

Sunday, April 17, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 27 Disclaimers Regarding the Limitations of Inspiration

Introduction

- After studying the doctrine of inspiration for the better part of 26 weeks, I would like to conclude this section of the class by looking at some disclaimers regarding the limitations of inspiration.
- Just as it was vitally important to clearly identify and defend what inspiration is from the Bible; it is of equal importance to be aware of the doctrine's limitations.
- In order to accomplish this task we will consider the following major points:
 - Disclaimers Regarding Inspiration
 - Four Summary Statements
- Please note that unless otherwise stated, these notes have been amended from the Sixth Lesson of Manuscript Evidence 101 taught by Pastor Richard Jordan in Grace School of the Bible.

Disclaimers Regarding Inspiration

Disclaimer Number One

- **Inspiration does not mean that all parts of the Bible are dispensationally applicable to the members of the body of Christ during the dispensation of grace. It only means that all parts of the canon (Genesis through Revelation) are equally inspired.**
 - This should be self-evident. Ephesians is more important to us as members of the body of Christ than the book of Revelation. That being said, it is all God's word and, because of that, it is important and profitable; but you must remember to rightly divide the scripture to get the profit that God intended for you in the Bible. So, it is all equally inspired, but it is just not all of equal importance. When you talk about the inspired word of God, it is every bit inspired; but you are not describing the importance of it as far as its practical application to you.

Disclaimer Number Two

- **Inspiration does not guarantee the inspiration of any particular modern or ancient translation.**
 - Now, why would that be true? It is not the function of the doctrine of inspiration to deal with the issue of the transmission of the text. The doctrine of preservation is the doctrine that does that. We have been dealing with inspiration—the scriptures came out of the

mouth of God, God breathed them, He speaks them out, and the scriptures come right out of His mouth. The idea of the transmission of the text and where the Bible is today is covered by the doctrine of preservation.

The reason I point that out to you is this. People will say, “Are you trying to say that the King James Bible is the inspired word of God?” They will try to make fun of you if you believe that the Authorized Version, or Luther’s German Receptus, etc., are copies of the inspired word of God. They say, “Do you mean that the translators were inspired like the original writers were?” And the answer is “NO”. We are not describing that.

I have learned this. You must be very careful in your statement of what you are trying to say because people have all kinds of false concepts. People jump to all kinds of conclusions about what they think they heard you say. You want to say it in the most proper and clear and persuasive fashion. You want to distinguish between inspiration and preservation. What you hold in your hand is the preserved word of God. Inspiration deals with the written text of the scripture. Inspiration deals with what God wrote down, not the process but the result. It deals with what He wrote down on the page. The words are inspired.

Now, what happened to those inspired words is determined by the doctrine of preservation. If you have a consistent doctrine of preservation (what God wrote down He has preserved through history and therefore you can hold it in your hands today), then you can say that you hold the preserved word. You have a copy of the original.

Therefore, if you have the preserved word of God, you have an inspired Bible. But, inspiration means that the original copies came out of the mouth of God. Preservation is what gets it to you.

So, the doctrine of inspiration does not guarantee the inspiration of any particular modern or ancient translation. Preservation does what inspiration ceased when the canon of scripture was completed. There is no inspiration today, but there is providential preservation.

Disclaimer Number Three

- **Inspiration does not allow for any false information, but it does on occasion record the lie of someone. Just because something is recorded in the Bible that does not mean it is always the truth. It is always an accurate record of what went on; but if somebody lies to somebody else, the record of the lie is accurate, but the lie is still a lie.**
 - Genesis 3:4—if I tell you that verse four is a lie, am I saying the text is wrong, or that the man who said it is wrong? I am saying that the man who said it is wrong. If I tell you that verse four is true, what am I saying? Am I saying that the devil did not tell a lie? No, I am saying that it is an accurate record of what Satan said. You must be real careful to distinguish between those things.

- Job 42:7—Well wait a minute! All of that stuff is recorded in the book of Job, and God says that it is not right. It is false information; it is bad information. It is off from center, meaning it is not accurate. But, God is not impugning the inspiration of the book of Job. He is not saying that the book of Job is not an accurate record. God is saying that it was accurately recorded, but what they said is not accurate.
- You want to remember this. Inspiration does not allow for any false information. Everything that is recorded is true and accurate in its record, but that does not mean that God did not record someone's lie or some misinformation that someone put out.

