**The Inspiration of the Bible, No. 2 – BD42-01**

We continue this morning with the study of the inspiration of the Bible. This is the second in the series. We have looked at two primary passages. The first one was 2 timothy 3:16-17. This passage told us that all Scripture is God-breathed which means that the contents of the entire Bible was produced by the creative breath of God. It is His Word. The contents of the Bible therefore originated with God and not with the human authors who actually wrote the books of the Bible.

The second passage we looked at was 2 Peter 1:21. This passage tells us that the writers of the Bible, while they wrote, were carried along by God the Holy Spirit in their writing. That is, God the Holy Spirit selected certain men as communicators of the written Scriptures and they were set aside to this purpose. As a matter of fact, God actually prepared these men. We are not to think that God one day came to the point where He needed the book of Romans written, and then he went and he looked out about for the people who were available, and He looked around and said, “Where can I find a man to write Romans in the right way who’s got the background and preparation.” All of this was in the providence and the preparation of God ahead of time. So this verse, 2 Peter 1:21 tells us how God produced the Bible which we have today; that is, the Holy Spirit superintended what the authors wrote so that they delivered an accurate record.

Now it is very important that you understand that these verses are telling us that God produced the Bible. So as we look at some of the alleged errors in the Bible, and we need to get into that to actually look at some of the errors that are claimed for the Bible, you will realize that anytime we say there is an error in the Bible, we are saying that God has made a mistake because the book is His production.

So the definition that we have of inspiration is that inspiration is the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures as a result of which we Scriptures possess divine authority and trustworthiness, and possessing such are free from error in both words and thoughts. We asked the question, “How do we know the Bible is inspired?” The first answer we gave was because the Bible claims it is inspired. Now it is very important for you to note that the Bible does not say that it is not inspired. And it is important for you to note that the Bible is not silent about inspiration. Now the liberal makes fun of this when we say that we believe the Bible is inspired because the Bible claims to be inspired. Yet if the Bible did not claim to be inspired or if it claimed that it simply was not inspired, this same liberal would quite readily point out to us that we are going far beyond what the Bible says for itself when we claim inspiration to it. He wouldn’t hesitate for one moment to point out that the Bible doesn’t say it’s inspired. The Bible claims it’s not inspired (if we were to say it were). So it’s not wrong for us to say it is inspired because the Bible does claim this.

We can also make this statement on the basis of the fact that the Bible is a reliable proven accurate book that justifies our believing its claim. In other words, why should we start with an attitude that we won’t believe the Bible? We could just as well, as believers, start with the attitude that we will accept the Bible until it has demonstrated to be an unreliable source of information which it is not.

Now ultimately the final proof, of course, is the internal conviction that God the Holy Spirit gives us. You and I study the Bible. We use Bible principles, and in time it dawns on us, “This book is supernatural. This book is right. It’s always right. This book works.” And it strikes us under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, “This is God’s book.”

So the mind of the Christian has been remade by God the Holy Spirit, and therefore he is capable as a believer of accepting the truth about inspiration which the Bible claims for itself. The unbeliever treats the Bible as false because his mind is incapable of receiving what the word says. Now theologians from New Testament times have firmly held to the inspiration of the Bible and its infallibility. I don’t want you to think that this is something new and recent. All during the ages men have held that the Bible’s claim to inspiration is a valid claim. However this is no longer true today. Now today most ministers actually reject the inspiration of the Bible. Most Christian religious organizations reject the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. When you do this, you in effect reject the whole foundation of Christianity. There is a body of revealed truth—the Bible.

This is a question of how we can get spiritual knowledge. How do we get knowledge about the other side? This is the issue that is before us. Can we come to this knowledge through human reasoning, or do we need an accurate inspired Bible to give us the information we need to know? The technical word for that is epistemology. Epistemology has to do with how we learn things. Scripture is the necessary link epistemologically between sinful man and an inscrutable God. We have sinful man and we have a god out here that cannot be known, and the link between them is Scripture. If that link is broken there is no contact with what God knows and with what God has to say to us with what is true about sin and about ourselves and so on.

