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## Chapter 8.9

# The Creation of Scripture

## *The Meaning of 2 Timothy 3:16*

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### **Primary Points**

- 2 Timothy 3:16 simply states that Scripture is: written divine revelation.
- *Theopneustos* does not mean “inspired” but literally “expired by God.”
- Neither the word nor idea of “inspiration” is used anywhere by the biblical writers. “Inspiration” is simply not a biblical word.
- Scripture, like Creation, is another creation of the creative breath of God.
- Scripture gives us detailed descriptions of how Prophets and Apostles *received* revelation, but no descriptions of how they wrote it because this was a rather natural act that humans are capable of.
- We must gain our understanding of the different ways that Scripture was written by studying the different kinds of Scripture.
- In general, we perceive four kinds of Scripture including that which was 1) *deposited*, 2) *dictated*, 3) *researched*, and 4) *experienced*.
- *Deposited* Scripture refers primarily to Apostles who wrote from a store of supernatural knowledge gained through divine revelation.
- *Dictated* Scripture refers primarily to Prophets who wrote from dictation or recorded a revelation rather immediately after receiving it.
- *Researched* Scripture refers to the historical parts, especially reflected in Luke’s description of his Gospel and Acts as the result of him having “**investigated everything carefully.**” We believe the “wisdom” literature can be placed in this genre as well.
- *Experienced* Scripture refers to writing that reflects the personal experience of the biblical author such as what we often find in Psalms.

## A) The Creation of Scripture

### A.1) Scripture is written divine revelation

The most definitive statement on how God provided us with Scripture is given by the Apostle Paul in the following well known statement:

**All Scripture [graphē] is breathed out [theopneustos] by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.** (ESV 2 Tim 3:16) <sup>1</sup>

Here, we get a succinct description of what Scripture is: written divine revelation. The term "**Scripture**" is translated from the Greek *graphē*, which, as NT scholar G. W. Knight notes, "was used in the Greek of the day for any piece of writing." <sup>2</sup> However, the NT writers coined it for their own use to refer to a special kind of writing, because "in the NT ["Scripture"] is used only of holy scripture." <sup>3</sup> Still, in essence, "Scripture" means writing, and so in Paul's simple statement that, "**All Scripture is breathed out by God**" (2 Tim 3:16) we have the essence of what Scripture is: written divine revelation.

### A.2) Scripture is not "inspired"

In addition, the Apostle is speaking of the authority of Scripture here, as we have discussed elsewhere. <sup>4</sup> But Scripture's divine authority is based on the fact that it is "**breathed out by God.**" The ESV here is a very good translation of the Greek word *theopneustos* of which Dr. Knight writes:

is a compound of the word for God, [*theos*], and the verb "breathe," [*pneu*]. . . . The word may be properly rendered "Godbreathed," though under the influence of the [Latin] Vulgate "*inspirata*" the more common, but somewhat less accurate, English rendering has been "inspired by God" <sup>5</sup>

Several misunderstandings in modern translations can therefore be pointed out. First, it has been misguided to take Jerome's rendering of *inspirata* from the Latin Vulgate and coin the English word "inspiration" as accurately reflecting the Apostle's meaning. As we will note below, *theopneustos* does not mean "inspiration" but "breathed out."

Accordingly, the majority of translations that use the word "**inspired**" here are misguided (NASB, NLT, RSV, NRSV, KJV, NKJV, NET). Along these lines, Wayne Grudem writes:

Older systematic theologies used the word *inspired* and *inspiration* to speak of the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God. This terminology was based especially on an older translation of 2 Tim. 3:16, which said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." (KJV). However, the word *inspiration* has such a weak sense in ordinary usage today (every poet or songwriter claims to be "inspired" to write) that I have not used it in this text.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Grudem's concern regarding confusion with the concept of "inspiration" is even reflected in C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) who wrote: "If every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of Lights then all true and edifying writings, whether in Scripture or not, must be in some sense inspired."<sup>7</sup> Perhaps, but this illustrates another reason that, like Dr. Grudem, we avoid the word "inspiration" as well. Accordingly, John MacArthur seems uncharacteristically misguided to comment on 2 Timothy 3:16: "Scripture is the revelation conveyed, inspiration is the means of that conveyance."<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the NEB makes the mistake of not even recognizing the "*theo*" portion of "*theopneustos*" and translating the Greek simply as: "**inspired Scripture.**"

On the contrary, *theopneustos* literally means something that is "exhaled," or "breathed out," by God, or as the NIV puts it "**God-breathed.**" More specifically then, Paul is saying that Scripture is a product of divine expiration, instead of divine *inspiration*. Along these lines, B. B. Warfield (1851-1921), in the most detailed study of *theopneustos* to date, writes:

The Greek term has nothing to say of inspiring or of inspiration; it speaks only of [expiration]. What it says of Scripture is, not that it is "breathed into by God" or is the product of the divine "inbreathing" into its human authors, but that it is breathed out by God, "God-breathed," the product of the creative breath of God.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, then, most English translations are wrong to give the misleading term "inspiration" in this text. In fact, neither the word nor idea of "inspiration" is used anywhere by the biblical writers. "Inspiration" is simply not a biblical word.

