How is Scripture the Inspired Word of God?
2 Timothy 3:16-17

When someone says to you, “I give you my word,” what they mean is, “I am telling you the absolute truth.” God has given us His Word and He stands behind every word that He has spoken in holy Scripture; Scripture is the inspired Word of God.

There are Christian song writers and authors who claim an inspiration from God; often we may hear a song or a sermon that blesses us and we might say, “That song or that message was inspiring;” what we mean is, it was uplifting, encouraging, emotionally moving; but can that song or message be placed alongside of Scripture?

Some will even claim their writings are equal to Scripture; there is a movement called the New Apostolic Reformation Movement that believes in modern day apostles and prophets that receive divine revelation from God no different than that of the early apostles; that when they speak they are truly divinely inspired.

The questions are these: are people today who write Christian books, Christian music, prophecy in the name of God, inspired in the same way in which the writers of the Bible were inspired?

The Doctrine of Inspiration

The definition of inspiration… Paul writes, “All Scripture is inspired of God…” (2 Timothy 3:16); the word “inspire” comes from the Latin meaning “to breathe in,” the Greek word is theopneustos, meaning “God breathed;” it is not us breathing in His Word, it is God breathing out His word in some fashion.
We believe the Bible came right out of the mouth of God; He gave it, He said it; that claim cannot be made for anything other than Scripture; there is no such thing as a God-breathed sermon or a God-breathed song; the only individuals on whom God’s breath has fallen are the writers of Scripture.

The difference between revelation and inspiration... At this point we need to understand the difference between revelation and inspiration; revelation is the content of the message; inspiration is how God delivered the revelation; it is the means by which revelation was put in the minds of those who wrote Scripture.

The degrees of inspiration... There is human inspiration from great authors like Homer, Tennyson, Browning, Longfellow, Shakespeare, etc.; there is spiritual inspiration where the songwriter or the preacher were said to be “anointed;” yet it is inspiration to a lesser degree; to say that they were inspired on the same level as the authors of Scripture is to make their works equally authoritative; only the writers of Scripture were inspired by the breathed out breathe of God; when it comes to divine revelation, there is no higher degree of revelation than that which is God-breathed.

The disagreements over the meaning of inspiration and what it is not...

1. The rational inspiration view... There are those who will not deny the authors of the Bible were inspired, but only to the high level of human genius.

The reasons to reject this view are:

Who would invent a person like Jesus Christ? As to who He is - the perfect Son of God; He is the theme of the entire Bible authored by 40 men over 1500 years; over 330 prophecies in the OT were fulfilled in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Who would write a book that condemns the whole world? The only hope for mankind is Jesus Christ which is the consistent theme from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible is not the master work of human genius.

2. The partial or non-historical inspiration view... This view says the Bible is only inspired in spots like the 10 Commandments, but not the story of Adam and Eve, David and Goliath, Jonah and the whale; Psalm 23 was inspired, but not the
historical psalms; the Sermon on the Mount was inspired but parts of Jesus’ life are myths.

Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16),

The general consensus of this view is that the moral teachings of the Bible are inspired but not the historical; God can be trusted in communicating morals but not history; yet among today’s liberals the moral aspects are coming under scrutiny; there is a concerted effort on the part of the secular left to destroy orthodox Christianity based on its morals— opposition to gay marriage, gender neutrality, abortion, etc.

3. The non-miraculous view… This is similar to the partial view but denies all the miracles of Scripture; science does not believe in miracles so miracles never happened; there was a time when scientists believed in God and Scripture was a tool of science; the whole scientific method came from the Bible; during the Age of Enlightenment science became god; while theologians could not accept that they were forced to rethink their view of the Bible and its miraculous accounts.

This is how liberalism crept into the Church; they began to deny the Trinity; the pre-existence of Christ, His virgin birth, His deity, etc.; this view must also believe in a non-miraculous God; if God is God He can perform miracles, otherwise He is not God.

4. The individual reader inspiration view… This view says that Scripture is not inspired but God acting on the reader; the Bible is basically a human book written by human geniuses that may have gotten some information from God, but the true inspiration is that God existentially moves the reader; it’s like you are reading a dead Bible and suddenly you have an epiphany; the Spirit of God has suddenly awakened in you as to what this is all about.