So Scripture’s essential function is the conveying of divine viewpoint to our minds, and this has been virtually abandoned by ministers today. So believers are hard pressed to do the primary thing that God has called them to do. The number one thing that God has called us to do is to make disciples. If you have any doubt about that, you had better start checking the Great Commission passages because the Great Commission passages make this the prime call of the church—making disciples, and you make disciples only one way, and that is by instructing people in the Word of God. And there is only one way that you will make yourself a disciple and that is by learning the principles of the Word of God. Without that you’ll be man’s disciple, and you may be very successful in what you’re doing, and you may be in a very engaging religious operation, but you will not be the Lord’s disciple. This is what we’re called to do.

Now when ministers reject the Word of God, and therefore when you walk to other programs, and we’re going to talk a little bit about this tonight—this obsession that Christians have with getting out and doing something for the Lord, and getting things in the wrong order. The Bible is very instructive on what God’s order is. God’s order is, first you become my disciple. First you enter into the Word, and you can do this the very day that you’re born again. You can immediately come to the point where commensurate with your state of maturity and development you have a service to perform, but that service always begins with that learning and taking in the Word of God so that you can function on that basis.

Now if you cannot feed your soul, you’re through. Once you stop feeding your soul, you’re through. If you happen to be a young adult in this church who has grown up here from the days of your childhood, you are under a very great hazard, I’ll tell you right now. Because you probably have picked up the idea that you have such a heritage from your long days under a biblical area in the church ministry that you’ve got it made. I can tell you that you can retrogress and you can backslide overnight into practically nothingness. Unless you sustain yourself on the Word of God, unless you keep feeding your soul, your soul will be in trouble. You cannot slide on a heritage as good as it may be of spiritual things.

So believers today are extremely hard-pressed because ministers say the Bible is full of errors. It is not God’s Word. We have to evaluate it by reason and judge what’s worthwhile in it.

Now those who still believe biblical teachings are dismissed, as one writer said, as “rather pitiful remnants of medieval credulity, the prisoners of a fossilized tradition.” Now they’re talking about you. So when you leave this morning you may greet one another as a fellow fossil who still believes in the Word of God. Modern man’s problem is with the Bible’s infallibility, but this is not due to the alleged errors. It’s due to the fact that he has a natural distinctive profound dislike for the claim of the Bible that it has authority and that it has divine truth, and when it speaks the issue is settled.

Actually to the liberal today the Bible can only provide you certain things. It can’t provide content for religious matters. That’s the kind of Bible that the average person is confronted with when he sits in church Sunday by Sunday. When a man leaves the solid ground of Bible doctrine, he inevitably goes to an emotional basis. He has no spiritual frame of reference. Emotion becomes his frame of reference, and then Satan’s playground is wide open.

**The Extent of Inspiration**

This morning we’re going to look at the extent of inspiration. We have talked about what the Bible claims. Whether you agree to it, accept it, or reject it, the Bible claims inspiration. We have spelled out what the Bible claims for itself. Now we need to clarify the extent of what the Bible means when it says it is inspired.

**Verbal Inspiration**

The first aspect of inspiration is verbal. When the Bible claims inspiration, it is talking about the words on the page of the original writings. The Holy Spirit guided the Bible writers in the choice of every word which they used. Now the writer’s style, his vocabulary, his background, his personality, all of that was preserved. When he sat down and wrote a book of the Bible, he was not under the impression that he was in some kind of a trance, that he was having a vision, that he was hearing a voice from God and copying the words that God was dictating to him. He just wasn’t conscious of anything more than the fact that he was sitting down and writing a letter home to his mother or something. But God, because at that point he was writing a letter that God intended to put into the canon of Scripture, God at that point moved in on the writer and superintended and directed him within his own personality, his own vocabulary, and his own style of writing to produce an absolutely accurate record as to the words which he used. God the Holy Spirit did not permit him to use the wrong words in expressing a line of doctrine.

So the whole Bible, every word of it in its original autographs, are the words which God the Holy Spirit directed the writers to use. This accuracy applies only to those original writings. We wouldn’t say this for your translation. We’re not saying that God the Holy Spirit wrote every word in the Bible that you have in your English translation.

So this verbal inspiration pertains to the words of the Bible. They are God’s words in the style and vocabulary of the writer. You cannot convey thoughts apart from the right words. You may try to think thoughts, but you will not think them apart from words, and that’s why words are important.

