



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, 2 Timothy 3:14-17

"Inspiration, or Truth Transmitted"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we come to Thee in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for a great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us. We thank Thee too for the teaching ministry which, through the spirit, he accomplishes. And we pray again that Thou will give us understanding and illumination. Enable us to truly grasp the significance of the words of holy Scripture. Be with us through this hour. We especially pray for any who may be here who are new in the study of the Scripture. Give them understanding. Enable them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his name. Amen.

[Message] This is the third in our series of studies which we have entitled, "Basic Bible Doctrine," and the subject for tonight is, "Inspiration, or God's Unveiled Truth Transmitted." And I'd like for you to turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 14 through verse 17, and we'll read these verses, which we shall be looking at later, as our Scripture reading for the night. 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 14 through verse 17, the apostle writes to young Timothy, who was an apostolic legate,

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 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. 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, first as part of the introduction, let me remind you of some of the things that we have studied to this point. We have said that we know that we know truth by the direct testimony of God received by faith. We turned to the passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and looked at the apostle's account of how he preached the Gospel to the Corinthians, and how he said in that coming to them, he did not determine to know anything among them except Jesus Christ and him crucified. He was among them in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and he said that his speech and his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. In other words, he did not try to impress them by the philosophical depth of his thought, but rather he came in the demonstration of the spirit and of power, that is, he came relying on the Holy Spirit to bring confirmation to their hearts of the things that he was saying.

And he said that he did this for a specific purpose. He said that he did it, "In order that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men." We might think that it would be the soundest foundation for faith to have good human reasons for our faith. That is really the way I think that most people, even among our evangelical Christians, approach the subject. If they can have good logical reasons for their faith, they think that that is the fundamental basis in which they should rest. But all human reasoning is ultimately the kind of reasoning for which we can have no certainty as to its effects, or as to its claims. So the apostle said he did not want their faith to stand in the wisdom of men because there is always someone coming along later who will appear to be wiser,

and if your faith stands in the arguments of human reason, well, you will just discover, sooner or later, that there are other kinds of arguments produced by human reason that will shake your faith. Ultimately the unshakeable faith is the faith that comes from the direct testimony of God. No testimony can be higher to truth than the testimony of God himself. So, Paul says he, "came that their faith should stand in the power of God."

And I read a testimony to that effect by James Henry Thornwell, one of the great Southern Theologians of the Presbyterian church, who a hundred years ago or so said, "But in no case is reason the ultimate rule of faith. No authority can be higher than the direct testimony of God, and no certainty can be greater than that imparted by the Spirit shining on the word of God. An accredited revelation, like an oath among men should put an end to all controversy." We also pointed out that all scientists carry on their work on the basis of faith presuppositions, and Christians should not be embarrassed at all to say that we too stand on certain faith presuppositions. Our faith presuppositions, we think, give us a better understanding of reality than theirs. But ultimately, the sense of certainty that we have concerning the Christian faith is grounded in the testimony of God the Holy Spirit himself.

Then we looked at Revelation in our last study, and we pointed out that the Scriptures say that truth comes to us by revelation. The reason that it must come to us by revelation is because we are finite beings, and therefore, we do not have the capacity to understand infinite things, and in addition, that humanness and finiteness is also complicated by the fact that we are sinners. So because we are sinners, we cannot see, and even if we were not sinners, but finite, we cannot grasp the infinite. Therefore, we need divine revelation, and so in the Scriptures, and in nature about us, we have revelation.

And I pointed out that there are two volumes of the one book of Divine Revelation, one General Revelation of God and nature, the other Special Revelation designed for sinners and that which contains the way of salvation. That is found in the

Scriptures and also preeminently in our Lord Jesus Christ which, too, is, of course, set forth in Scripture. I think I made reference to the Latin sentence, *Finitum non posse capere infinitum*, which means simply, "The finite is not able to grasp the infinite." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." So, if we have not been born again, and do not have the Holy Spirit (all born again people have the Holy Spirit) then we cannot understand divine truth. In addition, our wills are in rebellion against God, and that too makes it impossible for us to know truth.

Now, tonight we're coming to inspiration. Inspiration very simply stated is the means by which God secured an infallible communication of his revelation. So, revelation is the unveiling of divine truth, and inspiration is the means by which God secured an infallible communication of that revelation. So, he has revealed truth, and he has given it to us by inspiration in the word of God. The normative texts are 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16 and 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21, and we'll look at both of these passages in the course of our study tonight.

