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## **A Pentecostal Perspective on Theological Implications of the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture**

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### **Abstract**

The doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible is commonly affirmed in the Pentecostal tradition. For the most part, Pentecostal statements regarding Scripture have parroted the views Evangelicalism that focus attention on infallibility and inerrancy. This article suggests that a Pentecostal theology of inspiration is needed that takes into account Pentecostalism's epistemology, theology of the Holy Spirit, and understanding of prophecy. Utilizing a method that integrates theological interpretation and grammatical exegesis, this study suggests six theological maxims that can be inferred from a Pentecostal perspective on the doctrine of inspiration. These six points are offered as starting points for discussion and for the development of a robust theology of inspiration.

**Keywords:** Bible; Holy Spirit; Christian formation; inspiration; Pentecostal theology; prophecy; Scripture

## INTRODUCTION

Based on 2 Timothy 3:16 and other biblical texts, the Christian churches have confessed their belief in the inspiration of Scripture. Pentecostal churches and denominations are no exception. Belief in inspiration is affirmed with much enthusiasm, and inspiration is often cited as justification for the Bible's essential and unassailable role as the church's highest authority. Thus, Pentecostal theologian Frank Macchia asserts that the "overall goal of theology is faithfulness to the biblical message."<sup>1</sup> The value of Scripture for Pentecostalism is confirmed by the plethora of recent studies on biblical hermeneutics and related issues. In my edited volume on Pentecostal hermeneutics, I compiled a list of 133 scholarly books and articles that had been published in the field up to 2013;<sup>2</sup> and many more have been published in the 11 years since then.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frank D. Macchia, *Introduction to Theology: Declaring the Wonders of God* (Foundations for Spirit-Filled Christianity; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023), 7. See also Frank D. Macchia, "Theology, Pentecostal," in Stanley M. Burgess and Ed M. Van der Maas (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Rev. and expanded edn, 2002), 1121.

<sup>2</sup> See Lee Roy Martin (ed.), *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). The most comprehensive of the early works is undoubtedly Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Miguel Álvarez, *Hermeneutica: Palabra, Espiritu Y Comunidad* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2021), Miguel Álvarez, *Pasión Por La Palabra: Hacia Una Hermenéutica Latina* (Centro Estudios

Latinos Suplementos Académicos 4; Cleveland, TN: CEL Publicaciones, 2017), and Miguel Álvarez, "Contextualización De La Hermenéutica Latina," *HECHOS – Una Perspectiva Pneumatológica* 1.1 (2019).  
<sup>4</sup> Chris E. W. Green, *Sanctifying Interpretation: Vocation, Holiness, and Scripture* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2nd edn).  
<sup>5</sup> Daniel Castelo and Robert W. Wall, *The Marks of Scripture: Rethinking the Nature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019). Castelo and Wall find the analogy of the divine and human merger that is present in both Scripture and the Incarnation insufficient and inaccurate, in contrast to G.C. Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture* (trans. Jack B Rogers; Studies in Dogmatics; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), who laments the Fundamentalist viewpoint as "docetic" (18-23).

In addition to hermeneutics, the ontology and the function of Scripture have also been addressed by Pentecostals. Chris E.W. Green examines the function of Scripture and its role in sanctification,<sup>4</sup> and Daniel Castelo and Robert Wall have suggested key components of a Wesleyan–Pentecostal ontology of Scripture. They argue that Scripture should be described with same categories that are used to identify the church. That is, the Bible (like the church) is known by the four qualities of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity.<sup>5</sup>

Although they present extensive discussions of the Bible's value and functions, neither Castelo and Wall nor Chris Green devote significant attention to the Bible's inspiration or the implications of inspiration. A survey of the literature reveals very few Pentecostal works devoted to the inspiration of Scripture. Although John Christopher

Thomas briefly outlines the basic relationship between the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit,<sup>6</sup> no major work on a Pentecostal theology of inspiration has been published.<sup>7</sup>

A Pentecostal theology of inspiration is needed in part because contemporary Evangelical approaches to inspiration focus almost entirely on apologetic arguments regarding the Bible's inerrancy. Furthermore, Evangelical definitions of "inspiration" that identify inspiration as God's "superintendence" over the writing of Scripture display little correspondence to the Bible's own statements about the process of writing employed by the prophets and apostles.

One of the lengthier presentations of a Pentecostal view of inspiration (20 pages) can be found in the church doctrinal statement of Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI). The statement elaborates on the following points: (1) The Bible is trustworthy; (2) The Bible is God's self-revelation; (3) The goal of the Bible is human salvation; (4) God fulfills His promises; (5) The Bible alone is sufficient to answer all human needs; (6) The Bible is light.<sup>8</sup> The GBI statement is a mixture

of theological insights and practical applications that suggests possible avenues for discussion.

In light of previous studies, a number of questions come to mind: What, exactly, is the meaning of "inspiration" as it is expressed by 2 Timothy 3:16 ("All scripture is inspired ...")? In everyday speech, "inspiration" may refer to a moment of insight, a flash of creativity, a timely idea, or a feeling of motivation. Almost anything that catches our attention and makes an impression on us can be described as inspired.<sup>9</sup> However, when we say that the Bible is inspired, we mean much more. Inspiration attributes to Scripture a unique origin, a unique authority, and a unique power. Furthermore, is God's inspiration of Scripture an action accomplished in the past, or is inspiration an ongoing and contemporary work of Spirit? Does inspiration relate only to the ancient process of writing Scripture, or is inspiration also related also to the process of reading and hearing Scripture today? What is the relationship of "inspiration" to "revelation"?

