



**Ecclesiastes**  
**Introduction - 1**  
**Inspiration**

## Setting (low) expectations

- We're not going to settle all the questions as to what inspiration is or how it worked
- But maybe we can discover some principles that will help us consider the nature of Ecclesiastes (second part of the introduction)
- And maybe some of these principles are not all that difficult

## 2Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

## 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- “Scripture” (*graphe*)
  - Simply means “what has been written”
  - Used in the NT to refer to a writing that deserves special attention because in it God helps people understand how they are supposed to live
- “Inspired” --breathed or spoken by God
- “Profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” — to make it possible for one to do what God wants him to do
- *Are “scripture” and “inspired by God” synonymous terms?*
- *Can we agree that “inspired writing” or “scripture” means roughly, “a writing that completes and equips for every good work”?*

## Acts 1:16

<sup>16</sup> “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ...”

# Acts 1:16

- “Scripture” (*graphe*)
  - Simply means “what has been written”
  - Used in the NT to refer to a writing that deserves special attention because in it God helps people understand how they are supposed to live
- “... the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David ...”
  - The source was the Holy Spirit
  - The instrument was David
- *What part might David (or any inspired person) as an instrument have played in the production of scripture?*
- *Was producing scripture “taking dictation” from God?*

## 2Peter 1:20-21

<sup>20</sup> ... knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

## 2Peter 1:20-21

- “Prophecy” —speaking for God, telling people what God wants them to do
- “Scripture” —see previous notes
- “Interpretation” —unloosing, unbundling, unpacking, opening and straightening something that is folded
- “Men spoke from God” —they transmitted to those who heard them a message from God
- “As they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” —as the Holy Spirit supported and urged them to do
- *How was the support of or carrying along by the Holy Spirit—more than the Holy Spirit just telling them what to say or to write—an essential element of inspiration?*



## Consider: Genesis 3:4-5

<sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

## Consider: Job 22:5-11

- <sup>5</sup> Is not your evil abundant?  
There is no end to your iniquities.
- <sup>6</sup> For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing  
and stripped the naked of their clothing.
- <sup>7</sup> You have given no water to the weary to drink,  
and you have withheld bread from the hungry.
- <sup>8</sup> The man with power possessed the land,  
and the favored man lived in it.
- <sup>9</sup> You have sent widows away empty,  
and the arms of the fatherless were crushed.
- <sup>10</sup> Therefore snares are all around you,  
and sudden terror overwhelms you,
- <sup>11</sup> or darkness, so that you cannot see,  
and a flood of water covers you.

## Consider: John 9:31

**31** We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

# Consider

- *Should we regard these texts as inspired scripture?*
- *Are the statements made in these texts entirely true?*
- *... mostly true?*
- *... sorta true?*

## No definitive answers, but help to focus

- *What factors would we consider if we had to decide whether a text qualified as inspired scripture?*
- *Should a text written by an author not known to have written another inspired text be disqualified from being considered inspired scripture?*
- *How important should **tradition** be to us when we consider the authorship or authority of a text?*
- *If an inspired person issues a prophecy, and it is not recorded in a manuscript until years later, must the recording of the prophecy and the person recording it also be subject to the process of inspiration?*
- *Must an inspired statement also be a true statement if the person who wrote it also wrote other inspired statements that were true?*

# What makes the following writings inspired?

- *Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)?*
- *Philemon?*
- *Proverbs chapter 31?*
- *Ecclesiastes?*

Next time

(Real!) Introduction to Ecclesiastes