Let's look now, first of all, at the fact of inspiration, and let's turn to our passage in 2 Timothy chapter 3 that we just read for the Scripture reading. Let me say this before we look at the term *theopneustos*, or the term that means, "inspired of God." The idea that the Bible contains truth that is inspired of God, that it is an infallible revelation that the authors of Scripture have given us in human words, reliable truth from God which does not contain error is not a new doctrine. This is the doctrine of Justin Martyr. It's the doctrine of Irenaeus. It is the doctrine of men like Augustine. Augustine, speaking of the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostle's writings of the New Testament, said specifically in a letter that he wrote to Jerome, "that these writings are free from all error." These are his precise words. So it is clear that he believed in the inerrancy of Holy Spirit.

There are different views among contemporary evangelicals. Some believe that the Bible is a book that contains divine revelation, but it also contains, in matters like

history, geography and other points, somewhat minor, of course, errors. And so, some evangelicals believe that the Bible, while revelation and while reliable in matters of faith and practice, is not inerrant, or without error. Others feel that the Bible is inerrant in its revelational matters, but it is not inerrant in its nonrevelational matters, such as those that we were speaking about. And we don't want to, in this series of basic Bible doctrines, deal with the details of these controversies because it would take a great deal more time than we have at our disposal. I just mentioned that because I hope that some of you will investigate that further. We're thinking generally of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and I will just positively present what it seems to me the Scriptures teach.

Now first of all we want to take a look at the term *theopneustos*, which is the term which is translated in the Authorized Version verse 16, 2 Timothy 3, as given by inspiration of God. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Now this word, *theopneustos*, is a word that means, literally, "God breathed." Now the Greek word *pnoe* means, "to breathe" and *theos*, of course, this *theos* is for the word, "God," so that the combination of this adjective is a word that means, "God breathed."

Now, when we say the Scriptures are God breathed, as the apostle does here, the emphasis does not rest upon the nature of Scripture, nor does it rest on the effects of Scripture. But the emphasis rests on the origination of Scripture. Scripture is God breathed. That is, it is something that is come forth from God. That's the idea that is prominent in this word, this adjective given by inspiration of God, so that the stress of it is not so much upon inspiration as it is upon spiration. Spiration is the breathing out. Inspiration is the breathing into something. Inspiration might give you the idea that God saw some men write some material, came down took a look at it, and said, "That's not bad, I think I will inspire that." And so he breathed into it and made it the word of God.

Now that's not the picture that might be given by the term inspiration, to breathe into. But it really is spiration, breathed out by God. So when he says, "All Scripture is inspired of God," he means Scripture proceeds from God, not from men. It is something

that he breathes out through a man, so it is a divine product. The emphasis rests then not upon the nature of Scripture or the effects of Scripture, though those points are made, but the emphasis rests upon the origination of Scripture, so all Scripture is breathed out by God. It comes from God.

Now, in order to save a little time, I'm going to retranslate the 16th verse, it's not a very important point, but, in a way that I think the text probably is best defended and proceed from that. This verse may be rendered, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, or all Scripture is God breathed." But the normal rendering of the expression translated all Scripture in the Authorized Version is, "Every Scripture." Now some object to this rendering because they think that it means that when we say, "Every Scripture is God breathed," that there may be some kind of Scripture that is not comprehended by that which is not God breathed, but that is not a necessary inference at all. All Paul is saying is that every Scripture and that comprehends all that we know in our canon of Scripture, every Scripture is God breathed.

Now, the Bible then is not a product of God and man. It's not a product of God in a man. But it's a product of God who speaks through men. So when we speak of the Bible as a product, we should be careful to lay the stress upon the divine origination of Scripture. Now, there is a sense in which we could say the Bible is the product of men, in the sense that they were the ones who wrote these words, but the truth that they were communicating is truth that came from God, and the ultimate source of Scripture is God. That's why in the Old Testament you read over and over again, "Thus saith the word of Lord." The word of the Lord - that's the great stress of the Bible, the word of the Lord, because it is God's word. Now in that inferior sense, that is in the sense that men are agents, instrumentalities, we can say it's the word of men, but only in that sense, not in the sense of its authorship.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 1 and verse 22, and let me point you to one text among many in this very Gospel which makes this particular point, I think, quite well.

The evangelist is speaking about Isaiah chapter 7, in Matthew chapter 1, and he's thinking about the virgin birth, and in order to support what he has been describing, he introduces a Scriptural verse. And says that what transpired in the birth of our Lord is in harmony with what Isaiah wrote. Now verse 22 of Matthew 1 reads, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet."