<sup>6</sup> John Christopher Thomas, "The Word and the Spirit," in *Ministry & Theology: Studies for the Church and Its Leaders* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> I invite Pentecostal scholars to produce works on the magnitude of reformed studies such as Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, and Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of*

*God* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; New York: T&T Clark, 1936).

<sup>8</sup> *Pengajaran Dasar-Gereja Bethel Indonesia*. <https://bppgbi.org/departemen/teologia-ajaran/> (hereafter abbreviated as *PD-GBI*), 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> J. Ben Wiles, *A Believing People* (Living What We Believe; Cleveland, TN: Church of God Adult Discipleship, 2018), 14.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Evangelical discussions of inspiration are most often apologetic in focus, defending the Bible's historical accuracy and truthfulness against the humanistic critiques of historical criticism. G.C. Berkouwer, while offering a defense of inspiration and while opposing liberalism, admits that the doctrine of Scripture must not always be "expounded as an apologetic."<sup>10</sup> Following his lead, I would argue that Pentecostals need a theology of inspiration that goes beyond apologetics to explore the implications of their belief that the Bible is the Word of God. Consequently, this article integrates the methods of theological hermeneutics and grammatical exegesis to suggest a few brief contours of a Pentecostal theology of biblical inspiration.

The purpose of the article is not apologetic but theological. That is, the goal of this essay is not to prove that the Bible is inspired, because such a proof is not scientifically possible. The doctrine of inspiration is a matter of faith, not proof. Scripture claims to be inspired, and Christian theology (including Pentecostal theology) accepts the Bible's claim at face value. Instead of

offering proofs, this article will discuss the nature of inspiration, as expressed in Scripture and the theological implications of the belief in inspiration. From the perspective of Pentecostal epistemology and worldview, I will suggest six important theological implications of a Pentecostal approach to inspiration.<sup>11</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Inspiration Implies that God is Speaking

First and foremost, the doctrine of inspiration means that the God of the Bible is the God who speaks. God desires to communicate with his people in a living relationship. Renowned theologian Karl Barth writes, "God's Word means that 'God speaks,' and all else that is to be said about it must be regarded as exegesis and not as a restriction or negation of this statement."<sup>12</sup>

God speaks so that humanity might know him, love him, serve him, and live in constant communion with him. In the beginning, God spoke openly and freely to Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:28); but after they sinned, their relationship with God was broken. They were cast out of the garden, and humanity was no longer able to enjoy per-

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<sup>10</sup> Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> It is beyond the scope of this article to describe in detail the Pentecostal theological paradigm. One crucial element in Pentecostal thought and practice is the continuing revelatory work of the Holy Spirit through signs, wonders, miracles, and spiritual gifts.

See S. J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), and Macchia, *Introduction to Theology*.

<sup>12</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 133.

fect fellowship with God. However, God was not completely silent. In order to enact his plan of redemption, he would speak to people like Noah, Abraham, Hagar, and Rebecca (Gen. 7:1; 12:1; 16:18; 25:23). God “spoke to Moses face to face” (Exod. 33:11). He spoke to the people of Israel “from the midst of the fire” (Deut. 5:24). Sometimes, God would speak through dreams and visions (Gen. 15:1; 28:12; 37:5); and, at other times, he would speak through the prophets. In the Old Testament alone, it is stated more than 2000 times that God spoke. Many of God’s Old Testament messages promised a future restoration of the perfect communication that had existed between God and humanity before the Fall. For example, the prophets declared that the day would come when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9; see also Isa. 25:6-9; 65:17-24; Zech. 2:5-12; 14:9, 16).

God’s plan of restoration became much clearer when God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh (Jn 1:14); therefore, in Jesus, God was speaking face to face with

humanity once again. Therefore, the writer of Hebrews would declare, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). In Jesus Christ, the Word of God was revealed clearly, openly, freely, and fully.<sup>13</sup> As God’s fullest revelation, Jesus Christ is more than a teacher of truth, “he is the truth itself.”<sup>14</sup>

At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus ascended back to heaven; but Jesus continued to speak to humanity from heaven through the Spirit (Heb. 12:25). Pentecostals assert that the Holy Spirit speaks today through dreams, visions, and other revelatory gifts of the Spirit (Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 12:7-11). Moreover, Pentecostals insist that what God says through the gifts of the Spirit will always be consistent with what God says in the Scripture.<sup>15</sup> However, charismatic revelation is rejected by American Evangelicals, who insist that all revelatory gifts ceased with the death of the apostles.<sup>16</sup> Pentecostals would argue that God also speaks through faithful testimonies, through sound teaching, and through

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God. Dogmatics: Vol. 1* (trans. Olive Wyon; Dogmatics; Wipf and Stock: Eugene, OR, 2014), 23. Cf. Barth, who writes, “God’s revelation is Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (*Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*), 137.

<sup>14</sup> *PD-GBI*, 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 94, writes that the Holy Spirit speaks “scripturally.”

<sup>16</sup> According to Evangelicals, after the New Testament had been written, “revealed messages ceased” (the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”–Exposition; [https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI\\_1.pdf](https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf)).

music (Acts 4:31; 15:35; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 5:18-20; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rev. 6:9).<sup>17</sup> God communicates through anointed preachers “who have spoken the word of God” to us (Heb. 13:7). Also, God continues to speak today through the Old Testament (Heb. 12:5).

Although God is speaking to humanity, humans only “know in part” (1 Cor. 12:9). “For now, we see in a mirror, dimly,” but when Christ returns, we will see him “face to face” (1 Cor. 12:10-12). When Jesus returns, he will restore the perfect conditions of the Garden of Eden; and “God himself will be with” us (Rev. 21:3). Until then, however, God has provided three primary means of speaking to humanity. First, as mentioned above, he speaks directly through the Holy Spirit; and second, he speaks through other members of the Body of Christ.

