This Word Is Worth Sticking With
Exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:14–17

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If God have intended for his people to be motivated by Law and not by Gospel, the bare command to his people and to his pastors of "Preach the Word"[1] would have been more than sufficient to apply the Third Commandment to the New Testament Church and tell us what we must do. There would be no need to exalt the nature and the power of that Word, no need to comfort and encourage with the promises of the Spirit's own activity with that Word. It would be as blunt a discussion as "God said, 'Use it.' So use it, under threat of punishment." And certainly a despising of such Scriptures entrusted to them by God is a violation of God's Law and a sin against the God who entrusted them. But God does not bludgeon into existence his people's obedience, including their use of his means of grace, as a product of his Law. Instead, just as with every other sanctified fruit he produces in his people, he causes his people to sprout and bloom in their use of his Word using his Gospel, in particular, by extolling the Third-Article Gospel truths of what that very Word is and does.

It is exactly this which Paul is doing in 2 Timothy 3:14–17 as he encourages his younger colleague in ministry to continue to proclaim the Word in the face of opposition and in spite of proposed alternatives.[2] Paul begins by giving Timothy an imperative (μένε), but he does not leave it as a bare command.[3] He elaborates on the nature and power of the Word in which Timothy is to remain, grounding the call to sanctification on the Third-Article Gospel motivation which alone can prompt it: Stick with this Word, because this Word is worth sticking with. While the exact nature of the opposition and the proposed alternatives have changed over the centuries, Paul's message resonates with us as well: Stick with this Word, because this Word is worth sticking with.

We will enumerate the qualities of this Word by which Paul here shows Timothy and us that this Word is worth sticking with.

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[1] 2 Tim 4:2.

[2] Both the σύ and the δέ have contrastive force. Within the Pastorals, Paul uses this phrase similarly also in 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; 4:5; Titus 2:1.

[3] See Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, JSNTSS 280 (London; New York; T&T Clark, 2004), 180. Runge relates the role of hortatory expressions, including imperatives, as being part of the grounded thematic line in a behavioral or hortatory discourse, such as the epistles tend to be, and how the indicatives which follow then often consist of support material. Steven E. Runge, "The Contribution of Verb Forms, Connectives, and Dependency to Grounding Status in Nonnarrative Discourse," in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), 221–72, esp. 232–233. The next grounded hortatory construction is the adjurement formula found in 4:1 (διαμαρτύρομαι), structurally setting of the final verse of chapter 3 as the end of the supporting material for the command in 3:14.

1. God's Word Is Socially Operating

σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης, εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες (14)

In giving Timothy a reason to remain in the Word,[4] Paul points to the individuals who instructed Timothy in the faith (παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες). While some manuscripts here have a singular instead of a plural indefinite pronoun and the external evidence is fairly divided, the plural seems to be the stronger reading on the grounds of internal evidence.[5] The reference in the next verse to Timothy's childhood suggests that the unnamed individuals referred to as Timothy's teachers here are those who instructed Timothy while he was quite young. Timothy's mother Lois and grandmother Eunice[6] can be safely assumed to be the people Paul is speaking of here.[7]

Paul points Timothy to his first teachers as a way of showing him the reliability of what he has been taught. While it is obviously possible for anyone, regardless of how well-intentioned they might be, to err and to unintentionally mislead their children, certainly Timothy's mother and grandmother would not have deliberately deceived him.[8] Paul is borrowing from Timothy's trust in particular people to loan that same trust to the Word which they taught him. And in doing so, Paul is applying the fact that God's Word operates socially.

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[4] The circumstantial participle εἰδώς, modifying μένε, has causal force.

[5] Following the principle of *lectio difficilior potior*, it is more likely that scribes would have changed the plural to the singular than the singular to the plural, since within the New Testament τίς is far more commonly found in the singular (518 times) than in the plural (only 12 times). Additionally, Metzger, and Omanson following him, suggest that the change from plural to singular in transcription can be attributed to an assumption that Paul himself was the intended referent of the pronoun. Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Addition, A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4ᵗʰ Rev. Ed.)* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 580; Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 442. Such a misunderstanding is easily enough understood in light of the fact that just a few verses earlier Paul did point out that Timothy had faithfully followed Paul's teaching (v. 10).

[6] Cf. 2 Tim 1:15.

[7] Perhaps, however, Lois and Eunice are not the exclusive referents of the pronouns, and other teachers, including perhaps Paul himself, may be in view also in a secondary way.

[8] Habeck's caution, however, in using this passage with converts is well-heeded. Irwin J. Habeck, *2 Timothy: Be Strong* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1997), 75–76. We would not want to give the impression that Paul's point is *merely* to say that one should tribalistically remain in the teaching he was brought up in even when that teaching is learned to be incorrect. Other writings, even books teaching false religions, can operate socially and have such a familial appeal, so the social operation of the Word is by no means offered as a logical proof of its veracity. However, since God's Word is true in its entirely and does also operate socially, we are wise to be aware of and utilize the aspects of its social operation.

