

2 Timothy 3:15-16

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



By the Inspiration of God



What is your favorite Bible verse? Everyone seems to have them. These **3:16** verses, such as what we see here in our text today, seem to be a thing in N.T. scripture, and especially in Paul's writings. The most famous 3:16 is, of course, **John 3:16** – ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life”***. Then there is this **2 Tim. 3:16** (the second most famous **3:16**) – in which the apostle Paul proclaims that ***“All scripture is God breathed (or given by the inspiration of God - KJV) and is useful (profitable)...”*** well,.. useful for many things that the Christ-follower will always be in need of – ***“reproof, correction, and instruction in what is right and true*** – all of which equips Christ-followers for acting effectively – for achieving real, God-pleasing accomplishment – **for making an actual dent in the purposes of God that He prepared in advance for His people and intends for us to do [Eph. 2:10]**. [We'll come back to that next week.] And then there is [**2 Pet. 3:16**] – the best evidence we have that the apostles considered their writings to the churches to be “scripture” – on par with the Old Testament writings. We cannot overstate just how radical this claim is! Old Testament scripture was penned or dictated by venerated figures of the O.T. – all of them well-known, acknowledged as great men and Jewish heroes in their own right! The eyewitness disciples of Jesus – were just common men - former fishermen, a tax collector, and who knows what else? The O.T. prophets, on the other hand, were considered to be great men that God had spoken to in the past and who had recorded and preserved it by putting pen to paper. To equate the experiences of these common men with the heroes of old had to have been mind-blowing! Yet it made complete sense when you think of it! The truth about the disciples, later the apostles, is that ***what they witnessed was the most exceptional thing ever seen in human history!*** They had been exactly in the right place at the right time to witness the apex of salvation history – ie. God's activity in the midst of *human* history to save the world back to Himself! The writer of Hebrews said it best, I think, to begin his letter [**Heb. 1:1,2**]. The disciples had not thought of themselves as great men, but they soon realized that they had seen and heard things that were the most significant occurrences in human experience! They had been with Jesus, and they had seen and heard things that had proven to them that God Himself had visited earth, that Jesus was God and therefore had been far more than anyone had even suspected the Promised Messiah would be! [**1 John 1:1-3**] They had been hand-picked by Jesus to bear witness of God's activity . They must have had something special about them that God intended to use in building His church²

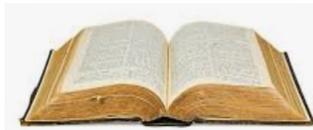


Our text from last week, **vs 14**, alludes to Paul's admonishment to young Timothy that He needed to stick with what he had been taught, because He had known personally from childhood, authentic Christ-followers who had known the Old Testament scriptures and had been able to follow the promise of God to bring a messiah throughout the Old Testament. They had been able to track it all the way to Jesus, naming Him to be the Christ, the Chosen One, the Promised One – and that He wasn't just a great man or even a great prophet, but was actually God incarnate – God having taken on human flesh, the same God that was atop Mount Sinai in the smoke, lightening, and thunder [**Ph'p. 2:6-11**] – the same God that is so great and glorious that no man can see and not be struck dead, fried to a frazzle, yet, who showed his back to Moses, at Mose's request, and just the exposing of his mere back turned Moses into a weird sort of human light bulb, glowing bright enough to hurt the human eye! Moses had to wear a thick cloth over his head that went to the ground so that the people would not panic! It was this God that ordered a fence, a perimeter be constructed around the base of the mountain so that no Israelite got any closer than many hundreds of yards away from the Presence of God on that mountaintop! He ordered that distance be kept for their own protection! And it was **this same God** that, when the time was exactly right, humbled Himself and did the impossible - causing His own essence to be conceived in the womb of a willing, young, virgin woman. And God, the same God who flung the galaxies and stars into their places, and all the inconceivably vast distances in-between – it was THIS God that chose to diminish Himself to human size, starting with that first infinitesimal zygote – the first human cell that divided one cell into two, and then two into four, and four into eight. Then 9 mos. later to squeeze through the birth canal, to breath air, and to be dependent upon earth's oxygen. And in this exact way, God became a human – a man, who His Heavenly Father directed His mother, Mary, to be named "Jesus" - the Name that is above every name, the Name and person to which every human being that has ever drawn breath will one day humble themselves and bow in forced or unforced acknowledgement of His Absolute Supremacy! One way or another - **EVERY KNEE!** God came down to a hostile world, **armed with words!** He had the explosive power of the universe at His disposal. Imagine the energy in the stars and then of the billions of stars in each of the trillions of galaxies! We simply cannot imagine the power – not even a tiny fraction of it! The Creator/God created and controls all of it! But He comes to earth equipped with all that power, and then uses words of truth as His primary power on earth! Extraordinary! [**Rev. 19:11-16**].