Pentecostals assert that there is still a third way that God speaks, and that is through his written Word, the Holy Scriptures.<sup>18</sup> Throughout Old Testament times, whenever God spoke through his prophets, he would move upon them to record his

words in writing. For example, after the Lord spoke his commandments to Israel from Mt. Sinai, “Moses wrote all the words of the Lord” (Exod. 24:4). Later, the prophet Jeremiah ministered as a preacher for forty years; but one day, the Lord told him, “Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you” (Jer. 36:2). Similarly, the Lord commanded the prophet Habakkuk, “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets” (Hab. 2:2; see also 1 Chron. 28:19; Isa. 38:9; Jn 5:46-47).

The writings of Moses, the prophets, and other people were collected to form the Old Testament. The Old Testament was the Bible that Jesus read, studied, and taught. Furthermore, it was the Bible of the early church for many years. About 20 years after Pentecost, the apostles began writing the four Gospels and the other books of the New Testament, a process that required about 45 years. Finally, the books of the Old Testament and the New Testament were gathered together and organized into one sacred book that Christians call “The Holy Bible.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> F. L. Arrington, *Exploring the Declaration of Faith* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2003), 20.

<sup>18</sup> Karl Barth states that God’s Word comes in three forms: “the Word of God Preached,” “the Word of God written,” and “the Word of God revealed” in Christ (*Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*), 88-124. As stated above, Pentecostals would add a fourth—the Word of God

revealed by the Spirit. That is, Pentecostals believe not only in the preached Word, but also in the charismatic Word that comes through the Spirit’s gifts (i.e. 1 Cor. 12:1-28). See Rickie D. Moore, “Canon and Charisma in the Book of Deuteronomy,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992), 75-92.

<sup>19</sup> The Gospel was believed and preached by the early church even before the Gospels were written.

The collecting and merging of the 66 books into the Bible were a huge step forward for the church. For the first time, the authoritative writings of the prophets and apostles were available in one volume. However, very few Bibles were available, because each copy was handwritten on parchment and because making a copy of the Scriptures was time-consuming and expensive. Therefore, until the invention of the printing press (around 1450 ce), the Bible was accessible only to scholars and church leaders, while ordinary Christians heard the Word of God only when the Scriptures were read in the churches. The printing press made the Bible more affordable; and soon after its invention, the Bible was translated into many different languages, including German, Italian, French, Spanish, and English.

The doctrine of the Bible as the speech of God leads to the necessary corollary that Scripture is “subject” not an “object.” In modern biblical studies, the scholar

functions as the subject; and the Bible is the object of study. Scripture is studied “objectively,” like any other text. The text is poked, prodded, dissected, and analyzed, just like the frog in biology class or the meteorite at the Arecibo Science Museum.<sup>20</sup> Approaching the Bible as subject, however, requires the “reader” to become a “hearer.”<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, Barth writes,

God’s Word is not a thing to be described nor a term to be defined. It is neither a matter nor an idea. It is not “a truth,” not even the very highest truth. It is **the** truth as it is God’s speaking person, *Dei loquentis persona*. It is not an objective reality. It is **the** objective reality, in that it is also subjective, the subjective that is God.<sup>22</sup>

### **Inspiration Implies that God Utilizes People**

Pentecostals understand that the Holy Spirit uses people to fulfill God’s work in the world, and one aspect of that work was the creation of Scripture. Christians today

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Thus, the New Testament is not “essential” for the survival of Christianity. The books of the New Testament were written between 50 and 120 CE, and they were not assembled as “The New Testament” in book form until the fourth century. Therefore, the early church grew and prospered for more than 300 years with just the Old Testament as canon. Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8.

<sup>20</sup> On the hermeneutical implications of reversing the subject/object relationship, see the following chapters in Martin (ed.) *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*: Rickie D. Moore, “Canon and Charisma

in the Book of Deuteronomy,” 29; Cheryl Bridges Johns and Jackie David Johns, “Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study,” 45; Robby Waddell, “Hearing What the Spirit Says to the Churches: Profile of a Pentecostal Reader of the Apocalypse,” 184, 89-90, 97; Scott A. Ellington, “Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture,” 157.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Lee Roy Martin, *The Unheard Voice of God: A Pentecostal Hearing of the Book of Judges* (JPTSup 32; Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008), 52-79.

<sup>22</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 136 (emphasis original).

able to acquire and to read the Bible in their own languages. The common availability of the Bible is due to the work of Spirit-led prophets, apostles, scribes, and translators. The inspiration of Scripture does not mean that the Bible came down from heaven on a silver platter, red-letter edition, thumb-indexed, and bound in genuine leather. Instead, the Bible was produced through a lengthy, painstaking process.<sup>23</sup> In a few cases, God gave the exact words that were to be written down (Exod. 34:1). More often, however, there were at least five steps involved in producing the Scriptures.

First, God revealed His Word to the prophets through dreams, visions, the Word of the Lord, or through other means. Revelation, however, is only the first step in the process that leads to the writing of Scripture. As Herman Bavinck points out, “Revelation and inspiration are distinct ... [they] have to be distinguished.”<sup>24</sup>

Second, the prophet who received the revelation from God would often preach or teach the message to God’s people.

Third, the Holy Spirit would motivate the prophets and scribes to write down God’s revelation. As French Arrington explains, “Revelation is an act that makes the truth known. Inspiration preserves the truth revealed through revelation.”<sup>25</sup> The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek. The gospel writers wrote from their experience as eyewitnesses to the ministry of Jesus (Jn 21:24; 1 Pet. 1:16); and they recorded the words of Jesus, which they had heard with their own ears. Luke reported in the book of Acts the sermons of Peter, Stephen, and Paul.

