

# The Anatomy of a Church (58)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 04/26/15)

## The Internal Systems-2

### *The Biblical Data*

This brings the subject to the biblical teaching itself. Some prominent New Testament passages set the stage for the discussion of inspiration.

1. In [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#) the apostle Paul declares that “<sup>16</sup>**All [*pasa*] Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**

There are **four key terms** crucial to a proper exegesis of this passage.

**The first term** is “all” (*pasa*). This term can be translated “every” or “all.” It is not essential that one term is better than the other because both refer to the entire canon of the Old Testament, which Timothy had known from his youth (cf. [v. 5](#)).

[2 Timothy 3:5 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>5</sup>“holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power;  
Avoid such men as these.”

[2 Timothy 3:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>16</sup>“All **Scripture** [*graphē*] is inspired by God and profitable for teaching,  
for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good  
work.”

**The second term** is “scripture” (*graphē*). This means a “writing” or “written document.” It is clear from the usage of this term that the locus of inspiration is in the written record rather than in the ideas or concepts or even oral expressions of the writer. Although the word *graphē* itself can have a more general usage than a canonical writing, nevertheless, the context clearly indicates that the entire Old Testament is in view (see also [Romans 15:4](#); [2 Peter 3:15–16](#)).

[Romans 15:4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>4</sup>For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our  
instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the  
Scriptures we might have hope.

**2 Peter 3:15-16 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup> 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.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired [*theopneustos*] by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

**Third**, since there is no verb stated in the text, the word “**inspired**” (*theopneustos*) is the critical term in the passage. The term *theopneustos* is an adjective that belongs to a special class called “**verbal adjectives.**” As such, it may be viewed either as a predicate adjective (the implied verb “**is**” precedes the adjective) or an attributive adjective (the implied verb “**is**” follows the adjective). It does not mean, as the English word “**inspire**” might imply, that God *breathed in* the word but rather that the very words were *breathed out* (see above definitions).

A more simple explanation of **predicate adjectives** is as follows: modifies the subject of the sentence. In the sentence “**The flowers are blue,**” the subject is “**the flowers.**” In this example, “**blue**” is what modifies the subject, “**the flowers,**” and is connected to the subject by what is known as a linking verb.

**What Is the Effect of a Predicate Adjective?**

Having **predicate adjectives** means that we can describe subjects without putting the adjectives before him. Instead of having to say, “**The good boy**” followed by a verb, we can simply say, “**the boy is good.**” In this sentence, we can identify that “**the boy**” is the subject, “**is**” is the linking verb, and “**good**” is the predicate adjective. “**Good**” effectively renames the subject of the sentence. It’s any qualifying adjective that qualifies (directly) a noun.

She’s a **beautiful** girl: “**beautiful**” is attribute of “girl”. “We were lying on the hot sand”: “**hot**” is attribute of “sand”, etc...

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture “**is**” (verb) inspired (adjective) by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

A parallel is found in the words of Jesus who referred to what is written as “**every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God**” (Matthew 4:4).

**Matthew 4:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> 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.**’”

What is of central importance in this passage is the relationship of “**inspired**” *theopneustos* to “**scripture**” *graphē*. It is grammatically possible to take *theopneustos* as descriptive of *graphē*; all inspired scripture is of God (**attributive adjective**). Nevertheless, there are several reasons for rejecting this possibility in favor of the much better substantiated “**all Scripture is inspired of God**” (**predicate adjective**).

Several reasons support this conclusion.

a. **2 Timothy 3:16** has an identical structure to **1 Timothy 4:4**, where the two adjectives are predicate.

