**The Inspiration of the Bible, No. 1 – BD41-02**

This morning we move now to the crucial subject of the inspiration of the Bible. We have found that the modern way of thinking is based upon philosophical concepts which are, by nature, hostile to the idea of a supernatural revealed Christianity. So let’s look at the Bible’s view of inspiration. This doctrine is crucial. All of Christianity, all of your personal fortunes as a Christian fall or stand on the issue of an infallible Bible—a Bible that in its original languages was produced by God through man without any error whatsoever being incorporated into that text.

Now if the Bible is not infallible, then we can be sure of nothing in spiritual matters. This is the very reason that the liberal presses viewing the Bible from the philosophies from Hagel and Kant, which were that everything is relative and that there are no absolutes. The reason that the liberal presses this is that he does not want to have to come to a book that makes a statement and that settles the issue on that particular point. He does not want to think that there is one place in the world where there is one book that has absolutely top priority authority, and when it speaks, that answers the question and there’s no debate and there’s no appeal from it.

Now if we reject the doctrine of inspiration as producing an infallible revelation from God, we will also reject the other doctrines in the Bible. Any attempt to evade the supreme importance of the doctrine of inspiration is a self-deception. Some of our conservative brethren in the neo-evangelical camp are prone to compromise on the doctrine of inspiration. They are so eager to be cooperative with the liberal. They are so eager to reach across. You’re going to be hearing a lot about this (this year) because the neo-evangelicals have kicked off a whole new operation for this year called “Key 73.” If you have not yet heard about it, you will be hearing about it. It’s going to get mounting promotion on television and in the news media, and you’re going to be bombarded with Key 73. Key 73 is an evangelistic program incorporating Catholics, liberals, orthodox, neo-orthodox, conservatives, fundamentalists, neo-evangelicals—the whole ball of wax in a great united effort of evangelism.

Now obviously, if we are going to reach across the aisle to take in hand the liberal and to join with him in an effort of evangelism, his gospel is going to be considerably different than our gospel. If our gospel is built upon the Word of God which we receive as God’s authoritative statement, and what it says is the final word relative to man’s problem and God’s solution, and our liberal friend says, “No, the Bible is man trying to give you an expression of what he understands of his religious experience,” and that God is your concern and your expression of love, as Bishop Robinsons says, obviously we’re going to have a hard time getting together in evangelistic efforts. Well the thing that you’re going to be told is, “Oh, we don’t want you to do that. We want you with your group to be out there in evangelism. We want the liberal with his group to be out there in evangelism. We want the Roman Catholic to be out there with Mary, the saints, and the whole bit in their evangelism. But we want everybody evangelizing. This seems very very wonderful.

But you want to remember to ask yourself the questions always, how would I run this show if I were the antichrist today? If I were on the scene, and Satan is my power in the background, how would I run this show in order to start moving society toward the place where I have all of humanity under one religious organization and under one church, because that’s where it’s going. And Key 73, while it is commendable in its purpose of evangelism, I think as you see it unraveling, as you think it through, you are going to discover that this is another ecumenical attempt at gathering together people of divergent views to say, “Let’s forget the differences and let’s get together on Bishop Robinson’s principle that it’s love that counts. If we just love one another, that’s what will carry us through.” But the Word of God says, and if you believe its propositions of truth you must accept this: we cannot love except in truth. We can only love on the basis of truth or there is no real love. It’s an emotional fraud. But not the love that God the Holy Spirit gives as a mental climate within our being. There is no mental ground on this doctrine of inspiration. You will find it very difficult to be cooperative in the Lord’s work with people who say that you don’t have God’s book; you don’t have God’s Word; you don’t have God’s truth.

**What the Bible Claims about Inspiration**

Now there are a couple of key passages on inspiration and we’ll look at them this morning to lay this out before you. I hope you will follow it carefully so that within your own mind you will first of all establish what the Bible teaches about inspiration. If we’re going to talk about inspiration with anybody and if we’re going to reject this idea that there is a god out there on the other side who can give us a Bible on this side which is a perfect record of what He thinks, first of all we have to see what the Bible claims for itself. Then you will understand what it is that the liberal is rejecting. What does the Bible claim for itself relative to its inspiration?