The biblical writers “had an active role in the writing of the Bible ... They did not just act as a recording tool.”<sup>26</sup> Sometimes conducted research, incorporating oral traditions and material from other written documents.<sup>27</sup> A Pentecostal writer explains: “The Spirit did not use these writers as machines but employed their personal qualities. He ... enabled them to use traditions,

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<sup>23</sup> See Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, 17-38, who affirms the reliability of Scripture but opposes the “mechanical” or “dictation” view of inspiration. Cf. Charles W. Conn, *The Bible: Book of Books* (Workers’ Training Course; Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1961).

<sup>24</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (trans. John Vriend; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), I, 426.

<sup>25</sup> Arrington, *Exploring the Declaration of Faith*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> PD-GBI, 8. “Tetapi para penulis ini juga memiliki peran aktif dalam penulisan Alkitab ... Mereka tidak hanya berperan sebagai alat pencatat.” Furthermore, “Ini tidak berarti bahwa para penulis Alkitab hanyalah alat yang pasif dan individualitas mereka lenyap. Yang benar adalah Roh Kudus menggunakan berbagai kemampuan dan latar belakang para penulis untuk menuliskan Alkitab” (10).

<sup>27</sup> Conn, *The Bible: Book of Books*, 55-56.



documents and history ....”<sup>28</sup> For example, the Old Testament mentions at least thirteen non-biblical documents that were consulted by the biblical writers, including the Book of Jasher (Josh. 10:13), the Acts of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:41), the Prophecy of Ahijah (2 Chron. 9:29); the Sayings of Hozai (2 Chron. 33:19), and the Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14).

At the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, he explains his procedure for researching and writing his two-volume work (Luke–Acts). I would draw your attention to four important elements of Luke’s introduction. First, he states that the gospel of Jesus was “handed down” (παρέδοσαν) to him. This means he did not start with a blank slate. Before he wrote the first word, he already knew the basic facts of the gospel. Second, his information was given to him by “eyewitnesses” (αὐτόπται), that is, by the apostles of Jesus and by other disciples of Jesus who were interviewed by Luke. Third, Luke declares that he “carefully investigated” (παρηκολουθηκότι) the details of the gospel story. Many fictional accounts of Jesus’ life were circulating at that time, and Luke was careful to separate fact from fiction. Luke wants his reader Theophilus to

know the “certainty” (ἀσφάλειαν) of the truths that he had been taught. Luke’s process of research, discernment, and prayer was aimed at producing a gospel that was TRUE in every point. The doctrine of inspiration suggests that the Holy Spirit guided Luke’s research and his writing of the Gospel.

When the prophets and apostles put their messages into written form, they were not always instructed to include everything that God had shown them. Thus, the inspiration of Scripture also means that the Spirit guided the writers in their selection of material. The Bible tells us that Solomon knew three thousand proverbs (1 Kgs 4:32); yet the book of Proverbs includes only eight hundred. He also knew more than one thousand songs, but only two songs attributed to Solomon are found in the Bible (Psalms 72 and 127). The process of selectivity is described in the verse that says Solomon “pondered and sought out ... many proverbs” (Eccl. 12:9). In Solomon’s time, all the peoples of the near east collected and recited proverbs—we have thousands of examples from Mesopotamia and Egypt. Solomon, therefore, would have heard these proverbs; and he even “sought” them out. After seeking out many proverbs, he then “pondered”

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<sup>28</sup> *Church of God Evangel* (July 17, 1943), 3.

(ἤκουσεν) them, which means he evaluated their truthfulness.<sup>29</sup>

A Pentecostal doctrine of inspiration would imply that when the book of Proverbs was written, the Spirit gave the compiler/editor the wisdom to choose only the ones that contained truths vital for the Kingdom of God. Proverbs chapters 30 and 31, for example, do not claim Solomonic authorship. Although they were written by Agur (Prov. 30:1) and by Lemuel (Prov. 31:1), not by Solomon himself, the Spirit guided the editor to include these non-Israelite proverbs because they contained truth. It is possible, as well, that these two chapters were modified from their original forms so that they conformed to Israelite wisdom.

Other examples of selectivity can be found in the New Testament. John heard the words of the seven thunders; and he says, “I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them’” (Rev. 10:4). Also, the Apostle Paul told us that he was “caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. 12:4). Furthermore, the Apostle John declared that he wrote only a small portion

of what could be said about Jesus. John stated, “the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (Jn 21:25, see also Jn 20:30). Therefore, when we say that the Bible is the Word of God, we do not mean that the Bible contains ALL of God’s Word or EVERYTHING that God has revealed to His servants. However, the Bible contains the truth that we need for “life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

Fourth, the priests and scribes would guard the Scriptures, preserve them, and make handwritten copies generation after generation.

Fifth, the religious leaders (at first Jewish then Christian) would carefully examine the content, impact, and reception of individual writings to decide which documents should be included within the biblical canon. Pentecostals would argue that the Holy Spirit was a work in the community of faith to discern the genuineness and universal relevance of the writings.

Sixth, dedicated scholars, most of them ministers of the Gospel, would translate the Bible from its original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into all the languages of the world.

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<sup>29</sup> William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, corrected 10th edn, 1988), 8.