Now in the original text, the expression, "by the Lord" signifies the ultimate source, the divine source of the writing. "Through the prophet" signifies the instrumentality. And so what we have there in that expression is simply the same teaching that the Bible is the product of God through men. Now if you wanted to study this further, you could look at Matthew chapter 2 verse 15 where we have the same thing, Acts chapter 1 verse 16, there are other places where you can find that illustrated. So, the Bible, then, is the product of God through men.

There is an analogy to this in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not a divine person and a human person. He is a divine person who had a divine nature and who took to himself an additional human nature, an additional nature, which was a human nature, but he is a divine person who possesses a human nature. And so the holy Scriptures are a divine product through a human agency.

Let me just put quickly a diagram here which might illustrate the parallel between the Lord Jesus Christ and Scripture. Remember our Lord is called the word of God, and Scripture is called the word of God. This is the process by which our Lord came into existence. There was the work of the Holy Spirit. Remember, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, wherefore also that holy thing being born of thee shall be called Son of God." So, we have the Holy Spirit involved in the birth of Christ. We also have a human being, sinful Mary. Now she said she was sinful. She spoke about God her Savior, and so sinful Mary. The product is a *theanthropic* person that is a God man person, *anthropos* meaning, "man," *the*, from *theos*, a God man kind of person. The result of this is Jesus Christ, who is impeccable. That is,

he cannot sin. It is not simply that our Lord does not sin, he cannot sin. Now this is a biological mystery. No one knows exactly how the Holy Spirit accomplished this. Maybe we shall never know, our Lord being the infinite person that he is.

Now, Scripture is the product of a similar process. We have the work of the Holy Spirit, who inspired men. We have the human authors of Scripture who are sinful writers of Scripture. The result is a *theanthropic* book, that's *theanthropic*. That is a God man kind of book, the Bible, which is, as our Lord was impeccable, the Bible is inerrant, or without error. It is not anything other than a divine miracle, but nevertheless, it is well within the power of God to produce something that is inerrant through sinful men. Now, that we call a psychological mystery. We do not understand all that is involved, of course, in the work of the Holy Spirit as he worked with the writers of Scripture, but nevertheless, we have the word of God telling us that the Bible is the word of God. So the term, *theopneustos* then means, "God breathed," and this text is a text which speaks of holy Scripture as the product of God.

Now, let's turn to the process of inspiration in 2 Peter chapter 1, 2 Peter chapter 1. Paul has just told us that the Bible is God breathed. It's the product of God. It is inspired. Now Peter tells us something else here. The preceding context before these words that I'm going to read right now concerns the authentication of the word of God, not interpretation. And so the interpretation that I shall put upon it is one that is in harmony with the authentication of the word. Now Peter says in verse 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." I think that the meaning of that is that the Scripture does not proceed from men. It comes from God. That seems to suit the context before and after best. But that text has been the subject of some debate.

Verse 21 is not the subject of any debate. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Now the first thing I want you to notice from this passage is the divine origin of Scripture. This is capital "A" in the outline that I'm using for tonight, "The Divine Origin of Scripture." Notice verse 21, the last part of the verse, "but holy men of God." Now we might think that that meant simply, the English text would allow this interpretation, holy men of God, that is holy men who belonged to God, but in the original text the expression, "from God" is an expression that emphasizes source. Holy men spoke from God. Holy men from the source of God spoke. It is the Greek preposition *apo*, which means, "from" and generally connotes the idea of source. So the idea then is that holy men spoke from God. So this expression denies the human source of the word of God. It is the word of God. So Peter emphasizes the same thing that Paul emphasizes. When Paul says, "All Scripture is God breathed," he means that it has its source in God, and so Peter says the same thing, holy men from God as the source spoke. And he does the same thing that Paul does, and the other writers of the New Testament in stressing the human instrumentality of Scripture.

That's the second thing we want to notice, our capital "B" in our outline. He says, "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Now notice, he says, "Holy men of God," or holy men spoke, so men spoke. The mental activity is in view, men spoke. Now the word is the issue of their times and their preparation. When we think of the Bible being produced by inspired men,- we should not think of them as being secretaries, or amanuenses, to use the technical term that was used of individuals who wrote letters for others in ancient times. They were not secretaries. What they produced is not a dictated word of God.