In addition to its erroneous use in 2 Timothy 3:16, the NASB uses the word "**inspiration**" three other times. Twice it is used when translating the very common Hebrew word *lēb* ("heart," "mind") in Ezekiel 13:2, 17. Therefore, the NIV is better, rendering

the phrase, "**those who prophesy out of their own imagination** [mind, heart]," rather than "inspiration."

Also the NASB has "**inspired**" to translate the phrase *ish rūăch* in Hosea 9:7, referring to false prophets (as does NIV, NLT). The latter word is the very common Hebrew term for "breath" or "spirit," and therefore OT scholars Keil and Delitzsch<sup>10</sup> and Thomas McComiskey<sup>11</sup> translate it merely as "a man of the spirit" or "spiritual man" (as does RSV, NRSV, KJV, NKJV, ESV, NCV "spiritual person").<sup>12</sup> There is no need to translate *ish rūăch* as "inspired."

None of these biblical references carry either the theological meaning of "inspiration" (i.e. revelation through divine influence) or the popular idea of divine revelation through *divine/human mental telepathy*. This is why descriptions of divine revelation coming to humans is described as something "**revealed**" (1 Cor 2:6; Eph 3:5), a "**revelation(s)**" (2 Cor 12:1, 7; Gal 1:12; 2:2; Eph 3:3; Rev 1:1), a "**teaching**" or being "**taught**" (John 8:28; 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13), or something being spoken (cf. Gen 3:8; Num 7:89; John 16:12-13; Acts 1:3; 13:2; 1 Tim 4:1; "**the Lord says**" 184x in NIV OT), seen (cf. John 3:31; Acts 26:13-19; and "**I saw**" 31x in Rev) or heard (Deut 4:12; cf. 4:33; 5:24-26; Exod 19:19; Isa 6:8; cf. Ezek 1:25, 28; John 3:31; Acts 26:13-14; "I heard" 22x in Rev)

But never an "inspiration." Accordingly, you will not find an entry for "inspire" or any of its cognates, or even anything related to the idea, in any biblical Hebrew or Greek dictionary. But you sure find a lot of references to it in modern theology. Nonetheless, when the second century Bible Teacher Hippolytus (c. 170-235) described the manner in which the Apostles wrote Scripture he said:

First of all they were endowed with wisdom by the Word [Jesus], and then again were rightly instructed in the future by means of visions. And then, when thus themselves fully convinced, they spake those things which were revealed by God to them alone.

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There is no mention here of supernatural influence in the communication of the revelation the Apostles had received.

What Christian theologians really wish to convey with the word "inspired" is "divinely authoritative." Accordingly, we recommend that you insert the latter term whenever you see "inspired" in theological writing in order to understand the topic more clearly. Or instead of "inspiration" the phrase "how the Bible was written inerrantly" could be inserted.

### A.3) The divine creation rather than “inspiration” of Scripture

Because *theopneustos* is never used elsewhere in Scripture, nor in any Greek document before 2 Timothy, it is evident that the Apostle himself invented the word in order to succinctly communicate something about the origin and authority of Scripture.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, we must derive its meaning from similar concepts in Scripture. What then did Paul mean that Scripture is “**breathed out by God**”? The most likely and biblical understanding is that Paul is referring to God’s creative activity, or as Dr. Warfield put it, “the creative breath of God.” In other words, the Apostle is using a metaphor that reminds one of divine creation.

It is interesting to note the other remarkable things that are said to be created by the “breath” of God, including the creation of the Universe (Ps. 33:6) and humanity itself (Gen. 2:7). Scripture is simply another creation of God through the creative breath of God.<sup>15</sup> When God spoke, Creation came into existence, and likewise, when God spoke, Scripture came into existence. When Creation came into existence all kinds of actions resulted such as the multiplication of the human race, agriculture, governments, and cultures in general. Likewise, when God spoke to create Scripture, it initiated a flurry of human activity including the recording, copying, distributing, canonizing, translating, and teaching of the word of God.

Accordingly, the Apostle is not suggesting that God breathed divinity *into* Scripture, but rather, in a creative act, symbolized by the metaphor of breathing, God produced Scripture.<sup>16</sup> Nor is the Apostle saying something like, “Scripture is inspiring” like a song might be. Paul is simply saying God created Scripture.

## B) The Methods of Creating Scripture: *Dictated, Deposited, Researched, Experienced*

### B.1) Studying Scripture to understand how it was created

Because Scripture itself simply states that God created it, we have a great deal of freedom in developing ideas about *how* God created inerrant Scripture through human writers. Scripture itself does not define this. Accordingly, the respected Reformed scholar Sinclair B. Ferguson writes:

Inspiration [how the Bible was written inerrantly] is given no final explanation [in Scripture]. No doctrine of the exact

nature of inspiration is gained from 2 Timothy 3:16. This passage considers, as we have seen, the product of God's powerful working (his "breath"), not the way in which his Spirit has engaged men's lives and minds in order to create the product of Scripture.

