

## **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17, Evaluation 7 Views of Inspiration Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17, Evaluation 7 Views of Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's session 17 lecture on Revelation and Holy Scripture evaluates various theories of biblical inspiration, contrasting them with an evangelical understanding. Peterson critiques views like the intuition and illumination theories, advocating for an "organic" view where God and human authors actively collaborate in producing Scripture. The lecture emphasizes verbal inspiration, asserting that God inspires both the words and the thoughts of the Bible, while distinguishing this from strict dictation. Finally, Peterson outlines the results of inspiration, highlighting Scripture's authority, inerrancy, sufficiency, clarity, and benefit as God's very word.

**2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Revelation & Scripture).**



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on 17.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17, Evaluation 7 Views of Inspiration

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Revelation and Scripture - Session 17

##### Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 17 of his teaching on Revelation and Holy Scripture. The session focuses on evaluating different theories of biblical inspiration, proposing an evangelical view (organic inspiration), and outlining the vital results that follow from this understanding of Scripture as God's word.

##### Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

##### 1. Evaluation of Seven Views of Inspiration:

Dr. Peterson systematically evaluates seven views of inspiration, contrasting them with what he believes to be a correct, evangelical understanding:

- **Intuition Theory:** Rejected as it views inspiration merely as religious genius exercising spiritual insight, failing to recognize God as the immediate author speaking through Scripture writers.
- **Quote:** "Contrary to the intuition theory, inspiration is not a matter of religious geniuses exercising spiritual insight. Inspiration is a special work of God, speaking his word through the scripture writers."
- **Corrective:** Inspiration involves God's providential preparation of the writers (Warfield, Old Princetonians) but goes beyond simply endowing them with religious awareness. God is the ultimate author, and the Spirit directed the writers (2 Peter 1:21).
- **Illumination Theory:** Rejected for suggesting that scriptural inspiration is only different in degree, not kind, from other types of inspiration.
- **Quote:** "Contrary to the illumination theory, the inspiration of scripture is different in kind, not only in degree, from other types of inspiration, so-called."
- **Corrective:** Every Scripture passage is the result of God speaking his word (2 Timothy 3:16 - "God-breathed").

- **Dynamic Theory:** Acknowledged for correctly seeing both God and humans actively working together in Scripture's production, utilizing the writers' styles, vocabularies, and personalities.
- **Quote:** "The dynamic theory is correct in seeing both God and humans as actively working together in the production of scripture. This is an advance."
- **Limitation:** It errs by limiting God's influence to the *thoughts* of Scripture, neglecting the inspiration of the *words* (2 Timothy 3:16).
- **Verbal Theory:** Praised for affirming the inspiration of the words of Scripture and generally denying divine dictation as the common mode.
- **Quote:** "Contrary to the intuition theory and the illumination theory, God inspires words, and they are correct, as the verbal theory espouses."
- **Limitation:** It is considered incomplete; simply affirming verbal inspiration and denying common dictation is insufficient. The Bible reveals a deeper divine-human collaboration.
- **Dictation Theory:** Correctly affirms that the words of Scripture are God's words, which aligns with the Protestant and Orthodox understanding of "dictation" (emphasizing divine authorship, not necessarily the *mode*).
- **Quote:** "Dictation theory rightly affirms the words of scripture are the words of God. And ironically, that is what the Protestants and Orthodox meant when they used the word dictation."
- **Incorrect Aspect:** It wrongly posits dictation as the primary *mode* of inspiration, contradicted by the different styles, vocabularies, and evidence of human study (e.g., Luke 1:1-4). God authors the Bible *through* human writers.
- **Neo-Orthodox View:** Commended for affirming the importance of God's personal revelation.
- **Critiques:** Falsely dichotomizes personal and verbal inspiration. God's revelation is both.
- Caricatures the verbal theory, as evangelicals generally reject strict dictation.
- Fails to recognize that God reveals himself in both deed and word, with words being necessary to interpret deeds (George Ladd).

