



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit and the Word of God, part II”      TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn again to Thy word and we ask Thy blessing upon us as we continue our studies in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

For Jesus' sake. We pray, Amen.

[Message] Tonight, I want to read 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 through 17, for our Scripture reading because we will refer to this section later on. I'm going to read from the Greek text and you follow along in your English version. Paul writing to Timothy says after mentioning that evil men shall advance; deceiving and being deceived, he then says.

“But you Timothy abide in the things which you have learned and of which you have become certain, knowing from whom you have learned them; And that from a babe you have known the holy writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, or better, God breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, completely fitted out for every good work.”

Now, last time, we, as I remember, had begun our studies of “The Holy Spirit and the Word of God,” by commenting upon the fact that there were three great words that we must understand if we are to understand what the Bible has to say about itself. And those three words were: revelation, which refers to the unveiling of God’s truth to men and to the resultant truth, so that we can by the term revelation refer to the giving of the word of God, and we can also refer to the product of it, the Bible, this is the revelation of God. We looked at the term inspiration, which refers to the means whereby God secured an infallible communication of the revelation. It refers to the recording of the revelation. Revelation has to do with the content of truth, primarily, and inspiration has to do with that final act which secures the trustworthiness of that revelation content. So, revelation, the unveiling; inspiration the means whereby God secured an infallible unveiling.

And finally, illumination that refers to word work of the Holy Spirit in granting us an understanding or enlightenment in the inspired revelation or in the revelation which has been given to us in trustworthy fashion. And then we began to discuss these three words in the relationship that they bear to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit and revelation. Capitol A - The author of revelation. And, if my memory serves me correctly because I forgot to make a note in my notes, I think that we covered 1A and stopped there. Is that correct, those of you that were taking a few notes?

So tonight we want to begin here at the means of revelation and proceed on through and complete our study. Next week, the Lord willing, we want to talk about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament period. Very interesting subject and I know we will all be interested to see what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. But now, we looked at the author of revelation and we saw that the emphasis of the Scriptures is to the effect that the author of the divine revelation is the third person of the Trinity. In other words, he takes the predominant part in giving us the word of God.

Now, the means of revelation. Revelation, according to the word of God came through varied means. For example, God has given us revelation of himself in his words. Most of us think of the Bible as a collection of words given by God about himself and his dealings with men. And so, revelation has come to us through the word. But, of course, I’m not speaking about the Bible when I say that; for if that were true, then all revelation comes to us, special revelation, by words. I’m talking about those particular times when God spoke to men and spoke to them in divine revelation, in distinction from other ways in which he unveiled himself according to our Bible.

For example, he not only spoke to men in word but he spoke to men in dreams, and you may remember that Jacob had a dream in which was contained revelation of God. Joseph had a dream. Perhaps one of the greatest illustrations of revelation through dream is the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had, in which there was given to him that great picture of Gentile world history. So that God has spoken through word, he has spoken through dreams, he has also spoken through visions.

Now, the Book of Revelation is almost one great vision given to the Apostle John; it really is a series of visions. And God has spoken in vision. Not only do we have this in the Book of Revelation, but we also have this in the prophecy of Isaiah because he speaks as he begins his book by saying: the visions of Isaiah, the son of Amos. And so, God has spoken through word, he has spoken through dream, he has spoken through vision, he has even spoken through a prophetic trance.

Now, if you’ve been listening to me trying to expound the Book of Acts, on Sunday morning, you will remember that Peter fell into a trance on the roof of the house in Sidon or Joppa, and there he was given a picture of the sheep that came down from Heaven, and the wild animals within it. And he was told to rise and eat. Now, the Greek word that is used, or the English word, I think, and the Greek word too, both suggest the idea of a trance, a prophetic ecstasy, in which, if I were to try to distinguish vision and trance, I’m not sure that I can, really. But some have suggested the differences, simply

this that in a vision a person sees something and he does not participate in what he sees.

But in a trance, he sees something and he also participates in this that he sees. Of course, he does not participate in a physical form, but he does become a part of it. And, if that is a true distinction then the visions of Zechariah the Prophet were something like trances because he is not only seeing things that God gives him to see but, he, himself, becomes a part of it and he speaks to the interpreting angel and the interpreting angel answers and gives him information and then he responds again. In fact, some of those visions in the Book of Revelation seem to be trances, too. But that’s a minor matter, God speaks in dreams, he speaks in trances, even if we don’t understand them, the word of God has said that this is true.