The nature of inspiration cannot be determined in an *a priori* fashion from the simple fact of it. Nor, indeed, does 2 Peter 1:21, which speaks of the Holy Spirit's carrying or bearing the biblical authors, shed much light. The mode of inspiration must be discovered exegetically, not dogmatically, in an *a posteriori* manner, by the examination of the whole of Scripture, with special attention to its reflection on the mode of the production of its various parts.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Sinclair makes two important points. First, there is freedom in how we understand the method God used to create inerrant Scripture through humans. Accordingly, John McClintock and James Strong wrote: "The [Church] fathers had no definite theory of inspiration at all."<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Dr. Warfield admitted, "How it [Scripture] was given through them [authors] is left . . . without specific explanation."<sup>19</sup> We believe this is because after giving very detailed descriptions of how God *revealed* Scripture (e.g. apparitions, visions, Angels, etc.), no explanation of how Prophets and Apostles *recorded* that revelation was necessary because humans are able to do this with sufficient accuracy. God describes the supernatural part in detail (miraculously revealing and confirming revelation) but saw no need to explain the natural part of recording that revelation.

The second important thing that Dr. Sinclair points out above is that any understanding of how the human authors wrote their texts needs to be derived from looking at the nature and characteristics of their writing. Many Evangelicals simply wish to wave a magic wand over Scripture and call it "divine" without discussing the vastly different types of literature in it. There are differences in how its prophetic parts were created as compared to its historical parts. Accordingly, we have demonstrated many different ways that Apostles and Prophets received divine revelation and by which God created Scripture.<sup>20</sup> Simply saying the whole Bible is "inspired" is neither accurate nor helpful. We would say that the whole Bible is divinely authoritative.

We have already noted that the popular approach to understanding how the Scriptures were written is to develop one, all-sufficient theory that explains all the different genres of Scripture.<sup>21</sup> This is a mistake. Several different modes of writing

were involved in producing the different genres of Scripture. Accordingly, Dr. Ferguson writes:

Paul affirms that the product is God-breathed. But it came into being through a variety of means (careful research and study, ecstatic experience, and even, in the case of some parts, dictation).<sup>22</sup>

Along these lines, J. I. Packer writes:

It is clear that the psychological dimensions and phenomena of the process of divine revelation varied from one writer to another, and from time to time for the same writer. Thus, the divine revelation of the prophets delivering (and, also recording or dictating, cf. Jer. 36) God's oracles was psychologically dualistic, in the sense that they knew themselves to be simply relaying what they had received, with no admixture of their own thoughts (whatever they might have contributed to the material's poetic form).

The divine revelation of the historians was psychologically didactic, in the sense that they evidently wrote on the basis of research into facts and traditions and reflection on the most instructive shape to give their material. Something similar should be said about the wisdom writers, and about the anonymous editors and redactors who worked to give the prophetic and historical books their final form.

The divine revelation of the psalmists and poets was psychologically responsive and creative, in the sense that they crafted into shape the praises and prayers and celebratory declarations that welled up within them as they looked towards God.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, then, we perceive four kinds of Scripture in Scripture including that which was 1) *deposited*, 2) *dictated*, 3) *researched*, and 4) *experienced*.

## **B.2) Deposited Scripture**

In chapter 8.2 of this book, we discussed thoroughly the nature of apostolic revelation and their gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge (cf. 1 Cor 12:8; 14:6; 2:6-13, 16; 2 Cor 11:5-6; Eph 3:2-10). We spoke of the supernatural knowledge resulting from their revelatory experiences as *abiding* and wrote:

By *abiding* revelation we mean that the gifts of divine wisdom and knowledge gave the Apostles a store or depository of divine knowledge to write from, rather than

being directly, spontaneously, and continuously “inspired” as they wrote.

Accordingly, the Apostle seems to distinguish the gift of “**knowledge**” from a “**revelation**” or a “**prophecy**” in 1 Corinthians 14:6, suggesting that the latter two may be a more spontaneous, immediately given revelation, while “**knowledge**” may suggest a one time deposit of divine revelation and knowledge which numerous subsequent “words” or messages of divine wisdom and knowledge were based upon.<sup>24</sup> Along these lines, Erwin Lutzer writes: “[I]n some instances God endowed the [biblical] authors with ideas that they were allowed to write in their own words.”

While Dr. Lutzer suggests the *abiding knowledge* of apostolic revelation only occurred in “some instances,” we would suggest this is the pervasive nature of all the NT epistles. After God supernaturally granted the Apostles divine knowledge of New Covenant doctrine through the types of supernatural revelation discussed in the next chapter, they could rather naturally use that knowledge to speak and write authoritatively on these subjects, adapting their knowledge to different circumstances, and weaving such supernatural knowledge amongst more natural knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, we would suggest that the *deposited* type of Scripture, which is spoken or written from a store of supernatural knowledge gained in the past, can be detected when Christ said: “**Everything that I learned [past tense] from My Father I have made known to you**” (John 15:15).

### **B.3) Dictated Scripture**

While Apostles would seem to have written primarily out of previously supernaturally deposited knowledge, the revelations that Prophets recorded were often essentially dictated to them. We have discussed elsewhere the popular denial that any part of the Scriptures was written by a person merely dictating directly what God was saying to him, and have offered several examples of dictation in Scripture.<sup>26</sup> There we have written:

By dictation, we mean the act of writing or speaking word-for-word exactly what another person is saying, as they are saying it. In other words, there is absolutely no influence of the speaker or the recorder in what is said or written, but only the words of the one they are speaking or writing for. . . .

*Webster's* defines "dictation" as: "the act or manner of uttering words to be transcribed."<sup>27</sup> What else is happening when Isaiah says: "**The LORD said to me, 'Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz'**" (Isa 8:1)?