When a businessman sits down to write a letter, he will call on his secretary, and because he wants to convey certain thoughts to the recipient of that letter, he dictates the very words he wants her to write. If he doesn’t care how the thoughts come out, he just gives her the general thought and he says, “Put it in your own words,” and he lets her write it. But when he wants to put it exactly in the way he is thinking it, then he tells her what words to put down.

Now the Bible writers sometimes were called upon to write about things that were absolutely beyond their knowledge. They were asked to write about things that were beyond the scientific understanding of the age. Therefore God had to come in and give them the correct words to use to describe what they were saying. For example, in Isaiah 40:22 we read, “It is He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants there are like grasshoppers.” Now for Isaiah to describe the shape of the earth, God the Holy Spirit had to give him the words to use to describe it because at the time people didn’t know what the shape of the earth was. As a matter of fact for many centuries they thought it was, as their eyes saw it, something completely flat like a platter. Again in Job 26:7 we read, “He stretched out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” Now when you read about the religions of the world and legends of pagan people, they never hang the world on nothing. They had it sitting on the back of a strong man like Atlas or floating on the back of a turtle or something. But there was no way for these writers to know this unless God gave them the words to describe it.

So the Bible claims divine authority for its very words, and this is the issue. Are we right in claiming verbal inspiration? There are few people really who would challenge that the ideas of the Bible are inspired, but they really have to swallow hard when you say that the very words of the Bible are inspired. A word is what? A word is a vehicle for communicating thoughts from one mind to another. For this reason, the expression “the Word of God” refers to the Bible as a collection of divinely selected words to convey the thoughts of God to us. When we speak with respect about the Word of God, what we are saying is that the Bible contains the very words that God has given us to express his thoughts. Whenever the words came from the mouth of God, they came absolutely perfect because of His essence. Since He is true and trustworthy, what He said also had to be true and trustworthy. But the liberal says, “No, God’s thoughts are spoken in the words of fallible men. And once fallible men speak, then the words are going to be fallible.” In other words, God does not have the capacity, the liberal says, to be able to take men who are sinners and fallible and enable them to speak with absolute accuracy conveying His thinking.

So the liberal says, “No, the Bible is not the Word of God. It simply contains the Word of God.” Then he decides which parts are which. A liberal can say that the Bible is a record of revelation. It is a diary of men’s religious experiences, and these are expressed in man’s own fallible words. Again, it is not the Word of God as such. But the Bible writers themselves leave us with no doubt that when they spoke, or when they verbally as prophets delivered a message, they were speaking the words which God gave them.

For example, Exodus 4:12 says, “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.” God instructed Moses to face Pharaoh. Verse 15 says, “And thou shall speak unto him and put words in his mouth (that is, into Aaron, his brother), and I will be thy mouth (Moses’s mouth), and with his mouth, and I will teach ye what ye shall do.” Now here is a clear declaration, the promise that the very words which were given to Moses and Aaron are the words which God would give them. Again in Deuteronomy 18:18 there is the same stress that the words that these people speak are from God. “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” So the prophets of God were inspired by God in the Words that they spoke as well as the words that they wrote. The information which the prophets communicated came to them by divine revelation. Now revelation means something that the person did not know beforehand.

For example, how did Moses know how to tell us about creation? Nobody was on the scene to see it. The only way that Moses could have known about the process of creation was by revelation. God gave him the information. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this revelation was spoken in words that the Holy Spirit selected. And when it was written down, it was written in the same words that the Holy Spirit had selected. God placed His words in the mouths of His communicators.

In Jeremiah 1:9, the prophet is told that he would be speaking God’s words. That is verbal information. Jeremiah was not told that he was going to be given God’s thoughts so he could develop them in his own words. You have the same concept again in Ezekiel 2:7, Ezekiel 3:4, 10, Isaiah 1:10, 2 Samuel 23:1, 2, Daniel 10:9-11, Hosea 1:1, Joel 1:1, and so on. The formula is constantly, “Thus saith the Lord.” Whenever this formula is used, the prophet means that what I am about to say are words which God gave me—verbal inspiration.