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Please turn to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Now the expression here, “all scripture” in verse 16 refers to the same thing that is spoken of in verse 15 where Paul is saying to Timothy, “and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Now as Timothy grew up as a boy with a mother who was a believer and a father who was an unbeliever, the mother trained him in the Word of God. What scripture did his mother read to him? What scripture did his mother instruct him in? She instructed him in what we now call the Old Testament. That’s all the Bible there was. That is what is referred to here in verse 16. Your Old Testament Bible is what Paul is saying is Scripture and is inspired. So we’re talking about the book that you hold in your hand. We shall see that the New Testament is placed in the same relationship as the Old Testament. The New Testament writers placed their communication on an equal level with the communication of the prophets of the Old Testament. The New Testament writers claim that what they wrote as apostles was equal as scripture to the Old Testament. So in effect we’re talking about both Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament was the Bible that Timothy knew. Almost all of the New Testament was written, by the way, at the time that 2 Timothy was written, except perhaps for the later writings of John. By the time that 2 Timothy was written, all the New Testament books except the later writings of John were already on parchment, written and ready to be preserved.

Paul in his epistle would equate the New Testament to the Old Testament. In 2 Peter 3:15-16 Peter says, “An account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, also according to wisdom given unto him hath written unto you, and has also in all of his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable rest as they do also (now notice) *the other scriptures* unto their own destruction.” Here Peter is talking about the epistles of Paul and he compares them to the other scriptures. The implication being that the writings of Paul are also scripture.

Paul quotes Luke 10:7 as being equal scripture with Deuteronomy 25:4. He does this in 1 Timothy 5:18. “For the scriptures saith, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the grain, and the laborer is worthy of his reward.’” Now the first part of that verse, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the grain,” which he calls scripture comes from Deuteronomy 25:4. But the last part, “the laborer is worthy of his reward,” is to be found no place in the Old Testament. Where you find it is actually in Luke 10:7. So here you have an example in these later New Testament books calling earlier New Testament books scripture.

Peter places the words of the New Testament apostles on equal plain with the words of the Old Testament prophets, both spoken and written. 2 Peter 3:2 says, “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets (the Old Testament) and the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” Peter says, “What they said in the Old Testament was important. What we as apostles say is equally important.” So all scripture: What I’m trying to get across to you is that when we say “all scripture,” it’s the Bible that you hold in your hands.

Now notice that in the Greek there is no verb. It says, “All scripture is given,” but you notice that the word “is” is in italics in your Bible, indicating that it is not in the Greek. In other words, you have no verb. It does have simply inspiration. “All scripture inspiration” is the way it reads. The Greek word for inspiration is “theopneustos.” This is a word which is used only once in the Bible and that is right here in this verse. It’s what we call a hapax legomenon (one time only). This first part of the word “theo” is from the Greek word “theos” for “God.” The last part of the word here “pneustos” is the word for “breathe.” So this word literally means God-breathed. All scripture is the breathing out of God.

In the Greek language when you have this ending “tos” connected to the word for God, it means that it is passive. The idea is “that which is breathed out by God.” It doesn’t mean that the Bible is breathing out God. When we say that all scripture is God-breathed, we don’t mean that all scripture is breathing out God. That would be active. What it says is that all scripture is breathed out by God. It’s important that you understand that passive quality. The author is receiving something. He is not inventing something the way the liberal says. The very Greek language denies the claim of the liberal. When the liberal says man produced these ideas, this word says, “You’re wrong.” You could not have this ending in this word and be an active idea of something that the Bible is breathing out God as a result of what men wrote. Rather it is God who breathed out the Word.

Now we’re not asked to place our supreme confidence, consequently, in doctrines of a book which are merely expressing the highest ideals and hopes of good of fallible men. This is clearly not the product of man. The same idea for the origin of the Bible is expressed by Jesus Christ in Matthew 4:4 when He was talking to Satan. Every word that proceeded out of the “mouth” of God—God breathing out His scriptural truth.

