Inspiration and Authority of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

The word "Scripture" in 2 Tim. 3:16 refers primarily to the Old Testament writings (3:15). There is indication, however, that some New Testament writings were already being viewed as inspired and authorized Scripture by the time Paul wrote 2 Timothy (i.e., 1 Tim. 5:18, which quotes Luke 10:7; *see* 2 Pet. 3:16, note). Today, we know that "Scripture" refers to both the Old and the New Testaments. The Bible is the original message of God to mankind and the only infallible witness to God's plan and purpose for all people.

I. Paul makes a positive declaration that all Scripture is inspired by God. The word "inspired" (Gk. *theopneustos*) comes from two Greek words: *theos*, meaning "God," and *pneō*, meaning "to breathe." So, "inspired" means "God-breathed."

   A. All Scripture is God breathed; it is the very life and Word of God. The very words of the original manuscripts are without error, absolutely true, trustworthy, and infallible.

   B. This is true not only when it speaks of salvation, ethical values, and morality, but it is also without error on all topics it mentions, including names, places, history, and the world (*see* 2 Pet. 1:20-21, note).

II. The writers of the Old Testament were conscious of the fact that what they said to the people and wrote down was God's Word to them (*see* Dt. 18:18; 2 Sam. 23:2; *see* outline, THE WORD OF GOD). Over and over the prophets introduced their statements with, "Thus saith the LORD." As if to say, "This is God talking – not me!"

III. Instead of saying, "Thus saith the LORD," Jesus said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me." (Jn. 7:16). He went on to say, "…He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." Jn. 8:26)

A. Jesus taught that Scripture is the inspired Word of God to even the smallest detail (Mt. 5:18). Absolute=NON-NEGOTIABLE

B. Jesus also promised revelation would come though the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15; *see* outline, THE HOLY SPIRIT).

IV. While the Bible was God-breathed (i.e., *inspired*) by His Spirit – He worked with the personalities of the writers, moved upon them in such a way that they wrote without error (*read again*, 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; *see* 1 Cor. 2:12-13, notes).

A. The Holy Spirit enables the *spiritual* man to know and understand the Word of God 1 Cor. 2:14; *see* study, EPHESIANS 1:17-18).

V. To doubt the authenticity of Scripture is to question or belittle God;

A. Jesus is the Word of God (Jn.1:1-3). The *entire* Word is true (Ps. 119:160; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:13). *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth*. (Jn. 17:17). *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever*. (Ps. 119:160). Don't think that the Bible is out of date. And don't be too sure about which part you think is not for today. Believe *all of the Word*, lest you think He is a liar.

B. The Spirit of Truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn. 4:6) The Holy Spirit is truth, don't doubt and discredit Him! *But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them*. (Isa. 63:10). You really do want to be on God's side. Speak the truth, believe and do what is right, *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*…. (Eph. 4:30).

VI. The *inspired Word of God* is the expression of God's wisdom and

character and is therefore able to give wisdom and spiritual life through faith in Christ (Mt. 4:4; Jn. 6:63; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:2).

VII. The Bible is God's infallible, true witness to His saving plan for man in Christ Jesus.

A. This is the reason Scripture is incomparable, forever finished, and always valid.

B. No word of man or religious establishment can ever compare to its authority.

VIII. All doctrines, commentaries, interpretations, explanations, and traditions must be judged and legitimized by the words and message in Holy Scripture (Mk. 13:22; *see* Dt. 13:3, note; *see* outline, FALSE TEACHERS).

IX. I want to encourage you to believe God. The Holy Scriptures as the Word of God must be received, believed, and obeyed as the final authority in all things that pertain to life and godliness (Mt. 5:17-19: Jn. 14:21: 15:10; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:3).

A. The Bible must be used in the church as the final authority in all matters for teaching, reproof, correction, doctrine, and instruction in righteous living. This makes us completely capable and equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

B. We cannot submit to the Lordship of Jesus without submitting to God and His Word as absolute and final authority. It is only the truth we know that will make us free (*see* Jn. 8:31-32, note).

X. The Holy Scriptures can only be understood when we are in a right relationship with the Holy Spirit. It is He who opens our minds to understand its meaning and gives us the inward witness of its authority. *What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us* (1 Cor. 2:12).

XI. I want to remind you of God's faithfulness. Take a stand in the things of

God. We must use the inspired Word of God to conquer the power of sin, Satan, and the world in our lives (Mt. 4:4; Eph. 6:12,17; James 1:21).

XII. The Scriptures must be loved, treasured, and guarded by all those of the church who see it as God's only truth for a lost and dying world.

A. We must safeguard its doctrines by faithfully adhering to its teaching, proclaiming its saving message, entrusting it to faithful men, and defending it against all those who would destroy or distort its eternal truths (*see* Phil. 1:17; 2 Tim. 1:13-14, notes; 2:2; Jude 3).