He also speaks in events and many of the events of the Bible are, themselves, revelatory events. For example, he has spoken in the cross. He has spoken in the Exodus. He will surely speak to men in his Second Advent. So, many of the great events of the Bible were revelatory in themselves. So, God has then spoken in many ways. But, we think primarily of his words. But let’s not forget that he has spoken to us and these are the ways.

Now, all of the result of these various means of speaking, which God has done, all of the results of this are found in this one book, which contains the words of God. But, we’re talking about the initial process when we say that God has revealed himself to men in varied means.

Now, let’s think for a moment about the process of revelation, Capitol C. B. B. Warfield, who has been one of our greatest theologians and particularly of the twentieth century. Warfield said that revelation has been given to men in three fairly well-marked periods. And, I put them over here, the Patriarchal Age, the Prophetic Age, and the Apostolic Age. And he likes to distinguish them in this way and I think there is some good reason why we should distinguish them this way.

He says that in the Patriarchal Age, revelation was given largely through outward manifestations, like the burning bush or the pillar of fire or the pillar of cloud. Revelation was given in the Patriarchal Age by symbols, like the Tabernacle, which as an institution, in itself, was a revelation of God. And revelation was given in theophanies; that is the appearance of God in the form of a man or the appearance of God in the form of an angel.

So that we have theophanies, we have symbol, and we have, what was it I said first? We have outward manifestations.

Secondly, in the Prophetic Age, this was the age of internal suggestion. That is the Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of the prophets and the prophets gave to men words that God was giving to them.

And in the Apostolic Age, well, Warfield says this is the period of “concurrent” operation. That is it is the age of the spirit through the medium of the written word and the human organs God speaks his mind through the apostles. So the Apostolic Age is preeminently the age of the Holy Spirit who speaks through the apostles and gives us his word.

Now, whether we can precisely distinguish these or not, well, we may have differing opinions about that, but at least I think we can see that there has been a progression. In the Old Testament, there is much more of the supernatural, much more of the unusual, whereas, by the time the apostles come, God has settled down to revealing himself, primarily, as he moves upon the heart of men who had touch with Jesus Christ and spoke through them.

Now, let’s move on tonight to the Holy Spirit and inspiration, secondly and Capitol A - The fact of inspiration.

Now, since we have talked about inspiration about two years ago, tonight, I want to just outline the main facts about it and if you have any questions, mark them down on the side of your paper And then when we have the question hour afterwards, why, you

can ask me anything that may puzzle you. But, some here have heard me, they may have forgotten everything they heard, but they have heard me speak to them on the subject of inspiration, and some of what I am going to say is repetitious.

Capitol A - The fact of inspiration. And will you turn back to our passage in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, chapter 3, and let’s look at these verses. And I want to make a few comments in connection with them.

Now, first of all, I want you to notice the important phrases. Paul says in 2 Timothy 3, verse 16: “All Scripture. All Scripture.” Now, I cannot engage in a technical discussion of this. In about three years from now, when everybody in this room is a student of the Greek New Testament, then we will be able to do that. But, I am just going to say this that the expression which is found in the Greek text here, *pasa graphe* may be rendered “all Scripture” but the normal meaning of it is “every Scripture.” And, I am inclined to think, in spite of what some of my good friends say, that the rendering is every scripture is God breathed.

Now, I understand this to mean “every part” of the word of God is inspired.

I know that some of my friends say, “Well, if that means every Scripture is inspired of God, or perhaps every scripture that is inspired of God is profitable, that might suggest that there were some scriptures that are not.” Well, I do not see how that is necessary at all. If I say, “Every Scripture is God breathed,” surely, that includes all. I think that what Paul is talking about is that every thing that God has said, which is recorded in the Scriptures, which were to him the Old Testament Scriptures, primarily, every Scripture is God breathed. It would seem to me that this implies that the whole of the word of God is inspired.

Now, the next word that we need to look at and we’ll spend a little more time on this is the word that is translated “given by inspiration of God.” Now, that is the rendering of one Greek word. The Bible in the Greek simply says, “Every Scripture is

*theopneustos*, every scripture is *theopneustos*.” That word *theopneustos*, I’ll try to transliterate it for those of you who don’t know Greek. “Every Scripture is *theopneustos*.”