Now we have this English word “inspiration” that translates “theopneustos.” Inspiration, in a way, is not a good word here because it comes from the Latin Vulgate. It’s actually the Latin word which is used here for the Greek “theopneustos” from which we get the English word inspiration. The “in” part of the word inspiration gives us the idea that God takes men’s writings and then he breathes life into them, and that is not the case. Actually a better word would be “expiration.” The Bible is actually an experience of expiration. It is God Himself breathing out His word. It is not something that man produced and then God did something with it. It is something that God produced entirely and men were simply the agents of that production. It is produced by the creative breath of God, and consequently it has a supernatural power. For this reason we’re told that it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness. There is no other writing in the world of which this can be said. Only the Scripture is profitable in this way. It is only the Scripture that can make a believer what our translation here says “perfect.”

Now this word “perfect” is not the usual word that we have for “perfect” in Scripture. You have heard us speak about this word “telios.” This is the word that is referred to in 1 Corinthians concerning the Scripture where we had knowledge in the New Testament only in part, and where we had the prophetic word only in part. When that is brought to fullness, then it says those things will cease. Previous to that the gift of tongues would have ceased. We’re going to look a little more in detail this evening. We have this key word “telios” which is normally translated as “perfect,” but it means “having reached its goal”—when a thing comes that God has planned for it. When the New Testament Canon of Scripture came to the point that God had planned for it, the gift of tongues dropped right out of sight and it came to an end. So whatever you have today is a fraudulent expression of tongues but it is not the New Testament gift.

The word that is used here is “artios.” “Artios” means capable. The Word has the ability to make a man capable so that he is thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and that means fully equipped (”exartizo”). It means to fully equip a Christian so that he can produce a divine good. Only the inspired Word of God can produce that. This word “exartizo” for fully equipped here is in the perfect which means that this equipping comes from the past when under the grace system of perception we are learning doctrine, and we enter then equipped to meet the current situation of life. It is passive which means that a Christian receives this status of preparation. He receives it as a result of learning the Word. Consequently, he is equipped to produce divine good unto all good works.

Sometimes the Bible authors themselves didn’t even understand what God had revealed to them as He directed them in their writings. 1 Peter 1:10-12 indicate to us that sometimes the writers didn’t understand the meaning of the very things that they were recording. They just knew that God had spoken. God told them to write it and they put it down. Because the content was not from men, but it was from God, there were times when they did not understand what they wrote. Angels sometimes were communicators of doctrine but they were never the originators of the truth.

So the translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 becomes rather important. We have a problem here because sometimes this is translated in a way that is deceptive concerning the doctrine of inspiration. In 2 Timothy 3:16 you have, first of all, in the Greek a noun “all scripture.” That’s the subject of the sentence. Then there is no verb. The “is” that you have in the English Bible is in italics. Now that is understood. It’s such a Greek construction that “is” is simply understood.

But what you do have are two adjectives. “God breathed” with the word “and” then “profitable.” This forms the predicate, the action part of the sentence. “All scripture (is) God-breathed and profitable.” In the Greek you literally have this order: “All scripture God-breathed and profitable.” There is no “is” and no verb at this point.

In the Revised version the translation that was given and which keeps cropping up and which in other later translations you’ll find (in the margins if not in the text) says “Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable.” Notice what that says. Immediately you should recognize that this construction “every scripture” raises the possibility that some of the writings in the Bible are not Scripture. What this translation is saying is that every Scripture is inspired and profitable. What is not Scripture is not inspired and profitable. This violates a basic law of Greek grammar. It is a translation that the liberals like because it gives them an opportunity to point to some parts of the Bible and say that they’re not inspired; and, to point to some parts of the Bible and say they don’t come from God. But in the Greek you have this condition that cannot be violated, that when you have two adjectives like this, connected in the way they are, “God-breathed and profitable,” they must go together. You cannot split them up as they did here: “Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable.” What they did was to make this word “and” into “also,” and that violates a basic rule of Greek grammar. Either both of these adjectives have to go with “every scripture” and be part of the subject, or neither one of them goes with it. Now if you put both of them with the subject, you have no verb, so you have no sentence. Therefore, “All Scripture” is the subject of the sentence. These two adjectives with “is” understood and the two connected form the verb part of the sentence. There is no way around that.