In Isaiah 5:1-2, we have the discussion of God’s disappointment with Israel, his vineyard. The writer Isaiah speaks of God in the third person. Then suddenly when you get to verse 3 of Isaiah 5, and the verses which follow, the writer moves into the first person. He is speaking as God. You have these transitions from the third person to the first person because God is giving information and it is no problem for the prophets simply to switch and start … speaking for God directly. This is done many times.

The New Testament writers, in the same way as the Old Testament writers, claim that their very words are from God. In John 14:26, the Lord Jesus Christ promises that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into the truth which the Lord had taught them, and they were to communicate these things, not the things of their own. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, the message of the apostles are definitely called “the Word of God.” Paul says, “For this cause also we thank God without ceasing because when you received the Word of God which ye heard of us,” they heard the Word of God from Paul and his associates, “ye received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth the Word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” The claim is for verbal inspiration.

So the Bible stresses the fact that its written words are the very words of God. We have shown that the Bible writers claim that they spoke God’s words. The question is sometimes asked, “Did they also write God’s words?” In Romans 9:17, the apostle Paul quotes Exodus 9:16 as what the Scripture says. While in Exodus, these words are presented as what God says. Paul quotes Exodus and says this is what the Scripture says. But when you look up Exodus 9:16 you see that it says this is what God says. So for the Scripture writers, there was no difference. If God said it, or if the Scripture said it, it was God saying it.

In Galatians 3:8, Paul is quoting Genesis 22:18 and he is attributing these words to Scripture. Yet in Genesis these words, again, are attributed to God Himself. So Paul identifies the Word of the Bible as the words of God.

One thing we always have to consider is how the Lord Jesus Christ felt about the Bible. When he was here they had the Old Testament written. How did He view the Word of God? When the liberal says it is not the Word of God, when the liberal says it is not actually the very words of God, it is important for us to know what Jesus Christ thought. If the liberal is right and Christ comes along and says, “Yes, it is the Word of God. Yes, Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Yes, these things are historical fact.” And the liberal says, “No, they’re not historical facts,” then either the Lord is wrong or the liberal is wrong. And what we find of the view of Jesus Christ concerning the Scripture is summarized in John 10:35 where He says, “The Scripture cannot be broken.” In Matthew 4:4 where He was dealing with Satan, the Lord views Scripture as the guideline. The writings of Scripture by Moses are equated to the words of God by Jesus Christ in John 5:46-47. Please remember that the liberal minister to this day says that Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible. Jesus Christ here in John 5:46-47 refers to those Scriptures, to the Law, and says Moses did write them. Somebody is wrong. You’ll have to decide whom you’re going to believe.

On the road to Emmaus when Jesus was speaking to two disciples after His resurrection in Luke 24:25, He rebuked them for not believing the Bible. Jesus said that Daniel wrote Daniel in Mark 13:14. The liberal says, “No, what is contained in the book of Daniel had to be written after these events. If it were written in Daniel’s time, all of these predictions about world empires would be prophecy, and that’s supernatural.” The liberal says that the supernatural is impossible, therefore somebody later wrote Daniel and put Daniel’s name on it. But Jesus Christ, in Mark 13:14, says that Daniel wrote Daniel.

Jesus said that Jonah was in a large sea monster (Matthew 12:40). Some people say, “No, that’s just a fable. That’s just a legend, an illustration.” Jesus says it’s an historical event. There was a man named Jonah who stood on the deck of a ship, and he confessed to the sailors and to the captain, “You are in this violent storm because of me. I’m violating God’s plan and … my life. If you throw me overboard, you’ll be saved.” And there was a moment in history when sailors reached over and they picked up Jonah and they heaved him over, and a fish came up, opened its mouth, Jonah went in, and the sea was calm. That’s a historical event. Jesus says it is. The liberal says it’s legend.

The days of Noah and the flood are declared by Jesus Christ to be a historical fact (Luke 17:26). There was a time when the corner of 6th and Nursery was completely over by water. That’s true. There is no way around it.

Lot’s wife was actually turned to salt (Luke 17:32). Was she actually turned to salt? Did this actually happen? Jesus said it did. In His post-resurrection ministry, Jesus had forty days with His disciples. What did He do with them? He spent the time teaching them the Scriptures because they were the Word of God.

