

"The Inspiration of Scripture"
2 Timothy 3:15-17
(Preached at Trinity, September 11, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After warning Timothy of the ever-increasing presence of evil men upon the earth, in **Verse 14** Paul admonishes him to continue in the things that he had learned and had been assured of.
Paul is making a great contrast.
 - A. The evil men are among those who Paul described in **Verses 1-9**.
2 Timothy 3:5 NAU - "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power"
2 Timothy 3:7 NAU - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
2 Timothy 3:8 NAU - "These *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith."
 - B. In contrast, Paul encourages Timothy:
Verse 14 - "You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,"
2. What "things" is Paul referring to in **Verse 14**? He tells us in **Verses 15-17**. Paul is talking about the Scriptures—God's Word.
He calls it "sacred writings" in **Verse 15** and "Scripture" in **Verse 16**.
3. In **Verses 15-17** we find one of the clearest statements on the Word of God in all of Scripture. Paul gives a statement on the nature of the inspiration of Scripture as well as its indispensable value in salvation and sanctification. In this passage we find God as Author of the Scriptures which are the infallible rule of faith and practice.
1689 London Baptist Confession
Chapter 1:1 - Of the Holy Scriptures
The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.
Paragraph Four
The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.
4. This is a subject of great importance.
Loraine Boettner: "The answer we give to the question, 'What is Christianity?' depends quite largely on the view we take of Scripture. If we believe that the Bible is the very word of God and infallible, we will develop one conception of Christianity. If we believe that it is only a collection of human writings, perhaps considerably above the average in its spiritual and moral teachings but nevertheless containing many errors, we will develop a radically different conception of Christianity, if, indeed, what we then have can legitimately be called Christianity."

5. Christianity rests on the Bible. It provides our credibility; in fact, it is the basis of our Christian faith. The claim and presupposition of orthodox Christianity is that the Bible is divinely inspired, authoritative, and inerrant.
6. The first subject I want us to examine is the origin of the Bible. How is it that we call it the Word of God. In the passage before us we find:
 "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God"
 θεόπνευστος – a hapex legomina – Literally it means "God breathed"
 The first question we need to answer is, "What do we mean by 'God breathed.'"

I. Improper Theories of Inspiration

- A. Mechanical Dictation – the biblical author was a passive instrument in the transmission of the revelation of God. They were only the channel through which the Holy Spirit flowed. The personality of the author is set aside thus preserving the text from human fallibility. This view was widely held during the middle ages and also widely accepted in the 18th and 19th centuries.
Objection: If God had dictated the Scriptures, the Bible would have been a uniform document. Rather, we see the various personalities, styles, and vocabulary of the author's preserved.
- B. Dynamic Inspiration – that God gifted certain individuals with exceptional insight who were chosen to write the Bible. Their mental and spiritual life was heightened to see things in a spiritual sense.
Objection:
 1. This view denies the supernatural nature of the Scriptures and destroys its infallibility.
 2. This view would make all of their writings of equal value meaning much of the Bible is lost.
 3. The Bible clearly states that the biblical authors were under the direct control of God.
2 Peter 1:21 NAU - "for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
 4. This view makes the Bible a purely human product. The Bible is the Word of God, not the words of men.

II. The Correct View of Divine Inspiration

- A. Organic Inspiration
 1. God acted upon the writers in harmony with the laws of their inner being –
 2. In other words, God used them as they were – their character and temperament, gifts and talents, education and culture, their vocabulary and style.
 3. God illuminated their minds and prompted them to write. He repressed the influence of sin and guided them in their choice of words so that their words were precisely the words of God.
- B. The Extent of Inspiration
 1. Verbal Plenary Inspiration:
 Verbal = the words are inspired. Not just the thoughts or ideas.
 Plenary = all of the words.

- a. There is no indication of division or some parts being more inspired than other parts – That God provided the general ideas and themes of revelation but the human author was given freedom in expressing it. This would call into question the infallibility of Scripture. "All Scripture is inspired by God"
Proverbs 30:5-6 NAU - "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. ⁶ Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar."
Matthew 4:4 NAU - "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"
- b. This is called the Word of God, not the Words of God
2. The Bible is God's word written through men's words.
3. J.I. Packer – "Scripture's not only man's word, the fruit of human thought, premeditation and art, but also, and equally God's Word, spoken through man's lips or written with man's pen. In other words, Scripture has a double authorship, and man is only the secondary author; the primary author, through whose initiative, prompting, enlightenment, and under whose super-intendance, each human author did his work, is God the Holy Spirit."

