

## Verbal Inspiration

This term simply means that inspiration extends to, and includes, the very words of Scripture. This concept stands in opposition to the theory that inspiration supplied the thoughts, but the choice of words to express those thoughts was left to the discretion of the human author.

One problem which has been raised in opposition to verbal inspiration has been put this way: "How could the words of Scripture come from both God and man, if man is a free agent? If every word of Scripture has come from God, then is not dictation implied if not necessitated?"

There are really two parts to this problem. The first part is the question of how God can work through a human being in such a way as to guarantee that God's purposes will be fulfilled, while at the same time allowing scope for the expression of that human being's personality traits, background, level of education, natural and spiritual abilities and gifts, and communication style. This is a difficult question, but even if we are not able to explain the "how," we know that God has done this many times, even accomplishing His purposes through men who do not consciously desire to do His Will. For example in Isaiah 44 and 45, we see that God can perform His good pleasure through an unbeliever even while that unbeliever is expressing his own will in actions. The passage (44:28-45:1,5) reads:

It is I who says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd!  
And he will perform all my desire."  
And he declares of Jerusalem, "She will be built."  
And of the temple, "Your foundation will be laid."  
Thus says the Lord to Cyrus his anointed,  
Whom I have taken by the right hand,  
To subdue nations before him,  
And to loose the loins of kings:  
To open doors before him so that gates will not be shut...  
I am the Lord, and there is not other:  
Besides me there is no God.  
I will gird you, though you have not known me.

Precisely *how* God does this we are not told, but *that* He does it is abundantly clear. How Cyrus as a free agent can do his own will and at