

The God-Breathed Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Introduction—the Bible is the most unique book in the world

- A. Unique in its production
 1. Written over a 1600 year span by 40 authors who represented every walk of life
 2. Written in a variety of places such as dungeons, palaces, during military campaigns and while in exile on a rocky island
 3. Written by authors in different moods—from the heights of joy to the depths of despair
 4. Written in three different languages—Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek
 5. Written on three continents –Asia, Africa & Europe
 6. Ranges in subject matter from creation of the world to issues of family life
 7. Yet it all fits together in one whole, centered around one figure, Jesus Christ
- B. Unique in its circulation
 1. First book printed on a European printing press
 2. Has been read by more people than any other single book
 3. It has been translated into more languages than any other book
- C. Unique in its survival
 1. Written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of printing, yet it maintains its style and accuracy
We have more ancient copies of the Bible than any other ancient book. We only have 10 ancient copies of Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* and the oldest is 1000 years after it was written. We only have 9 copies of Euripides plays, the oldest being 1500 years after they were written. We only have 8 copies of Thucydides history of the Peloponnesian War the earliest copy 1300 years after it was written. Yet no historian questions that these are accurate. We have 13,000 manuscript copies of just the New Testament, the earliest (the *John Rylands MSS* housed in Manchester University library) is only 40-50 years after the original writing.
 2. Many have attempted to destroy it from the Roman emperor Diocletian who ordered it burned to the modern critic who attempts to discredit it
Voltaire (d. 1778), the French philosopher and skeptic said that in 100 years Christianity and the Bible would be swept out of existence, but 50 years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his printing press to print Bibles and stored them in his house.
 3. Critics have tried to destroy it by proving it false
“A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put.” (Bernard Ramm)
 4. When governments try to take it away from people it never works
“Alyosha the Baptist was reading the Testament under his breath. Alyosha was smart; he’d made a chink in the wall and hidden the little book in it and it had survived every search.”
(Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*)
- D. It is unique in its influence on literature
Cleland B. McAfee writes in *The Greatest English Classic*: “If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library.”
- E. Unique in its archaeological support
Every discovery ends up proving the Bible right and its critics wrong
- F. The point of all this is to say that the Bible we hold in our hands today we can confidently say is “the Word of God.” (For more information see *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by John McDowell)

I. The power of scripture

- A. Psalm 119 (ESV)
 1. Vs. 25—“My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word!
 2. Vs. 28—“My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!
 3. Vs. 35—“Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.”
- B. 2 Timothy 3:14-15
“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (ESV)

II. The origin of scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)

- A. How did it come into existence?

1. The KJV translated the Greek word *theopneustos* as “inspired.”
 - a. This is the only time the word is used in the NT or in Greek literature
 - b. It may be that Paul actually invented the word to describe how the Bible came to be; however, the idea is found in many other places (Ex. 20:1; 2 Samuel 23:2; Isa. 8:20 etc.)
2. What is *theopneustos* here?
2 Peter 1:21—“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (ESV)

B. How much of the scripture is *theopneustos*?

Revelation 22:18-19—“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” (ESV)

III. The profit of scripture—(2 Timothy 3:16)

A. It converts (3:15)

1 Peter 1:23—“since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God”

“To withhold scripture from anyone is an act of ecclesiastical robbery as well as spiritual murder.”

(Wilhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, Vol. 1, p. 69)

- B. It teaches—imparts knowledge, the most basic thing. Nothing is more discouraging than believing what is not true. These are the “sound words” of 1:13. John 17:17—“your Word is truth.”
- C. It reproves—negatively, it warns of errors in doctrine and behavior. How tragic to be investing your life in all the wrong directions. The Bible doesn’t just build up, it also tears down. This is the work of conviction.
- D. It corrects—positively, it points out the right way to go. It is not enough to know what to avoid, we also need to know what to pursue. This is the work of rebuilding and restoring us.
- E. It trains in righteousness—matures us. Matthew 4:4—“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (ESV) The Word is our food that grows us up spiritually.
1 Peter 2:2—“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

IV. The goal of scripture (2 Timothy 3:17)

Every believer adequately equipped to handle life in a holy way, equipped for every good work.

Conclusion/Application

- A. Biblical ignorance is a serious thing because it undermines the spiritual growth the Holy Spirit wants to bring about in our lives. Colossians 3:16—“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly....” (ESV) There is no spiritual maturity without faithful investment of time in God’s Word. So how are you feeding on God’s Word?
- B. We should expect that when we hear the Word of God something will happen in our lives. We will be educated in spiritual things, we will be challenged about how we are currently living, we will be shown the way we should be living and we will have unveiled for us the true spiritual behavior we need to incorporate into our lives (James 1:22). If nothing happens to us when we are in the presence of God’s Word, then the problem is our dull ears not the scripture (see Hebrews 4:12).
- C. The Bible is sufficient in itself. We do not need any added revelation. Cults and false teachers want to add or take away from the scripture so we must always be alert. Mark 13:22—“For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible the elect.” (ESV) We must be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11) who examine the scriptures to see if what they were being taught was accurate.