

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 16, Scripture, 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 16, Scripture, 7 Views of Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture, "Revelation and Scripture, Session 16," introduces a **systematic theology of Holy Scripture by exploring seven distinct views on its inspiration**. The session begins with prayer and a review of biblical texts (Mark 12, John 10, 1 Corinthians 14, 2 Timothy 3, and 2 Peter 1) often cited regarding inspiration. **Peterson then outlines and briefly describes five classical theories of inspiration from Millard Erickson's work: intuition, illumination, dynamic, verbal, and dictation**. He also adds two more contemporary perspectives: the neo-orthodox view and the limited inerrancy view. **The lecture sets the stage for a future evaluation of these various perspectives on how God communicated through human authors to produce the Bible**. The discussion emphasizes the importance of understanding the origin and nature of scripture, especially in contrast to false teachings, and highlights the Trinitarian involvement in its creation. **Ultimately, this session serves as an introduction to a more in-depth examination of the doctrine of biblical inspiration**.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 16 – 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 16.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 16, Scripture, 7 Views of Inspiration

#### Briefing Document: Seven Views on Inspiration

**Overview:** This lecture session by Dr. Robert A. Peterson focuses on the doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, building upon previous discussions of general and special revelation and the examination of key biblical texts on inspiration. Peterson begins by reviewing the significance of 2 Peter 1:16-21 as a crucial passage for understanding inspiration, then introduces and briefly describes seven different views on how God inspired the Bible, drawing primarily from Millard Erickson's framework in *Christian Theology*. The lecture sets the stage for a more in-depth evaluation of these views in a subsequent session.

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

##### 1. Review of Key Biblical Texts on Inspiration:

- Peterson briefly recaps previous discussions on significant texts concerning inspiration, including:
- Jesus' statement in Mark 12 that David spoke Psalm 110 by the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus' comment in John 10 regarding Psalm 82 that "the scripture cannot be broken."
- Paul's assertion in 1 Corinthians 14 that his words were a "commandment from God."
- The pivotal passage of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 on the God-breathed nature of Scripture.

##### 2. In-depth Examination of 2 Peter 1:16-21:

- **Context:** Peter is nearing death and writes to remind believers to live for Christ, providing a written record of important matters (2 Peter 1:12-15). The immediate context addresses false teaching, highlighting Scripture as an antidote.
- **Eyewitness Testimony vs. Myths (1:16-18):** Peter emphasizes that their message about Jesus' power and coming was not based on "cleverly devised myths," but on their experience as "eyewitnesses of his majesty" at the Transfiguration. They heard the voice of God declaring, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 17:5, quoted in the lecture).

- **Quote:** "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16)
- **Quote:** "We ourselves heard this very voice, born from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain." (2 Peter 1:18)
- **The Reliable Prophetic Word (1:19):** Peter states, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."
- Three views on the meaning of "more fully confirmed" are presented:
  1. The transfiguration strongly confirmed the prophetic word.
  2. Believers have something *more* reliable than the transfiguration (the Old Testament scriptures). Peterson inclines towards this view.
  3. "Confirmed" can be a superlative, meaning the Old Testament is completely reliable.
- Peterson emphasizes the reliability and guiding nature of Scripture using the simile of a "lamp shining in a dark place," highlighting the world's need for God's revelation. This guidance lasts "until the day dawns," referring to the eschatological return of Christ.
- **Origin of Prophecy (1:20-21):** This is the central point regarding inspiration.
- **Quote:** "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation." (2 Peter 1:20) This speaks to the divine origin, not the explanation, of Scripture.
- **Quote:** "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." (2 Peter 1:21)
- Peterson clarifies that while human authors used their volition, they were not the ultimate source. They "spoke from God" as they were "carried along by the Holy Spirit." This emphasizes the Holy Spirit's active agency in producing God's Word.
- He draws a parallel with Aaron being Moses' mouthpiece, with God speaking through human instruments.

### 3. Systematic Theology of Holy Scripture: Introduction to Views of Inspiration:

- Peterson transitions to a systematic theological approach to Scripture, starting with the doctrine of inspiration.
- He will present and evaluate seven views of inspiration, drawing primarily from Millard Erickson's categorization in *Christian Theology*, and adding two others.