One of the common criticisms of ignorant liberals in criticism of evangelical doctrine of Scripture is to say such a doctrine is a dictation theory of inspiration. That only shows they have not studied the views of evangelicals. Evangelicals do not believe

in a dictation theory of inspiration. They do believe that the product of the word of God is exactly that which God desired, but he did not just take men and dictate to them so that the word had no relationship to these men at all. If he wanted to write a book of history, like the Book of Luke is, and have it the product of historical research, Luke was the kind of person who carried on historical research, and as a result of his historical research, he's given us the Gospel of Luke.

There are some who seem to think it a rather impossible thing for the Lord to do something like this. They rather think of the Lord as being anxious to have the Bible, but finding it somewhat difficult to get the men that might be able to produce this, and so they think of God as looking down here among men and scrutinizing them very carefully and saying finally, "Well now, I would like for a person to write some epistles," such as the Epistles of Paul will be and so he looks very intensively among men until finally, he locates the Apostle Paul, and says, "Ah, that's the man." And then thinking that he would like a good book of history or a book of the life of the Lord grounded in good historical research, he scrutinizes carefully men until Luke happens to come before his eyes, and so he selects Luke. But that's not what we are to think of in the instrumentality of these men at all. In the first place all of these events about which they write were prepared by the Lord God, and these men, Luke, Paul and others, were prepared for what they were going to do from the beginning.

Sometimes liberal men will say, "It's like stained glass windows in a cathedral, if you take the word of God and you put that word of God through sinful men, you're going to see the effects of their sin in their word. And so we should expect to find errors in the Bible. And we do find errors in the Bible," so they will say. Well if it is like stained glass windows, we might ask who made the stained glass windows, and what did they intend for them to be. Anyone who's been in some of the great cathedrals of Europe, for example, and seen those beautiful stained glass windows knows that it was the design of those individuals who made the mirrors to produce certain effects, and they

were made with that in view. So when the light comes through them, the effects are the intended effects.

And so when the word of God comes through a Luke, the result is not something contrary to what God intended, it's exactly what he had intended, for he made Luke, that stained glass window, to produce exactly what he wanted to produce, and a Paul, and a Peter, and an Isaiah, and all the rest. They were prepared by God for what he gave them. They entered into the experience of all that they were writing too. They knew that they were writing. They even reasoned the things out that they were writing, but there was someone over and above them superintending their thinking, and that was the Lord God. So he didn't take men who had no personal relationship, no preparation, no interest in, no union, with the things that they were writing. He prepared those men for the things that they ultimately wrote. So men spoke from God, but they were men, men spoke. So we can say that the Bible has come to us through human instrumentality, but it's the word of God.

Now the process is described here probably more fully than anywhere else in Scripture, and yet there are some things that are not fully explained even by this expression. We read here that, "Holy men of God spake" (or spoke) "As they were moved by the Holy Spirit." "Moved by the Holy Spirit," that's emphatic in the original text of this clause, "Moved by the Holy Spirit." So the Spirit moved the men, but the men spoke; the Spirit moved, men spoke. So what he's really saying is that the motivation lying back of their writing was from God. God moved them, and they responded in writing. It's like the way we are saved. We are saved because God moves first, and then we respond to the Gospel, and we're saved. And we don't go around saying salvation is of the Lord and of me. We go around saying salvation is of the Lord, that is, if we're going to be in the company of the apostles and the prophets and others in heaven, and not be kicked over the walls by the angels when they find someone up there who thinks that salvation's partially of human free will, for example, and of the Lord God.

Now he says that they were, "Moved by the Holy Spirit." That expression is an expression that means literally to be "borne along." There is a rather interesting illustration of it. Maybe we have time to look at it. In Acts chapter 27, it's the same Greek word that is used there, the Greek word *phero* which means, "to bear" or carry. It has a number of other meanings too, but in Acts chapter 27, we have that interesting chapter in which Luke records the storm that took place while Paul was on his way to Rome. And we read in verse 15 in the description of the storm that was given, Acts chapter 27, "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive." That is, we let her be borne along. We let her be carried. Verse 17, "Which when they had hoisted it, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, struck sail, and so were driven," were borne along. It's the same word, translated driven here, that is used in verse 21 of 2 Peter 1, "Moved," or driven, "By the Holy Spirit." So the picture is of a boat that is given the freedom to follow the dictates of the wind.