In saying that God's Word operates socially, I am referring to a specific aspect of what we more commonly speak of as being the psychological operation of the Word.[9] In one sense God's Word operates no differently than any other instance of human language, in that it is perceived through the cognitive and affective mechanisms of man. This is the psychological operation of the Word. One aspect of this psychological operation of the Word is it social operation, that is, that it, like all human communication, operates in the context of social relationships.

By God's design, human beings are social creatures, which are meant to exist in relationships with one another.[10] And by God's design, these relationships are often the context in which God works through his Word both to convert hearts and to equip and defend them in an ongoing way. While we would never dare deny the Spirit's ability to work conversion through the Word when one reads it for oneself or when one is evangelized by a total stranger, the fact remains that in most cases before conversion there is already at least some relationship of trust between the one who shares the Word and the one with whom the Word is shared.

The primary example of this social operation of the Word is the one seen here in the case of Timothy: the family unit. God has designed the family as the building block of society, and the structure for the upbringing of children. When functioning correctly, there will be a relationship of love and trust between parents and children.[11] It is within the context of this social relationship of the family that God assigns to parents the primary role of spiritual educators and upbringers.[12] There is a synergy here between parents and public Gospel ministers, each with a role they are more capable for than is the other when it comes to the spiritual education of children: parents instill attitudes, pastors and teachers instill information.[13] The role of parents in influencing their children's attitudes toward virtually everything is confirmed by countless studies which seek to quantify the extent of that influence as well as isolate the factors which strengthen or weaken said influence. There are also a number of studies which show, from a human perspective, that when it comes to religious attitudes, in particular ongoing church attendance, the religious attitudes and

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[9] See Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics, Volume IV*, trans. Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Bill Tackmier (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1999), 13–16; Jonathan R. Hein, "Treasure in Jars of Clay: The Synergy Between the Instrumental and Ministerial Causes in God's Plan of Salvation," 6–7.

[10] Cf. Gen 2:18.

[11] Cf. Ps 103:13; Isa 49:15; Matt 7:9–10; Luke 11:11–12.

[12] Cf. Deut 4:9; 6:7–9; 11:19; Ps 78:5–6; Eph 6:4.

[13] This is not to say that parents do not instill any information or that pastors and teachers do not instill any attitudes, but that the unique relationships and competencies brought to the table by parents and Gospel ministers makes them especially suited for the one. While we all know of exceptions where pastors and teachers through their instruction and care were able to counteract the bad example set by parents, we also all know of many more cases where no amount of instruction and care seemed to overcome a child following in the negative habits of their parents when it came to the faith.

church-attendance habits of parents, especially that of fathers, are the most determinative factor.[14] While it is solely the power of the Holy Spirit inherent in the Word which creates and preserves faith, often it is the relationship between parent and child in which that Word is granted an attentive audience.

The implications of the social operation of the Word, both within and outside the context of the family, are many, bearing application for philosophies of education,[15] pastoral practice,[16] and evangelism.[17]

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[14] For the most recent comprehensive study, see Vern L. Bengston with Norella Putney and Susan C. Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[15] Parents dare not hand off the work of being spiritual educators to pastors and teachers. While pastors and teachers do play a critical role, in that they may have an expertise to teach more advanced *content* than many parents may be able, parents, by virtue of their relationship with their children, can shape *attitude* toward the Word in a way which pastors and teachers will be less equipped to do so. In our society of professional specialization, churches must consciously fight against the idea that the spiritual education of children is the work of professionals and encourage and equip parents to be spiritual caregivers in their own home. For more on this point, see David L. Rueter, *Teaching the Faith at Home: What Does This Mean? How Is This Done?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016).

[16] It speaks to the importance of pastors taking the time to develop relationships with their members, since it is within the context of that relationship through which their Law and Gospel messages will be heard. A proven track-record of trustworthiness and love for the people is worth the time it takes to cultivate.

[17] This is why there really is no better way to do evangelism than friendship evangelism. The relationship with an unchurched person already exists to provide a context to speak the Gospel or invite to church. God's people should not be afraid to borrow on their relationship with people and make appeals to their own character and relationship in efforts to encourage their friends to give the Gospel an audience. What is called "testimonial evangelism," bearing witness to the difference the Gospel has made for them in their life, belongs here as well. For more on these points, see David J. Valleskey, *We Believe—Therefore We Speak* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1995), 171–86.