## Inspiration Implies that God is the Origin of Scripture

The doctrine of inspiration affirms that the Bible is God's self-revelation,<sup>30</sup> which teaches God's nature, character, and plan of redemption. Inspiration means that the Bible is the Word of God, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit. God moved upon the writers of Scripture in a variety of ways, but they did not explain the exact methods of inspiration. In the case of John, when the risen Lord appeared to him in a vision, John was told, "What you see, write in a book ..." (Rev. 1:11). Apparently, John was given the freedom to use the words that seemed most appropriate to describe his vision. The Apostle Peter explains that "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God"

(2 Pet. 1:20-21, nasb). Peter's statement means that Scripture originates in the will of God, not in the "human will." Furthermore, human writers were "moved by the Holy Spirit" as they wrote the Scriptures.

Peter's comments indicate that the writing of Scripture was a divine-human cooperation, although the exact nature of inspiration remains somewhat of a mystery.<sup>31</sup> There were times when the Holy Spirit gave to the prophets the exact words to write, such as at Mount Sinai (Exod. 20-23; cf. Rev. 14:13). At other times, as was stated earlier, the writers utilized their own vocabularies and styles to record what they had seen in a dream or vision, or to describe events that they had witnessed.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the writers expressed their own personalities and wrote with their own literary styles<sup>33</sup> and from within their own cultures and ideologies; but, at the same time, the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to them.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, as Emil

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<sup>30</sup> *PD-GBI*, 5-8.

<sup>31</sup> Arrington, *Exploring the Declaration of Faith*, 18. The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" agrees; it says, "The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us" (Article VII).

<sup>32</sup> Conn, *The Bible: Book of Books*, 58-59.

<sup>33</sup> Arrington, *Exploring the Declaration of Faith*, 18. Cf. the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" (Article VIII).

<sup>34</sup> The "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" (Article XIII) states that inerrancy is not negated by "biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or

the use of free citations." The Exposition of the statement goes on to include the following disclaimer: Differences between literary conventions in Bible times and in ours must also be observed: since, for instance, non-chronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days, we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed. The truthfulness of Scripture is not negated by the appearance in it of irregularities of grammar or

Brunner states, “God himself actually speaks, using human words.”<sup>35</sup> The church of Gereja Bethel Indonesia agrees, stating, “Just as Christ came to this earth fully God and fully man, so the Bible is fully the word of God but is also the words of the man who wrote it.”<sup>36</sup>

Within the pages of the Bible, we find different kinds of written material, including songs, proverbs, epistles, poetry, narratives, genealogies, census lists, parables, and more. God moved upon the writers of Scripture to record the truth in a wide variety of forms, and everything in Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Throughout its history, the Pentecostal movement has been committed to the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture. At no point has the inspiration of Scripture been questioned or its importance diminish-

ed. For example, the authority of Holy Scripture was the first doctrinal statement adopted by the Church of God. At the organizational meeting of the group that would become the Church of God, Richard Spurling gave an invitation for membership to those who were willing to take the New Testament as their “only rule of faith and practice” (Aug. 19, 1886). Then, the first publication of the Church of God teachings in the *Evangel* (Aug. 15, 1910) began with the statement, “The Church of God stands for the whole Bible rightly divided.” This statement on the Bible, along with a list of other teachings, was adopted by the 1911 General Assembly of the Church of God.<sup>37</sup> Thirty-seven years later (1948), the Church of God adopted their Declaration of Faith, which includes the statement, “We believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.”<sup>38</sup>

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spelling, phenomenal descriptions of nature, reports of false statements (e.g., the lies of Satan), or seeming discrepancies between one passage and another.

<sup>35</sup> Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 22. Barth agrees, stating that “the biblical word of man is [God’s] own Word” (*Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 110). Using a different phrase, Barth declares that Scripture is “the Word of God and the word of man” (265).

<sup>36</sup> PD–GBI, 8. The Indonesian text reads, “*Sama seperti Kristus yang datang ke bumi ini sepenuhnya Allah dan sepenuhnya manusia, demikianlah pula Alkitab yang sepenuhnya adalah firman Allah tetapi juga merupakan kata-kata manusia yang menulisnya.*”

<sup>37</sup> *The Evening Light and Church of God Evangel* (Aug. 15, 1910), 3; and *Minutes of the Sixth Annual Assembly of the Churches of God Held at Cleveland,*

*Tennessee, January 3-8, 1911* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1911), 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Other Pentecostal denominations state similar positions. The Gereja Bethel Church states, “*Alkitab, Perjanjian Lama dan Perjanjian Baru adalah firman Allah yang diilhamkan oleh Roh Kudus*” (<https://bppgbi.org/tata-gereja-2021-2/>). The Assemblies of God uses the phrase “verbally inspired of God.” The Church of God in Christ states their belief in “full inspiration,” and the Church of Pentecost prefers the term, “divine inspiration.” The Church of God of Prophecy believes that Scripture is “inspired, inerrant, and infallible.” Similarly, the Elim Pentecostal Church states, “We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God.” The Foursquare Church uses the terms “inspired” and “inbreathed by the Holy Spirit.” The International Pentecostal Holiness Church declares the Bible “to be the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of

## Inspiration Implies that Scripture is Alive and Life-giving

Because of inspiration, the Bible is more than letters on a page; “it is a living book” that gives and sustains life.<sup>39</sup> Thus, “The Word of God is primarily spiritual.”<sup>40</sup> The English word “inspire” is a combination of the Latin words “in” and “spirare”—meaning “the act of breathing into any thing.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, to be “inspired” means to be breathed into by God. The “Middle English Dictionary” defines inspiration as “filled with divine spirit or power.” The word “inspiration” occurs in the Bible only in 2 Tim. 3:16. The Greek word translated “inspired” is *theopneustos* (θεόπνευστος), which means “God-breathing.”<sup>42</sup> Pentecostal New Testament scholar John Poirier has shown that the word *theopneustos* was used in ancient times to mean “life-giving,” or “having divine qualities” (e.g. *Sibylline Oracles* 5.308-311).<sup>43</sup>

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God.” These statements are available on the denominational websites.

