

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

(CP 2Ti 3:15-17). *All Scripture* means the whole body of truth, Old Testament and New Testament both – the Bible – from Gen 1:1 to Rev 22:21. The Bible is God’s revealed will for fallen man and is the only infallible witness to His plan of salvation (CP 2Pe 1:16-21). Here Peter refers to the transfiguration of Jesus which he personally saw, and God’s voice coming down from Heaven, which he personally heard. He compares this witness to the abiding, prophetic word of Scripture; not even supernatural events such as the Transfiguration hold greater authority than Scripture itself does. This also confirms what Ac 17:10-11, 1Cor 14:29, 1Th 5:21 and 1Jn 4:1 all teach (CP Ac 17:10-11; 1Cor 14:29; 1Th 5:21; 1Jn 4:1). The clear teaching here is that Scripture is the yardstick by which every teaching in the professing Church must be measured. If it does not harmonise with Scripture it must immediately be rejected regardless of the subject matter or who the teacher is, or how it is represented. Scripture cannot be altered to suit one’s theology. Their theology must be altered to suit Scripture (CP De 4:2; Pr 3:6; Jn 10:35; Ga 1:6-9; Rev 22:19).

Scripture cannot be added to, nor taken away from (CP Psa 138:2). God places more importance on Scripture than He does on His name. Christians are exhorted throughout Scripture to be diligent to show themselves approved by God. They are to build their lives on what Scripture teaches and build what Scripture teaches into their lives (CP Josh 1:8; Psa 1:1-2; Pr 3:1-4; 2Ti 2:15). Christians’ consistent and diligent study of Scripture is vital to their Christian witness. Paul’s declaration in 2Ti 3:16 that “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (KJV), means literally that all Scripture is breathed out by God, or God-breathed. This is perfectly explained by Peter in 2Pe 1:19-21 where he teaches that it was the special influence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of holy men of God – the Prophets – which qualified and enabled them to make an inerrant and infallible record of Divine truth – Scripture – concerning God’s will for fallen man (CP 2Pe 1:19-21).

Doctrine in 2Ti 3:16 refers to the wealth of teaching which Scripture provides. All teachings necessary for life and Godliness are provided in Scripture (CP Psa 119:97-105; Col 3:16-17; 2Pe 1:2-4; 1Jn 2:24-27). Psa 119:97-105 is essentially the same teaching as 2Ti 3:15-17; Scripture is perfect and infinite. Christians whose lives are ordered according to Scripture hate sin and love holiness. They will never wander out of the way of God’s truth. They allow Scripture to guide, correct, instruct, lead and teach them (CP Psa 119:105 with De 8:3, 6-10 (also Mt 4:4 and Lu 4:4)). There is no such thing as growth in Christians living apart from a clear priority on the place of Scripture in the life of Christians. It is only by being completely submitted to the authority of Scripture that Christians are able to overcome the temptations encountered in their daily walk (CP Psa 119:9-16; 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:10-18 with Jas 4:7 and 1Pe 5:8-9).

Psa 119:9-16 teaches that purity – being free from sin – is the fruit of obedience to God’s word. It is only by ordering their lives to conform to Scripture that Christians can resist the influences of the immoral and corrupt world system in which they live and ensure their place in God’s Eternal Kingdom (CP also Psa

37:31; 1Jn 1:7). Psa 119:9-16 contains eight verses. Each verse teaches Christians how to keep their lives pure. V9 teaches that it is by practical obedience to Scripture. Eternal life is only assured for those doing the work of God’s word in Scripture (CP V9 with Pr 13:13; 19:16; Mt 7:21-27; Ro 2:13; Jas 1:21-25). Psa 119:10 teaches that it is by wholeheartedly seeking to do the work of God’s word which Scripture reveals. There are no half-hearted or nominal Christians in God’s economy (CP V10 with Mt 12:30; Rev 3:14-16). Psa 119:11 teaches that it is Scripture lodged in the heart of Christians and lived out in their daily lives that empowers them to resist sinning (CP V11 with Eph 6:10-18; Jas 4:7). Psa 119:12 teaches that it is by learning Scripture and making it the rule for living (CP V12 with Rev 3:7-13). Psa 119:13 teaches that it is by taking an open stand for all God’s truth which Scripture reveals. Christians must always declare the full counsel of God, not a watered down version (CP V13 with Php 1:20-21; 2Ti 2:15). Psa 119:14 teaches that it is by delighting more in doing the work of God’s word in Scripture than in riches (CP V14 with Psa 40:8; 119:72, 127; Ro 7:22). Psa 119:15-16 teaches that it is by obeying God’s commandments and walking in the way He has prescribed. “*Having respect unto thy way*” in V15 means to follow the rules for living marked out in Scripture, and “*I will not forget thy word*” in V16 means essentially the same thing – to never forget that the rules for living are marked out by Scripture (CP V15-16 with Psa 19:7-11; 119:93-106; 1Jn 2:14; Rev 3:7-10).