Now, if you are a good reader of roots of words in English, you may guess the meaning of this. Of course, you know that *thea* comes from the Greek word, *Theos* which means God, from which we get theological, for example. And *pneustos* comes from the Greek word *pneuma*. And this word is the word from which we get such English words as pneumatic. A pneumatic drill is what kind of drill. It’s an air drill, right. And so, this is the word for spirit. It is the word for breath. And, so, *theopneustos* means that every scripture comes from the breath of God. Every scripture is breathed out by God. As you can tell, this word does not really mean, “inspire,” meaning to breathe in, but it really means to breathe out. Every scripture is God breathed.

It does not mean, for example, that Moses wrote, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And God looked down from heaven and was a little surprised and said, “Well, what do you know. Moses has hit on the truth. [Laughter] I think I shall inspire this. And so he breathed in it the authority of God.” Well, that is suggested, at least to me, by the English expression, “Every Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” It’s as if the truth was there and God inspired it. He breathed into it and gave it authority and power. But really, the expression means that he breathed it out. And the idea back of it is that God breathed into Moses and out of God through Moses there resulted “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” And the reason it was true was not because Moses happened to hit upon something that was true, because he was writing through the “spiration” of God, through the breath of God.

So that really, we shouldn’t speak so much of inspiration of the Scriptures as the “spiration” of scripture. But, if we went around talking about the “spiration” of scripture, no one would understand us. And consequently, we just better stick with the old term that everyone understands but which is in need of some explanation. So we talk about

the doctrine of inspiration but we’re really talking about how God breathed out the Scriptures. So, the origin of the word is in view and God is its author.

Now, let’s turn over to Matthew, chapter 1 in verse 22 again. I think we referred to this last time, but I don’t think we can ever refer to this too much. Inspiration is such an important doctrine of the word of God. In Matthew, chapter 1 in verse 22, the prophet writes, and I’m going to read from the Greek text, and I’m going to read literally, and you follow in your English texts there, Verse 22.

“Now this whole thing has come to pass that that spoken directly by the Lord through the intermediate agency of the prophet, might be fulfilled, say.”

Now, you can see from that verse that “that spoken” as you have it here “of the Lord,” is really, directly by the Lord, through the prophet, through the intermediate agency of the prophet. Now, the thing I want you to notice is that when we talk about the inspiration of the Scriptures, we are talking about something that is the product of God.

Now, we’re not talking about something that is the product of God and man, as if each has a fifty percent part in the product of the Bible. So that we can say the Bible is the product of God and the product of man, each has an equal part. It is true that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This Bible is, in one sense, a human book; men wrote it. But, at the same time, it is a divine book, and the important stress of the passage and the important stress of the New Testament and Old Testament rests upon the fact that the Bible is a product of God through men. Its origin is God. The intermediate agency, by which it has come to us, is human. But, that is why the Bible is called, “The word of God.” You know, it is never called the word of God and man.

Now, it’s true, as I said last time, occasionally, you will find “Moses said ” or the word of God spoken through David. But that is the intermediate agency. So the word is the word of God, and so here.



“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, say.”

Now, what we’re trying to say, then, is that the word of God is the product of God; and therefore, we should call it, God’s Word.

I’d like to stop here just a moment and say something about the importance of this. Occasionally, in modern theology, contemporary theology, you will find people saying, “Well, now, the Bible is a human book.” And so much is correct. And because the Bible is a human book, since men are sinful, the Bible must have its flaws and errors, because, if it’s a human book then it should bear the impress of its human origin, and it should have errors, because we are sinners. And, I surely agree with that last statement.

Now, that can be very deceptive. I don’t think that any one of us would want to minimize in any way the fact that men are sinners. But when we say then, that because the Bible is a human book it must have error in it, that’s another matter. Now, let’s just take an illustration. Let’s take Jesus Christ. And, let’s think about the birth of our Lord.