- While subjective appropriation through faith is necessary for spiritual benefit, revelation occurs regardless of individual belief.
- **Quote:** "Second, the neo-orthodox view caricatures the verbal theory. Though God dictates parts of scripture, he mostly uses the author's experiences, vocabulary, and so on to produce his holy word."
- **Limited Inerrancy:** Correctly identifies that the Bible is not primarily a history or science textbook.
- **Error:** It errs by suggesting Scripture contains mistakes in historical, scientific, or other non-salvific matters. God speaks truth in his word, even when the primary purpose isn't historical or scientific precision.
- **Misuse of "Infallibility":** Some proponents redefine "infallibility" (Scripture unfailingly accomplishing God's purposes) to accommodate errancy, which is a misuse of the term. The biblical concept of truth includes factual accuracy (Roger Nicole).

## 2. A Theology of Inspiration: Organic View (Concursus/Confluence):

Dr. Peterson proposes an organic view of inspiration, also called *concursus* (co-authorship) or *confluence* (divine and human aspects running together).

- **Key Principles: God is the ultimate author:** 2 Timothy 3:16.
- **Inspiration of the autographs:** God directly inspired the original manuscripts. Modern Bibles are reliable copies through God's providence.
- **God uses human authors:** 2 Peter 1:21 ("men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit").
- **Scripture is both divine and human:** God's word in human language, reflecting God's grace and desire to communicate with humanity.
- **Humanity of Scripture:** Evident in diverse vocabularies, styles, emphases, and the use of human study and experiences (Luke 1:1-4, John 1:1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:21-33).
- **Divinity of Scripture:** The human element does not negate its being the very words of God. Writers did not originate the ideas independently of God (2 Peter 1:20).

- **Providential Guidance:** God not only prepares writers but actively guides and speaks through them in a special way during the writing process. The exact *modus operandi* remains a mystery, similar to the Incarnation.
- **Plenary and Verbal Inspiration:** The whole of Scripture (plenary) and the very words (verbal) are inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). This includes both ideas and the words used to convey them.
- **Jesus and Apostles Affirm Verbal Inspiration:** Examples include Jesus' argument based on a verb tense (Matthew 22:32) and Paul's argument based on a singular noun (Galatians 3:16).
- **Words Convey Thoughts:** God gave words to communicate specific thoughts; the two are inseparable.

### 3. Results of Inspiration:

Dr. Peterson outlines vital results that follow from the understanding that Scripture is God's word:

- **Authoritative:** Because God is the ultimate author.
- **Inerrant (rightly understood):** Implied by God being truth.
- **Sufficient:** Contains all that is necessary for salvation and godliness.
- **Clear:** Its main message is understandable.
- **Beneficial:** Profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

He quotes Carl F. H. Henry emphasizing that "God's revelation is rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words. That is, in conceptual verbal form." Henry also highlights the personal nature of God's revelation culminating in Jesus Christ, "the word in flesh."

### Further Support for Scripture as God's Word:

- **Routine Identification:** Scripture is consistently called and equated with the word of God (2 Timothy 3:15-16, 4:2, 4:4; Psalm 19:7-11).
- **Divine Direction of Writers:** 2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Timothy 3:16.

- **Characteristics of God Reflected:** Psalm 19 describes Scripture as perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and righteous, and its effects as reviving the soul, making the simple wise, etc.
- **Jesus and Apostles' Attribution:** They often attribute Old Testament statements to God, even when the original text doesn't explicitly do so.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson advocates for an organic view of biblical inspiration, recognizing the co-authorship of God and humanity in producing the Scriptures. This view affirms both the full divinity and genuine humanity of the Bible, leading to the understanding that it is the authoritative, inerrant, sufficient, clear, and beneficial word of God. The session concludes by setting the stage for further discussion on these crucial results of inspiration.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17, Evaluation 7 Views of Inspiration