B. No one may add anything to the Scriptures or take anything away (*see* Dt. 4:2, note; Rev. 22:19, note).

Inerrant inspiration applies to the original texts. When you find something in the Bible that appears to be incorrect, start a prayerful and thorough word study of the original language and context. Your understanding of the Bible will increase with the help of the Holy Spirit.

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—Dwight Hammond
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2 Pet. 3:16, Note

2 Peter 3:16 (WEY) That is what he says in all his letters, when speaking in them of these things. In those letters there are some statements hard to understand, which ill-taught and unprincipled people pervert, just as they do **the rest of the Scriptures**, to their own ruin.

The context here is The Day Of The Lord (vv. 10-18). I just want to focus on verse 16. Paul's letters were considered comparable with "the rest of the Scriptures" (meaning the Old Testament at that time).

Peter admitted that some of Paul's writings were hard for him to understand. But he goes on to call Paul's writings "Scripture," elevating them to the level of the Word of God. This is a powerful witness to the revelation of the Gospel of grace (Galatians 1:6-7 and Acts 20:24) that Paul preached.

There was not a "light switch" type of turning on of the New Testament, sometimes we forget that history takes time. Over the course of a generation the apostles wrote what was later canonized as books of the Bible.

The Apostle Paul had a revelation of the grace of God and the true Gospel that even Jesus' own disciples, who had traveled with Him for over three years, didn't have. Peter's statements here show us they accepted and embraced Paul's teachings as from God. The twelve disciples didn't manifest this teaching. This was done through a man who never knew Jesus during His earthly ministry.

This graphically illustrates how *we* can know the Lord through the Holy Spirit's revelation of God's Word rather than by physical contact. (*See* notes at 2 Peter 1:19 and John 14:7-9.)

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2 PET. 1:20-21, NOTE

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB) [20] But know this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture** is a *matter* of one's own interpretation, [21] for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 1:20 Note: – **No prophecy of Scripture:** Means that no prophecy in Scripture came about by the writer's own interpretation, ideas, or reasoning, but only from the Holy Spirit. (*see* the Psalmist's attitude toward Scripture in Psalm 119).

2 Peter 1:21 Note: – **Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God:** Peter states the divine origin and authority of prophecy in Scripture. All believers must likewise maintain a strong uncompromising view of the Holy Scriptures as inspired and authoritative. There are at least five reasons for this;

1. It is the only way to be faithful to what Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Bible itself teach about Scripture (*see* Ps. 119; Jn. 5:47, note).
2. Without a strong view of the Bible, the church has no true and sure foundation for its faith, no certainty of salvation, no moral absolutes, no message to preach without doubt. Without a clear biblical view you have, no real expectation for the baptism in the Holy Spirit or the working of miracles, and no hope for the close at hand return of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
3. Without a strong Biblical view, Christians will not be ready to withstand the extreme difficulties of the last days to come (*see* 1 Thes. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:1, note; 2 Tim. 3:1, note).
4. Without a strong perspective of holy Scripture, the full authority and teaching of the Bible are weakened; the Bible will subsequently be replaced by human subjective religious experience or by independent and critical reasoning (2 Pet. 2:1-3).
5. Without strong Bible-believing Christians, you have no absolute and verifiable truth based on the authority of God Himself by which to judge and reject the ever-degrading values of this world, human philosophies, and the ungodly lifestyles of our society (Ps. 119:158-160). And without godly people in leadership roles and centers of influence, societies fail and lawlessness abounds.

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MT. 5:18, NOTE

Matthew 5:18 (KJV) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

A **jot** is the smallest letter in the original languages; *yod* in Hebrew, and in Greek an *iota*. A **tittle** is a tiny mark used to distinguish certain Hebrew letters. (Example: in English the dot of an "i." Without the dot it could be number "1" or a lowercase "L.") One small mark could change the meaning of a paragraph! But there is absolutely *no* doubt or changing of God's Word. (Even the spaces were inspired by God, and are very important, i.e., GOD IS NOWHERE *vs*. GOD IS NOW HERE.)

When was this time – when Jesus said the Law would pass away and "all be fulfilled"? From the context of the previous verse, we can see this was what He came to do. So, this took place during His lifetime here on earth. He was not speaking of the future.

When Jesus hung on the cross, He said, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). He was speaking about the demand of the Law that the punishment of sin was death (Gen. 2:17, Ezek. 18:4, and Rom. 6:23). Jesus fulfilled all the demands of the Law by dying for our sin. Now, we are free from the Law, because our debt has been paid. Our sentence has been served.

