

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE – DEFENDED

- Not everyone believes what the Bible teaches concerning the doctrine of its divine inspiration.
- There are a number of other theories of inspiration, and these can be classified under the three major theological positions, as follows:
 1. Theories of Inspiration within Conservative theology
 - “THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD”
 - i. D_____ Inspiration
 - ii. C_____ Inspiration
 2. Theories of Inspiration within Modernist theology
 - “THE BIBLE CONTAINS THE WORD OF GOD”
 - i. P_____ Inspiration
 - ii. G_____ Inspiration
 - iii. N_____ Inspiration
 3. Theories of Inspiration within Neo-Orthodox theology.
 - “THE BIBLE BECOMES THE WORD OF GOD”
 - i. D_____ Inspiration
 - ii. P_____ E_____ Inspiration
- This lesson will briefly examine each of these theories and answer them from the Word of God.

I. THE THEORY OF DYNAMIC INSPIRATION

- This view of inspiration is also known as m_____ dictation.
- This theory holds that the writers of the Bible were mere passive instruments, just “machines,” and insensible to what they were doing.
- This is not so much a theory that is actually held by anyone.
- Rather it is a “straw man” theory that those who hold to a verbal, plenary, inerrant, infallible inspiration are often accused of believing.
- However, such a charge ignores the fact of c_____.
- It should be noted that there were definite occasions when dictation occurred (e.g. **Revelation 2:1,8,12,18**; etc., and **Exodus 34:27**).
- Yet it is evident that even these kinds of passages exhibit the peculiar “style” of the writer.

- Answer:
How do we account for the different writing s_____ of the Books of the Bible? If inspiration involved pure dictation, we would expect a uniform style to be seen throughout the Word of God.

II. THE THEORY OF CONCEPTUAL INSPIRATION

- Otherwise known as “T_____ Inspiration,” this view holds that only the thoughts, concepts, and overall message of the Bible were given by inspiration.
- This theory readily accommodates the use of different v_____ of the Bible.
- After all, “they are all saying basically the same thing!”
- Answer:
The Bible itself teaches verbal inspiration — **1 Corinthians 2:13**. The thoughts, concepts, and message are indeed inspired — but so are the w_____!

III. THE THEORY OF PARTIAL INSPIRATION

- This common modernistic opinion is usually expressed by the statement, “The Bible contains the Word of God.”
- Somewhere, between the covers of the Bible, you will find the Word of God.
- Those holding such a view cannot a_____ on which parts are inspired and which parts are not inspired.
- Some believe the cardinal doctrines of Christianity are inspired, while the supportive arguments and evidences are of human origin.
- Some hold only those parts of the Bible containing “good moral instruction” to be inspired.
- Usually, the criterion is “what is rational?”
- Similar to this theory is “D_____ Inspiration” which sees some parts (e.g. the Sermon on the Mount) as more inspired than others (e.g. the Mosaic laws).
- Answer:
The Bible teaches Plenary inspiration — **2 Timothy 3:16**. This theory is very subjective. Who decides what parts are inspired? Man himself becomes the a_____!

IV. THE THEORY OF GRACIOUS INSPIRATION

- Otherwise known as “G_____ Inspiration,” this theory holds that it was the writers who were inspired — in the sense that they were pious, Spirit-filled men, who were granted deep special religious insight by the Holy Spirit.
- This theory sees the human writers of the Bible as much the same as other post-Biblical Christian “greats.”
- Thus the writings of John Bunyan (for example) might be taken as being on the same level as those of the apostles and prophets (and thus liable to error).
- Some also consider this kind of “inspiration” as being the same experienced by non-Christian writers such as Shakespeare, Mohammed, Confucius, etc.
- Answer:
If such inspiration were possible, why not write another book for the Bible?
cf. **Revelation 22:18**. **2 Timothy 3:16** states that it is the s_____ (writings) that are inspired, NOT the w_____.

V. THE THEORY OF NATURAL INSPIRATION

- This theory is also known as “I_____” or “Universal Christian Inspiration.”
- It holds that the writers of the Bible were inspired in the same sense in which Christians of all ages have been inspired.
- The scriptures then are just writings of men which are “inspiring!”
- Answer:
Such a theory is similar to that of Gracious Inspiration (above), and it is answered in much the same way. Illumination, enthusiasm, zeal, Spirit-filling, etc., are not inspiration.
Yes, the Word of God is inspiring, but that is not what is meant by divine inspiration. The scriptures are “Thus saith the LORD!”

VI. THE THEORY OF DEMYTHOLOGICAL INSPIRATION

- This view sees the Bible as being written in the legendary style of its day with the task of the modern day scholar being to “demythologize” it — i.e. peel away the myth to find the truth.

- An example of this kind of thinking would be “t_____ e_____.”
- The first two chapters of Genesis are pure myth — the real message is that somehow, God used evolutionary forces to bring man into existence.
- It’s the m_____ that’s important, not the f_____!
- Answer:
The Bible becomes a s_____ Book, because it requires the correct interpretation before the message comes through. Again, man becomes the final authority.

VII. THE THEORY OF PERSONAL ENCOUNTER INSPIRATION

- This Neo-Orthodox view holds that the Bible is an imperfect record which becomes the Word of God when the message of God “breaks through” the written record in such a way as to speak personally to the reader.
- Inspiration is viewed (in the words of Frederick Schleiermacher) as the “original translation of Christian feeling.”
- In other words, what we read in the Bible are the writers’ responses to their personal encounters with God — and we can share in those same encounters as we work back through their written responses.
- The existentialist theologian, Karl Barth (1886-1968) said the Bible brought about an encounter with the hidden God.
- Answer:
Theology based upon such a view of inspiration can only be e_____ and m_____ and again makes man the authority. People will worship a “Christ” of their own imagination (Romans 1:21).