Erwin Lutzer, longtime Teacher at Moody Bible Church has succinctly written:

[S]ome of the Bible was dictated by God word for word. Moses did not add his own style when he wrote, "You shall have no other gods before Me." On many occasions the prophets received revelations from God, word for word, at other times they put the message in their own words. But dictation, as such, was rare; almost always the author's style can be recognized.<sup>28</sup>

While we would agree that dictation may have been a relatively rare mode of writing and speaking the word of God, it was perhaps more common than just the Ten Commandments that most are willing to concede. . . .

If we include within the genre of "dictation" those instances in which the biblical writer recorded the revelation rather immediately after receiving it, then we would suggest that much of the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Revelation can be ascribed to this mode of revelation and writing.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, we have elsewhere given several examples where Christ would seem to be describing dictation from the Father in His own speaking.<sup>30</sup>

## **B.4) *Researched Scripture***

### **B.4.a) The biblical research of Luke**

We have written elsewhere in *Knowing Our God* of the difference between *divine revelation* and *human research*.<sup>31</sup> The former, *divine revelation*, can be illustrated in Paul's claim:

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

And based on that supernatural knowledge, the Apostle wrote the descriptions of "**the Gospel**" we find especially in Romans and Galatians.

The latter, *human research*, is illustrated in how Luke received the information he used to write his Gospel. He explains:

**Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated [researched] everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.** (Luke 1:1-4)

And based on that rather natural, indirect, *human research* derived from his own personal experience and the "**eyewitnesses**" he evidently interviewed, this premier biblical historian wrote the history we find in Luke and Acts.

We must be careful in our distinction between *divine revelation* and *human research*. These categories were originally intended by us to distinguish the "supernatural" data we simply *read* in Scripture and the "natural" data we need to *research* from Creation. Still, they are useful categories here. In the description from Galatians above, the Apostle is speaking of a knowledge he received by direct revelation from God. On the other hand, *while the events Luke writes about were certainly divine revelations through the words and actions of people*, he did not receive knowledge of them through direct divine revelation from God, but rather, through research.

Make no mistake, the writing in Luke and Acts is as trustworthy as that in Romans. God has simply provided it in a different way. As we argue in the next chapter, humans are able to faithfully record history. <sup>32</sup> And it is a mistake to attempt to lump Luke and Paul's experience together in something called "inspiration." The Apostle did not need divine assistance to write the revelation he received. Likewise, we need not assume that Luke needed some sort of continual, mystical, supernatural divine influence on his mind to "**carefully investigate**" things and "**write an orderly account**" of them. He certainly doesn't claim any such need.

In other words, both the writings of Paul and Luke are equally trustworthy descriptions of the truth and actions of God, but they have been provided to us in different ways. Much of Paul's writing has a more supernatural source because its contents, such as the

Gospel, could not be obtained in any other way (cf. 1 Cor 1:18-2:6). Luke's writing has a much more natural source, being obtained by his personal experiences (notice the "we" passages in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16), or apparently interviewing "**eyewitnesses**" of the events he records. Nevertheless, just because the source of Paul's writing is often more supernatural than Luke's, it is not more true.

We need to remember the axiom that *God will not do for us what He has already enabled us to do*. *Super-supernaturalists* of all types forget this and invoke, claim, and require the supernatural intervention of God in places and times it is not needed. Claiming that Luke needed some sort of supernatural divine influence on his mind to do what he describes above is one more example of *super-supernaturalism*.

For example, Luke uniquely records many things about the early life of Christ that are not in the other Gospels. How did he know these things? Visions from God? *Divine/human mental telepathy* as in "inspiration"? No. *He interviewed* people who were known to have direct knowledge of these events, as he says, "**they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses.**"

For example, Mary, the mother of Jesus not only worshipped with the early Apostles (Acts 1:14), but she lived with the Apostle John (cf. John 19:27). No doubt she told her story from her perspective to many of the early Christians, including much of the history we have in Luke chapters 1-2. Accordingly, what we have in the Gospel of Luke is a "**carefully**" guarded and "**investigated**" historical account, not something directly and supernaturally revealed by God as Prophets and Apostles experienced in visions, apparitions, etc.

Accordingly, perhaps the most ancient description available of how Luke wrote his Gospel shows no sign of the need of any supernatural ability. The well-known *Muratorian Fragment* (c. A. D. 170-200) states:

The third book of the Gospel is that according to Luke. Luke, the well-known physician, after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken with him as one zealous for the law, composed it in his own name, according to the general belief [of others]. Yet he himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh; and therefore, as he was able to ascertain events, so indeed he begins to tell the story from the birth of John.<sup>33</sup>

This ancient document relates one reason that Luke did not need supernatural assistance or authentication to ensure the accuracy of his accounts. They could easily be compared by his

contemporaries with the “**many**” who had “**undertaken to draw up an account of the things**” (Luke 1:1) Luke wrote about.