Now the individuals on the boat had freedom on the boat. They could move over the boat. In the midst of this storm, I don't know how much moving they wanted to do, but nevertheless, they could have freedom within the confines of the boat. But the boat itself was at the mercy of the wind, driven by the wind. That's the precise expression that we have here. These men had the freedom of their own personality, their own preparation, their own interest, the reasoning that they themselves had given of the things that they were writing about, but they were moved by the Holy Spirit. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Now when someone is borne along, he is carried by someone else's power. And so these men were carried by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let's come to the third of our sections, "The Extent of the Inspiration." How far is the inspiration to be carried? If we acknowledge that the Bible is breathed out by God, it's a divine product. If we acknowledge that human individuals were involved in the writing of Scripture, that it is the Holy Spirit who moved men. How far is the Bible

inspired? Does it give us just general ideas, general principles, but contain a number of errors? What about all of the books of the Bible, all of the chapters of the Bible? Are all of the chapters inspired or just those that we like best, or those that have good theology in them? Those that have good Calvinistic teaching, those that seem to teach Arminianism, they're not inspired, someone might say.

Well, we ask the question. How far is inspiration to be carried? Well first of all, from the teaching of the New Testament, we can say it's to be carried to the whole of the Bible. That is, the extent of the inspiration extends to the whole of the Bible, or it is plenary, now I didn't make that too plain here, but that's a "p," plenary. *Plenus* is a Latin adjective that means, "full," remember. So, plenary means full inspiration. Now when we say the Bible is plenary inspired, or inspiration is plenary, we mean that all of what we understand by the canon of Scripture (incidentally, that's a subject we'll take up here in a few weeks from now) all that we mean by the term canon is included under inspiration when we read every Scripture is inspired of God, or breathed out by God in 2 Timothy chapter 3. We are saying the Bible is fully inspired. In John chapter 10 and verse 35, we have a statement that bears on that too. Remember the Lord Jesus, in citing one text added, the Scripture cannot be broken. In other words, the whole of Scripture cannot be broken.

Now, we don't have time to argue this in detail, but so far as the Bible is concerned, we read all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Inspiration extends to the whole of the Bible. It is plenary. The canon of Scripture was closed when written. Every particular book of the Bible formed a part of the canon from the time that it was written. All of our sixty-six books were ultimately recognized by the Christian church. That recognition probably reaches its climax at the third Council of Carthage in 397 AD, and the Scriptures are demonstrated to be the inspired word of God by the results that they have as we respond to them. Incidentally, these sixty-six books are the books that God uses. He does not use other books in the salvation of men's souls. You don't find

anybody getting up in a testimony meeting and saying, "I want to thank the Lord that I was saved through Tobit chapter 5 and verse 4." They don't say that. If they cite some text or Scripture which was used in their salvation, it's invariably one of the sixty-six books of the Bible. It is these books that God uses in the salvation of souls.

Now, secondly, the extent of inspiration or inspiration extends to every word of the autographer. Now when we say that it extends to every word of the autographer, we mean that it is therefore verbal inspiration. *Verbum* in Latin means, "a word." Verbal inspiration, it extends to the word. So, Biblical inspiration, then, in its extent is verbal and plenary. That is, it extends to every word. Now when we say, "Word of the autographer," we mean of the original writings, not of the English translations. English translations contain errors, but to every word of the autographer. Incidentally, this is an expression for some of you who may not have heard this before, *grapho* means, "to write" in Greek and *autos* means, it's an intensive pronoun that means, "itself," or "himself," or "herself," and so forth, so the writings themselves, autographer. To every word of the writings themselves, that is the things that he apostles wrote, the original writings, verbal plenary inspiration.

Now, just for a few minutes because we still have about six minutes, I want to try to suggest some lines of thought that support the idea that inspiration extends to every word of the autographer. The first place we could argue just from the standpoint of human reason, or reasoning, that words signify and safe guard meaning. If we change words, we change meaning. It's impossible for us to convey the precisely same force by different words. A wrong word distorts meaning. If the words are not wholly God's, then their teaching would not be wholly God's. So it is implicate of the divine origin of Scripture that this inspiration should extend to its words, otherwise we would have part of Scripture that would not be from God, or wholly, from God. But the Bible also does other things that make this quite clear. In the first place, the Bible appeals in its arguments to words. Let's just take an illustration. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 22 and verse 43, Matthew

chapter 22 and verse 43. Now this is in the course of a section in which the Lord Jesus is arguing with the Pharisees, and while you're finding verse 43, let me read verse 41,

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of the Messiah?" (They've been asking him questions. He decided he would ask them a question.) "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?"

