Old Testament writers. The Old Testament writers in many cases did not understand what they were writing (1 Pet. 1:10-12) but the New Testament writers understood it first because it was revealed to them by the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12)

then they spoke or wrote those words by inspiration (1 Cor. 2:13).

“But we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God: which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual *things* by spiritual *means*. ” (1 Cor. 2:12-13)

Human fingerprints: Inspiration *not* Dictation. The same truth given to the Apostles and Prophets by *revelation* they then communicated by *inspiration* in words taught by the Spirit. A human means would not be suitable to convey the revealed truth of God to us! Therefore God inspired the writers of scripture (Old and New Testament) so that the communication of the truth would be flawless. Inspiration is when the Spirit of God works through a writer to record the Word of God. Inspiration is not dictation (as Muslims claim the Qua-ran was given). Dictation does not allow for the *human* fingerprints to be woven into the *divine* design. Woven into the scripture are the experiences, circumstances, and even the style of each special instrument; but it is all exactly according to the mind of God, with no mistakes. For example, the Spirit used Matthew (a tax collector) to write the Gospel which is most Jewish in character. He used John Mark, a restored servant to present Christ as the Perfect Servant, etc.

Verbal Inspiration. Another important point is that the very “words” are inspired, not merely the ideas or thoughts. What is inspiration? Inspiration is the communication of “*spiritual things*” (the thoughts of God) by “*spiritual means*” (the actual words). This is why using a literal translation (word-for-word) is important (KJV, ESV, NASB, DBY, YLT). The problem with dynamic translations (thought-for-thought) is that more often the assumed meaning of the text is transmitted by the translators (NIV, NLT). Even worse are paraphrases which are more like commentaries and are not worthy to be considered translations (MSG, TLB).

Summary. Scripture teaches a verbal, plenary inspiration. *Verbal*, because every word is important and meaningful. *Plenary*, because the Spirit employed multiple writers (~40) to write scripture. *Inspired*, because the words are written by the Spirit of God and carry God’s authority.

References:

[1 Cor. 2:10-16](#); [Matt. 15:3](#); [New Testament Apostles and Prophets](#);