### 4. The Five Theories from Millard Erickson:

- **Intuition Theory:** Scripture is a product of the natural spiritual insight of religious geniuses, similar to other great thinkers.
- **Illumination Theory:** The Holy Spirit heightens the natural powers of the scripture writers, increasing their sensitivity to spiritual matters, but doesn't specifically communicate truth.
- **Dynamic Theory:** God guides the writers to have specific thoughts or concepts, but allows them to express these in their own words, potentially leading to errors.
- **Verbal Theory:** God guides not only the thoughts but also the very words chosen by the writers, resulting in the exact words God intended. This is seen as a step closer to the truth but not exhaustive.
- **Dictation Theory:** God directly dictates the words of the Bible to passive human writers. Peterson clarifies that while parts of the Bible involve direct communication (e.g., the Ten Commandments), the Bible was not generally dictated. He also notes that liberals often misrepresent this as the historical conservative view.

### 5. Two Additional Views:

- **Neo-Orthodox View:** This view critiques both conservative and liberal approaches. It argues that revelation is God himself in his mighty acts (climaxing in Jesus Christ), not propositions about God. Scripture becomes revelatory when God encounters the reader through it. Neo-orthodoxy criticizes traditional orthodoxy for overemphasizing propositional revelation, defining faith as intellectual assent, and holding to divine dictation. It also critiques liberalism for overemphasizing reason and critically dissecting Scripture.
- **Limited Inerrancy View:** This view holds that Scripture is inerrant (truthful, accurate, faithful) in matters of faith and Christian life but not necessarily inerrant in historical, scientific, or other secular matters. Some proponents use "infallible"

to describe Scripture's unfailing ability to accomplish God's purpose of salvation, even if not every detail is factually precise by modern standards. Peterson acknowledges the good intentions of those holding this view but suggests it is not entirely correct.

#### **6. Full Inerrancy:**

- Peterson briefly mentions "full inerrancy," which affirms the complete truthfulness of the Bible without denying its infallibility. This will be discussed further in the next lecture when evaluating the presented views.

#### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson concludes the session by reiterating the topic and setting the stage for the next lecture, which will involve a critical evaluation of the seven views of inspiration. The session heavily emphasizes the significance of 2 Peter 1:16-21 in understanding the divine origin and reliability of Scripture, particularly highlighting the active role of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the biblical authors.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 16, Scripture, 7 Views of Inspiration

### Study Guide: Special Revelation, Holy Scripture, Seven Views on Inspiration

#### Key Scripture Passages Discussed:

- Mark 12 (Jesus quoting Psalm 110)
- John 10 (Jesus quoting Psalm 82)
- 1 Corinthians 14 (Paul's words as God's commandment)
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Inspiration of Scripture)
- 2 Peter 1:16-21 (Eyewitness account and prophetic word)
- Matthew 17:1-8 (Transfiguration)

#### Key Concepts:

- **General Revelation:** God's self-disclosure through nature and human reason. (Mentioned as the preceding topic)
- **Special Revelation:** God's self-disclosure through specific means, culminating in Jesus Christ and Scripture.
- **Inspiration of Scripture:** The supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the human authors of the Bible, resulting in it being God's Word.
- **Prophetic Word:** In the context of 2 Peter, primarily refers to the Old Testament scriptures that foretold and anticipated Christ's coming and kingdom.
- **Transfiguration:** The event where Jesus was transformed and appeared in glory with Moses and Elijah before Peter, James, and John.
- **Autographs:** The original manuscripts of the books of the Bible.
- **Textual Criticism:** The scholarly discipline of comparing and analyzing ancient manuscripts to determine the most accurate rendering of the original text.
- **False Teaching:** Doctrines and interpretations that contradict the truth of Scripture.
- **Eschatology:** The study of end times or last things, including the second coming of Christ.