Nevertheless, many have thought that some sort of supernatural operation was needed to ensure the reliability of Luke’s writing. Accordingly, Bruce Demarest and Gordon Lewis, Professors of Systematic Theology at Denver Seminary write something that is actually at odds with what Luke testified himself:

The introduction to the Gospel of Luke shows . . . how the writers [were] supervised by the Holy Spirit [while being] active in research . . . God . . . chose to work . . . miraculously in overseeing the production of . . . Luke’s Gospel (1:1-4) . . . In all their research, writers were supervised by the Holy Spirit . . . were kept from human error by an epistemological miracle.<sup>34</sup>

On the contrary, and as discussed elsewhere,<sup>35</sup> humans are capable of recording history and divine revelation accurately. And as also noted, if they didn’t they would have been corrected by God in regards to a revelation, or their contemporaries in regards to historical events.<sup>36</sup>

#### **B.4.b) Biblical research throughout Scripture**

The method that God used to produce the historical writings of Luke and Acts should not surprise us as this is precisely how much of 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles were written. C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) related:

The human side of Scripture is reflected not only in different styles of writing, but in the biblical writers’ use of secular archival records, prophetic annals, collections of poetry, and the like. Uninspired sources utilized by the sacred authors in the preparation of canonical Scriptures include the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. 1:18), the book of the annals of Solomon (I Kings 11:41), the book of the annals of the kings of Judah (I Kings 14:29), the records of Samuel the seer (I Chron. 29:29), the records of Nathan the prophet (I Chron. 29:29), the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer (2 Chron. 12:15), and the annotations on the book of the kings (2 Chron. 24:27).<sup>37</sup>

Accordingly, Everett F. Harrison, Professor of NT at both Dallas and Fuller Theological Seminaries, writes:

The Old Testament which was so heartily endorsed by Christ and so reverently held by the early Church to be the Word of

God had already been constructed in part along similar lines [as Luke and Acts], for the use of sources is often indicated throughout the historical books. We have no reason, therefore, to raise any *a priori* objection to this methodology in the composition of the Gospels.<sup>38</sup>

Along the same lines, J. I. Packer relates:

Scripture also shows us that inspired [sic] documents may be the product of first-hand historical research (as Luke's gospel is), and of direct dependence on older written sources (as Chronicles depends on Kings), and even of wholesale borrowing (compare 2 Peter and Jude).<sup>39</sup>

Older theologians have remarked the same. William Sanday (1843-1920) from Oxford wrote:

It cannot be said that the writing of history as practiced by the Hebrews required, or that as a matter of fact it shows, signs of supernatural intervention. The Hebrew, like the Greek or Roman, made use of previously existing documents or of oral tradition.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, we will quote James Orr (1844-1913), a founder of American "fundamentalism," yet a clear thinker on the nature of divine revelation. He wrote:

It is not uncommon to hear inspiration spoken of as if it rendered the subject of it superior to ordinary sources of information, or at least was at hand to supply supernaturally all gaps or deficiencies in that information. The records of the Bible have only to be studied as they lie before us to show that this is an entire mistake. . . .

In historical matters it is evident that inspiration is dependent for its knowledge of facts on the ordinary channels of information—on older documents, on oral tradition, on public registers, on genealogical lists, etc. No sober-minded defender of inspiration would now think of denying this proposition. One has only to look into the Biblical books to discover the abundant proof of it. The claim made is that the sources of information are good, trustworthy, not that inspiration lifts the writer above the need of dependence on them. . . .

Where sources of information fail, or where, as may sometimes happen, there are lacunae, or blots, or misreadings of names, or errors of transcription, such as are incidental to the transmission of all MSS., it is not to be supposed that supernatural information is granted to supply the lack. Where

this is frankly acknowledged, inspiration is cleared from a great many of the difficulties which misapprehension has attached to it.<sup>41</sup>

#### B.4.c) The biblical research of Solomon

We believe much of what Solomon wrote in Proverbs was more a matter of *human research* than *divine revelation*. We gain a description of God's gift to him when we read:

**God said to him, "Because you have asked . . . for yourself understanding to discern what is right [intelligence to make judgments<sup>42</sup>], behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind [*l'eb*: "mind"] so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.** (1 Kgs 3:11-12)

Likewise, the result of Solomon's gift is described a few verses later:

**And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind ["mental capacity to embrace the most diverse departments of knowledge"<sup>43</sup>] like the sand on the seashore,<sup>30</sup> so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. . . .<sup>33</sup> He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish.** (1 Kgs 4:29-30, 33, ESV)

In other words, instead of giving Solomon supernatural, direct *divine revelation* and knowledge regarding the practical life wisdom and scientific knowledge he wrote of, we believe that God gave him a particularly intelligent mind, or as OT scholars Keil and Delitzsch comment on the phrase, "**breadth of mind**," a "mental capacity to embrace the most diverse departments of knowledge."<sup>44</sup> It wasn't knowledge itself that God gave him, but an extraordinary desire and ability to learn and research things.