III. Evidence of Inspiration

- A. The Bible claims to be the Word of God
2 Timothy 3:16 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God"
 1. "Thus saith the Lord" in some form occurs over 2000 times
 The O.T. claims to be inspired by God.
 2. The authors claim to have heard from God directly and written down what the LORD said.
Exodus. 7:14 NAU - "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go."
- B. The way the NT quotes from the OT. Jesus and the Apostles saw the O.T. as the Word of God
Matthew 1:22-23 NAU - "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."
Matthew 8:16-17 NAU - "And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill ¹⁷ in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."
Matthew 4:7 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'
 1. Christ affirmed the historicity of Noah's ark.
 2. Christ affirmed that Jonah was literally in the belly of the fish for three days.

- C. While Paul in **2 Timothy 3:16** is referring to the O.T. the N.T. writers refer to each other as having written inspired Scripture.
2 Peter 3:15-16 NAU - "and regard the patience of our Lord *to be* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."
- D. Matthew Barrett writes: "It is difficult to ignore the evidence that the Bible does affirm its own inspiration. Scripture is not silent on its identity and origin. While a skeptic may reject the Bible, he has no grounds for doing so on the assumption that the Bible does to make the claim to be God-breathed. This means that to reject inspiration is to abandon the authority of Christ and the apostles as our doctrinal authorities, for they themselves taught this doctrine. If Scripture is not inspired, as some argue, then the claims and exhortations of Christ and the apostles no longer hold water."¹

IV. The Implications of Divine Inspiration for our life

- A. The Bible is Infallible – i.e. unfailling, sure – The Bible will never fail in its purpose. All of the promises of God will be fulfilled.
Matthew 5:18 NAU - "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."
Isaiah 55:11 NAU - "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it."
- B. The Bible is Inerrant
1. Definition: That the Word of God in its original autographs or manuscripts is without any mixture of error or mistakes. The Bible is entirely true. This is true not only in the doctrine of salvation and ethics, but in every subject to which it speaks.
 - a. It is historically accurate – new historical findings continue to prove the Bible’s accuracy.
 - b. It is archaeologically accurate – archaeological evidence continues to verify the Bible’s account of civilization.
 - c. It is prophetically accurate – hundreds of prophecies have been literally fulfilled giving credence to those not yet fulfilled.
 2. God cannot err
 - a. He cannot lie – God's Word cannot contain untruths
Hebrews 6:18 NAU - "so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us."

¹ Matthew Barrett, *God’s Word Alone—The Authority of Scripture*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 262.

Titus 1:1-2 NAU - "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,"

2. God is inseparably united to His Word – He cannot deny Himself
2 Timothy 2:13 NAU - "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."
3. If God is perfect – all wise, all knowing, incapable of lying – it only follows that His Word must be free from all error arising either from conscious deceit or unconscious ignorance.

C. If this is God's Word then it holds absolute authority over us

1. It must be received and obeyed absolutely in all matters of faith, life, and holiness. It must be the final authority in all of life.
Belief in the Word of God is commanded in Scripture. Salvation is often referred to as receiving and obeying the truth.
2 Timothy 2:25 NAU - "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,"
1 Timothy 2:4 NAU - "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."
Romans 2:8 NAU - "to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation."
Galatians 5:7 NAU - "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"
2 Thessalonians 2:10 NAU - "because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved."
2 Timothy 3:7 NAU - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
2. Most people take a buffet approach – some of this and some of that. I like this, I'll skip that.
They are dogmatic in some areas while they completely disregard others.
John 8:31 NAU - "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;"
3. The greatest goal of any church or any people should be to receive every word of the Bible as absolute authority. We have no right to disregard any portion

Conclusion:

1. This is the Word of God. Every word, every doctrine, every command. We must receive it all or suffer under its condemnation.
2. To disregard the Bible or disobey its precepts is sin.