Was Jesus Christ human? Well, yes, Jesus Christ was human, perfectly human. Just as much human as you and I are. Was he, therefore, sinful? No. Was he the product of human generation? No. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. But, if he was born of the Virgin Mary, was he not a partaker of human nature? Yes. But of sin? No. Why? Well, because of the action of the Holy Spirit in preserving that conceived by the Holy Ghost from the sin of Mary. Now, it was a miracle. That’s why we talk about the supernatural virgin conception of our Lord.

Now, if we look at the Bible and we call this the word of God, are we being so illogical if we insist that the word of God has come through men, it has in a supernatural way been preserved from the errors of men? I don’t think so. I think if we posit a

miraculous birth of our Lord, by which he was preserved from sin, we surely can be not misunderstood and heretical if we insist that the Bible is a product of divine supernatural action. So that what has resulted is a book that is flawless in its original writings.

So when we say then that the Bible is God breathed, we are saying it has come from God. It has come through men. But, it is a book that is inspired of God and inerrant. That is, it does not possess error in its original writings, although it has come through men. Its inerrancy is to be traced to its divine origin. It is the word of God.

Now, later on we will probably be saying more about that. But, that’s enough at the present, I think. Let’s go on to say a few words about the process of inspiration.

Now, let’s turn over to 2 Peter, chapter 1, verses 19 through 21. 2 Peter 1:19 through 21. Here Peter writes.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto 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. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: [There it is – the prophecy did not have its origin in the will of man] but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

The Spirit moved. The Spirit is the origin but men spoke. The moving of the Spirit is a revelation. The speaking of the men involves inspiration.

Now, the product, of course, was the issue of its kind. “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” And so we can say that the Bible is the work of men as the intermediaries in its conveyance to men. Those men were prepared by God; they had experiences that are reflected in the word of God. We’re not saying in any way that God simply dictated the writings of the Bible to men who were amanuensis

or ancient stenographers. We are saying that they spoke, that their natural characteristics and background and age are reflected in the things that they wrote.

Some of the things they knew had been given them by God directly, so that they spoke word for word what God gave them. At other times they were moved by the Holy Ghost to write what they felt convinced was God’s message to them but which they did not hear, necessarily, word by word. And, perhaps, also, so far as we know, there were some things in the Bible, which they wrote, which they may have written without any sense of being inspired by God. But, as a result of what has happened, it has come to be part of our word of God, through the providence of God. So the men were the products of their times. The Bible is not a dictated book. So, when we explain the inspiration of the Scriptures we do not say that the correct explanation of how the Bible has come to us is dictation. It is inspiration or spiration but it is not dictation.

Dr. Warfield has an illustration and I’m just going to read it to you. He says, “As light that passes through the colored glass of a cathedral window, we are told is light from heaven, but it’s stained by the tints of the glass through which it passes; so any word of God which has passed through the mind and soul of a man must come out discolored by the personality through which it is given and just to that degree ceases to be the pure word of God.

“But, what if this personality,” Warfield says, “has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is for the express purpose of communicating the word given through it just the coloring which it gives it? What if the colors of the stained glass windows have been designed by the architect for the express purpose of giving the light that floods the cathedral precisely the tone and quality it received from them? What if the word of God that comes to his people is framed by God into the word of God it is, precisely, by means of the qualities of the men formed by him for the purpose through which it is given? When we think of God, the Lord, giving by his Spirit a body of authoritative writings to his people, we must remember that he is the God of providence

and of grace as well as of revelation and inspiration; and that he holds all the lines of preparation as fully under his direction as he does the specific operation, which we call technically in the narrow sense, by the name of inspiration.”

Now, I think we can add one thing more which Warfield has not added. Because, while it is true that the Bible has come to us so that we can recognize the hand of Luke in one place and we can recognize the hand of Paul in another and we can recognize the hand of Peter in still another, it is not just exactly like a stained glass window because God has preserved the men from error as they were writing in supernatural fashion. So, he has prepared them. That’s why Luke has given us the Book of Acts.

How was Luke prepared? Well, he was a physician, he was a man of some academic standing, and in order to do the work necessary to give us an authoritative researched history of the early church, we needed a man who knew something about methods of research. And, by the way, Luke’s methods of research have an increasingly high regard as the decades have passed on in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But, he needed a man like Luke and so he prepared Luke so that Luke would give us Luke’s Acts. And when he wanted a man who grew out of the Old Testament and was familiar with it so that he might through this man show us all of the New Testament truths are the fulfillment of the Old Testament revelation in Judaism, what better man than the man who has advanced beyond all of his contemporaries in Judaism, the Apostle Paul; a Pharisee of the Pharisees, who understood the letter of the Old Testament, perhaps, as no other man did. And so he prepared that man and all of those years that Paul spent away from God were not lost years; they were years of preparation. When he wanted a man to give us the prophecies that Jeremiah has given us, he prepared him from the time of “his mother’s womb,” so Jeremiah says.