Solomon describes the result of God's gift himself elsewhere, "**I devoted myself** [lit. "set my mind" NASB] **to study** [*darash*: "seek, inquire, search, investigate"] **and to explore** [*tur*: "seek out"] **by wisdom all that is done under Heaven"** (Eccl 1:13). Keil and Delitzsch comment:

The synonyms [*darash*] (to seek) and [*tur*] (to hold survey over) . . . represent . . . two kinds of searching: one penetrating in depth, the other going out in extent; for the former of these verbs (from the root-idea of grinding, testing) signifies to investigate an object which one already has in hand, to penetrate into it, to search into it thoroughly; and the latter verb (from the root-idea of moving round about) signifies to hold a survey,—look round in order to bring that which is unknown, or not comprehensively known, within the sphere of knowledge . . . It is the usual word for the exploring of a country, *i.e.*, the acquiring personal knowledge of its as yet unknown condition . . . an intellectual search [including] . . . research and observation.<sup>45</sup>

In other words, the Hebrew describes the fact that Solomon's knowledge and practical wisdom regarding life came from an extraordinary thirst for knowledge, an extraordinary opportunity and financial means to obtain it, and an extraordinary intelligence to understand it. In other words, Solomon was the researcher of all researchers and God enabled him to be so.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps our claim that Solomon did not receive direct, divine revelation from God as a Prophet is further proven by the fact that there is no record of him predicting the future or performing a miracle, which we believe was required of anyone claiming such revelation in order to authenticate themselves. The truth of Solomon's wisdom is authenticated by life, not miracles.

### **B.5) Experienced Scripture**

This category of Scripture is reflected in those portions in which the biblical author is simply writing out of their personal life experience. Many of the Psalms would seem to be a good example of this. For example, David writes:

**He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support.** (Ps 8:16-18)

How did David know these things? Not by a vision or apparition, but by experiencing a personal revelation of God in his life. Again, it is not that *researched* and *experienced* Scripture do not involve divine revelation, it is simply that such writing does not come from

direct revelation from God as much of prophetic or apostolic revelation did.

*Experienced* Scripture is closely related to *researched* Scripture because the biblical authors personally experienced the history they wrote about. Nonetheless, the “we” passages in Acts which Luke personally experienced can be distinguished from, for example, the data in chapter 1 which he probably received from the Apostles themselves.

Obviously, the Apostles Matthew and John wrote out of personal experience, not historical research as did Luke. Accordingly, John writes elsewhere:

**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.** (1 John 1:1-3)

Clearly, what John wrote of Jesus came in a significantly different way than Luke’s “investigation.” Which is another reason why describing all of Scripture as “inspired” is misleading as it implies it came by direct revelation to all. Scripture is all authoritative and inerrant, but not “inspired.” And none of these modes of writing involved, nor needed, some sort of immediate divine/human mental telepathy. Not even the parts of Scripture that God dictated to Prophets occurred in that way.

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## ***Extras & Endnotes***

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### ***Gauging Your Grasp***

- 1) What is our interpretation of 2 Timothy 3:16? Do you agree or disagree and why?
- 2) We claim that neither the word nor idea of “inspiration” is found in Scripture. Do you agree or disagree and why?

- 3) What is the similarity between Creation and Scripture being communicated in 2 Timothy 3:16?
- 4) Why do we claim that Scripture does not give us detailed descriptions of how Prophets and Apostles recorded their revelations? Do you agree or disagree and why?
- 5) What four kinds of Scripture do we see in Scripture? Do you agree or disagree and why? What do we mean by each of them and what are some primary examples?

### **Publications & Particulars**

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<sup>1</sup> Too much has been made by more liberal scholars of the NEB rendering of *pasa graphe* as, "**Every inspired Scripture . . .**," suggesting that only parts of the Bible are "inspired Scripture" but not all Scripture is "inspired." While this construction is a possible translation, one can hardly find another translation that adopts it. Regardless, Paul is speaking about the authority of divine writings, which he here calls "Scripture", and all such writings have divine authority for Paul.

Nonetheless, the following describes the Greek issues well:

The word which for our purpose is of supreme importance is the word *theopneustos*, translated in the English Bible, "inspired of God." It is a compound, consisting of the elements *theo* (God) and *pneustos* (breathed). Now, it is well to note that the word ends in the three letters *-tos*. In the Greek language, words which 1) end in *-tos* and 2) are compound with *theo* (God) are generally passive in meaning.

An example will make this clear. There is a Greek word *theodidaktos*, (many others might also be brought forth) which means "taught of God." As may be clearly seen, it ends in *-tos* and also contains the element *theo* (God). Precisely similar is the important word which we are now engaged in considering, namely, *theopneustos*. It likewise is passive in usage, and we should properly translate, "breathed of God."

This point is often overlooked, and there have been those who have somewhat vigorously insisted that the meaning is active. They would therefore translate by the phrase "breathing out God," in the sense that the Scriptures breathed forth or were imbued with the Spirit of God. Such, however, as has been noted above, is not the true meaning. The true meaning is passive, "that which is breathed out by God," and it is this strange designation that the Apostle here applies to the Old Testament Scriptures. Young, 20.

Likewise, George W. Knight III relates concerning *theopneustos* in 2 Timothy 3:16:

If this is a passive verbal form, it indicates that scripture's source is the breath of God, i.e., that scripture itself is a result of that action. If it is active, it indicates that scripture is filled with God's breath and

that it breathes out the Spirit of God. The latter was argued by Cremer in a later edition of his *Lexicon* (cf. pp. 730-32 in contrast with the other position, p. 282).

But Warfield demonstrates that in patristic literature the word bears "a uniformly passive significance, rooted in the idea of the creative breath of God" (*Inspiration and Authority*, 275; see further 245-96). He further indicates that this conclusion is confirmed by "the consideration that compounds of verbals in *-tog* with *theos* normally express an effect produced by God's activity" (281; see 281f. for a list of more than seventy-five such compounds; cf., e.g., *theodidaktos*, "instructed by God," 1 Thes. 4:9). He notes that this is in accord with "the Hebraic conviction that God produces all that He would bring into being by a mere breath" (286). Warfield's study has proved to be so convincing that BAGD list only his work in its bibliographic note on *theopneustos*. (*Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (NIGTC)* [Eerdmans, 1992], 446

<sup>2</sup> Knight, 445.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the authority of Scripture see chapters 7.7-7.9.