This view denies that Scripture came from the mouth of God; rather as you read it God zaps you with some sort of ecstatic experience and suddenly you have your own private interpretation; this explains in part why we have so many different interpretations; you get out of the Bible what you think God wants you to get from it; it was philosopher Kierkegaard who said: “Only the truth that edifies is truth for you.” In this view truth is not absolute, but personal and is what benefits you; it’s equivalent to saying: “God told me so.”

If God can inspire the reader, why cannot He inspire the writer?
5. The mechanical inspiration view... This view says that men who wrote the Bible were automations; like secretaries writing down word for word what God spoke leaving no room for the writer's personality to come through; we reject this because there are obvious differences in writing styles of the various authors.

Scripture says that God spoke to the prophets in different ways (Hebrews 1:1); God did not communicate the same way all the time—angels, dreams, visions, orally; approximately 1900 times Scripture says: “Thus says the LORD” (Jeremiah 1:4).

Of the NT, Peter writes: “... holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 2:21); “moved” to be carried along like a leaf floating down stream; the Spirit moved them, but there was individual variety among the writers.

*The discernment of true inspiration... verbal-plenary...*

The word “plenary” means “total”...The total Scriptures are inspired; there are degrees of value and worth, but no degrees of inspiration; 2 Kings 11:21 is as much inspired of God as John 3:16.

The word “verbal” means words... Every word is inspired (2 Peter 1:21); every letter is inspired (Matthew 5:18); all grammar is inspired (Galatians 3:16).

While we believe every word, every letter, as well as all grammar is inspired, yet God allowed for individual personality, one’s ability to use the language, as well as allow one’s emotions to come through as the Holy Spirit oversaw all that God intended to be Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16).

**The Declaration of Christ about Scripture**

1. He spoke of Himself as the theme of Scripture... “You search the Scriptures, because you think in them you have eternal life, and these are they which bear witness of Me” (John 5:39); Jesus understood that He was the theme of Scripture (see Luke 24:44).

2. He spoke of Himself as the fulfillment of Scripture... He did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17); Jesus was on a divine schedule to
do exactly what was written of Him (Matthew 26:24; see verse 53); it was prophesied He would die on a cross to fulfill the Scriptures.

3. He spoke of the truthfulness of Scripture... Jesus said to His Father, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17); truth is verifiable facts; that which stands up in a court of law; if Scripture were summoned before a court there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to demonstrate the Bible as truth.

4. He spoke of the sufficiency of Scripture... Jesus repeatedly referred to Scripture saying, “Have you not read...” (Matthew 12:3,5); or “For it is written...” (Matthew 4:4, 7,10); on the cross He personally fulfilled the OT prophecies, like when He said, “I thirst” (Psalm 22); He confirmed the the following accounts of the OT: Adam and Eve, murder of Abel, Noah and the flood, the role of Abraham, circumcision, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot’s wife, the salvation of Lot, the call of Moses, the manna from heaven, the brazen serpent—I could go on and on.

Jesus also established the sufficiency of Scripture in saving mankind from hell; in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them” (Luke 16:29); in Mark 12:24 Jesus warned the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection by saying, “...you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God;” Scripture gives us everything we need to know about life and death.

5. He spoke of the durability of Scripture... Jesus said, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). The Bible has been put to the test; the most persecuted book ever written; Emperor Diocletian declared it illegal imprisoning those who possessed a copy; 2nd Century philosopher Celsus tried to undermine its message as did 3rd Century philosopher Porphyry; Scottish philosopher David Hume said, “Methinks I see the twilight of Christianity.”

King Henry V made Bible reading a crime; Thomas Paine, one of our founding fathers, tried to drown it in his infidelic ink; Voltaire, 18th Century philosopher said, “Fifty years from now people will hear no more of the Bible.”

In 1963 the Supreme Court declared the Bible cannot be read in public schools because it might be “psychologically harmful to our children.”
Paul, while in prison in Rome wrote, “The word of God is not chained” (2 Timothy 2:9).

6. He spoke of the eternality of Scripture... “Heaven and earth will pass away, but God’s words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35); Jesus placed Scripture on equal footing with His own words; just as Jesus is the eternal Son of God so Scripture is eternal.

Praise God we have this holy book available to us—a book unbound and unbroken. Amen!