- **Seven Views of Inspiration:** Different theological perspectives on how God inspired the Bible:
  - Intuition Theory
  - Illumination Theory
  - Dynamic Theory
  - Verbal Theory
  - Dictation Theory
  - Neo-Orthodox View
  - Limited Inerrancy View
- **Inerrancy:** The belief that the Bible is completely truthful and without error in all that it affirms.
- **Infallibility:** The belief that Scripture is unfailingly effective in accomplishing God's purpose of salvation.

#### **Study Questions to Consider:**

- What are the five key scripture texts discussed at the beginning of the session, and what does each contribute to the understanding of biblical authority and inspiration?
- How does the transfiguration event relate to Peter's understanding of the prophetic word in 2 Peter 1? What are the different interpretations of verse 19?
- According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, what is the origin of scriptural prophecy? What role did human authors and the Holy Spirit play in its production?
- What is the significance of the simile of a "lamp shining in a dark place" in 2 Peter 1:19? What does it tell us about the purpose and reliability of Scripture?
- What are the main tenets of each of the seven views of inspiration discussed by Dr. Peterson (Intuition, Illumination, Dynamic, Verbal, Dictation, Neo-Orthodox, Limited Inerrancy)? How do they differ from one another?
- What are some of the criticisms that the neo-Orthodox view raises against both traditional orthodoxy and liberalism regarding their understanding of revelation and Scripture?

- What is the distinction between full inerrancy and limited inerrancy? How do proponents of limited inerrancy define "infallibility"?
- What is Dr. Peterson's general approach to presenting and evaluating these different views of inspiration?

### Quiz:

1. According to Mark 12, what did Jesus say about David's writing of Psalm 110:1, and what does this imply about the nature of Scripture?
2. In 2 Peter 1:16-18, what personal experience does Peter refer to as a basis for the truthfulness of their message about Jesus Christ? What was the significance of this event?
3. Explain the main point of 2 Peter 1:20-21 regarding the origin of scriptural prophecy. What two agents were involved in the production of Scripture according to this passage?
4. Describe the Intuition Theory of inspiration. To what other forms of human expression does it compare biblical inspiration?
5. How does the Illumination Theory of inspiration differ from the Intuition Theory? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Illumination Theory?
6. What is the central idea of the Dynamic Theory of inspiration regarding the interaction between God and human authors in the writing of Scripture? What is a potential consequence of this interaction according to the theory?
7. Explain the Verbal Theory of inspiration. How does it go beyond the Dynamic Theory in describing God's involvement in the writing process?
8. What is the primary characteristic of the Dictation Theory of inspiration? Why does Dr. Peterson argue that this is not generally the historic conservative view of inspiration?
9. Briefly describe the neo-Orthodox view of revelation. According to this view, what does revelation primarily consist of, and how does it critique traditional orthodoxy?
10. What is the core belief of Limited Inerrancy? How does it differentiate between matters of faith and Christian life versus matters of history and science?

### Answer Key:



1. Jesus stated that David wrote Psalm 110:1 "by the Holy Spirit." This implies that the Holy Spirit supernaturally guided David's writing, indicating a divine origin and authority for that part of Scripture.
2. Peter refers to the transfiguration of Jesus on the holy mountain, where they witnessed his divine majesty and heard the voice of God the Father declaring Jesus as his beloved Son. This event served as eyewitness confirmation of Christ's glory and power.
3. The main point is that no prophecy of Scripture originates from the prophet's own interpretation or will. Rather, Scripture was produced as people "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," highlighting both human instrumentality and divine initiative.
4. The Intuition Theory holds that biblical inspiration is essentially a heightened form of natural spiritual insight possessed by religious geniuses. It compares the Bible's inspiration to the insights of other great thinkers like Plato, viewing it as exceptional religious literature.
5. The Illumination Theory posits that the Holy Spirit influenced the Scripture writers by enhancing their natural abilities and spiritual sensitivity. Unlike the Intuition Theory, it emphasizes the Spirit's role in elevating the writers' existing powers, though not necessarily by directly communicating truth.
6. The Dynamic Theory suggests that God worked in conjunction with human authors, guiding their thoughts and concepts but allowing them to express these divine ideas in their own unique styles and words. This theory acknowledges both divine guidance and human authorship, but it also suggests the possibility of error due to the human element.
7. The Verbal Theory asserts that the Holy Spirit guided not only the thoughts of the biblical writers but also their choice of words. It emphasizes that the very words of Scripture are those that God intended to be written, resulting in a text that accurately conveys God's message.
8. The Dictation Theory claims that God directly dictated the exact words of the Bible to the human authors, who served as passive recipients. Dr. Peterson argues this is a misrepresentation of the historic conservative view, as evidenced by Luke's research and the diverse writing styles within Scripture.