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1 Cor. 2:12-13, Note

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 (NKJV) –[12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **that we might know** the things that have been freely given to us by God. [13] These things we also speak, not in **words** which man's wisdom teaches but **which the Holy Spirit teaches**, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Cor. 2:12, Note: – **That we might know:** The things which God has prepared for those who love Him (v. 9) **can be understood by the believer through the Spirit's revelation and illumination** (vv. 10-16). As the believer reads and studies the Bible, the Holy Spirit illuminates his understanding of the truth. The Spirit also gives to the faithful believer a strong assurance of the divine origin of Scripture (Jn. 16:13; Eph. 1:17).

1 Cor. 2:13, Note: – **Words… which the Holy Spirit teaches:** (i.e., explaining spiritual things to spiritual people). Though Paul is writing about the divine origin of his preaching, vv. 9-13 suggest the steps by which the Holy Spirit also inspired the writing of Scripture.

Step 1: God desired to communicate His wisdom to mankind (vv. 7-9). This wisdom concerned our salvation, centering in Christ as the wisdom of God (*cf.* 1:30; 2:2, 5).

Step 2: It is **only through the Holy Spirit that God's truth and wisdom were revealed** to humanity (v. 10). The **Holy Spirit knows** fully **the thoughts of God** (v. 11).

Step 3: God's revelation is given to believers **through** the indwelling presence of **the Spirit** (v. 12; *cf.* Rom. 8:11,15).

Step 4: The writers of Scripture wrote with words taught by the Holy Spirit (v. 13); the Holy Spirit directed the writers in the choice of the words they used (*cf.* Ex. 24:4; Is. 51:16; Jer. 1:9; 36:28,32; Ezek. 2:7; Mt. 4:4). At the same time, the Spirit's guidance in the expression of divine truth was not mechanical; rather the Spirit used each writer's vocabulary and personal style.

Step 5: The divinely inspired Scripture is understood by spiritual believers as they examine its content through the illumination of the Holy Spirit (vv. 14-16).

Thus, both the thoughts and language of the Scriptures were inspired by the Spirit of God. Not a single writer uttered a false word or phrase. The Word of God was protected from error by the Holy Spirit (*see* outline, THE WORD OF GOD, VictoryBriefings.Net).

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1 Cor. 2:14, Note

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) – But the **natural man does not receive** the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are **spiritually discerned**.

1 Corinthians 2:14, Note 1: The truths of the Gospel and the power of God that these truths release can only be imparted through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The wisdom of man, regardless of how eloquent it is, cannot impart the life of God.

A lot of preaching today is done in man's wisdom. It's impressive to the carnal mind, but it leaves the spirit starving for the touch of God.

The greatest need among ministers today is not to have more education but to receive the revelation knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Only words spoken by the Spirit of God can reach the spirit of man. Spiritual thoughts have to be spoken with spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2:14, Note 2: Spiritual growth requires revelation of God's Word. There are three spiritual categories of people concerning receiving revelation of the Word of God.

- The **natural** man, unsaved, unregenerate and devoid of the Spirit, has no regard for the gospel. Governed by his own natural, human powers and not by the Spirit of God.
- The **spiritual** man, saved, regenerate and is spiritually mature, free from denominational strife (v. 3:3-4). Spiritual people naturally respond to the truth, and unbelievers think they are weird.
- The **carnal** person, saved but living like the unsaved, and with childish ways, is sensual believing what is seen. An immature Christian trusting human opinion more than the Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:14, Note 3: Notice this word "**receive**." God has made His wisdom available through Christ, but the natural man (unbeliever) does not receive it. Spiritual truths can only be recognized by a person's spirit. It is impossible for those who are walking in the vanity of their minds (Eph. 4:17) to ever understand the things of God.

The Word of God is a spiritual book, written by the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit. It was not written to the head but to the innermost part of the heart. This is why some people find the Bible so hard to understand. They are trying to comprehend it using only their minds. The Word of God has to **inspire** our hearts before it can enlighten our heads.

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JN. 8:31-32, NOTE

John 8:31-32 (NKJV) –Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. [32] "And you shall **know the truth**, and the truth shall **make you free**."

The foundation of being a disciple is abiding in, and knowing the Word of God. It is only the truth we **live and know** that will make us free.

Faith in the absolute truth of the Bible results in stability of thoughts, words, and actions. It's the absolute truth of the Bible that produces the renewed mind and Christ-likeness. The word "if" tells us the condition of being a disciple is abiding in the Word. There are many "believers," but few "disciples." Not all Jews believed Jesus. His Word has no place in an unbeliever (*cf.* Jn. 8:37).

A lack of faith in absolute truth results in fear and insecurity. The world teaches there are no absolutes, but the Bible is full of absolutes. For example, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). God says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). God's absolute truth provides security. Security removes fear, and the absence of fear brings freedom.

An unbeliever could be enslaved to fear in every area of his life, but a believer should not be. God wants His children to be free. But this isn't always the case. Many believers live in torment and anguish about what they see on the news. They are tormented with fear about what world leaders are going to do, or what is happening in our nation. If we live in the awesome promises of the Bible, we realize that everything is going to be fine, because Jesus keeps His Word.