Words, spoken or written, are terribly underrated and underestimated. *We have a saying that we learn as children - *“sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me”*. Yet, the cruel words of others on social media has been causing a plague of teen suicides like we’ve never seen before in all of human history! I think **that** alone can begin making a case for the destructive power of the written and spoken word on this earth! *Adolf Hitler got an **entire nation** to enthusiastically go along with his diabolical schemes to conquer and rule the world and to enforce a cruel genocide upon the Jewish people scattered among the nations. **The power of words did that** – leading to a war of nations called WWII that had a destructive power that exceeded the destruction and death of all the previous wars in human history **combined! Words started that war, and words kept it going!**

So, God comes to earth with the power of the word, **personified** in His Son (**“the Word” - Jn. 1:1**) and words spoken and written down – words of accuracy, truth, and hope, introduced like life vests into a churning sea of this world’s lies, falsehoods, and confusion!



All of that provides context for this morning’s passage! All scripture is **“God-breathed”**! The word in the Greek is **“theopneustos”**, taken from two Greek words – **Theo** (God), and **pneustos** (which has three similar but somewhat different meanings - **Spirit**, or **breath**, or **wind**). So it could read **“All scripture is God-Spirit, God-breath, or God-wind”**. The NIV translators in this instance thought that, of the three choices, **“God-breathed”** was the best choice. The **KJV** chose to go for what they believed was the intended meaning rather than the literal meaning when they interpreted this as - **“All scripture is given by the inspiration of God”**, but that way of interpreting this **“theopneustos”** misses the beauty of the imagery. **“God-breathed”** is a beautiful term and brings up in the mind of the reader an image of God **breathing out** scripture or **breathing upon** scripture! At any rate the meaning is that scripture is God-generated. It comes from Him! **First** of all it is all about Him and His activities in human history to save the world caught in rebellion, back to Himself. **Secondly**, the way it was written down and preserved had to be utterly accurate and truthful – no making of myth – none of the additions or deletions that humans are notorious for. He was going to use humans to write it down, but it had to be entirely right – no mistakes! Humans are prone to veering off course when it comes to things like this, so they had to be assisted by God **to not do that!**

The NIV says that these God-breathed words are **“useful for teaching”** – God teaching about a central story-line of His own activity in human history, to humans that would otherwise know **nothing** of the Creator God! Be assured that what the Bible contains is not the only thread of God’s activity in human history. He is at work on the earth, and always has been, in multiple ways! But the Bible contains that central thread, the only recorded thread, the supporting structure of God’s plan of salvation! Jesus is at the center of this thread! All roads in this book point forward to Jesus or point back to Him! We need to know this information and be well-versed in it! **Vs. 15** tells us that through the scriptures we **“are made wise wise for salvation”**. These Spirit-led words of God teach us what Jesus did, who He is, and what He wants. Through our knowledge of Him we come to know the truth of Him! If we respond to our accurate knowledge of Him in faith and trust, He will use the epic work He accomplished on cross against our sins and transgressions against our Creator! He will atone for and wipe them out of our record – permanently! He will place us **“in Christ”** so that we are totally and permanently identified with Him and with every honor He has ever earned, and we will get to start over with God! After this is accomplished, we get to access to God! *There is no entity more difficult to have access to! *Try getting anywhere near the President of the United States and you will fail. There are too many protective layers of people around him! Maybe if you give upwards of \$500 **million** dollars to his re-election campaign – then you might get in to see him for 15 minutes. But most people don’t have that kind of money to throw around! But conversely, God is not protected from us because He has nothing to fear from us! He protects us **from Himself!** His perfection, His holiness, the light and heat of His glory would kill if we came anywhere in the general proximity of His Presence! But once **“in Christ”**, we can approach the throne of God because in Christ it has become a **“throne of grace”**, and we can have confidence that we are safe and protected by faith and trust in Jesus! We are even heard by Him as we bring our petitions and concerns to Him! What an incredible privilege! And we know this all because of the God-breathed scriptures, penned by the disciples of Jesus the Christ, bearing witness of the phenomenal things they saw, heard, and were taught by the Son of God! Until we know the true Christ and are “in Him”, we are neither qualified nor equipped to make a dent in the purposes of God – the works He had prepared in advance for us to do for Him!