Paul speaks in similar language. And, when God wanted somebody to preach to you the word of God, well, he prepared that person too. Only more so when it comes to the writing of the Bible.

Now, I believe that God prepared me for what I do. Let me give you an illustration. When I went to college, I was interested in one thing; that was playing golf. My father was able to send me to almost any college or university that I wanted to go to, even in the depression years. And so I looked around at all the colleges and I decided what better one to go to than the one right in Charleston, College of Charleston, because I could play golf the year around there. And, I wasn’t sure about Duke; and I wasn’t sure about Virginia, and I wasn’t sure about an Ivy League school. And so, why not stay right in Charleston, so I did.

And I played golf every afternoon. I did not miss a single afternoon unless there was something that came up; unless it was raining or something cataclysmic happened, I was out there. And on Saturday and Sunday, I was out there morning and night. Sunday morning -- that was a beautiful time to play because a few people at the club were at church and so the course was a little clearer then. So I played every day. And the second year when I went back to college, I decided, well, now, I want to take German. By the way, I was taking Latin. I’d taken four years of Latin in High School and I was majoring in Latin in the Classics in my college. And so, when it came to my sophomore year, I thought, well, now, I want to take German. So I signed up for German. I fit it into my schedule and it met in the mornings and everything was lovely because I had my afternoons free. And, so I began school and after the first week, everything was fine, until the second week, I went to school and looked at the bulletin board and there was a notice that said that the course in German I will meet and there were two hours listed, as I remember, and one hour in the afternoon. The schedule had been changed. So, I hastily got the schedule of all the classes and tried to find out one particular course that might fit in my schedule that would keep my afternoons free.

And do you know what course it was? Greek! That’s what it was. And, I will never forget, it met four times a week and it met, as I remember, at eleven o’clock one day, at twelve o’clock the next, at eleven the next and twelve the next, Tuesday,

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. And, one schedule was just vacant at those spots: eleven, twelve, eleven, twelve or vice versa. And so I signed up for Greek. And I began to attend Greek and I liked Greek. In fact, I liked it better than anything I was taking. We had an excellent professor. In fact, one of the outstanding teachers in that part of the country, we later came to realize. And so, I liked Greek.

And then I noticed, by the way, about six weeks later, I was walking by the bulletin board and I looked up there and it said, the German class which had been meeting in the afternoons would now meet in the morning. [Laughter] And it was as if God interrupted the schedule of the College of Charleston, in order that I might get in that Greek course. And he prepared me for what I was doing. Well, who ever thought I would wind up teaching the New Testament in Greek in a Theological Seminary. If someone had told me that, I think I would have blown my brains out. [Laughter]

Or else I might have said, ‘what am I to do?’ in the afternoons before I. [more laughter]

So you see, God not only prepares the men that he is going to use to preach, but he most of all is interested in preparing the men who are going to give us Scripture. And so he prepared these men perfectly for their task. And they wrote out of their own experiences so that when I read Peter, I can see Peter in what he writes. And I can see Paul in his writing and Luke in his, and so on. And yet, all in all, it is still the work of God. It is God’s word. So we read: “Thus saith the Lord.” We never read, “Thus saith the Lord” and I. Where do you ever find that in the Bible? You don’t find it because it’s the word of God. But it does come through men.

Now, the extent of inspiration. The fact: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The process: The Spirit moved; the men spake. The extent: Now, the extent of inspiration is the study of how far this inspiration goes. And I want to just say two things. The inspiration of the Bible extends to the whole of the Bible. In other words, it is plenary, plenary. It is full inspiration. All of the Bible is inspired; not just the part we

like, but all of the Bible is inspired. That comes from the Latin word you remember, *planos*. That’s why I took eight years of Latin. God was preparing me so that I could put this word up on the board in 1970. Planos which means full, remember full inspiration. So it is full inspiration. So it is plenary inspiration.