<sup>39</sup> Conn, *The Bible: Book of Books*, 39-40.

<sup>40</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 135.

<sup>41</sup> Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, <https://webstersdictionary1828.com>.

<sup>42</sup> Hermann Cremer, *Biblich-theologisches Wörterbuch der neutestamentlichen Gräcität* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1866), insists that *theopneustos* has an active sense; that is, Scripture imparts the Spirit. For Cremer, Scripture is “God-breathing” rather than “God-breathed.” The translation of *theopneustos* as “inspired by God” is derived from the fourth-century Latin translation of St. Jerome and today is consistently defined by the

This meaning of *theopneustos* is consistent with the context of 2 Timothy 3:16, where Paul declares the life-giving power of Scripture for Timothy. The life-giving breathing of God can be illustrated by Genesis 2:7, where we read that God breathed into Adam. The Scripture says, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7 nasb). Just as the breath of God created life in Adam, the breath of God in the Scriptures creates life in all who receive the Word of God. Accordingly, John Poirier states, “If we consider what the image of ‘divine breathing’ signifies in Scripture, the answer is clear and obvious: the **giving of life**.”<sup>44</sup>

The life-giving power of God’s Word was recognized in the Old Testament by Moses, who wrote that “man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every

lexicons as “inspired.” See *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VI, 455; *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek; A Greek-English Lexicon* (BDAG), 449-50; Louw-Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, I, 417; Liddell-Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 791; and *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, II, 140.

<sup>43</sup> John C. Poirier, *The Invention of the Inspired Text: Philological Windows on the Theopneustia of Scripture* (The Library of New Testament Studies; New York: T&T Clark, 2021).

<sup>44</sup> John C. Poirier, “Is ‘All Scripture ... Inspired’? The Meaning of θεόπνευστος in 2 Timothy 3:16” (Paper presented at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies; Seattle, WA; March 2013), 3 (emphasis original).

word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord” (Deut. 8:3). Therefore, Scripture itself is likened to food: “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2; also Heb. 5:12-14). The nourishing qualities of the Word are also illustrated in God’s command to Ezekiel to devour the Scriptures (Ezek. 2:8-3:4). The same command was given to John (Rev. 10:9). The living quality of the Word of God was perfectly embodied in Jesus Christ, and he also spoke God’s living Word. He declared, “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (Jn 6:63). Furthermore, the living nature of God’s Word is affirmed in the book of Hebrews: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

The Word of God is “living;” it is “powerful;” and it “is a discerner” of the innermost thoughts and desires. According to the Apostle Paul, the written Scripture is creative and life-giving because it is infused with the Spirit— “for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor. 3:6).

## **Inspiration Implies that Scripture Brings Salvation**

Because Scripture is alive with the Spirit, it transforms everyone who will hear its message. The Apostle Paul writes the following to Timothy:

from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the minister of God may be qualified, equipped for every good work. I charge you therefore ... Preach the word! (2 Timothy 3:15-4:2)

Paul’s statement to Timothy indicates seven aspects of the Bible’s salvific function.

First, the ultimate purpose of Scripture is to lead humanity to salvation in Christ. God did not give the Scriptures for purposes of entertainment or to teach ancient history. Poirier writes, “the description of Scripture as “God-breathing” denotes that it has a life-giving aspect. The question naturally follows: In what sense might Scripture have a life-giving aspect? The answer is simple:

Scripture contains the life-giving gospel.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, “The Bible achieves its primary purpose and purpose, which is the salvation of humanity.”<sup>46</sup> The Scriptures touch the heart, move the conscience, and convince the mind—they are the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Barth observes that the Bible “does not say how we are to find our way to [God], but how God has sought and found the way to us.”<sup>47</sup>

Second, the salvific effect of inspiration applies to “All Scripture.” The entire phrase “verbal inspiration” means that every word in the Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, is inspired by the Spirit.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, Pentecostals, such as the Church of God, have stated from early days that they stand “for the whole Bible rightly divided.” The term “verbal” signifies the words of the Bible, not just the thoughts or ideas. Verbal inspiration is strongly implied by God’s command that no one should add to Scripture or take away from it. God said to Israel, “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it” (Deut. 4:2 nasb,

see also Rev. 22:18-19). Verbal inspiration means that readers are not free to pick and choose which parts of the Bible they will accept and believe. Even the most obscure stories and lengthy genealogies have teaching value.

Third, the salvific effect of inspiration is a present, abiding quality. Inspiration is normally defined in connection to the original writing process. A common view of Fundamentalists and other Evangelicals is that inspiration concerns only the original manuscripts. For example, prominent Evangelical scholar Charles C. Ryrie writes that inspiration is “God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded ... the original autographs.”<sup>49</sup> Ryrie’s insufficient definition is based in part on the English phrase “given by inspiration” (2 Tim. 3:16, KJV). The words “given by” would seem to suggest God’s oversight of the writing process. However, the words “given by” are not found in the Greek text. The Greek says simply, “All Scripture is inspired.” The mistranslation, “given by,” is

<sup>45</sup> Poirier, “Is ‘All Scripture ... Inspired’?”, 5.

<sup>46</sup> *PD-GBI*, 12. The Indonesian text reads, “Alkitab mencapai maksud dan tujuan utamanya yaitu keselamatan manusia.”

<sup>47</sup> Karl Barth, *The Word of God and Theology* (trans. Amy Marga; London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 25. The German is “*wie er den Weg zu uns gesucht und gefunden hat*”; Karl Barth, *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie: Gesammelte Vorträge* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1925), 28.