So, it’s nonsense to talk about having inspired thoughts apart from inspired words. This is like having a tune without notes of different pitch. Without God’s Word you could not have God’s thoughts accurately conveyed. Without inspired words you could have no expository preaching to discover Bible doctrine. Without the words of the Bible being God’s Word, there is no way that you could come to Bible doctrine instruction. It’s all based on that. Yet the neo-evangelicals have come to the point where they are willing to question the accuracy of the words. They have come because of their desire, particularly the neo-evangelicals, because they want to be cooperative with liberals. They want to move into mass movements where they can reach a comradery ground in some religious activity. They try to soft-pedal certain things, and if there’s anything that distress the liberal, it’s the idea that the very words of God are inspired, because if you say that the very words of God are inspired, you are also saying that there are no mistakes in Scripture—that the Bible is inerrant. This is extremely distressing. This sticks in the liberal’s throat like a broken chicken bone. And if you would take the time to read some of the neo-evangelical writers who are at the center of ecumenical movements today—and I’m not talking about the liberal’s ecumenical movements. I’m talking about conservative ecumenical movements—these movements that want to bring believers and unbelievers together in some cooperative effort. Everybody working in his own back yard, but we’re all one big religious group—that concept. Anytime you have this kind of an ecumenical thrust, it is at the expense of what the Word of God says. It is destructive to the Word of God. The liberal cannot possibly mean the same thing that you mean by the Word of God. Now if you’re going to get him to work with you on the Word, then you must soft-tone this one thing that distresses him above all—absolute authority in the very words of Scripture.

As we mentioned Wednesday night at prayer meeting: Remember that for the first 300 years of Christianity, Christians stood for the fact that they had God’s written Word that actually had the very words of God. They stood under persecution. They stood under attack. They stood against the whole Roman Empire. They suffered, they bled, they died, and they were thrown to lions, but they stood for the Word of God. They had it, they knew it, and they believed it. There were no united efforts. There were just pockets of resistance as individual believers stood firm. But once Constantine became Emperor of the Roman Empire, and insisted in not only making Christianity a legal religion but in making it the favored religion, and insisted that people who dealt with them were to be Christians, then the pagans poured into the Church. Constantine was the first ecumenicist. He brought things together. He brought people together, and he brought pagans and believers into one conglomerate, and the result was that there descended upon humanity the Dark Ages spiritually. The farther they went into a mass ecumenical cooperative movement, the less people knew about the Word of God.

So there is a danger in these popular, evangelical, ecumenical, we’re-going-to-work-together movements, such as Key 73 that is being kicked off this year, there is this danger that is setting the attitudes in the minds of people of religious cooperation, religious cooperation, religious cooperation. And, of course, Satan loves that because this is the groundwork for the antichrist’s church. These things will not happen overnight in the tribulation. It is the groundwork which is being set.

So neo-evangelicals today are saying, “Let’s just admit that there are mistakes in the Bible. Let’s just admit that fallible men wrote and they were mistaken in some of the things they wrote. That doesn’t mean that the Bible is not inspired.” But what you’re saying is, here is God. He’s sitting here trying to direct His writers. He’s trying to have them write the Scriptures, and poor God can’t keep his men from putting mistakes into His Scriptures. We must always go back to the fact that inspiration means that God wrote the Bible.

So to accommodate to the liberals on that point is to face off with this declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:17-18 when the Lord said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto to that until heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law until all be fulfilled.” The word “jot” refers, most scholars think, to the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The “tittle” are the little marks on the Hebrew letters which distinguish one from the other. It would be like what we would say is the cross on the “t” or the dot in the “I,” the small little particles. The Lord is not saying here that He is referring to perfection of written copies. What he is saying is that the teachings conveyed by these words would not pass away until all be fulfilled. He’s not talking about the actual mechanical factor of the writing of the words. He’s talking about what this stands for—what the Word of God conveys in words will come to pass.

When Jesus answered the Sadducees in Mark 12:26-27, His answer depended upon the fact of the tense of the verb, “I am.” It was that definitive. Paul speaks of Abraham’s seed in the singular, not in the plural. Verbal inspiration.