While some corporate evangelism efforts should still be designed to as directly as possible put the Word in front of people, recognizing that the Word works and does not require a relationship between speaker and hearer for it to work, there are times when it is wise to consider the social operation of the Gospel when planning how we will seek to reach the community with the Gospel. Cultivating real connections and relationships within which the Gospel can be shared is important. This may mean it is worth considering planning events which will lead to meaningful and longer-term contact instead of events which are more likely to lead to all-at-once one-and-done turnout. When it's a one-time invitation, you tend to hope to impress people to come back by how great of an event you ran, and if your event was not church itself, even impressing them may not bring them through the church doors for a service. When it is a more ongoing relationship, the context for Gospel-sharing you are trying to develop is not so much one of impressiveness as one of love and trust. And while we may all struggle to impress, we should all be able to show love and trustworthiness.

2. God's Word Is Self-Authenticating

ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης (14a)
. . . καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας (15a)

In 3:15a Paul adds a second reason (καὶ ὅτι)[18] to stick with God's Word, adding an appeal to the length of time (ἀπὸ βρέφους) which Timothy has known (οἶδας)[19] the Scriptures ([τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα).

For the sake of argument, it seems fair to ask here: How strong of a reason is this to stick with God's Word? We could imagine, for example, an argument in the same form being made by a Muslim imam, a Hindu guru, or an evolutionist professor: *Stick with the Qur'an/the Vedas/the proofs of science, because they're what you've known your whole life.* So clearly longevity of familiarity does not prove an item's veracity in an objective sense. What differentiates Paul's appeal to the length of time Timothy knew the Scriptures from these other hypothetical non-Christian appeals?

The answer is found in Scripture's character itself. Paul is relying not merely on the length of Timothy's exposure to the Word but in what that Word itself will have done in Timothy over the duration of the exposure. Over these decades Scripture will have proven itself to Timothy, and in a supernatural way which cannot be said about the Qur'an, the Vedas, or the proofs of science. This is what the dogmaticians mean when they refer to Scripture as being "self-authenticating" (αὐτόπιστος) or speak of "the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit" as what convinces a person as to Scripture's divine character. The Word itself, working on an individual's heart, is what convinces that individual that this Word is itself true.[20]

Paul trusts that over the length of Timothy's thorough contact with the Word, the Word itself has convinced him that it is both God's Word and true. Paul even said as much directly in the previous verse when he stated that Timothy not only had learned Scripture's

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[18] The ὅτι here is causal, and itself parallel with the causal circumstantial participle εἰδώς, not a marker of indirect discourse dependent on εἰδώς.

[19] Typically οἶδα is found only in the perfect system. While οἶδα should be seen as a true perfect from a Greek perspective, as it depicts a present state of knowledge which was brought about by past observation (οἶδα is a cognate of the Latin *video*), from an English perspective, its usage and rendering is more in line with an English present. What this means is that under normal circumstances it would not speak to knowing which began in the past and continues into the present. However, with an adverbial construction referring to past time, for both the presents of other verb stems and the perfect of οἶδα, you can end up with a sense similar to the English present perfect. A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 879–80.

[20] See Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics I* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 307–15; Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics, Volume I*, trans. James Langebartels and Heinrich Vogel (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2009), 452–54.

truths (ἐν οἷς[21] ἔμαθες) but also had become confident (καὶ ἐπιστώθης)[22] in them. So in encouraging Timothy and all of us to continue to make use of God's Word, he points us back to Scripture's own self-authenticating testimony in our hearts over the course of whatever length of time we have known that Word.

3. God's Word Is Distinct

[τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα (15a)

In speaking earlier of the Word's psychological, and, more specifically, social operation, it was noted that there are respects in which God's Word operates the same as other manners of literature. Paul also makes clear to Timothy here, however, that this does not mean that God's Word is simply to be classified among human literature.

ἱερὰ γράμματα, whether the article τά is original or not,[23] speaks to the canonical literature of the Old Testament. While often translated "Holy Scriptures," these are not the New Testament's regular words for "holy" or "Scripture" (ἅγιος and γραφή, respectively). ἱερός speaks of a holiness which contrasts not with impurity or immorality but with the common and profane, perhaps more in line with the English "sacred." γράμμα, in the singular, speaks of a single letter (i.e., α, β, γ, etc.). In the plural, it speaks of an instance of writing which would consist of a number of letters.[24] It is impossible with this word, then, to

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[21] ἐν οἷς is a contraction of ἐν τούτοις ἅ, where, just as in English, often a demonstrative and a relative are combined into a single expression ("Remain in what you learned"). In this passage the contraction does even more to make the clause flow more smoothly, as ἐπιστώθης could not well have taken an accusative argument like ἔμαθες could have and so would have required an additional prepositional phrase to flow grammatically. This contraction helps to smooth out the entire construction in Greek and make it more concise.