Disclaimer Number Four

- **Inspiration does not mean that all Bible writers had personal illumination. Every Bible writer did not have personal illumination about all that he was writing down.**
 - This is one of the ways you know that the Bible had to come out of God's mouth. The dynamic inspiration idea is that it goes into the mind of man, and he comprehends it, and he spits it out. Consequently, that would mean there is no way to transfer the thought if it was incomprehensible to the man.
 - I Peter 1:10-11—the Old Testament prophets searched their own writings diligently. They were trying to figure out what the Spirit meant when he wrote through them about the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. Therefore, it is pretty obvious that the OT prophets did not all have personal illumination at all times with respect to everything that they wrote.
 - Daniel 7:1, 15, 28—Daniel did not grasp what was going on. He writes the dream down in verses 1-28, but he does not fully understand what is happening. He had the facts but he did not have the illumination to understand the facts, and that is not unusual. He writes 27 verses there, and in half of them he is just writing the dream down, and in the other half of them, you have the explanation that was given him. Yet, he still does not understand it.
 - One needs to understand that just because a Biblical writer wrote something that does not necessarily mean that he understood everything that he wrote down. This is why it is very important for one to understand the issue of progressive revelation. Something can be written down in time past and not understood by the men that wrote it down. Yet, it is inspired and it is right.

Disclaimer Number Five

- **Inspiration does not prohibit personal research by a writer.**
 - That is very important because a lot of people will try to get after you about the issues of inspiration. They will claim that you are saying that the man who wrote it had to sit on a stump somewhere knowing nothing, and God just bore a hole in his head and poured the information in. That is not what is implied by inspiration. Inspiration does not imply that God does not take into account the activities, and the knowledge, and the frame of reference of the man who wrote it. Nor does it imply that when you read about someone

in the scripture who has personally investigated things, that therefore God could not have inspired him because the man was not in a trance and all that kind of stuff.

I have never read about anybody, or heard about anybody that teaches plenary verbal inspiration and believes that the men were put into a trance, or a vision, or whatever in order to write the text of the scripture. If you ever hear anybody say that, please know that they are wrong. God did not just blank-out their mind and pick up their pen in a magical kind of operation and cause them to write. He reached into the library of their vocabulary; and out of that He chose words and moved upon them in such a way that the words they wrote down were the very words that He wanted them to write down. The words came out of His mouth through them onto the paper.

- Luke 1:1-4—Luke is saying, “Listen Theophilus, I am writing this to you, and I want you to know at the outset that I have been a good historian. I checked the references; I talked to the eyewitness accounts; I talked to the people that were there – the people that know. When I got this piece of information, I checked it out.” It is amazing how many historical references there are in the book of Luke. As you read Luke sometime, mark down the dates, and the references, and that kind of thing, and you will be impressed with the job that Luke did. My point to you is that Luke personally researched the data, and he said, “I’ve checked all the facts that you are going to read in this book.” Yet, the book of Luke is inspired by God.
- Thus, inspiration does not mean that the writer is prohibited from doing personal research.

Disclaimer Number Six

- **Inspiration does not deny the use of extra-biblical sources.**

- I say it that way because I cannot come up with any better way to communicate what I have in my mind.
- Acts 17:28—When Luke wrote Acts 17:28, he wrote it down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that is an inspired passage. That does not mean that God Almighty put those words in the poet’s mouth, but it does mean that God Almighty accurately recorded them here. If you look back in history books, you can find the source.
- Titus 1:12
- I Chronicles 29:29—When he says, “the book of Samuel the seer (see I Samuel 9:9 for a definition of “seer”), and the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer” that demonstrates that the nation Israel had extensive archives of public records. What is written in Chronicles is easily checkable; it is easy to verify the information. It is taken from well-known public records that only prove the legitimate nature of the work that you are reading in Chronicles as having been done by a well-informed author.
- There are at least fourteen different source references recorded in I Chronicles and II Chronicles.

- II Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22, 20:34, 24:27, 26:22, 27:7, 32:32—Do you see the historic references when you read these things? They show you that Israel had extensive archives and that the guys that compiled this information back there had it readily available to them. The public also had it readily available to them, and they are referring people to the records.
- Inspiration does not allow for any false information. It does not necessarily mean that God, on occasion, does not record something that was not originally inspired. He takes it and puts it in the Bible; and the part that is in the Bible is inspired, because it is what is written down in this book. If God can record Satan's lie, he can record public records.