**Plenary Inspiration**

Alright, the second aspect: The first part was that when we say verbal inspiration of the Word of God, we mean that every word of the original writings came from God through the writers. The second part is called plenary inspiration. This is what we learned in 2 Timothy 3:16. Plenary means that all parts of the Bible are equally inspired. If the whole Bible is from God, then the whole Bible is authoritative. If only parts of the Bible are inspired, then you and I are going to have to find the wheat in the pile of chaff. If the Bible is not a trustworthy guide in spiritual matters, then it is not authoritative and accurate throughout.

Some parts of the Bible you may find more practical than other parts. But those that may not interest you, those that you do not think are practical to you, this does not mean that those are less inspired. We cannot say that some parts of the Bible are not the result of inspiration.

Now the Bible covers all kinds of materials under inspiration. All types of materials are actively recorded. For example, some of the things we have in the Bible are divine inscriptions. The Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). When Moses wrote that, He copied the inscription exactly. At Belshazzar’s feast, the hand began writing on the wall (Daniel 5:5). When Daniel recorded that, he copied exactly what the hand wrote on the wall. These were pure divine inscriptions. They were divine revelations. Prophecies from Isaiah to Malachi are prophecies that God has delivered as revelations to his writers. Every prophecy is equally inspired.

Now the visions that you have in Ezekiel and in Daniel and in Revelation, these are all visions that are inspired once they are recorded in the Word of God. The dreams, the information about the unknown past: How do we know about Genesis 6 and the infiltration of angels into the human race? No way, except by revelation. But divine revelation is inspired.

Also there are some parts of the Bible that are divine dictation. The Law was dictated (Exodus 20:1, 22). The warnings which are in the prophetic portions of the prophets: The prophets simply gave God’s warnings the way God gave it to them. The seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3: These were dictated. John simply sat and he copied. He took down God’s dictation on these letters like a secretary. Whatever the dictation is, it is an actual quote.

When we have the record of what Satan said to Eve in the garden, “You will not die if you eat of the fruit.” He was lying. That is not the truth. But the record that we have in the Bible is an accurate record of Satan’s lie. The dictation was recorded.

We have records of history. Some of these writers have personal knowledge like Luke did in writing about the history of the church. Others got it from existing documents. Luke did this also, but he did not include from existing documents anything that was not true. He had an accurate background of what he was recording.

We have devotional literal—Job through Ecclesiastes. This is inspired. This literature is the outgrowth of pressures upon believers, the emotions, the triumph that certain Christians have, and they wrote it down, in Psalms, in Proverbs, their understanding of God’s ways. Now all of these are declaring God’s plan and His grace.

Then we have doctrines, and we have analysis. We have outlines of how man devolved in Romans 1, how man devolved from a high point. We have the teaching of election in the Word of God. These are doctrinal pieces of information. All these are also inspired. We have teachings from angels, and that’s recorded (Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19). We have falsehood in human viewpoint recorded. A book like Ecclesiastes, most of it, is how man’s human viewpoint sees life, and he’s wrong. He’s mistaken, but it accurately records it.

So plenary inspiration means that the whole Bible, all parts of it, are infallible and are trustworthy. So the Bible says that no part of it can be broken. The full content of every book is Scripture. Both doctrinal statements of fact are inspired. And Jesus said that all parts of the Old Testament would be fulfilled as they were about Him (Luke 24:44).

Now we want to admit, of course, that these writers were not omniscient. These writers labored under the same limitations as other people in their day relative to science, to history, and so on. They didn’t know any more scientific facts than the other people did. They didn’t know any more about the civilized world than other people did. But while they held the same errors as their contemporaries, these were never permitted into Scripture. That’s what’s so fantastic about the Bible—that you are dealing with people who are infallible and have a lot of misconceptions, but their mistaken ideas about any subject are never entered into Scripture. That’s why we say “plenary inspiration.” The whole Bible is entirely accurately representing God’s thinking, and it is the truth because the Holy Spirit supervised it.

This inspiration was so natural that it allowed for personal matters. In 2 Timothy 4:13 Paul talks about his cloak and his books. In 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul gives medical advice to friend Timothy. In Philemon 10-16 Paul pleads with Philemon on behalf of a slave. All of these are personal matters. They are all inspired because they are accurately presented.