Now several of the scholars who were on the committee translating the Revised Version strongly protested this translation. They were shocked. They couldn’t believe this kind of a fracture of grammar. To this day it’s a marvel that these men would have come up with a translation such as this. It can only make us suspect how some of them were deeply moved by a liberal bias such that they wanted to put it in this way, knowing better that this was by far an inferior translation; that they wanted to put it in this way in order to keep the way open for their liberal views. So when you see this Revised Version translation, it should be rejected. It permits the liberal to reject parts of the Word of God and it is not a proper translation.

For example, we have the same thing in Hebrews 4:12 which says, “The Word of God is living and powerful.” It does not say, “The living Word of God is also powerful.” You could do the same thing. It’s the identical type of construction. You could do the same thing to this verse, and what are you saying? “The living Word of God is also powerful.” That doesn’t even make sense because we already know that if the Word of God is living, it’s also powerful. So it’s saying a useless thing. The same thing applies here: “Every Scripture inspired by God is profitable.” We know that if it’s inspired by God that it’s profitable. The sentence isn’t saying anything. It’s a foolish translation.

**2 Peter 1:21**

The second major verse we want to look at this morning is 2 Peter 1:21. This one also gives us information about the doctrine of inspiration. “For the prophecy came not any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” In the context, verses 16 through 20, Peter says in verse 16 that the great theme of prophecy concerning Christ’s return is no fable which the disciples just invented. Three apostles actually were on the scene at the transfiguration on the mountaintop and they were eyewitnesses to a preview of Christ’ majestic return to this earth. Verses 17 and 18 describe that preview. The expression “the word of prophecy” makes this promised return even more certain. It’s not only that they witnesses a preview, but then he goes on to say, in verse 19, a more sure word of prophecy—a declaration from God that we will take heed to, that Christ is going to return. The word of prophecy or the prophetic word is part of the Bible.

Peter may be referring to two things here. Prophecy included two factors. Prophecy included forthtelling, just declaring or announcing the truth of God. Prophecy also included predicting the future. Peter may be referring merely to the predictive portions of Scripture, or he may be referring to forthtelling, to everything—the Scripture as a whole. It doesn’t make any difference. In either case we are told something about how Scripture is produced by this verse. The gift of prophecy, in the sense of forthtelling, was actually possessed by all writers of the Scripture. They were all heralds declaring the mind of God. Verse 20 stresses how the Bible was not produced. “Knowing this, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” That means that no single individual on his own investigated into matters and then wrote down his findings apart from God, and wrote it down as Scripture. The Bible is not the product of mere human investigation and reason because verse 21 specifically says that it did not come by the will of man. The Bible declares this about itself, that it is not of human origin and so it does have divine authority. If it was of human origin alone, we would question whether it could carry divine absolute authority.

That’s the expression that you have in verse 21: “For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man.” There is no segment of the Word of God, the forthtelling part or the predictive part, which simply came because men decided to sit down and write the Scriptures.

Now the word that describes what did happen: It says that holy men of God spoke as they were “moved,” and the word “moved” is “phero” in the Greek which means “born along.” They were “carried along.” This word connotes the effect of the wind blowing into the sail of a boat. This is what the wind does to a boat. It picks it up and carries the structure along. This is what happened to the men who wrote the Scriptures. God the Holy Spirit came upon them, He came under them, He picked them up and He carried them along as they wrote the Scriptures, so that what they thought was the mind of God and what they recorded was the truth of God. The power that carried along these communicators was God the Holy Spirit.