Now, when Paul writes here in 2 Timothy 3, “Every scripture is given by inspiration of God,” he is saying the inspiration of the Bible is plenary. It is full inspiration. Now, we could illustrate this but we don’t have time.

Secondly, inspiration extends to every word of the original writings. It is not only an inspiration that covers all of the Bible but it extends to every part of the Bible, every word of the autographer. We cannot conceive of an inspiration that does not extend to words. As James Packer has said, “If the words are not Holy God’s then the teaching is not Holy God’s.” And when we say the Bible is God’s teaching that the words are God’s words.

Now, the inspiration of the Scripture is not only plenary but is verbal. It is word inspiration. So, the theory of the inspiration of the Scriptures, which I feel is true to the Bible, is what we call a verbal plenary theory of inspiration.

Now, there are some people who say, “I don’t believe the Bible is inspired in its words. It think it is inspired only in its concepts.” And so there are conceptual theories of inspiration, sometimes called dynamic inspiration.

Now, we should not get into an argument with someone over this in such a way that it’s either the inspiration of its concepts or the inspiration of its words because, of course, if the words of the Bible are inspired its concepts are inspired. And so it’s a question of whether it is both and. And I think that the Bible teaches that it is not only full inspiration but that inspiration extends, not only to its concepts, but to its words. Because we cannot conceive, and I do not think it is possible for us to consistently believe that we can have an inspiration, which does not involve words. As Packer said, “If the words are not wholly God’s then the teaching is not wholly God’s.”

And, how can we distinguish what is of God and what is of man? What standard can we use to weed out that which is wrong? We don’t have any such standard.

When I was in Basel, studying and attending lectures of Professor Karl Barth, a great man and, I think, a genuine Christian, Professor Barth insisted that the Bible was not, he said that the Bible was verbally inspired but he didn’t mean what you and I mean by that. He meant that God only speaks through the words of this Bible. But, he said, this Bible is a human Bible and a faulty Bible and a fallible Bible. And, its words are fallible. But, God has chosen to speak through fallible words. And, then when one asked him the question, “Well, Professor Barth, how can we tell what is infallible in the Scriptures and what is fallible?” He had no standard by which we could determine except human reasoning.

Well, we could say, “Well, this doesn’t seem to be scientific.” But then we might learn ten years from now that it is scientific and we’ve modified our science. We might say, “This is psychologically untrue,” but then we might learn that our psychology is wrong. And so we do not have any test for determining what is fallible and what is infallible. And, there are positive reasons why we believe that the Bible contains a verbal plenary inspiration. Let me illustrate for a few moments and have you look up a few words. Let’s turn to John, chapter 10 in verse 35. John 10, verse 35. These are the words of our Lord, Jesus, and he is speaking with the Jews and we read in verse 31 of John 10:

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. [You’ll notice, they understood that he claimed to be deity.] Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [Now notice that one word “gods.” If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken – full inspiration] Say



ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?”

Now, you will notice that our Lord’s argument rests upon what? One word, one word, if the Scripture called them “gods.” Now, if I’d been sitting there and didn’t believe in verbal inspiration, I’d say, wait a minute, wait a minute, your argument is based upon one word. The words of the Bible are not inspired. I think I know what our Lord would have said, You err not knowing the Scriptures. So an argument may be based on one word. Let’s turn back to Matthew, chapter 5, verse 18. By the way, there are many such arguments in the Bible. Matthew, chapter 5, verse 18.

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Now, notice our Lord’s words. Now, these words are figurative. He is talking about how the Bible is God’s word to its smallest point and he says, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Now, you know that the jot was the Hebrew, *yodb*, that’s the way it looked. For example, in the Tetragrammaton, for God is this little letter *yodb*. That *yodb* is the way we would transliterate it. Look how small it is? One jot shall in no wise pass away. Our Lord is trying to show that the Scripture is to be fulfilled to its smallest point. He says, “One jot or one tittle.”

Now, here are two letters in Hebrew. Let’s take this one, which is a “D,” or a *dalet*, and this one, which is a *reish*. Now, if you can see the only difference between them is that this line extends below the vertical line, the horizontal beyond the vertical. That makes the *reish* below another *dalet*. That is a *dalet*. This is the *reish*. Now, that little extension is a [Hebrew indistinct] or horn, or a tittle of a letter. It’s the little mark

that distinguishes one from another. And so, he says, “Till heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Now, that is an expression in which our Lord claims that the complete fulfillment to the smallest degree of the word of God.

