

THE DIVINE AUTHORSHIP OF SCRIPTURE

(Taken from the Study Guide *The Bible for Our Times*, by Michael Button)

Introduction. (*Read* 2 Timothy 3:16). This is the key verse to our understanding that every Book of Scripture has its origin in God and has practical applications to living a righteous life, i.e. a behaviour which is right in God's eyes. The word 'inspiration' (translated 'God-breathed' in some versions) means that God gave those who wrote the books and letters His guidance as to what to write. This was given not in word-by-word dictation that took over the minds of the writers, for the different personalities of the human writers is evident in the various expressions and writing styles used, but neither did God simply give a general idea and leave the human writer to flesh it out. Rather, God in His sovereignty guided the minds of the writers to ensure they wrote everything that He wanted to convey in the ways He wanted to convey them.

A similar principle of the Holy Spirit partnering with human speakers can be seen today in the exercise of the spiritual gifts of prophecy and interpretation of tongues.¹ The personality and modes of expression of the speaker are in evidence even though it is God's message that is being spoken. (We must be careful, however, not to put what is spoken in these gifts on a par with Scripture or above Scripture.)

It may be argued that a reference to inspiration of Scripture from within Scripture itself is no proof of inspiration. However, the passage in 2 Timothy is reinforced by other evidence:

1. **The words of our Lord.** If we believe Jesus to be God, then we can be confident that His understanding of Scripture is correct. His teaching on Scripture is:

(i) The Holy Spirit inspired its writing (*read* Mark 12:36 and Psalm 110:1). This Psalm was written by David and is included in Scripture. Notice that Jesus attributes the origin of the saying to the Holy Spirit Who inspired David to write it.

(ii) The Scriptures must be fulfilled (*read* Luke 24:44). Mere human authors could not know the facts of our Lord's life and death to prophesy them in such detail. Such accuracy indicates a degree of knowledge that could have come only from God.

(iii) The Scriptures are the Word of God (*read* John 10:34-35). Here Jesus refers to a Scripture in Psalm 82 verse 6, calling it the *word of God*.

2. **Prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit to write** (*read* 2 Peter 1:20-21). We see this in action when God says to the prophet Jeremiah, "*Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you*"² and to Habakkuk, "*Write the vision And make it plain on tablets.*"³

3. **Moses was told to write down the Law given to him** (*read* Exodus 34:27). Notice that the core of the Law, which is the Ten Commandments, was so important that God Himself wrote the Commandments on tablets of stone.⁴

4. **The testimony of experience.** The truth of Scripture has been proven countless times in history and in individual human experience. Again this points to an origin that is from a higher wisdom than that of the men who wrote them.

¹ 1 Cor 12:10

² Jeremiah 30:2

³ Habakkuk 2:2

⁴ Exodus 31:18