9. The neo-Orthodox view states that revelation is primarily God revealing Himself through His mighty acts in history, culminating in Jesus Christ, rather than through propositional statements. It criticizes orthodoxy for overemphasizing biblical propositions and for holding to divine dictation, and liberalism for overemphasizing reason and criticizing Scripture.
10. Limited Inerrancy contends that the Bible is without error in matters pertaining to faith and Christian living but may contain inaccuracies in areas like history and science. It often uses the term "infallibility" to describe Scripture's unfailing ability to achieve God's saving purposes.

### **Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the significance of 2 Peter 1:16-21 for the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. How does Peter's appeal to his eyewitness experience and the prophetic word contribute to an understanding of biblical authority?
2. Compare and contrast at least three of the seven views of inspiration discussed by Dr. Peterson (e.g., Verbal Theory, Dynamic Theory, and Illumination Theory). What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective in explaining the divine and human aspects of Scripture?
3. Discuss the neo-Orthodox critique of traditional understandings of revelation and Scripture. What are the key points of their argument, and how do they propose an alternative understanding of God's self-disclosure?
4. Explore the distinction between inerrancy and infallibility as it relates to different views of biblical inspiration. Why do some theologians prefer the term "infallibility," and what are the implications of this preference for how we understand the truthfulness of Scripture?
5. Based on the material presented, articulate a comprehensive understanding of biblical inspiration that incorporates both the divine and human elements in the production of Scripture. Support your understanding with specific references to the scripture passages and theological perspectives discussed.

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Special Revelation:** God's communication of Himself and His will through specific, supernatural means, such as miracles, prophetic words, and ultimately, Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures.
- **Inspiration (of Scripture):** The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in and through human authors, so that what they wrote is the very Word of God, authoritative and trustworthy.
- **Prophecy (in 2 Peter):** Primarily refers to the Old Testament Scriptures that foretold God's saving acts and the coming of the Messiah.
- **Transfiguration:** A pivotal event in the Gospels where Jesus was gloriously transformed in appearance on a mountain, witnessed by Peter, James, and John, and spoke with Moses and Elijah, confirming his divine identity.
- **Autographs:** The original, handwritten manuscripts of the books of the Bible penned by the original authors.
- **Textual Criticism:** The scholarly discipline dedicated to studying and comparing ancient manuscripts of the Bible to reconstruct the most accurate possible text of the original autographs.
- **Inerrancy:** The theological doctrine that the Bible, in its original autographs, is completely true and without error in all that it affirms, including matters of faith, history, and science.
- **Infallibility:** The characteristic of Scripture by which it is entirely trustworthy and unfailingly accomplishes God's purposes for salvation and instruction. Some views use this term to describe Scripture's reliability in matters of faith and practice, while allowing for possible errors in other areas.
- **Intuition Theory:** A view of inspiration that sees the biblical writers as religious geniuses with a natural, heightened spiritual insight, similar to other great thinkers.
- **Illumination Theory:** A view of inspiration that holds the Holy Spirit enhanced the natural abilities of the biblical writers, giving them greater spiritual understanding and sensitivity, but not necessarily directly revealing specific content.

