



Systematic Theology

A row of white classical columns receding into the distance under a bright sky. The columns are fluted and have decorative capitals. The scene is brightly lit, with long shadows cast on the ground.

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Session 5: Inspiration & Inerrancy

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INSPIRATION



The Written Word as Revelation

- When we speak of the scriptures or the Bible, we are referring to God's Special Revelation
- Special Revelation is, by its nature, supernatural.
- Therefore, the process used to produce the scriptures is a supernatural process
- We **do not** approach the scriptures as primarily the result of naturalistic processes




The Meaning of Inspiration

- The Christian Doctrine of Inspiration affirms that the answers to life's big questions must come from above us
- The Meaning of Inspiration
 - The scriptures are, fundamentally, the words of God himself (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rev. 2:7)

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2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

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2 Peter 1:20-21

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.



Revelation 2:7

He who has an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit
says to the churches.

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The Meaning of Inspiration

- The Christian Doctrine of Inspiration affirms that the answers to life's big questions must come from above us
- The Meaning of Inspiration
 - The scriptures are, fundamentally, the words of God himself (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rev. 2:7)
 - The Scriptures are God's Words written by men (Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 15:17; 2 Peter 3:15-16)



Hebrews 1:1

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

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2 Peter 1:20-21

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.




Matthew 15:7

You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah
prophecy of you, when he said...



Luke 4:17-21

He who has an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit
says to the churches.

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2 Peter 3:15-16

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him...



The Meaning of Inspiration

Inspiration is the supernatural process by which God produces his written revelation by the Holy Spirit through the writings of men resulting in the writings of men being the very words of God.



What we do NOT Mean

- We do not mean that the scriptures are inspired in the same way we may speak of a book or a story as “inspired” or inspiring.
- We do not believe that God simply gave concepts and ideas to the human authors and they then expanded them and filled in the gaps as they wrote the scriptures.



What we do NOT Mean

- We do not believe that the scriptures are the words of men and become inspired as we read them.
- We do not mean that scripture was produced by people acting like robots or automatons, in some trance-like state without thought or feeling



What we do NOT Mean

- We do not mean that men produced writings that the Spirit found acceptable enough to “breathe into them.”



The Extent of Inspiration

- Inspiration extends to the WORDS themselves and to ALL the words that are inspired by the Holy Spirit
- This is referred to as VERBAL (words), PLENARY (every word) inspiration



Modern Challenges to Inspiration

- Loss of the Original Writings
- Partial Inspiration
- Experiential Inspiration
- Limitations of Human Language

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INERRANCY



The Meaning of Inerrancy

- The natural consequence of Inspiration in Inerrancy
- God's Words will bear God's Character
- Inerrancy, in a nutshell, affirms that God's Word is true



The Meaning of Inerrancy

- God's Word does not suffer from Human Limitations (Numbers 23:19)

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Numbers 23:19

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?



The Meaning of Inerrancy

- God's Word does not suffer from Human Limitations (Numbers 23:19)
- God's Word Provides Truthful Guidance and Hope (Psalm 18:30)



Psalm 18:30

This God—his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD proves
true; he is a shield for all those
who take refuge in him.



The Meaning of Inerrancy

- God's Word does not suffer from Human Limitations (Numbers 23:19)
- God's Word Provides Truthful Guidance and Hope (Psalm 18:30)
- Jesus Points to the Necessity of Scripture's Truthfulness for Holy Living (John 17:17)



John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth;
your word is truth.



The Meaning of Inerrancy

The conclusion scripture clearly leads us to is that God's word is without error, cannot contain error because of God's character, and, if it did contain error, would make Christian living impossible.



Challenges to Inerrancy

- Scientific Challenges
- Historical Challenges
- Moral Challenges



The Chicago Statement

God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.



The Chicago Statement

Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.



The Chicago Statement

The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author,
both authenticates it to us by His inward
witness and opens our minds to
understand its meaning



The Chicago Statement

Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.



The Chicago Statement

The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church