

Grace OPC High School Sunday Class Teaching Notes			
Year:	1 of 4		Date: 09/07/2003
Quarter:	1 of 4	Theology	
Lesson Title:	The Holy Scriptures - Part 2		
Lesson Purpose:	To examine the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture so that we understand what they are and why we believe them to be true. To see how translations of the Bible are to be handled in the light of these truths.		

1. Introduction

What did we see last week about the Holy Scriptures?

- God has revealed Himself to us generally through nature and more explicitly and specifically through His Word.
- Without His Word, we could not have known His will and the way of salvation
- His Word serves several other purposes also
- It comprises 66 books given by inspiration and called the canon (rule) of Scripture
- It does not include the books of the Apocrypha, though the Roman church accepts them.
- The church did not create the canon of Scripture but recognized it with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

This week, we will explore what is meant by the phrase “given by inspiration of God” (WCF 1.2), and we will deal with the Inerrancy of Scripture, as well as Bible translations (WCF 1.8).

2. What is the inspiration of Scripture?

This is the process by which God has given us the Bible, His Word.

The classic text on the subject is 2 Peter 3:16

2 Timothy 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16 All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Note that the word translated “inspired” here is *theopneustos*, or “God-breathed”

The Scriptures are the out-breathing of God (expiration!)

We know from other Scriptures that the breath of God and the Holy Spirit are the same.

Job 33:4 “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

So the inspiration of Scripture is a work of the Spirit of God

2 Peter 1:19 So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. **20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

Scripture continually claims its own inspiration (see examples in the Appendix)

2.1. Plenary Inspiration

Because God’s Spirit moved men to write the words of Scripture, it follows that all the Scriptures are inspired (see 2 Tim 3:16 above). We do not believe that some passages in the Bible are not inspired but others are. If that were the case, we would include the Apocrypha and writings of other men in our Bibles. All Scripture is God breathed! Plenary means full, complete in every respect. So we speak of the plenary inspiration of Scripture

2.2. Verbal Inspiration

Again, because the Spirit of God moved men in writing Scripture, we believe that Scripture was inspired down to the very words that the authors used in the original languages to express God’s truth. This is the testimony Scripture gives of itself:

Jeremiah 26:2 “Thus says the LORD, ‘Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak to all the cities of Judah who have come to worship *in* the LORD’S house all the words that I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word!”

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, **13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual words.

We constantly see authors in Scripture basing arguments on a single word

Matthew 22:45 "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I SAID, YOU ARE GODS'? **35** "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),

Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but *rather* to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ.

There are many other examples. All show us that the inspired authors of Scripture understood that the very words of Scripture were inspired by God.

2.3. Inspiration is not dictation!

Note that Scripture (the Word of God) was not simply dictated by God and written down by men. Rather, God superintended the authorship of Scripture to ensure that it was his Word but He never overruled the man's own writing style. James wrote like only James could write. Peter writes differently than Paul. Jeremiah has a different style and character than Isaiah. It follows:

- That a Scripture author's whole life and experience was shaped by God so that he could become an instrument in penning God's Word. God made Peter who he was, gifted him as he did and led him through all his life experiences so that he could write his letters the way he did; the same is true of Paul, John, Moses and so on for all the authors.
- That the written Word is the product of the divine and the human in a mysterious manner. Note the analogy with Jesus Christ, who, as the Living Word of God, is both human and divine.

3. What is the Inerrancy of Scripture?

Since all Scripture, down to the very words, are words that God chose, the resulting manuscripts in their original languages must be perfect and without error.

Not surprisingly, Scripture claims its own inerrancy.

3808 times, authors of the OT claim to be transmitting the very words of God

The psalmist says again and again, "the Law of the Lord is perfect", "Your law is truth" (Psalm 19, 119)

Christ argued from Scripture on the basis that it contained no error – He did not seek to correct anything it contained.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Note that inerrancy extends to the text, in the original language, and not to our interpretations of it.

It extends to every area on which the Scriptures touch, including science and not only to parts dealing with faith and life. We need to realize, though, that ideas were expressed in the language of the day and not modern technical terminology

Inerrancy does not imply omniscience of the authors. They were not acquainted with all the facets of the subjects with which they dealt.

4. Translations of Scripture (WCF 1.8)

We have seen that the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were inspired and are inerrant. God has wonderfully preserved texts in the original tongues and it is to these manuscripts that

the church must therefore appeal. However, we generally use translations because we are not familiar with Hebrew and Greek. There are different approaches to translation and some are better than others (see the lessons on Bible Versions next quarter). Our translations are not without error but we use them in order to gain access to the Word of God in our own tongues. This was a breakthrough of the Reformation, prior to which the scriptures were only available in Latin and the priesthood claimed sole right to possess and interpret them. Note also that the New Testament writers, and Christ Himself, were comfortable using and quoting from the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures), so that we have excellent precedent to follow in our use of translations!

5. Conclusions

All Scriptures are inspired of God (plenary inspiration)

The very words used in the original tongues were inspired (verbal inspiration)

Inspiration does not mean dictation

The Written Word is a mysterious product of the divine and the human and in this way resembles Christ, the Living Word

Because Scriptures are fully and verbally inspired, the original manuscripts were also inerrant in all areas upon which they touch – and we have access to remarkably preserved copies of the originals

Nevertheless, to grant ready access to the Word of God, it is to be translated into the languages of peoples around the world. We have warrant to do this since Christ and the Apostles made free use of a translation (the Septuagint) in their ministries.

6. Appendix – Scripture claims to its own inspiration

6.1. *Old Testament claims*

Ex 4:11-12 The LORD said to him, (Moses) "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Ex 33:11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young assistant Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Num 12:8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

1 Chron 28:19 "All this," David said, "I have in writing from the hand of the LORD upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan."

Isaiah 6:9 He said, "Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving."

Jer 1:9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth."

Amos 7:15 But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

Zech 1:6 But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers? "Then they repented and said, "The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do."

Over 1000 times "Thus saith the LORD" or its equivalent is used - not an empty formula

6.2. *New Testament claims*

6.2.1. Jesus confirmed the inspiration of the OT

Mark 12:36 "David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." "

Matt 5:18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a

pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Matt 26:54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

Luke 24:44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

6.2.2. The Apostles confirmed Divine origin of OT

Acts 1:16 and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus-

Heb 10:15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

Rom 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

Gal 3:16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.

6.2.3. Jesus Promised the inspiration of the NT

John 14:26 But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26-27 "When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

6.2.4. Paul claimed inspiration of NT

1 Cor 2 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1 Cor 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

Gal 1:11-12 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

1 Thess 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

1 Thess 4:15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Eph 3:3 that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

6.2.5. John claimed inspiration of NT

Rev 1:10-11 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

1 John 5:9 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.