So they’re not functioning under their own power and recording the divine revelation which God gave them. Peter is telling us how God breathed forth, or how He produced the Bible. The Holy Spirit so moved the writers that they delivered a book without mistakes. Now when we say there are no mistakes in the Bible, we are talking about the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. In the original writings there were no errors. We have in effect produced, reproduced from copies, those original manuscripts. But we can’t be absolutely certain that we have every small word exactly as it was in the original. We have no errors of doctrine and there are no errors of any substance to be found in the copies we have.

They were born along. This is present tense which means the Holy Spirit continually superintended their Bible writings so everything was accurate. This is not true, by the way, of their other writings. When Peter sat down and wrote a letter to his mother back home, it was not an inspired letter. That letter is lost like his authoritative inspired letters also. But only when they sat down and they were writing Scripture, when they picked up the pen and at the point when the pen touched the parchment, inspiration went into action. They were carried along, born along, like the wind carrying a boat in its sails, they were carried to the destination that the Spirit of God intended them to go to, both in the words and in the thoughts that those words conveyed.

This is passive voice which means that the Holy Spirit was the one that was active in inspiration, and the writers were carried along. The human beings actually spoke using their own vocabulary and their own personality style, yet the Holy Spirit guided them in the selection of the words that they were to use. In the actual writing, the writers were active, but they were being carried along by the Spirit of God, and in that sense they were passive. This is a participle which states the principle of inspiration.

So what does the Bible claim for itself? The Bible says that it is actually the words that God spoke. He gave them to holy men that He selected, and he recorded the very words that He said. So we may translate it “being born by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God.”

**How Inspiration Works**

So here’s a definition of inspiration. Inspiration is the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of Scriptures as a result of which these Scriptures possess divine authority and trustworthiness, and possessing such authority and trustworthiness, are free from error in both words and thoughts. Inspiration is actually an inhale and an exhale operation. The writer receives information from God in one way or another. He may be reading historical records. He may be recalling his own experiences. He may be talking to eye witnesses. He may be getting direct speaking revelation from God. He gets the information—the revelation from the Holy Spirit goes into his perceptive, his thinking, his understanding side of his mind. It comes in there has knowledge. He believes it and transfers it to his human spirit where God then teaches him this truth as full knowledge. From this it is cycled back up to his directive mind and it is there as a frame of reference now ready for him to exhale. This principle is taught in 2 Samuel 23:2-3, Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 22:42-43, Mark 12:36, Acts 4:24-25, and Acts 28:25. All of these verses tell us that God gave the writer the information. He believed it and understood it as from God, and then he was ready to act in the process of exhaling. Here the author takes up his pen, he sits down with a parchment, and he records the full knowledge that he has received, and he records it without error in the original languages. The two verses that we have looked at this morning, 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21 teach this fact. The testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 10:35 is that all the Scripture must be fulfilled. None of it can fail to be realized.

This then brings us to the question: All we’ve answered thus far is what does the Bible claim about inspiration. In these two verses we have seen that God says, “I took men. I selected them. I taught them. Then I guided them so they recorded my mind with a perfect copy with exactly the right words.” Therefore what you have in the Bible is the Word of God—the ultimate final supreme authority in spiritual things. Everything it says about God is true. Everything it says about sin therefore is true. Whatever it says about salvation, it’s true. Whatever it says about morality, it’s true. Whatever it says about blessing and cursing and happiness and unhappiness, it’s all true. Therefore the Bible makes a claim such that you and I come to a crossroads and we have to decide, “Is that true?” How do I know that the Bible is inspired? How do you know this morning if the Bible is inspired? If we were to take a vote, would you vote, “Yes, it is inspired of God,” or would you vote, “No,” or would you vote, “I’m not sure.” How do you know that the Bible is inspired?