<sup>48</sup> “Verbal inspiration” is first mentioned in the *Church of God Evangel* Aug. 8 (1936), 6.

<sup>49</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972). Ryrie’s definition is problematic for other reasons as well. For example, if inspiration applies only to the original autographs, then how can we say that our Bible is inspired? We do not have any of the original autographs.

not found in the Latin Vulgate, which reads, “*omnis scriptura divinitus inspirate;*” nor is it found in the earliest English translation (Wycliffe 1382). The unwarranted addition of the words “given by” was apparently introduced first by William Tyndale (1525) and was continued in the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishop’s Bible (1568), and the King James Version (1611). The mistranslation seems to be limited to English versions. The following important versions omit the words “given by.” They are in agreement that the translation should read, “All Scripture is inspired by God...”: “*Toute Écriture est inspirée de Dieu*” (Louis Segond, 1910); “*Ogni Scrittura è ispirata da Dio*” (La Sacra Bibbia Nuova Riveduta, 1994); “*Toda la Escritura es inspirada por Dios*” (Reina-Valera, 1960); “Segala tulisan yang diilhamkan Allah” (Indonesian, 1997).

Therefore, Paul’s point is not that the Scripture “was given” by God, but that the Scripture “is filled with the breath of God” and that it is life-giving and salvific. Yes, the Bible is the Word of God; and according to 2 Peter 1:21, it came through the prophets who were “moved by the Holy

Spirit” to write down the revelations that God had given to them. In describing what the Spirit did in the past, Peter explains the origin of Scripture as a work of the Holy Spirit. However, in 2 Timothy 3:16, the Apostle Paul uses the word “inspired” to explain the Spirit’s present work in Scripture, not only the Spirit’s past work. Paul does not say that Scripture **was** inspired (past tense); he says that Scripture **is** inspired (present tense).<sup>50</sup> Even now, the Holy Spirit moves and breathes through the words of Scripture, making them dynamic, alive, and directed toward this present generation. Although the Bible was written centuries ago, it is not only God’s word for the past, it is God’s word for the present.<sup>51</sup> When the apostles quote the Scriptures, they almost always use the present tense of “to say,” as in “the Spirit says...” not “the Spirit said...” (see Acts 7:48; Rom. 11:9; Gal. 4:30; Heb. 1:6; 3:7; Jas. 4:5, 6).

In agreement with Paul, early Pentecostals taught that the present inspiration of Scripture applies also to translations, that is, to the Bible that we read today.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, many definitions of “inspiration” li-

<sup>50</sup> The sentence lacks a verb, which is a common construction in the Greek present tense of εἶμι.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 111. Cf. *PD-GBI*, 7, which states that the Bible is a present revelation.

<sup>52</sup> See *The Book of Doctrines: Issued in the Interest of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: Church of

God Publishing House, 1922), 6-7, where the trustworthiness of translations is affirmed by the Church of God. The book’s readers are advised to consult the article on the Bible in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.



mit the Spirit's work of inspiration to the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.<sup>53</sup> The fact that the apostles quoted from the Greek translation of the Old Testament indicates that Paul would consider translations to be infused with the Spirit just like the original Hebrew and Greek. Although translations may appear imperfect, the Holy Spirit uses contemporary translations to reveal the truth. This is possible because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Of course, Pentecostals affirm that Bible translations should adhere as closely as possible to the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures and that interpretations of Scripture must be based on the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Fourth, the salvific effect of inspiration means that Scripture has a vital role in Christian discipleship. In terms of discipleship, Paul says that Scripture is useful for "doctrine" (*διδασκαλίαν*); that is, what to believe. Scripture teaches doctrine related to God, humanity, sin, salvation, sanctification, the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the return of Jesus. Also, Paul says that Scripture gives "reproof," which is to show some-

one where they have gone wrong; and Scripture offers "correction," which is to set a person on the right path. Furthermore, Scripture provides "Training in righteousness," which is to give instruction in the proper way of living the Christian life. Thus, according to Paul, the Holy Scriptures address the three aspects of effective Christian discipleship: 1) Knowing—Beliefs and attitudes; 2) Being—Affections and character; and 3) Doing—Practices and behaviors. As the primary source for discipleship, the Scriptures lead to spiritual growth, moral and ethical formation, sanctification, and a deepening of one's relationship with God.

Fifth, the salvific effect of inspiration means that Scripture is part of the equipping of ministers. Paul reminds Timothy that the Scriptures are an important aspect of ministry. The minister may be a gifted leader, talented, intelligent, a great speaker, and an efficient administrator; but it is the Scriptures that make the minister qualified and well-equipped to preach, teach, lead, and make disciples.

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<sup>53</sup> For example, the Evangelical "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" states that "inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture." An article in the *Church of God Evangel*, copied from a non-Pentecostal fundamentalist source, states that the claim for verbal inspiration "is not made for the versions and translations but original Greek and Hebrew

scriptures." *COGE* 34.20 (July 17, 1943), 14. A similar statement is made in another reprinted article, which says that verbal inspiration refers to "inspiration of the very words of the original manuscripts of the Bible, not inspiration of the various translations" (*COGE*, 34.36 [Nov. 13, 1943], 8). The Bible itself does not support such a limited view of inspiration.