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

**1 Timothy 4:4 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> **For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;**

b. The usual position of the attributive adjective construction would be *theopneustos graphē* (“**inspired scripture**”) instead of *graphē theopneustos* (“**scripture inspired**”).

c. The absence of a verb suggests that *theopneustos* (God-breathed) and *ophelimos* (profitable) are to be viewed in the same manner; for they are both the same and *ophelimos* cannot be translated attributively without leaving the sentence without a predicate.

d. Words joined by *kai* (and) are usually understood as being joined by the conjunction “and.” If *ophelimos* (profitable) and (God-breathed) *theopneustos* were attributive, the *kai* would be pointless.

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is inspired (*theopneustos*) by God and profitable (*ophelimos*) for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

e. The use of *theopneustos* as an attributive adjective would stress the *usefulness* of Scripture rather than its inspiration.

f. The use of *theopneustos* as an attributive would leave open the possibility of some uninspired “*graphē*,” which is contrary to the meaning of “**all scripture**” (as discussed above).

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**

**Fourth**, grammatically the word “**profitable**” (*ophelimos*) can either mean the Scriptures are inspired because they are profitable (**attributive**) or the Scriptures are profitable because they are inspired (**predicate**). **The context, however, would confirm the conclusion that the Scriptures are profitable because they are inspired.**

Thus, they are useful because of what they are: their intrinsic quality produces results. Hence the translation “**All Scripture is inspired**” shows that *because* they are God-breathed, they are therefore **useful** (*ophelimos*) for the work of the ministry, *not the reverse*.

Some implications of this translation of [2 Timothy 3:16](#) may be drawn.

a. Inspiration deals with the objective text of Scripture, not the subjective intention of the writer.

b. The doctrine of Scripture applies to *all* or *every* Scripture, that is, the Bible in part or in whole is the Word of God.

c. The Scriptures *are* the very “spirated” (breathed out-voiceless) Word of God. The *form and content* of Scripture are the very words of God. This does not mean that each individual word is inspired *as such* but only *as part of a whole* sentence or unit of meaning. There is no implication in Scripture of an *atomistic inspiration (subjective individualism)* of each word but only of a *holistic inspiration* of all words used. Just as an individual word has no meaning apart from its use in a given context, so individual words of Scripture are not inspired apart from their use in a whole sentence. **[This is crucial to understanding the reading of scripture always within its context.]**

**2 Peter 1:19-21 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

<sup>20</sup> But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of one’s own interpretation*,

<sup>21</sup> for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired [*theopneustos*] by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

<sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2. In [2 Peter 1:19–21](#) what the apostle Peter asserts is more than the divine origin of Scripture (as [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#) does). Here he adds to the understanding of how God produced the Scriptures. This was accomplished through the instrumentality of men who “spoke from God.”

More specifically, these spokesmen were “**moved along by the Holy Spirit**” (cf. [Acts 27:5](#)).

In the context of this passage, Peter has assured his readers that what he was making known to them was not by “**cleverly devised tales (mythos)**” ([v. 16](#)) nor even personal experience ([v. 18](#)).

**2 Peter 1:16 (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

**2 Peter 1:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup> and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Instead, it was “**the prophetic word *made* more sure**” ([v. 19](#)).

[2 Peter 1:19 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> **So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.**

Here is an implicit affirmation of the authority (certainty) of the “**prophetic word**” presented by eyewitnesses (**Peter, James, John**) of the Lord ([Matthew 17:1, 13](#)).

[Matthew 17:1 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> **Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.**

[Matthew 17:13 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> **Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.**

“**For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**” ([2 Peter 1:21 NASB](#)). So, in biblical terminology, inspiration is the process by which **Spirit-moved writers *recorded* God-breathed writings**. Hence, when inspiration is extended to the total process, it includes both the writer and the writings; but when it is limited to its biblical usage (as in [2 Timothy 3:16](#)), it relates only to the written product (*graphē*-scripture).

That is well summarized in [Hebrews 1:1](#): “**God ... spoke long ago to the Fathers *in the prophets***” to which [2 Timothy 3:16](#) would add the thought *in their writings*.

[Hebrews 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,**

[2 Timothy 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;**