Well part of the problem is that the signposts have been tampered with on the road that directs us relative to our attitude about the Scripture. Today the Bible doctrine of inspiration will place you at a crossroad in your life. You may take the road that it is an inspired inerrant Bible from God with final authority, or you may take the road that the Bible is from men filled with errors but a worthy message with no ultimate authority. The problem in knowing which it is is made more difficult because Satan has tampered with the signpost like some kid who climbs up on the signpost at some intersection and he twists the signs so that the streets are marked just the opposite way. What the liberal has done under the direction of Satan is that he has changed the signposts. He is actually pointing down the road that says the Bible is a human product full of errors but with a good message and the signpost says this is the way to blessing and to a knowledge of God. All of our society believes that that’s the way to find the knowledge and the blessing of God. The Bible is a good book. They love to call it the good book. The good mistaken book is what they mean because it has a nice message in mistaken words. That does not happen to be the road to God’s blessing. Everywhere the Bible claims to originate with God and not with man.

So it faces you and me to decide if that’s true. If the Bible is not trustworthy in what it claims on this subject, how can you and I trust it in anything else? So it raises the question as to why do men believe Satan and why do they reject the claims and the evidences of the Bible about itself. Well, natural man is spiritually blind, so any light that the Bible gives he’s not going to receive. What he needs is eyes to be healed so they can see, so they can grasp spiritual understanding. For the Christian, you do have spiritual understanding. Your eyes have been opened. The Holy Spirit persuades the Christian of the infallible truth and the divine authority of the Bible. One day you suddenly realize, and you say, “It just dawned on me that the Bible is the Word of God.” So the Christian has an internal testimony that it is the Word of God which unbelievers have no way of receiving. You can receive it because the Holy Spirit can tell you this. The unbeliever cannot because he has no way of receiving the information. Only God can identify what is his Word, not man, as the liberal suggests.

So the Christian believes the doctrine of inspiration for this reason. If somebody were to say, “Why do you believe that the Bible is inspired?” Because you are a believer and God the Holy Spirit instructs you, you say, “I believe it because the Bible is inspired.” The Bible is inspired. Why? Because the Bible claims to be inspired. Why does the Bible claim to be inspired? Because the Bible is inspired, so it’s true.

Now when you say that to an unbeliever, he immediately laughs at you and he calls that circular reasoning. He says, “That’s ridiculous. I ask you why you believe the Bible is inspired and you say because the Bible says it’s inspired. And I ask you why is it true and you say it’s true because the Bible is inspired, and because the Bible is inspired whatever it says is true. And he shakes his head and wonders why they still leave people like that running around loose.

Now it’s important to notice, before you get too carried away and too overcome by that attack, it’s important to notice that the Bible does not say that it is not inspired, nor is the Bible silent about inspiration. It does not reject the fact that it is inspired, nor is it silent. It tells you that it is. It makes a statement. Suppose the Bible did not say it was inspired. Suppose that the Bible was silent on this issue or the Bible said that it was not inspired. And you came along and said it was inspired. The first thing the liberal would say to you is, “You’re countering what the Bible says. How can you say the Bible is inspired? The Bible doesn’t claim to be inspired. The Bible says it isn’t inspired. He would very readily resort to the Bible as testifying and qualified to testify about itself. In effect, he deals with the Bible’s claim to inspiration as being false. So the Christian is not entirely illogical because of his belief in the inspiration of the Bible. He claims it on the basis of an internal conviction that God the Holy Spirit provides.

Now I realize that there is a great deal that we may say concerning the Scripture which is external which is very impressive. We could point out the unity that the Bible has—a continuous message. Some 40 men over 1500 years, many of them who never saw each other’s writings, and yet they never contradict each other. The message that they write is continuous. It all fits together. It’s progressive revelation. Inside this collection is all kinds of subject matter, yet without contradiction. There is no other book in the world like the Bible. An author can hardly write one book and not contradict himself within that book.

**Prophecy**

We have a fulfillment of prophecy. Twenty five percent of the Bible was prophecy when it was written. The Bible is filled with detailed kind of prophecies, one after another, naming people, two or three hundred years in the future who are going to come on the scene of history telling what they’re going to do—telling what’s going to happen to the nation Israel. Then, in detail, history fulfills this.

