

Text: 2 Tim 3.16-17, 2 Pt 1.20-21, 1 Cor 2.13

As I prepare for this study, I looked back at some messages I've written in the past. The doctrine of inspiration is foundational to all that we believe.

One could call inspiration "the fundamental." We can know truth about God from General Revelation (observing the world around us, looking for signs of God's work in creation and providence).

However, we can only know God personally if he speaks. The Bible claims to be the voice of God, we call this "inspiration."

Recently, when I asked for topics for Wednesday night, a request came to me about "what about fulfilled prophecy." That brought to mind a book I read over 46 years ago. I was able to find a reprint and am working through it. The book was called:

The Wonders of Prophecy: or, What Are We to Believe?

by John Urquhart.

Urquhart begins his book with a series of illustrations. He refers to:

1. An argumentative church member who challenges the preacher's sermons if he disagrees with the question, "What are we to believe?"
2. A young man raised in a Christian home who moves away and comes under the influence of philosophy and comes to question all he was taught. "What are we to believe?"
3. Another young man from a worldly background, converted to Christ, but challenged by a sceptic, asked despairingly, "What are we to believe?"
4. A young preacher comes under the influence of a liberal clergyman, loses confidence in what he preached, and struggles with his faith. "What are we to believe?"

Urquhart calls all of these "no fancy sketches; they are photographs."¹

¹ John Urquhart, *The Wonders of Prophecy: Or, What Are We to Believe?* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.), 6.

I. The foundations of the Bible doctrine of Inspiration (2 Tim 3.16-17, 2 Pt 1.20-21, 1 Cor 2.13)

A. Paul to Timothy: the Gibraltar of Inspiration (2 Tim 3.16-17)

What does Paul mean by “Scripture”? [Gk: “writings”]

The Old Testament for sure, but by extension also the New Testament

What does Paul mean by “inspiration”?

Etymology = “God breathed” — given out by God, spoken by God

Certainly in Paul’s day “the writings” referred to the OT, so he means to say that the OT is the voice of God. How do we extend that to the NT?

By analogy, mostly, but also Paul and Peter will refer to other passages in the NT as “writings” in this technical sense

B. Peter to everyone: the Process of Inspiration (2 Pt 1.20-21)

What does Peter mean by “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”?

That God is speaking when the Holy men are writing Scripture

What does Peter mean when he says that “no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation”?

He means that the Scriptures are not merely “one man’s opinion”

C. Paul to Corinth: the Extent of Inspiration (1 Cor 2.13)

What does Paul mean by “words ... taught by the Spirit”?

Paul means that every individual word of Scripture comes from God

II. Inspiration and prophecy

A. The place of prophecy in God’s speech (comments from Roy Beacham, “Literalism and the Prophets: The Case for a Unified Hermeneutic,” in *Dispensationalism Revisited*)

“Predictive prophecy was designed by God as a revelatory apologetic.”²

² Roy Beacham, “Literalism and the Prophets: The Case for a Unified Hermeneutic,” in *Dispensationalism Revisited: A Twenty-First Century Restatement*, ed. Kevin T. Bauder and R. Bruce Compton (Plymouth, MN: Central Seminary Press, 2023), 37.

1. Revelatory = God revealing himself through his word
2. Apologetic = a defense of God's speech claims

Consider the claims of God in Isaiah:

- Isa 41.21-24, 26
- Isa 42.8-9
- Isa 44.6-8
- Isa 45.18, 20-21
- Isa 48.3-5

Beacham:

“Clearly, God purposed to use the genre of prophetic foretelling as unimpeachable evidence of his exclusivity. This verification of his sole claim to deity was, and continues to be, conclusive.”³

“... the evidentiary purpose of divine prediction in Scripture finds validity only if *everything* that God foretells actually comes to pass precisely as foretold.”⁴

B. Considering unfulfilled prophecy

1. Fulfilled prophecy begins the apologetic
2. Unfulfilled prophecy awaits fulfillment to complete the apologetic

Conclusion:

The opening illustrations concluded:

Of Urquhart's last two examples, the young convert found a Christian magazine called, *The Defender*, took it up and eagerly read: “A spirit that was willing to believe if it only could, was, so to speak, taken by the hand and led onward into brightening light.”⁵

³ Beacham, 40.

⁴ Beacham, 40 emphasis Beacham's.

⁵ Urquhart, *Wonders of Prophecy*, 5.

Of the young clergyman, Urquhart says:

“Then came a time of terrible darkness, and of soul wrestling. But there was hope in the ordeal, for the wrestling was, like his of old, a wrestling with God. Light dawned, and it found him humbled and willing to be led. It gave him a truer hold on Christ, a deeper and more childlike trust in God’s word. He still serves, and not without result. The other lies to-day in a suicide’s grave.”⁶ [The other is the clergyman who influence him.]

⁶ Urquhart, 6.