### Study Guide: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Revelation and Scripture, Session 17

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Peterson, what is the fundamental flaw of the intuition theory of inspiration?
2. How does the illumination theory differ from Dr. Peterson's understanding of inspiration?
3. What does the dynamic theory of inspiration correctly recognize, and where does it fall short according to the lecture?
4. Why does Dr. Peterson consider the verbal theory of inspiration to be an advance over previous theories, yet still incomplete?
5. What is the primary error of the dictation theory of inspiration, despite its correct affirmation?
6. In what key ways does the neo-orthodox view of inspiration err, according to Dr. Peterson?
7. What is the "organic view" of inspiration, and what other terms are used to describe this concept?
8. Why does Dr. Peterson emphasize both the divinity and humanity of Scripture?
9. What does "plenary verbal inspiration" mean, based on Dr. Peterson's explanation?
10. According to Dr. Peterson, what are some of the vital results that follow from the fact that God is the ultimate author of the Bible?

#### Answer Key

1. The intuition theory wrongly suggests that inspiration is merely the spiritual insight of religious geniuses, failing to recognize that inspiration is a special and direct work of God speaking his word through the Scripture writers. It does not account for the Holy Spirit's specific superintendence in the writing process.

2. The illumination theory incorrectly posits that the inspiration of Scripture is different only in degree, not in kind, from other forms of inspiration. Dr. Peterson argues that every Scripture passage is a direct result of God speaking his word (God-breathed), setting it apart from general spiritual enlightenment.
3. The dynamic theory rightly acknowledges the active involvement of both God and human writers in the production of Scripture. However, it errs by limiting God's influence to the thoughts of Scripture, neglecting the fact that God also inspires the very words.
4. The verbal theory correctly affirms that God inspires the words of Scripture, a crucial point missed by intuition and illumination theories. However, it is incomplete because it often denies dictation without fully accounting for the collaborative divine-human working together in the production of Scripture.
5. The dictation theory correctly affirms that the words of Scripture are indeed the words of God, which aligns with Protestant and Orthodox understandings. However, it incorrectly assumes that dictation was the primary mode or method by which God inspired the entirety of Scripture, overlooking the human authors' styles and research.
6. The neo-orthodox view errs by creating a false dichotomy between personal and verbal revelation, caricaturing the verbal theory, incorrectly viewing deeds as self-interpreting without the need for verbal revelation, and suggesting that revelation's validity depends on subjective benefit.
7. The "organic view" of inspiration, also called "concursus" and "confluence," describes the co-authorship of Scripture, where both God and human beings actively and inseparably play roles in its production. It emphasizes the coming together of the divine and human to create God's divine-human word.
8. Dr. Peterson emphasizes both the divinity and humanity of Scripture because God chose to communicate his very word in human language through human authors with their unique styles and experiences. The humanity of Scripture makes it accessible, while its divinity ensures it is the authoritative and truthful word of God.
9. "Plenary verbal inspiration" means that the entirety of Scripture (plenary), not just parts or ideas, and the very words themselves (verbal) are inspired by God. This view holds that God's inspiration extends to both the thoughts and the specific wording of the original manuscripts.