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Philippians 1:17 (KJV) But the other of love, knowing that I am set for **the defense of the gospel**.

Phil. 1:17, Note: – **The defense of the gospel:** God gave Paul the important task of defending the content of the gospel as defined in Scripture. All Believers are called upon to defend Biblical truth and to resist those who would distort the faith (v.27; *see* Gal. 1:9 note; Jude 3, note). Paul's words seem foreign to those ministers today who feel no need to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

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2 Tim. 1:13-14, Note

2 Timothy 1:13-14 (NKJV) –**Hold fast** the pattern of **sound words** which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [14] That good thing which was committed to you, **keep by the Holy Spirit** who dwells in us.

2 Tim. 1:13, Note: – **Hold fast… sound words:** The "sound words" are the fundamental revelation of Christ and the apostles, and the doctrines taught by Paul to Timothy. Timothy was to hold fast these truths in faith and love in Christ Jesus, never depart from them and never compromise them, even if it means suffering rejection and persecution.

Today it is popular in some churches to focus on experience more than doctrine. This is contrary to Paul's pastoral letters (*cf.* 2 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1-2, 8).

2 Tim. 1:14, Note: – **Keep by the Holy Spirit:** A pastor or teacher must guard and defend the gospel committed to him even in a day when many depart from the faith (2 Tim. 3:13-15; 4:2-5; 1 Tim. 4:1).

A. Timothy's instructions were to defend the Word of God against attack, and to challenge the church if it was tempted to stray from the truth. This was necessary to guarantee salvation for himself and for those under his charge (*see* 2 Tim.3:13-14; 1 Tim. 4:16, note).

B. **Guarding** of the deposit of faith must be done **with the help of the Holy Spirit.** It is He who inspired the infallible truths of Scripture (*see* 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) and it is He who is the great guide and defender of the truth (Jn. 16:13). Defending the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3) means standing faithfully beside the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17; 15:26-27; 16:13).

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DEUT. 4:2, NOTE

Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV) –"**You shall not add to the word** which I command you, **nor take from it**, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deut. 4:2, Note: – **You shall not add to the word… nor take from it:** Anything that contradicts, modifies, or changes Scripture must be rejected by those who follow God. His Word, the Bible itself, is our highest authority and the ultimate truth (Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 3:15; Rev. 22:18-19).

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REV. 22:19, NOTE

Rev. 22:19 (KJV) And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away** his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Rev. 22:19, Note: – **God shall take away:** John ends this Revelation of Christ by warning about the terrible possibility of losing one's share in the book of life and the holy city. We cannot afford to have a careless attitude toward the Bible. And that attitude is manifested if we choose to believe only certain parts of God's revelation and reject other parts that we do not like, or if we teach our own ideas as if it were part of God's Word itself (v. 18). Now is the same as the beginning of the human race, failure to take God's Word with absolute seriousness is a matter of life and death (*see* Gen. 3:3-4).

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MK. 13:22, NOTE

Mark 13:22 (NKJV) –For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Jesus didn't say the elect would be deceived; He said there would be such a strong delusion that even the elect would be deceived if that were possible.

Paul recorded a similar thing in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-14. He said that the "lawless one" will be revealed who will do signs and wonders, and that God will send a strong delusion to the people who will not believe the Truth so they will believe his lies. That implies that those who do believe the Truth will not believe these lies. (*see* Dt. 13:3, note; *see* outline, FALSE TEACHERS).

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DEUT. 13:3, NOTE

Deuteronomy 13:3 (NKJV) –"you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deut. 13:3, note: You shall not listen. Heretics have their good words and fair speeches, wherein they can vent a spittle of diseased opinions, and whereby they deceive the hearts of the simple. (Romans 16:18) It is not safe, therefore, to hear them, or hold discourse with such, lest they insinuate and infect us.

Romans 16:17 (NKJV) –Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Rom. 16:17, note: And avoid them: Decline them studiously, as you would a serpent in your path, or poison in your food.

Titus 1:11 (NKJV) –whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.

Titus 1:11, note: Whose **mouths must be stopped:** I learned while fishing that frogs will stop croaking if you shine a light over the lake where they are. Speak the truth boldly around them, and heretics will usually shut up. But if they will not, another course of action must be taken. (*see* outline, FALSE TEACHERS).

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MT. 4:4, NOTE

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) –But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Mt. 4:4, note: He **answered** and **said**, "**It is written**": The Word of God has power to demolish Satan's temptations. Speak the Word against the temptation, and the sin is obliterated. Say, "I must not do it, I may not, I dare not; for it is forbidden in such a scripture, and again in this scripture." And be sure to have Scriptures ready at hand, that you may "resist the devil," "steadfast in the faith," grounded on the word.

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