Now, let’s turn over to Galatians, chapter 3 and verse 16. Galatians, chapter 3 in verse 16. Here Paul says, Galatians 3:16.

“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.”

Now, let me ask you a question. On what does the argument of Paul depend here? On what? On the “s.” On the distinction between a singular and a plural. In other words, the argument is an argument that really rests on the difference between two forms of the same word, seeds, seed. Now, if you were listening to Paul, “Wait a minute, Paul -- Wait a minute, the Bible is not inspired to that extent. How can you be sure?” Well, I’m sure, again, Paul would say, “You err not knowing the Scriptures.”

Now, let’s turn back to Matthew chapter 22 in verse 32. You know I wish I had an hour on this next text because some may misunderstand what I’m going to say. And, you’re going to have to take my word for it, but I have spent an hour on this text with students, already, this term and whenever I teach the course of our Lord’s use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, at the seminary, I spend an hour on this particular verse. It’s Matthew, chapter 22 in verse 32. And here in the argument over the resurrection, we read.

“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Now, the argument that our Lord uses in this text is an argument that is based on the genitive case. You see, they had come to him and they had said the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, said “Master, if a man died, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother.” Well, that was the Old Testament law. So, if a man died and didn’t have any children, it was the responsibility of the brother to marry his wife and to have children, so that his brother would have seed. And so they posed the Lord a little problem.

“Now, there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, he died and having no issue, he left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second, the third, unto the seventh. [You can tell they thought this up out of the discussions over the point with the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection. And they couldn’t answer it, the Pharisees couldn’t.] And last of all, the woman died. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her. [I can just see the Pharisees puzzling over that, you know. How in the world can we answer these Sadducees? They’ve really got us there.] And so, the Lord said You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”

So, he said, the whole thing just doesn’t have any relevance because in heaven there is no such thing as this marriage you’re talking about. Then, not as if he’d probably embarrassed them right there, but then he wasn’t going to let them off the hook. He said.

“Now as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

In other words, the whole point of it is that when God enters into covenant relationship with anyone and promises them ultimate blessings, that guarantees resurrection because it is only in resurrection that they can experience the blessings that God has given to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, for it involved that they should be on the land of Palestine in the future, that through them all the families of the earth would be blessed, and that Abraham would have a name that was great throughout the world. You cannot have that unless you have the doctrine of the resurrection.

And so, when he says God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, he’s arguing not on the basis of one word, not on a distinction between a singular and a plural, but he’s arguing on the distinction in cases, the genitive case. God is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob. He is the God of the living, not the God of the dead. So, he has entered into relationship with them so that they are living and out of that arises the resurrection. So, his argument is on a distinction in cases.

So, you see, the extent of the inspiration of the Scriptures extends to every word. As a matter of fact, it extends even to the forms in which that word might appear.

Now, finally, the Holy Spirit and illumination. And, I’m going to justify not taking a whole lot of time on this because we are going to talk about the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit for an hour, later on next spring. So, let me tonight ask you, now, to turn back to 1 Corinthians, chapter 2 and let’s just notice these two things. First, the need of illumination and then the fact of it, and then we shall close.

If God makes himself know in revelation and if in inspiration he makes himself known in trustworthy writings, then illumination is God making himself understood through the writings. So, revelation is God’s unveiling of himself. Inspiration is the means whereby this revelation has been conveyed to us so that it is trustworthy. Illumination is the work of the Spirit in enabling us to understand this trustworthy

revelation that God has given us. So, God the Father reveals, the Son mediates and what the Son mediates the Holy Spirit speaks into the human’s spiritual ear.