So what we’ve come up with then is, in speaking of the extent of inspiration, what we call the “Verbal Plenary Doctrine of Inspiration.” This doctrine answers what is inspired—the extent and the results. It does not tell us how the inspiration was done. It tells us what was inspired. Verbal plenary applies only to the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The writers of these Scriptures were infallible only when they were writing Bible books. When they were writing other things they were not infallible.

There’s an excellent summary about this whole subject in a book called “General Introduction” by Miller, and I’d like to read it to you. I think that it will summarize what we’ve been saying about the Bible’s view of its inspiration.

Dr. William Evans says, “The spirit employed the attention, the investigation, the memory, the fancy, the logic in the Word—all the faculties of the writer and wrought through these. He guided the writer to choose what narrative and materials, speeches of others, imperial decrees, genealogies, official letters, state papers of historical matters He found necessary for the recording of the divine message of salvation. He wrought in and with and through their spirits so as to preserve their individuality to others. He used them of themselves and spoke through their individualities. The gold was His. The mold was theirs. If the question be asked whether or not inspiration affected the words, it must be answered in the affirmative. It is hardly possible that inspiration could inspire the correct transmission of thought without in some way affecting the words. Yet it affected the words not directly and immediately by dictating them in the ears of the writers, but mediately through working on their minds and producing there such vivid and clear ideas of thoughts that the writers could find words fitted to their purpose. We must conclude therefore, that while from the divine side the Holy Spirit gave through men clearly and faithfully that which He wished to communicate from the human side, that communication came forth in language such as men themselves would naturally have chosen. We may therefore safely say that we believe in plenary and verbal inspiration. That is to say the words as well as the thoughts have been given, whether mediately or immediately under the influence of the divine spirit. We claim that the Bible is in deed and in truth the very Word of God; that it is the Word of God in the language of men—truly divine and at the same time truly human; that it is the revelation of God through His creatures; that infallible guidance was given to those who wrote it so as to preserve it from error in statements of fact; that what the writers of the Scriptures say or write under this guidance is as true as said or written by God, as if their instrumentality were not used at all; that the ideas expressed therein are the very ideas the Holy Ghost intended to convey; and, that God is in the fullest sense responsible for every word. This is what the Bible claims for itself.”

Now that’s an excellent summary of this doctrine. It is impossible to divorce the thoughts of the Bible from the words. If the words are fallible, so are the teachings. You cannot communicate thoughts except with words, and you have to understand the meaning of those words. That’s one reason God used languages like Greek and Hebrew that were frozen so that we understand the meaning of these words so that we understand what the writers meant. Doctrine does not come through feelings. It comes through words.

So whether modern man likes it or not, the Bible claims for itself verbal plenary inspiration, and this is the doctrine that Jesus Christ everywhere embraced Himself.

So the Bible has this strange appeal for us today over the minds of men. It’s a best seller. It’s viewed as a book of truth about actual divine intervention in history; claims to be believed about … God; and, claims to be free of any human error in its original writings. The moves … of the writers were directed. Yet the majority of ministers today reject (in the large denominations) reject the Bible as being the inspired Word of God. Most pastors however keep this to themselves. In most of the major denominations today you have to know terminology very well. You have to know how to ask the right questions to pose to a minister to find that he does not hold to verbal plenary inspiration. Most ministers keep their doubts about the accuracy of the Bible to themselves. Many Christians simply choose to reject this fact about their spiritual leaders. They just ignore it.

Now this change in attitude has come about on the part of ministers in the last 75 years, and it is the direct outcome of the higher criticism hypotheses that we’ve already looked at, where the Pentateuch is a patch of books put together from four main documents from about 450 B. C., that Jesus is wrong to say that Moses wrote those books. Prophecies are merely current events that somebody wrote and then projected back as coming from an earlier period. Several men wrote a book like Isaiah in order to account for its prophetic portions.

So our choice today is between what Jesus Christ has said and what the higher critic has said. We do not hold to a mechanical inspiration, but we do hold to a real inspiration by God the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Scriptures you have God’s thoughts. Through every word of Scripture you have those thoughts conveyed in the exact words that God wanted it delivered to us. Yet in spite of the inane views of higher criticism, clergymen still tenaciously claim to the fact that the Bible is a book filled with mistakes.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971