<sup>5</sup> Knight, 446.

<sup>6</sup> Grudem, 75, fn. 6.

<sup>7</sup> C. S. Lewis in *C. S. Lewis on Scripture*, M. J. Christensen ed. (Word, 1979), 15.

<sup>8</sup> John MacArthur, *MacArthur's New Testament Commentary*, Electronic Edition STEP Files CD-ROM (Parsons Technology, 1997), 2 Tim 3:16.

<sup>9</sup> B. B. Warfield, "Inspiration," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., 4 vols. (Eerdmans, 1988), 2:840

<sup>10</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Electronic Edition STEP Files CD-ROM (Findex.com, 2000), Hosea 9:7.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas McComiskey, "Hosea and Amos" in *The Minor Prophets*, 3 vols. (Baker, 1992, 1993, 1998), Hosea 9:7.

<sup>13</sup> Hippolytus, *Antichrist*, 2; online at [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org).

<sup>14</sup> NT scholar I. H. Marshall writes: "This is the earliest known occurrence, [of *theopneustos* in Greek literature] and it is possible that the writer coined it. (*The Pastoral Epistles* [T & T Clark, 1999], 794).

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Packer writes:

The "breath" or "spirit" of God in the Old Testament denotes the active outgoing of divine power, whether in creation (Ps. 33:6; Job 33:4; cf. Gen. 1:2; 2:7), preservation (Job 34:14), revelation to and through prophets (Isa. 48:16; 61:1; Mic. 3:8; Joel 2:28ff), regeneration (Ezek. 36:27), or judgment (Isa. 30:28, 33). The New

Testament reveals this divine "breath" (Greek *pneuma*) to be a Person of the Godhead. God's "breath" (the Holy Spirit) produced Scripture, as a means to the conveyance of spiritual understanding.

Whether we render *pasa graphe* as "the whole Scripture" or "every text," . . . Paul's meaning is clear beyond all doubt. He is affirming that all that comes in the category of Scripture, all that has a place among the "sacred writings" (*hiera grammata*, 2 Tim. 3:15), just because it is God-breathed, is profitable for the guiding of both faith and life. ("The Inspiration of the Bible" in *The Origin of the Bible*, ed. Philip W. Comfort [Tyndale, 1992], 30)

<sup>16</sup> Carl F. H. Henry noted:

[W]hereas Barth emphasizes the "inspiring" of Scripture—that is, its present use by the Holy Spirit toward hearers and readers—the Bible itself begins further back with the very "inspiredness" of the sacred writings. The writings themselves, as an end product, are assertedly God-breathed. (*Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought* [Baker, 1958], 146)

<sup>17</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, "How Does the Bible Look at Itself?" in *Inerrancy & Hermeneutic*, ed. Harvey Conn (Baker, 1988), 56.

<sup>18</sup> John McClintock and James Strong, "Inspiration", in *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, CD-ROM (Ages Software, 2000), 225.

<sup>19</sup> Warfield, *ISBE*, 2:845.

<sup>20</sup> Regarding the variety of ways that God provided divine revelation for Scripture see chapter 10.7, 9.5, and 8.3.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding the mistaken attempt to develop one, all-sufficient theory that explains all the different genres of Scripture see section 8.8.D.4.

<sup>22</sup> Ferguson, 55.

<sup>23</sup> J. I. Packer, *Truth & Power* (Harold Shaw, 1996), 69

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion on the distinction between the gifts of prophecy and Apostleship see section 9.4.B.

<sup>25</sup> Excerpt from section 8.2.D

<sup>26</sup> Regarding dictation in Scripture see section 9.5.C.

<sup>27</sup> *Webster's Dictionary* online at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dictation>.

<sup>28</sup> Erwin Lutzer, *Seven Convincing Miracles* (Moody, 1999), 22-3.

<sup>29</sup> Excerpt from section 9.5.C.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>31</sup> For further on the difference between *divine revelation* and *human information* see section 2.3.C.1. For examples of *human research* see chapter 2.5.
- <sup>32</sup> Regarding the human ability to accurately record history see section 8.10.D.4.
- <sup>33</sup> *Muratorian Fragment*, translation by Bruce M. Metzger; online at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/muratorian.html>.
- <sup>34</sup> Bruce Demarest & Gordon R. Lewis, *Integrative Theology*, 3 Vols. (Zondervan, 1987, 1990, 1994), I.149, 162.
- <sup>35</sup> Regarding human ability to sufficiently record divine revelation without some supernatural influence called "inspiration" see chapter 8.10.
- <sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, there are still those who have felt a need to *super-supernaturalize* Luke's writing. Reformed scholar Louis Berkhof (1873-1957) reported that:

Athanasius states that the Gospel of Luke was dictated by the apostle Paul. In view of the preface of the gospel we may be sure that the Church fathers exaggerate the influence of Paul in the composition of this Gospel, possibly to give it apostolic authority.