10. Some vital results of God being the ultimate author of the Bible are that Scripture is God's very word, making it authoritative, inerrant (when rightly understood), sufficient, clear, and beneficial for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Compare and contrast Dr. Peterson's understanding of the organic view of inspiration with two other views of inspiration discussed in the lecture (e.g., intuition theory and dictation theory). Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective.
2. Discuss the significance of both the divine and human aspects of Scripture according to Dr. Peterson. How do these two aspects work together in the process and product of inspiration, and why is it important to affirm both?
3. Explain Dr. Peterson's critique of the neo-orthodox view of inspiration. What are the key points of disagreement, and why does he consider this view problematic for understanding the nature of biblical revelation?
4. Analyze the relationship between verbal inspiration and the communication of God's thoughts as presented by Dr. Peterson. Why does he argue that one cannot be separated from the other, and what are the implications of this understanding?
5. Based on Dr. Peterson's lecture, discuss the practical consequences of believing that Scripture is the inspired word of God. How does this understanding impact its authority, reliability, and usefulness for believers?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Special Revelation:** God's self-disclosure to humanity through specific means, such as miracles, prophetic words, and ultimately, the Bible and Jesus Christ.
- **Inspiration (of Scripture):** The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit on Scripture's human authors, guiding them to write what God intended, resulting in God's word in human language.
- **Intuition Theory:** The view that inspiration is merely a heightened form of natural religious insight or genius possessed by the biblical writers.
- **Illumination Theory:** The belief that the Holy Spirit enlightened the minds of the biblical writers, enabling them to understand and articulate religious truths they discovered themselves, with no direct divine authorship of the words.
- **Dynamic Theory:** The perspective that both God and human authors actively worked together in producing Scripture, with God primarily directing the thoughts and allowing the writers' own styles and vocabularies to shape the expression.
- **Verbal Theory:** The view that God's inspiration extends to the very words of Scripture, not just the ideas, though it typically denies a mechanical dictation process.
- **Dictation Theory:** The belief that God directly dictated the exact words of Scripture to the human authors, who served as passive scribes.
- **Neo-Orthodox View:** A theological perspective that emphasizes God's personal encounter with humanity as revelation, often downplaying or denying the verbal and propositional nature of biblical inspiration, viewing Scripture more as a witness to revelation than revelation itself.
- **Organic View (of Inspiration):** Also known as concursus or confluence, this view emphasizes the cooperative working together of God and human authors in the production of Scripture, where both divine and human elements are fully operative and inseparable.
- **Concursus:** A theological term emphasizing the concurrent action of God and human beings in producing an effect, used in this context to describe the co-authorship of Scripture.

- **Confluence:** Similar to concursus, this term describes the flowing together of the divine and human aspects in Scripture, resulting in a unified whole.
- **Autographs:** The original, handwritten manuscripts of the biblical books.
- **Plenary Inspiration:** The belief that all parts of Scripture are equally and fully inspired by God.
- **Verbal Inspiration:** The belief that God's inspiration extends to the specific words used in Scripture.
- **Inerrancy:** The doctrine that the original manuscripts of Scripture are completely free from error in all that they affirm, including matters of faith, practice, history, and science.
- **Infallibility:** The characteristic of Scripture by which it unfailingly accomplishes God's purposes for salvation and is entirely trustworthy as a guide for faith and life. Some use this term to allow for the possibility of minor errors in non-salvific areas.
- **Sufficient (of Scripture):** The belief that Scripture contains everything necessary for salvation, spiritual growth, and understanding God's will.
- **Clear (of Scripture):** Also known as perspicuity, the idea that the essential message of Scripture is understandable to all who read it with an open heart and mind, even if some passages are more difficult to interpret.
- **Authoritative (of Scripture):** The belief that Scripture, as the word of God, possesses ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice, demanding obedience and belief.
- **Beneficial (of Scripture):** The quality of Scripture that makes it profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, leading to spiritual growth and maturity.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 17, Evaluation 7 Views of Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on the Inspiration of Scripture**

#### **1. What is the central idea behind the evangelical view of inspiration presented in this lecture?**

The evangelical view of inspiration emphasizes an organic, or confluent, model where both God and human authors actively participate in the creation of Scripture. God is the ultimate author who directly inspires the original manuscripts (autographs), guiding human writers using their individual styles, vocabularies, and experiences to communicate His very words and thoughts. This view, also called *concursum*, highlights the co-authorship of Scripture, resulting in a divine-human word.

