

Wednesday Night Study - October 15, 2025

The statement that "***The Bible is the Inspired and Infallible Word of God***" is a core Christian belief, asserting that God is the ultimate author, that the Bible is without error, and that it is completely truthful and reliable. This is based on the concepts of inspiration (God "breathed out" the scriptures through human authors), inerrancy (the Bible is free from mistakes), and infallibility (the Bible is unable to lead one astray and will accomplish God's will).

- ** Inspired: **

Christians believe God supernaturally guided human authors to write the Bible, preserving their individual styles and personalities while ensuring the text conveyed His intended message. It is seen as God's communication to humanity, written down through human instrumentality.

- **Infallible: **

This means the Bible is incapable of leading people to error or deception. When properly understood, its message is reliable and will always lead to truth.

- **Inerrant: **

This doctrine asserts that the Bible is without factual or historical error. The belief is that because God is perfect, His word is also perfect and contains no mistakes.

Basis for belief:

Proponents of this view point to biblical texts like 2 Timothy 3:16, where it is stated that "All Scripture is God-breathed," and 2 Peter 1:20-21, which says "holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit". Jesus is also cited as upholding the Scriptures' authority, stating that "the Scriptures cannot be broken" and "Your word is truth".

Core concepts

- **Inspired (Theopneustos):** This term comes from the Greek word meaning "God-breathed" and indicates that the Bible's ultimate author is God, even though he used human writers. The human authors wrote from their own unique perspectives, literary styles, and experiences, but were guided by the Holy Spirit to produce precisely what God intended.
- **Infallible:** This means the Bible is incapable of teaching error in matters of faith and practice. The reliability of its message is guaranteed by the perfect and truthful nature of God.
- **Inerrant (often grouped with infallible):** This is a stronger position, usually held by evangelicals and fundamentalists, asserting that the original biblical manuscripts (the "autographs") are completely without error in all subjects, including historical, scientific, and geographical details. Some traditions distinguish between infallibility (unfailing in its purpose) and inerrancy (without any factual error).

Scriptural basis

The belief is supported by biblical passages that describe the divine origin of scripture.

- **2 Timothy 3:16–17:** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". This passage is often cited as the primary textual support for the doctrine of inspiration.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 states that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". This passage emphasizes the divine inspiration and practical value of the Bible for personal and ministry growth.

- **Inspired by God:**

"All Scripture is God-breathed" signifies that the Bible is divinely inspired, meaning it is the very word of God.

- **Profitable for multiple purposes:**

The scripture is useful for:

- **Teaching:** Providing instruction and knowledge.
 - **Rebuking/Reproof:** Convicting people of sin.
 - **Correcting:** Guiding believers back to the right path when they stray.
 - **Training in righteousness:** Equipping people to live lives that reflect God's character.
- **Equips for service:**
The ultimate purpose is to make the "man of God" (or person of God) complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work they are called to do.

Verse 16

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (NIV).

- **God-breathed (theopneustos):** This emphasizes that scripture is not merely a human work but has its origin and inspiration directly from God, indicating its authority and divine nature.
- **Useful for teaching:** Scripture is the source for understanding God's truth and for establishing sound doctrine.
- **Useful for rebuking and correcting:** It exposes sin and error, acting as a mirror that shows where a person's life deviates from God's standards. It then provides the necessary guidance to get back on the right path.
- **Useful for training in righteousness:** The Bible teaches Christians how to live a life that is in conformity with God's will, helping them grow in holiness and right behavior.

Verse 17

"so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (NIV).

- **Purpose of scripture:** The ultimate goal of all the functions of scripture mentioned in verse 16 is to prepare and furnish believers. It makes them mature and sufficient for the mission God has for them.
- **Thoroughly equipped:** This imagery suggests a person with all the necessary tools and resources to accomplish a task. Scripture provides everything needed for effective ministry and a godly life.
- **Every good work:** The equipping is not for a single task but for all the works of service and righteousness that God has prepared for His people to do.

The passage teaches that the Bible is the essential guide for all believers, supplying the instruction, correction, and equipping necessary for a life of purpose and service.

- **2 Peter 1:21:** "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit". This verse describes the divine guidance of the writers, distinguishing it from purely human endeavor.

2 Peter 1:21 explains that no prophecy (divine communication) comes from a human's own will or desire. Instead, it originates from God, as holy men of God spoke divine messages while being guided and moved by the Holy Spirit. This emphasizes the divine origin and trustworthiness of scripture, confirming it as God's word rather than a human invention.

Here are some key interpretations of the verse:

- **Divine Inspiration:**
The core message is that scripture is God-breathed or divinely inspired, not a product of human thought or will.
- **Role of the Holy Spirit:**

The Holy Spirit is the active agent, carrying along or moving the prophets to speak God's message.