- **Dynamic Theory:** A view of inspiration that emphasizes a cooperative effort between God and human authors, where the Spirit guided the writers' thoughts and concepts, but they expressed these in their own style and words.
- **Verbal Theory:** A view of inspiration asserting that the Holy Spirit guided not only the thoughts but also the very words chosen by the biblical writers, ensuring that the resulting text is precisely what God intended.
- **Dictation Theory:** A view of inspiration that claims God directly dictated the exact words of the Bible to largely passive human scribes.
- **Neo-Orthodoxy:** A theological movement that emphasizes the radical transcendence of God and views revelation as God's self-disclosure in historical events, particularly in Christ, rather than primarily in propositional statements in Scripture. It often sees Scripture as a witness to revelation, becoming God's Word when it encounters the reader in faith.
- **Limited Inerrancy:** A view that holds the Bible is inerrant (without error) in matters of faith and Christian living but may contain errors in historical, scientific, or other factual details.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Revelation & Holy Scripture, Session 16, Scripture, 7 Views of Inspiration, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: Understanding Biblical Inspiration

**1. What is the primary focus of the discussion in this lecture by Dr. Peterson?** The primary focus is on the doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture as a form of special revelation from God. Dr. Peterson sets the stage by referencing key biblical texts often used in discussions about inspiration and announces his intention to explore various systematic theological views on this topic.

**2. Which key biblical passages are highlighted as foundational to understanding inspiration?** Several key passages are highlighted, including: Mark 12:36 (David speaking by the Holy Spirit in Psalm 110), John 10:35 (the unbreakable nature of Scripture), 1 Corinthians 14:37 (Paul's words as God's commands), 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Scripture as God-breathed), and 2 Peter 1:16-21 (prophecy originating from God through the Holy Spirit, witnessed through the Transfiguration).

**3. According to 2 Peter 1:16-21, what is the origin and nature of biblical prophecy?** This passage emphasizes that biblical prophecy does not originate from human interpretation or the will of man. Instead, it comes from God, as individuals spoke from God while being "carried along by the Holy Spirit." This highlights the divine origin and the Holy Spirit's active role in the production of Scripture. Peter also contrasts this divine origin with "cleverly devised myths," asserting that the apostles were eyewitnesses to Christ's majesty.

**4. How does Peter use the Transfiguration event in relation to the reliability of Scripture?** Peter refers to the Transfiguration as a confirmation of the "prophetic word." While different interpretations exist, the main point is that the eyewitness account of Christ's glory strengthens the reliability and authority of God's word, particularly the Old Testament prophecies that foreshadowed Christ's coming glory. Peter suggests that the prophetic word is a more reliable guide than even personal, albeit extraordinary, experiences.

**5. What metaphor does Peter employ to illustrate the importance and function of Scripture?**

Peter uses the simile of a "lamp shining in a dark place" to describe the crucial role of the prophetic word (and by extension, all of Scripture) in a world characterized by sin and a lack of divine knowledge. This metaphor emphasizes Scripture's guiding light until the return of Christ ("until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts").

**6. What is the central point made about the interpretation of Scripture in 2 Peter 1:20?**

The central point of 2 Peter 1:20 is that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation. This speaks to the divine origin of Scripture, implying that the ultimate source and meaning are rooted in God, not solely in the individual understanding of the human authors or readers. The prophets were spokesmen for God, conveying His message rather than their own.

**7. What are the five views of inspiration initially presented by Millard Erickson that Dr. Peterson will discuss?**

Dr. Peterson outlines five views of inspiration drawn from Millard Erickson's Christian Theology: \* **Intuition Theory**: Inspiration as heightened insight of religious geniuses. \* **Illumination Theory**: The Holy Spirit heightening the natural powers of the writers. \* **Dynamic Theory**: God guiding the writers' thoughts but allowing their own expression. \* **Verbal Theory**: God guiding both the thoughts and the very words chosen by the writers. \* **Dictation Theory**: God directly dictating the exact words of Scripture to passive writers.

**8. What two additional views of inspiration will Dr. Peterson consider beyond Erickson's initial five?**

In addition to the five views from Erickson, Dr. Peterson will also examine: \* **Neo-Orthodox View**: This view emphasizes God revealing Himself through acts in history, culminating in Christ, rather than primarily through propositional statements in Scripture. Scripture becomes revelatory when it encounters the reader and mediates this divine encounter. \* **Limited Inerrancy View**: This perspective holds that Scripture is inerrant (truthful and accurate) in matters of faith and Christian living but may contain errors in historical, scientific, or other non-theological details. Some proponents may use the term "infallible" to describe Scripture's unfailing ability to achieve God's saving purposes.