Paul's relation to the third Gospel differs from that of Peter to the second [Mark]; it is not so close. Luke did not simply write what he remembered of the preaching of Paul, much less did he write according to the dictation of the apostle, for he himself says that he traced everything from the beginning and speaks of both oral and written sources that were at his command.

Among these oral sources we must, of course, also reckon the preaching of Paul. That the great apostle did influence Luke's representation of "the beginning of the Gospel," is very evident. There are 175 words and expressions in the gospel that are peculiar to Luke and Paul. Cf. Plummer p. LIV. (*Introduction to the New Testament* [Benediction Classics, 2010]).

Likewise, the renowned British NT scholar J. B. Lightfoot (1828-1889) evidently tried a different route to *super-supernaturalize* Luke's account:

There are some Scripture passages that point to the inspiration of the gospel records. The older Lightfoot, (*Works* IV p. 1193, 114; XII p. 7, and following him Urquhart, *The Bible its Structure and Purpose* I Ch. 5), find a proof for the inspiration of Luke's Gospel in 1:3, where they would translate the words *παρηχολουθηχότι ἄνωθεν* by "having had perfect understanding of all things *from above*."

This interpretation is favored by the fact that *ἄνωθεν* has this meaning in eight of the thirteen times that it occurs in the New Testament, and in three of the remaining instances means *again*, while it is translated "from the beginning" only here and in Acts 26:4. The expressed purpose of Luke in writing his Gospel also falls in exceedingly well with the rendering *from above*. It is, he writes to Theophilus, that you may have the *certainty* of those things in which you have been instructed."

Yet the verb παρακολουθέω, meaning, *to follow up carefully*, and thus, *to obtain knowledge*, argues decisively against it. (Berkhof)

Also, see Darrell Bock, *Luke (BECNT)* (Baker, 1994), 60-61 who does not even mention Lightfoot's translation as a possibility.

<sup>37</sup> Lewis, 139.

<sup>38</sup> Everett F. Harrison in *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, Carl F. H. Henry, ed. (Baker, 1958), 243.

<sup>39</sup> J. I. Packer, "*Fundamentalism" and the Word of God* (Eerdmans, 1958), 78. Insert "authoritative" at "inspired."

<sup>40</sup> William Sanday, *Inspiration* (Green & Co., 1903), 401.

<sup>41</sup> James Orr, *Revelation and Inspiration* (Eerdmans, 1952), 163-5.

<sup>42</sup> Keil and F. Delitzsch, *in. loc.*

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, Solomon's relationship with the relatively ancient and advanced culture of Egypt could have been a source of research for particularly his scientific knowledge. So, even though his knowledge surpassed "**all the wisdom of Egypt**" (1 Kgs 4:30) he may have learned from it as well. Keil and Delitzsch comment:

[T]he wisdom of the Egyptians, which was so greatly renowned as almost to have become proverbial (cf. Isa 19:11; 31:2, and Acts 7:22; Joseph. *Ant.* viii. 2, 5; Herod. ii. 160), extended over the most diverse branches of knowledge, such as geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology (*Diod. Sic.* i. 73 and 81), and as their skill in the preparation of ointments from vegetable and animal sources, and their extensive acquaintance with medicine, clearly prove, embraced natural science as well, in which Solomon, according to [1 Kgs 4] v. 33, was very learned.

However, even some of his moral knowledge evidently derived from Egyptian sources. While Proverbs 22:17-23:14 (labeled "Sayings of the Wise" in the Hebrew MSS) is convincingly demonstrated to be written by Solomon by Keil and Delitzsch, OT scholar R. K. Harrison notes in his well regarded *Introduction to the Old Testament*:

The first collection of the "Sayings of the Wise" (Prov 22:17-23:14) has . . . been regarded as dependent upon the [Egyptian] *Wisdom of Amenophis*. . . [O]nly about one-third of the section corresponds at all closely with the *Wisdom of Amenophis*, and the remainder is either Israelite in origin or derived from other sources, as for example, in the case of 23:12, which is borrowed from the oriental *Sayings of Ahikar*. . . . That there is a general connection between this portion of Proverbs and the [Egyptian] *Wisdom of Amenophis* is scarcely in dispute. ([Prince, 1999], 1014-15).

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At the time of Solomon there was a large collection of wisdom literature from ancient cultures that he was exposed to, such as Babylonian and Chaldean texts in addition to Egyptian ones. OT scholar Dave Hubbard notes: "Egyptian instructions [of wisdom] of Ptahhotep (ca. 2450 B.C.) and Merikare (ca. 2100 B.C.) were ancient volumes by Solomon's time" ("Proverbs, Book of" *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, Geoffrey Bromily, ed., 4 vols. [Eerdmans, 1986], III:16).

Likewise, the Hebrew culture itself had an oral tradition of wisdom that Solomon could have gained knowledge from. Dr. Harrison writes:

In common with other races of antiquity . . . the Hebrews possessed a number of wisdom-utterances that probably circulated at least partly in oral form prior to being collected and preserved in writing. These sayings enshrined certain truths gleaned from the experience of life, and while they were intended to serve as practical guides for successful living, they ultimately reached back for inspiration and vitality to the distinctive features of the Israelite faith. In this sense, therefore, they can never be regarded as purely secular in the sense in which the proverb is sometimes understood. (1010)