When the Disciples were on the Emmaus rode, remember, after Jesus left, they said “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

Now, the opening of the Scriptures is the work of God in illumination; it is the enabling of them to understand what God has revealed. The Jesuits had a strange reaction to the doctrine of illumination. There’s a famous instance when a Jesuit in arguing with an Evangelical about this matter put the Scriptures to his ear and, as he listened, I don’t hear the Holy Spirit speaking as you say he speaks in the Bible. But, God doesn’t speak in audible fashion. I’ve said to you before people go around talking about God speaking in audible fashion today, they’re queer, they’re strange and you shouldn’t have anything to do with them. Let’s look at verse 14.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The natural man is the man who is unsaved; he does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. In other words, every man outside of Jesus Christ needs illumination. He is blind. He is spiritually deaf. He cannot hear God’s word. I’ve often used this illustration; I think it’s a fairly good one. In this room there are many sounds that you and I cannot hear. As you know, the human ear can pick up sounds between certain wave frequencies. When they become so low the human ear cannot hear them, although, an animal can. And, when they become so high, a human ear cannot hear them, although an instrument, like a radio, can pick them up. Now, men when they read the word of God without the Holy Spirit are just like men trying to pick up the sounds in this room, which are at frequencies beyond the capacity of their ears. Why, in this room, at the

present time, over station WRR, mutual news is being given. Yes, it is. Can you hear it? Do you hear it? Oh, the commercial is on right now. [Laughter] It’s here. The only trouble is, not only is WRR in this room, but WFAA, KBOX, everything else, all the rest of them are here. This room is just crammed with all kinds of sounds but you and I cannot hear them. We don’t have the capacity for it.

Now, the Bible is like that. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” There are levels of perception among men in almost anything. The cultured person enjoys a concert, which bores the farmer. That’s not always true. This is someone else’s writing. The clever person sees the point of a barb, or the force of a satire, or the meaning of an illustration, which eludes the ordinary person. I’ve noticed that yesterday. I was preaching yesterday morning and I made reference to those hoods and yuppies, which were in the city of Thessalonica and how the Jews stirred them up to attack Jason in order to drag Paul and the rest out of the house. And I said, “Some of those hoods have been playing around in Aunt Maudie’s fun garden. And, you know, there were a lot of people who didn’t get that in the audience. [Laughter] I marked them down as not clever. They hadn’t been listening to the same music that I had, you see.

So, the meaning of an illustration eludes an ordinary person, the sensitive, moral person sees the ethical issue in a situation, which escapes the brutish man. The Scriptures also see man in depth, man does have eyes of the heart; and these eyes of the heart must have been clear and unclouded in the days of Adam. But, now, man has sinned. And, consequently, he cannot see. There are brilliant, logical analytical eyes, which see certain things, which others do not. Some eyes see beauty; others do not. Some see the sublime in human experience or in nature; others don’t. There are eyes, which see the finer points of the moral law, and there are eyes, which see God. And, the eyes, which see God, are the eyes that have been given the capacity to understand through the Holy Spirit.

Now, the fact of illumination; we see then the need of it. The fact of it is referred to in verse 9 and 10. Notice:

“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Verse 14 says “They are spiritually discerned.” Verse 15 and 16 say “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” And so, what Paul is saying is, simply, this. When we read the Bible without the new birth, as a non-Christian, we do not get anything out of it because we do not have the Teacher, we don’t have the capacity, we don’t have the radio of the spiritual high frequency waves to understand God’s word. But, through the Holy Spirit, we are given the understanding, because the Holy Spirit has come to indwell us and through the presence of the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ.

Now, we’re going to talk about this later too, but all I want to mention tonight is that he is “the” teacher of truth; and he has been given to us and when he teaches, we learn. I feel, myself, thoroughly convinced that one of the secrets of the understanding of the word of God is to recognize that we are completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit for our understanding of that word. And, when we come to the Bible and open it up and say, “Now, Lord, this is your word; it is beyond me. My eyes are naturally deaf and dumb. My eyes are blinded. My ears are deaf. Speak to me through Thy word.” It is, in that attitude of mind that we, really, come to understand truth.

We’ll talk more about that and we’ll talk about the hindrances to it later, in the spring. Next time, we will talk about the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament.

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. And we thank Thee for the revelation that has been given to us. You have spoken to us in the Scriptures and they are the record of divine revelation. And we thank Thee, too, Lord, for inspiration, which guarantees the trustworthiness of the revelation. And we thank Thee for illumination; the promise that as we rely upon the Holy Spirit he will teach us divine truth. And, potentially, we are able to understand the things which Thou hast revealed because we have the mind of Christ and the spirit as our great instructor. Go with us and illumine us in the word.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.