Now the whole point of our Lord's argument rests on the word Lord. Whose son is David? Whose son is the Messiah? "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" "Son of David," they say. Ah, but David called him Lord. In other words, David has said something more than they were saying. They said, "He's the son of David." David called the Messiah the Lord. Now you can see the meaning and the argument depends entirely upon the force of the word Lord, because if David called him Lord, he's more than son. It's obvious that to say he's the son of David is not a full answer to the question, "Who is the Messiah," partial answer, son of David, full answer, also, he's the Lord. Now that argument rests on one word, the word Lord. If the Bible is not verbally inspired then one might say at this point, "Oh well, that's just a word, a specific word, and specific words are not inspired. It's the general thought."

But the Bible argues over and over again, its points on the basis of specific words. Hebrews chapter 8, verse 13, John chapter 10 verse 34, I could list twenty five places without even looking because it just so happens this is something that I've worked with for many years. There are just many passages which depend upon a particular word. And if the Scriptures are not inspired verbally, those arguments fall to the ground.

Now the Bible not only appeals to words, the Bible appeals to the difference between grammatical number, singular and plural. The Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 16 is arguing some theology, and he says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." So the Apostle looks at the Old Testament references to seed and argues on the basis of the difference between a singular and a plural, a certain theological point. It's clear that he must have had a conception of Scripture as verbally inspired. And those words were not words that you could change.

In addition the Bible appeals to grammatical case. In Matthew chapter 22 and verse 32, in fact the Bible has a rather interesting figure given by the Lord Jesus himself, in Matthew chapter 5, verse 17 through verse 20. Now let me read this because I think this will rather clinch the point. The Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount says in verse 17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Now when he said, "One jot or one tittle," he referred to the smallest Hebrew letter, the *yodb*, which is a little mark like that, and he referred in the tittle to the little extension beyond the vertical line in a word like this that distinguishes it from a word like that. So he talks about something like that, or for example, between a *deleth* in Hebrew which has that, and a *rashe*, which is rounded. So when he said a jot or a tittle he's referring to the smallest kinds of things in the written text, and he says not, "One jot or one tittle shall pass away, till all be fulfilled." Now he's not speaking literally about the jot and the tittle of the word of God because he, of course, did not have the jots and the tittles of the autographer even in his day. But he's speaking about the comprehensive fulfillment of the Old Testament Scripture and a comprehensive fulfillment of the Scripture demands an inviolability of Scripture in a most minute way. If a Scripture is going to be fulfilled in every detail it's obvious that the Scripture is inviolable in its details. It is a

magnificent statement of the inviolability of the written word of Scripture. Now he's talking about the written word because he talks about jots and tittles. So it's a magnificent expression of the fact that the Scriptures are inspired and they will be carried out to the smallest particulars as set forth in the written text of the word of God.

Augustine was the one who said, "Indeed, O man," putting these words in the mouth of God, remember, "Indeed, O man, what my Scripture says, I say." And that is the attitude toward holy Scripture that the apostles had. "What my Scripture says, I say." Scripture is the word of God, therefore inspired, inspired fully, inspired in its very words. Now we don't deny that problems exist, if you're interested in some of those details, you can go to the tape ministry and select tapes on specific passages like this very passage in 2 Peter where there are messages in which we try to deal with some of the problems. But the treating of them is for another time.

Bishop Ryle, one of the evangelicals of the earlier part of this century, bishop of Liverpool in the Anglican church, said, "Give me the difficulties, rather than the doubt, I accept the plenary verbal theory of biblical inspiration with all its difficulties and humbly wait for their solution, but while I wait, I'm standing on the rock. It is written." Or to Donald Grey Barnhouse, in one of his writings somewhere, I didn't notice where, didn't note where he got it, said that he ran across a Bible which he had used as a little boy, and on the fly leaf he had written these words, "Scripture is throughout from God. Scripture is entirely from God. The Bible is God speaking in man. It is God speaking by man. It is God speaking as man. It is God speaking for man, but always, it is God speaking." Let me sum up by citing 2 Samuel chapter 7 verse 28, "And now, O Lord GOD, thou art God, and thy words are true." Inerrancy, the Bible as the inerrant word of God is the necessary postulate of the divine origin of Scripture, the nature of God and the profitability of the word of God. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the inspired word. We thank Thee that it is truly the word of God. And O God help us to bow before it. Lord God deliver us from rebellion against the word. Deliver us from lethargy in studying it. Deliver us from indifference to it. Enable us Lord to truly respond to it. And have it as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, through this pilgrim journey that we are each taking. If there should be some here without Christ give them no rest nor peace until they rest in him. By virtue of his atoning sacrifice we pray in his name, Amen... [END]