Reproof in 2Ti 3:16 is conviction. It means to rebuke with the truth of God’s word so as to bring the one rebuked at least to a conviction of their sin (CP Job 13:6; 23:4; Hos 5:9). *Correction* in 2Ti 3:16 means bringing to an upright or right state, setting up straight again; correction or improvement of life and character; restoring the ones corrected to the place God has designated them to be in Him. Scriptures, for those who heed them exposes sin and points the way back to living Godly lives (CP Psa 119:9-12; Pr 3:11-12; 15:9-12; Jn 15:1-2; He 4:12-13). *Instruction* in 2Ti 3:16 refers to training and education. It relates to the cultivation of mind and morals – chastening and chastisement, discipline (CP Psa 2:10-11; Pr 6:20-23; 19:18; 29:17; 1Cor 11:32; He 12:6-7, 10; Rev 3:19). *Perfect* in Ti 3:17 means completely qualified; one in whom all the parts are complete or whole and what they are supposed to be, so they might serve their destined purpose (CP 1Cor 14:20; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:28; 2:1-2, 10; He 5:14). *Thoroughly furnished* in 2Ti 3:17 means being fully equipped for God’s service. Scripture equips Christians with the necessary skills and tools to be capable of performing every good work (CP Eph 2:10; 2Ti 2:20-21; He 13:20-21).

The entire process of sanctification is outlined in 2Ti 3:16-17. First of all, Scripture is presented as doctrine, instruction, authoritative teaching, i.e. truth. Secondly, as truth it is ethically persuasive – proof, correction – convincing Christians of any sin in their lives. Thirdly, it then places Christians in a correct moral posture, and fourthly, it continues to provide chastening, discipline and training in righteousness. (See also author’s comments on Mt 4:1-11, Jn 15:2, Ac 17:11, 1Cor 11:31-32, 2Cor 10:3-5(a) and (b), Eph 4:11-12, 6:11-12, 2Ti 3:16-17, He 4:11-12, 5:12-14,

12:5-11, Jas 4:7-10, 1Pe 5:8-11, 2Pe 1:4, 1:16-19, 1:20-21, 1Jn 4:1-6 and Rev 3:14-22 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his studies *Psalm 119 – A Study on Salvation by the Word of God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *Regeneration and Sanctification Defined* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**).

It is worth noting here that as well as the word *Scripture* (CP Mk 15:28; Jn 7:38), the Bible is also referred to as *the Scriptures* (CP Lu 24:27, 45; Jn 5:39); *the Promises* (CP Ro 9:4-5; 15:2); *the Oracles of God* (CP Ro 3:2; He 5:12; 1Pe 4:11); *the Lively Oracles* (CP Ac 7:38); *the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms* (CP Lu 24:44); *the Law of the Lord* (CP Ps 1:2); *the Law and the Prophets* (CP Mt 5:17; 11:13; Ac 13:15); *the Book of the Lord* (CP Isa 34:16); *the Word of God* (CP Mk 7:13; Ro 10:17; Eph 6:17; He 4:12); *the Sword of the Spirit* (CP Eph 6:17); *New Testament* (CP 2Cor 3:6); *Old Testament* (CP 2Cor 3:14); *the First and Second Covenants* (CP He 8:7); *the Word of Christ* (CP Col 3:16); *the Word of Life* (CP Php 2:16); *the Word of the Kingdom* (CP Mt 13:19); *the Scripture of Truth* (CP Dan 10:21); *the Word of Truth* (CP 2Ti 2:15); *the Gospel of Christ* (CP Ro 1:16); *the Word of Faith* (CP Ro 10:8); *the Word of the Lord* (CP 2Th 3:1); *the Word of Righteousness* (CP He 5:13).