**Sin**

The Bible takes a look at sin. Man’s natural inclination is that I’m going to weigh my good things against my bad things, but the Bible takes a totally different view of sin and says that man is hopelessly depraved and only God can help him out. All the religions of the world come up with the idea that man can help himself.

The great concepts of the Bible: It’s like walking out of a gloomy cave into the sunshine outdoors. When you think about the monotheism of the Bible against the crude polytheism of the world’s religions. You think about the concept of the trinity—beyond human capacity even to imagine. You think about creation—the grotesque accounts of pagan religions of creation and the magnificent clean-cut definitive statement that Moses gives under inspiration.

So the Bible is filled with these evidences but you want to remember that this will not convince the man who is spiritually blind. At the end of the 19th century, the liberals rejected inspiration with a clever phrase. They said that the Bible contains the Word of God—it is not the word of God. In a way that is true but they meant that some parts of the Bible were not the Word of God. It is a deceptive phrase so the liberal can reject parts of the Scripture. Then in the 20th century, neo-orthodoxy came along with the phrase, “The Bible is a record of God’s revelation.” What they meant by that is that the Bible merely records the religious experiences that people have had, but it does not record statements of truth from God. In other words, Moses was just keeping a diary about what happened to him. And Paul was just keeping a diary about what happened to him. It was just records of experiences, not statements of truth. Both of these statements are deceptive ways of rejecting the doctrine of inspiration.

So the options are this: Either the bible is a worthless fraud and Jesus was a diluted martyr, or the Bible is in truth the written Word of God. If the Bible writers were wrong about the source of their message, then why should we believe what they say about God, sin, salvation, or anything else? Here’s what’s so ridiculous about the liberal: He rejects the authority of the Word of God and yet he thinks he can talk about the message of the Word of God as being found in the Bible and having some value. How can we believe in a Savior who says that His Word will never pass away and it will all be fulfilled, and yet some of it will not be?

So unbelievers today reject the Bible, the existence of God, and the doctrine of inspiration. The ultimate proof is this: How are you going to prove the doctrine of inspiration? It comes as a direct conviction of God the Holy Spirit. Remember in the case of Peter. The Lord is asking Peter to tell him whom he thinks the Lord is. In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asks Peter, “Who say ye that I am?” In Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In verse 17, “Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘Blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.’” Now you notice that we’re not told that Peter had a vision, that he had a revelation, that he heard voices that gave him this information about the deity of Christ. It says that flesh and blood did not reveal this to him, but the Father who is in heaven made this clear to him.

Now what did Peter experience with the Lord? He heard the Lord’s sermons, he saw his miracles, and one day it just dawned on him that Jesus Christ is God. Now that’s how the inspiration of the Scriptures comes to you and me. We accept it as we learn doctrines. It suddenly occurs to us one day that we have in the Bible the inerrant Word of God. Sin causes the human mind to resist and to reject divine truth (1 Corinthians 2:14). Man is not stupid. He’s just incapable of receiving the Word of God so he’s resistant to it. He actually takes the truth of God and changes it to a lie (Romans 1:18). For this reason the fallen mind of man is the enemy of God. He has no knowledge of God and he rejects what the Word has to say.

So the abnormal depraved intellect has to be remade by the Holy Spirit through regeneration, then it can receive the Word of God. So it would be impossible for you by logic or argument to convince an unbeliever that the Bible is inspired. It’s necessary for you to explain that because we are to give an account for the faith we have within us, and the Holy Spirit will use that. But you won’t convince people by telling these fantastic things that are true about the Bible relative to prophecy and so on. The external proofs of the Bible merely confirm our faith. A Christian may not always be able to answer the scholarly attacks of a critic. You may come across someone who is very adept and very versatile in speaking. He may bold you over. You may have to be like the blind man with the religious leaders in Israel when he said, “All I know is that I was blind, and now I can see.” You know what God the Holy Spirit has caused to dawn upon you in relationship to the Bible as the Word of God. That is the ultimate answer. The reality of evidence is one thing, but the power to perceive it is quite another.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971