- **God as the Source:**

The ultimate source of the prophecy is God, who influenced the prophets and directed them to speak His words.

- **Human-Divine Interaction:**

The verse acknowledges human beings as the conduits for God's message but stresses that their will was not the origin of the prophecy.

Analysis and meaning

- **Divine origin:** The verse teaches that biblical prophecy does not come from human ideas or personal interpretations. It is not something that prophets decided to say on their own. The ultimate source of the message is God.
- **Human instruments:** God used human authors ("prophets, though human") to deliver his messages. These individuals, with their own personalities and writing styles, were still used as vessels for God's word.
- **"Carried along by the Holy Spirit":** This phrase emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in inspiring the prophets. The prophets spoke and wrote under the Spirit's direction and guidance, which ensured the accuracy and divine authority of their messages. The image can be compared to a ship being moved by the wind, with the Spirit providing the power and direction.
- **Trustworthy scripture:** Because the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author, the prophecies and teachings in the Bible are reliable and trustworthy. Believers can have confidence in the truth of God's Word.

Context in 2 Peter 1

This verse appears at the end of a section where the Apostle Peter emphasizes the reliability of the prophetic word. He points to his own eyewitness account of Jesus's transfiguration as confirmation that the prophecies about Christ are true and trustworthy. The divine inspiration of the scriptures is his final point in building a case for the truthfulness and importance of the Bible.

- **John 10:35:** Jesus says, "Scripture cannot be broken," which is interpreted by many to mean that the Bible is fully authoritative and without error.

John 10:35 states that "the scripture cannot be broken," a key phrase Jesus uses to defend his divine claims. In the verse, Jesus argues that if human judges were called "gods" in scripture (referring to Psalm 82:6), then his own claim to be "the Son of God" is not blasphemy because scripture is infallible and authoritative.

- **The context:**

Jesus is in a dispute with Jewish leaders who are angry because he claims to be one with God the Father. They want to stone him for what they perceive as blasphemy.

- **The scripture Jesus is quoting:**

The verse directly references Psalm 82:6, where God refers to Israel's judges as "gods". These human rulers were acting as God's representatives on Earth.

- **Jesus's argument:**

- He points out that these human judges were called "gods" in God's own Word.
- The key part of his argument is that "the scripture cannot be broken". This means that God's word is true, reliable, and authoritative.
- Therefore, if scripture can call human leaders "gods," then Jesus's own claim to be the Son of God, especially given his divine works, is not blasphemy and cannot be dismissed as a lie or error.

In the Bible, John 10:35 states, "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken" (King James Version). In this verse, Jesus is defending himself against accusations of blasphemy from the Jews, who were preparing to stone him for claiming to be God's Son.

Here is a breakdown of the verse's meaning:

- **The context:** The Jews were upset because Jesus had said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), which they interpreted as blasphemy.
- **Jesus' argument:** Jesus quotes from Psalm 82:6 in the Old Testament, where God himself refers to human judges as "gods". Jesus uses this to build an argument from the lesser to the greater.
- **"To whom the word of God came":** The judges were called "gods" because they were given a divine commission to deliver God's law and justice to the people.
- **"And the scripture cannot be broken":** Jesus affirms the authority and truth of the Old Testament scriptures. The Jews understood this and could not contradict it.
- **The contrast with Jesus:** Jesus points out that if the scriptures could refer to mere mortal judges as "gods," how could the Jews accuse him of blasphemy for calling himself the Son of God, especially since he was the one "whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world"?

In essence, Jesus's argument highlights the greater difference between his divine status and that of mere human authorities. He uses their own scriptures to show the inconsistency of their accusations.

Differing perspectives

Not all Christian denominations or theologians hold the same view on the Bible's inspiration and infallibility.

- **Protestant evangelicalism:** This tradition often holds a strong position on both verbal plenary inspiration (all of the Bible's words are inspired) and inerrancy.

- **Roman Catholicism:** The Catholic Church teaches that Scripture is inspired and infallible. However, it also views the Church's tradition and magisterium (teaching authority) as infallible, alongside Scripture.
- **Liberal Christianity:** Many liberal theologians accept that the Bible was written by humans and may contain historical or scientific errors, while still holding its religious message to be authoritative. They often see the inspiration as the overall message rather than the exact wording.

Debate and implications

The doctrine is not without debate, and its interpretation has significant implications for how believers read and apply the Bible. Adherents see it as a necessary foundation for trusting God's revelation, while critics question whether it accurately reflects the nature of the text. Key implications include:

- **Authority:** Whether the Bible is the supreme and final authority for faith and conduct.
- **Interpretation:** Whether certain passages should be read literally or with an understanding of historical context and literary genre.
- **Scientific and historical data:** How to reconcile biblical accounts with scientific or historical findings that appear to contradict them.