Scripture is the conclusive standard for Christians' faith, morals and practical living, and is the nourishment for Christians rising to strength in faith, holiness in living, and effectiveness in consecration and service to God. It contains everything Christians need to ensure their salvation (CP Ps 119:7-11; 119:105-112, 130; Pr 6:23; 30:5-6; Jn 17:13-17). In 2Pe 1:19 Peter likens Scripture to a light that shines in a dark, squalid place, and he admonishes Christians to feed upon it until the light of Scripture dawns in their soul and Christ who is the Morning Star shines in their heart. That is essentially what Ps 119:105 and Pr 6:23 also teach (CP Ps 119-105; Pr 6:23 with 2Pe 1:19).

As stated at the outset of this study and it needs to be re-stated here, Scripture is the yardstick by which all that is being taught in the Church must be measured. Christians cannot just passively accept every teaching that is promoted in their assemblies. Everything must be tested in the light of Scripture. If it does not harmonise with Scripture it must be rejected out of hand completely. In Ac 17:11 we learned that while the Berean Christians readily received Paul and Silas' Gospel message, they still searched the Scriptures to see if it was true, then they accepted it. Let us study that passage again (CP Ac 17:11). The Bereans were not just gullible listeners who passively accepted all that was taught. Even though it was the Gospel of salvation, they still tested it by Scripture. Yet the contemporary Church has passively accepted and publicly endorsed clever stories especially directed to

children, using pure witchcraft and wizardry disguised in "Christian" metaphor, which is strictly forbidden by God in Scripture (CP De 18:10-12).

Scripture teaches that God commanded that witches and wizards had to be killed under the Old Covenant before the Israelites could take possession of the Promised Land (CP Ex 22:18; Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1Sam 28:3, 9; 2Ki 21:1-15; 23:24; 2Chr 33:6; Isa 19:1-4). The clear teaching of Scripture is that anything involving witchcraft and wizardry is strictly forbidden by God. The first century Church submitted to Scripture in this regard (CP Ac 19:18-20), and so must the contemporary Church. Christians are to test all things in the light of Scripture and to only hold fast to that which is good. They must only allow their minds to think on things that harmonise with eternal truth; things that are venerable, worthy of reverence; the sacred as opposed to the profane; that are righteous, chaste and holy; that are pleasing and a blessing to others, not fantasies or fables or things occultic that might please some, but cannot nourish or edify them Spiritually (CP Php 4:8-9 with Eph 6:4). Scripture is the only conclusive source of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding concerning ultimate realities waiting to liberate and enrich those who will pursue its wealth. Scripture cannot fail (CP Isa 55:10-11; Lu 16:17). See also author's comments on Eph 6:4, Php 4:8 and 1Th 5:21 in his book **A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament**, and his study *Husbands, Wives, Children – their Duties and Obligations to Each Other* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

To summarise this study in closing here, we learn that Scripture must be received, believed and obeyed as the final authority in all things pertaining to life and Godliness. It must be used in the Church as the final authority in all matters of doctrine – for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteous living. No one can profess to be a Christian if they are not totally yielded to the authority of Scripture. Christians must use inspired Scripture to overcome the power of Satan, sin and the corrupt world system in their lives. Scripture must be loved, treasured, and guarded by all professing Christians who see it as God's final and ultimate truth for a lost and dying world. Its truth cannot be compromised to accommodate any other belief system. Christians must safeguard its doctrines by faithfully adhering to its teaching, proclaiming its salvation message, and defending it against all those who would distort or destroy its eternal truth. Last, but by no means least, nothing must be added to or taken away from Scripture. It is the final, infallible and inerrant word of God; the only inspired and authoritative ruler by which all other teachings in the world can be measured. Glory to God!

One last word – Christians who refuse to compromise the truth of Scripture to accommodate a Gospel of easy believism are Biblicists, not legalists, as some call them. Praise be to God!