

# From Inspiration to Translation

## Lesson 1

This study provides a biblical, historical and practical overview how God has provided his Word to us in written form.

### Three Purposes for this Study

1. To equip our church to handle extensive (and often erroneous) information that is readily available on this subject, especially through the internet.
2. To equip our church to be unified on this topic so that we will enjoy God's Word to the fullest and guard ourselves against division on this subject.
3. To prepare us to begin using the NKJV as our ministry Bible and to benefit from using a variety of other good English translations in our personal Bible study.

### Three Phases of Scripture Transmission

To understand this subject, it is important to recognize three phases in the process of how the written Word of God becomes available to believers and churches today.

#### ***Phase 1: Inspiration***

This phase refers to the original manuscripts of Scripture written directly by the apostles and prophets.

#### ***Phase 2: Preservation***

This phase refers to the subsequent copies of Scripture that continue throughout history.

#### ***Phase 3: Translation***

This phase refers to versions of the Bible made available in other languages beyond Hebrew and Greek.

To understand this subject, it is also important to recognize what the Bible itself teaches about the three phases of Scripture transmission.

### Biblical Evidence for Inspiration

Several key statements in Scripture provide us with important information about the original words of Scripture that God provided to us. This applies to the sixty-six books of the Bible.

#### ***The Result of Inspiration***

Old and New Testament Scripture came to us in a "God-breathed" manner. Paul teaches that all Scripture is the result of "inspiration from God" (2 Tim 3:16). The phrase "given by inspiration of God" comes from one Greek word, *theopneustos*, which means "God-breathed." It is helpful to recognize that this verse especially refers to the Old Testament scriptures, because that was the Scripture available to Timothy as a child. But in another place (1 Tim 5:18), Paul uses "scripture" to describe both an Old Testament reference (Deut 25:4) and a New Testament reference (Luke 10:7). Furthermore, Peter calls the New Testament writings of Paul "scripture" (2 Pet 3:16). This indicates that all the words

of scripture, whether in the Old or New Testaments, were given to us as though they were “breathed out” by the mouth of God.

### ***The Means of Inspiration***

The Holy Spirit guided the thoughts and motives of the men who recorded the original scriptures. Peter explains that no scripture was written for merely human purposes or according to human whim. Instead, men chosen by God (i.e., prophets and apostles) wrote as they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:20-21). The word *moved* means to be “carried along,” as a ship is moved when the wind pushes into its sails, providing invisible but definite guidance. So, God himself directed the human writers so that they wrote the exact words that he intended to speak to us.

### ***The Extent of Inspiration***

Paul teaches that God inspired his revelation to us through the Holy Spirit using specific words and not just general ideas or impressions (1 Cor 2:13). So, when we say that the Bible is inerrant (or without errors), we are speaking about the original, inspired words of God.