

Inspiration Is Invisible

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Jesus said, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going" (John 3:8, NIV). We can't tell where the wind comes from or where it is going because we can't see the wind. We can only see what it does. In the same way we can't see the Holy Spirit. We can only see the effects of His work in human lives.

The written word, like the living Word, combines two sets of influences – the divine and the human. The one we can see, the other we cannot. These influences are both fully present, but don't compete for the same space. It is not the case that if the one is present 80%, the other can only be present 20%.

When we look at a Bible, we see a book. We can trace the history of this book's text, we can talk about who translated it, compare one translation with others, and count the words and the commas. All of these are things we can see, so that is not the locus of inspiration. It is not where the power resides.

On the other hand, there are aspects of Scripture that we can't see. Paul makes this clear in the following passage:

^{NIV} **2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We can't see the breath with which God breathed Scripture into existence, but we can be very sure that Paul was telling us the truth when we see the results that follow from studying Scripture lovingly. Such study changes lives. It doesn't leave people the same as they were before. When people start studying the Bible in such a way as to touch the hem of Jesus' garment (see Matt 9:20), they draw power from Him and start doing inconvenient things, like throwing cigarettes away, avoiding certain types of parties, and so on. They stop saying things that used to come naturally before. They begin swimming against the current of the world. Their direction has changed. These are things they could not do before and could not do now without the power of God.

This experience is the highest evidence of the divine authorship of the Bible. We receive God's word as food for the soul, through the same evidence by which we receive bread as food for the body. Bread supplies the [172] need of our nature; we know by experience that it produces blood and bone and brain. Apply the same test to the Bible; when its principles have actually become the elements of character, what has been the result? what changes have been made in the life? "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. In its power, men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have been transformed into the image of God. This change is itself the miracle of miracles. A change wrought by the word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. {Ed 171-72}