Sixth, the salvific effect of inspiration means that the Bible's message is missional. Thus, Paul says to Timothy, "preach the Word" (4:2) Paul insists that the message of Scripture should form the content of Christian preaching. Paul knew that false teachers would arise who would twist the Scriptures, conform to ungodly culture, and attract many followers. To those who are deceived, the truth is relative, and the straightforward meaning of the Scripture is rejected.<sup>54</sup> However, only the preaching of the unadulterated Word of God will produce salvation and spiritual fruit. For Pentecostals, the missional message is eschatological, and Barth concurs. He writes,

the Word of God as the Word of reconciliation directed to us is the Word by which God announces Himself to man, i.e., by which He promises himself as the content of man's future, as the One who meets him on his way through time as the end of all time, as the hidden Lord of all times. His presence by the Word is His presence as the coming One, coming for the fulfilment and consummation of the relation established between Him and us in creation and renewed and confirmed in reconciliation.<sup>55</sup>

The missional message of Scripture

flows out of its universal relevance. Although the Old Testament is addressed specifically to the Hebrew people, it is God's Word to all people, everywhere, and in every time period. Israel was called by God to be a "light to the nations" and to bring blessing and salvation to all people (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 2:3; 49:6; Ps. 67:2; 96:1-13), and Israel's light continues to shine by means of the Scriptures. Similarly, many of the New Testament books were written to specific churches or individuals. The book of Acts was written to a man named Theophilus, and the book of Philippians was written to the church at Philippi; nevertheless, because these books are inspired apostolic writings, they are authoritative for all churches and for all believers. The universal authority of Scripture is captured in the theological term "canon," which means "rule" or "standard" (Gal. 6:16, Greek κανών). Therefore, when we say that the book of James is canonical, we mean that it is accepted as part of the Christian Bible and that it is authoritative as a rule and standard for the church.<sup>56</sup>

Seventh, the salvific effect of inspiration applies to both Old and New Testa-

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<sup>54</sup> Pentecostal theologian Daniel Castelo asserts that "a rigorous appraisal of the text's plain sense, which is the result of careful exegetical analysis, is the necessary first step of any faithful interpretation." Daniel Castelo and Robert W. Wall, "Scripture and the Church: A Précis for an Alternative Analogy,"

*Journal of Theological Interpretation* 5.2 (2011), 197-210 (210).

<sup>55</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics: Volume I. The Doctrine of the Word of God*, 142-43.

<sup>56</sup> Conn, *The Bible: Book of Books*, 73.

ments. We already mentioned that inspiration is applicable to “All Scripture,” but it is worth mentioning that Paul’s statement refers primarily to what we call the Old Testament. When Paul wrote to Timothy, the New Testament did not exist; therefore, his statement about the inspiration of Scripture applies to the Old Testament books. However, the writings of the apostles were later recognized as Scripture. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles spoke with divine authority. Therefore, the Apostle Peter classified Paul’s epistles as Scripture. Peter states,

as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Here, Peter states that Paul wrote his epistles “according to the wisdom given to him,” which indicates that God, through the Holy Spirit, gave Paul the wisdom necessary to write the epistles. Furthermore, the

writings of Paul are classified as Scripture, inasmuch as they are compared to “the rest of the Scriptures.” The word “rest” (Greek *λοιπός*) means “the other,”<sup>57</sup> “pertaining to the part of a whole,”<sup>58</sup> “the rest of any number or class under consideration.”<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Paul’s writings are Scripture, in the same category as the “other Scriptures,” which would include the Old Testament and the Gospels.

### **Inspiration Implies that the Scripture and the Holy Spirit Work as One**

Pentecostals affirm strongly that there is no conflict between the Word and the Spirit. God’s Word is truth (Jn 17:17), and the Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of truth,” who guides us “into all truth” (Jn 14:17; 16:13).<sup>60</sup> God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have eternally existed as One God, the personification of truth. In the beginning, the Spirit was hovering over the waters; and God spoke the Word, “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. 1:2-3). By God’s Word, all things were created (Heb. 11:3); yet, the psalmist says

<sup>57</sup> Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd edn, 2000), 602.

<sup>58</sup> J.P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 2nd edn, 1989), I, 613.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), 382. Cf. Frederick W. Danker and Kathryn Krug, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 218, “being part of a class in addition to the entity or entities just mentioned.”

<sup>60</sup> See Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, 39-66, regarding the Holy Spirit’s “autonomous witness” to Scripture.

to God, “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created” (Ps. 104:30). God’s Word and God’s Spirit always work in unison to accomplish God’s purposes on earth. Jesus is the Word of God, but He was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Lk. 4:18). The Holy Spirit anointed the writers of Scripture; and the Holy Spirit presently inspires the Scriptures, making them alive and powerful. Furthermore, the same Spirit that “moved” upon the writers of Scripture also moves upon the readers and hearers of Scripture today. The Spirit “teaches” us the things of God (1 Cor. 2:13-14) and removes the “veil” that hinders us from receiving the truth of Scripture (2 Cor. 3:8-17).

## CONCLUSION

Pentecostals would agree with Karl Barth’s assertion that the Bible is unique. Because of the Bible’s unique origin, unique authority, and unique power, it deserves a unique response from its readers. A Pentecostal theology of inspiration requires a fourfold response to Scripture. First, Pentecostals will spend quality time reading the Bible, studying the Bible, and meditating in the Bible. Second, Pentecostals will receive the Scriptures with faith. As they receive the Word of God by faith, they will allow Scripture to discern the “thoughts and intents” of the heart (Heb. 4:12). Third, they will follow through with obedience to God’s

Word, according to James’s admonition, “be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (Jas. 1:22). Fourth, they will share the Word of God with others. As they read the Scriptures and then teach them to others, God will work in the lives of people. Through his Word, God will move people to repentance (Acts 2:37-38; Rom. 1:16). Through his Word, God will sanctify and purify people’s hearts (Jn 17:17). Through his Word, God will heal the sick (Ps. 107:20). Through hearing God’s inspired Word, congregations will grow in faith (Rom. 10:17).

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