#### **2. How does the presented view contrast with the intuition and illumination theories of inspiration?**

The lecture strongly contrasts the evangelical view with the intuition and illumination theories. It argues that inspiration is not merely a matter of religious geniuses having spiritual insights (intuition theory) or a difference in the degree of divine influence compared to other forms of inspiration (illumination theory). Instead, it asserts that scriptural inspiration is unique in kind, a special work of God where He directly speaks His word through the writers. God is not just endowing writers with religious awareness; He is the ultimate author, and the Holy Spirit specifically directed them.

#### **3. What are the strengths and weaknesses identified in the dynamic and verbal theories of inspiration?**

The dynamic theory is credited with correctly recognizing the active collaboration between God and human writers in producing Scripture, acknowledging that God uses their styles and personalities. However, its weakness lies in limiting God's influence primarily to the thoughts of Scripture, neglecting the inspiration of the very words. The verbal theory is praised for affirming that God inspires the words of Scripture, a crucial point against theories like intuition and illumination. However, it is considered incomplete by itself, as it needs to account for the clear human element and the variety of ways God worked through different authors.

#### **4. Why does the lecture reject the dictation theory as the primary mode of inspiration?**

While the lecture acknowledges that the dictation theory rightly affirms that the words of Scripture are God's words (and that this was often the intended meaning of "dictation" by early Protestants and Orthodox), it rejects it as the general mode of inspiration. The diverse styles and vocabularies of the biblical authors, as evidenced by Luke's own account of research in Luke 1:1-4, indicate that God worked through the writers' active engagement and preparation, not solely through dictation. Although some parts of the Bible might have involved dictation (like the Ten Commandments), it was not the common method.

#### **5. What are the main criticisms leveled against the neo-orthodox view of inspiration?**

The lecture critiques the neo-orthodox view on several grounds. First, it argues that it falsely separates personal revelation from verbal inspiration, denying that God reveals Himself in words. Second, it claims that neo-orthodoxy misrepresents the verbal theory, as evangelicals generally do not adhere to a strict dictation model. Third, it emphasizes that God's revelation is both in deed and word, and deeds require verbal interpretation to be understood correctly. Finally, it asserts that Scripture remains God's revelation regardless of whether individuals personally benefit from it.

#### **6. How does the lecture address the concept of limited inerrancy?**

The lecture acknowledges the point of limited inerrancy that the Bible is not primarily a history or science textbook. However, it strongly disagrees with the conclusion that Scripture contains errors in matters of history, science, or other subjects. It argues that while the Bible's purpose is salvation and sanctification, God, being truth, speaks truthfully in all matters it addresses. It suggests that the Bible may not use modern scientific precision but still conveys truth. Furthermore, it criticizes the redefinition of "infallibility" by some limited inerrantists to accommodate perceived errors, stating that the biblical concept of truth includes factual accuracy.

**7. What are some of the "results of inspiration" highlighted in the lecture, and what do they imply about Scripture?**

The lecture outlines several vital results of God being the ultimate author of Scripture. These include its authority, inerrancy (rightly understood), sufficiency, clarity, and beneficial nature. Because God is the author, His Word is authoritative and can be trusted completely. Inerrancy signifies that Scripture, in its original autographs, speaks truth. Sufficiency means it provides all that is necessary for salvation and godly living. Clarity suggests that its core message is understandable. Finally, its beneficial nature is emphasized in passages like 2 Timothy 3:16, stating its profitability for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness, as well as Psalm 19, which details its power to revive the soul, make the simple wise, and bring joy.

**8. How do the references to Jesus and the apostles support the evangelical view of verbal inspiration?**

The lecture argues that Jesus and His apostles affirmed verbal inspiration through their actions and teachings. Examples include Jesus' argument in Matthew 22:32 hinging on the present tense of a verb in Exodus 3:6 and Paul's reasoning in Galatians 3:16 resting on the singular form of a noun in Genesis 12:7. These instances demonstrate that they believed even the specific words and grammatical nuances of the Old Testament were significant and carried divine weight, supporting the idea that God's inspiration extends to the very words of Scripture.