Disclaimer Number Seven

- **Inspiration does not overwhelm the personality of the human author. Inspiration does not mean that a guy just goes into a catatonic state while the Lord gives him the words.**
 - See our discussion of Divine Dictation in Lessons 14 through 18.

Disclaimer Number Eight

- **Inspiration does not mean uniformity in all the details given in describing the same event.**
 - An example of that are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You have four inspired accounts of the earthly ministry of Christ each given from a different perspective. So, inspiration does not mean that all of the details are the same, rather, it shows the design and purpose in giving a particular viewpoint, which might necessitate different details.
 - See our discussion of Undesigned Coincidences in Lessons 21 and 22.

Four Summary Statements

Summary Statement Number One

- **Plenary Verbal Inspiration assures us that God included all of the necessary things that He wanted us to know and excluded everything else.**
 - In other words, everything that you need is in the Bible and what is not in the Bible, you do not need. That is pretty simple. If God wrote the very words down, then you can be sure and confident that everything that He wanted written down is there and that everything that is excluded is unnecessary.

Summary Statement Number Two

- **Inspiration has been completed.**
 - Colossians 1:25—the word of God has been completed in its contents, in its subjects, and in its canon. There is no more revelation being given today. Revelation has been

completed. Revelation produces inspiration. Illumination produces preservation. Revelation is completed; inspiration is completed. They do not function today.

The Charismatic movement teaches that God is still revealing himself today. According to Pentecostalism, Jesus shows up and speaks to people when they are speaking in tongues. They profess to believe in a continuing revelation, which means that there is a continuing inspiration, meaning that the word of God is not completed. It is being added to every time they speak and every time they preach. That is a dangerous doctrine! The reason it is so dangerous is because that would mean that your Bible is not complete, therefore, it is not the last word, and it is not completely and absolutely authoritative. (That is Satan's design – to cause you not to believe that it is complete and absolutely authoritative.)

When you believe as do the Charismatics, (that revelation and inspiration are not finished), you get into Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles Russell, and Herbert Armstrong type stuff. They believe that the Bible is not complete, and that they are getting further revelation. They believed that what they wrote was of equal inspiration and authority as the canonical scriptures.

Summary Statement Number Three

- **The Bible is complete.**
 - Revelation and inspiration are completed. God has completed it, and it is finished. The writing of the scripture is complete, which means if verbal inspiration assures you that God included everything that is necessary, all that He wanted you to have is in the Bible, then the Bible is complete. If you add those two things together, you come up with the fact that the canon is complete without any *Apocrypha* or any extra books.

Paul says in Colossians 1:25 that the scripture is completed as to its content – its subject matter. In Colossians 1:25, Paul is saying that the dispensation of the grace of God is given to me to fulfil the word of God—to bring the word of God to its completion. Without Paul's revelation, the word of God would never be complete in its subject matter.

Therefore, the scripture is infallible; it is authoritative; it is sufficient; it is effective.

Summary Statement Number Four

- **The Bible should not be treated like any other book.**
 - Many encounter problems studying manuscript evidence because they approach the subject from the vantage point of human viewpoint. In other words, the subject is broached with a lack of thorough understanding of the fundamental underlying doctrines.
 - “The Christian Church has long confessed that the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, are divine Scriptures, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. . . Since the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament has, in all ages, stimulated the copying of these sacred books, it is evident that this doctrine is important for the history of the New Testament text, no matter whether it be a true doctrine or only

a belief of the Christian Church.” But what if it be true? What if the original New Testament manuscripts actually were inspired of God? If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament is a true doctrine, then New Testament textual criticism is different from the textual criticism of ordinary books.” (Hills, 1-2)

- “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism; the consistently Christian method and the naturalistic method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- Grounding ourselves in these basic concepts will help us wade through the manuscript and textual issues later on. Possessing the ability to judge the textual and historical information from the vantage point of what the Bible teaches about itself is the only source of clarity on these difficult issues. In short, if our doctrine is correct it ought to commend itself to us in both history and our experience.

Works Cited

Hills, Edward F. *The King James Version Defended*. Christian Research Press, 1956.

Jordan, Richard. *Manuscript Evidence 101, Lesson 6*. Chicago, IL: Grace School of the Bible.