[22] πιστόω is a factitive verb formed from the polysemous adjective πιστός, which can variously mean "trusting" or "trustworthy." For a demonstration and application of the markedly polysemous nature of πιστός, see Aaron Michael Jensen, "Πίστις and Πιστεύω in Romans 4:5: Neglected Evidence for 'Faith in Christ', and a Re-detheologizing of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate," *JSPL* (forthcoming). Both meanings of πιστός are found for πιστόω in the passive: either "become trustworthy" or "become trusting." (Cf. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) s.v.) Context selects as preferable the understanding "become trusting." Contra Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 581, who finds a reference to Timothy's faithfulness as more fitting contextually since this section contrasts Timothy with the unfaithful false teachers. However, this immediate part of Paul's argument is speaking to Timothy's prior learning of Scripture, not his professional use of it. On the "passive" morphology being interpreted as "become" and not "be made [by someone]," see the refutation of (θ)η- morphology as being exclusively a marker of the passive and a better framework for understanding a two-patterned more-complex middle voice system offered in Aaron Michael Jensen, "The Greek Middle," *WLQ* 115.2 (Spring 2018): 83–108. Despite its inaccuracies, I will use the designation "passive" throughout this paper for the sake of simplicity.

[23] Evidence leans in favor of its inclusion, but this is by no means certain.

[24] English also contains a number of nouns which when used in a certain sense must always be plural and so they do not on their own well indicate if one or more item is meant. For a listing, see EnglishGrammar,

determine whether Paul here is presenting God's Word as a single sacred writing or as a collection of sacred writings, as the plural would be used in either case. In English this ambiguity can be preserved using the word "literature."

God's Word is Sacred Literature. It makes up its own unique class and category of writing, distinct from all other writings.

4. God's Word Is Clear

καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας (15a)

Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures ἀπὸ βρέφους. βρέφος is the youngest designation for a human being, meant to express the absolute incipient stage of life.[25] While it is unclear exactly how old someone could be while still being called a βρέφος,[26] where context aids in determining meaning, the term is applied to those who are clearly still babies,[27] and at times can even be used to refer to babies who are not yet born.[28]

While this passage often finds itself cited by Lutherans in an effort to demonstrate that even infants have the passive capacity for faith as worked by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, such a demonstration, while theologically true and logically valid, is really an implicit argument from the greater to the lesser in light of the much more striking claim Paul is making here. It is not merely faith which he is ascribing to the infant Timothy—it is a knowledge of Scripture as well. We are given here an encouragement not to speak or act as if children and babies have no brains, and so Baptism is the only means of grace available to them. Not only Baptism, but also the Word itself can work on their heads and hearts, and so deliberate steps should be taken to place that Word on their heads and hearts.[29]

"Nouns that Exist Only in the Singular or Plural Form," https://www.englishgrammar.org/nouns-exist-singular-plural-form (2012).

[25] Philo (*Somn*. 1, 192) says αἱ ἐκ βρέφους ἄχρι γήρως τῶν ἡλικιῶν ἁπασῶν τροπαί "the changes of all the ages from infancy to old age," which shows that βρέφος is the earliest designation for a human being in his vocabulary.

[26] Philo (*Spec*., 2, 33) uses the phrase ἀπὸ βρέφους to paraphrase מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ "from the age of one month" in Lev 27:6. The age-range he is describing which begins at that age terminates at age five (εἰς πενταετίαν), suggesting that the word βρέφος would at the very least not normally be extended beyond age five. (Compare the awkwardness in English from expressions such as "From the time you were a baby until you were two months old," "From the time you were a teenager until you were 16," and "From the time you were elderly until you were 90.") This would speak against the suggestion made by some on the basis of ʾAbot 5:22 that Timothy would likely have begun his study of Scripture at the age of five.

[27] Within the New Testament: Luke 2:12, 16; Acts 7:19; 1 Pet 2:2. From other Jewish Hellenistic writers: 1 Macc 1:61; 2 Macc 6:10; Josephus, *B.J.* 6.3.4 §§205.

[28] Within the New Testament: Luke 1:41, 44. From other Jewish Hellenistic writers: Sir 19:11; Josephus, *A.J.* 20.2.1 §§18.

[29] It is important that parents begin working with their children on memorizing Scripture and Luther's Small Catechism while they are still toddlers. While some may claim that such children are too young for something

Even before he himself was literate, Timothy would have known what was in the Sacred Literature,[30] being instructed in its truths from little on.[31] This need not imply some

so difficult, this approach ignores the fact that, while toddlers lack the critical thinking to engage in conscious memorization techniques, their minds are actually better equipped at this age for rote memorization than their minds will be later on if this skill is not cultivated. The reason for this is that young children are sponges who learn by imitating and repeating what they hear. Everything that a preliterate child learns is by hearing someone speaking it to them and then trying to repeat it. This makes the age of about 1½ the best age to deliberately begin working with a child to memorize passages. The best way to do this is simply to repeat the passages back and forth. Depending on the strength of the working memory which the child has developed yet, it may be best to work on a single phrase at a time. The negative effect that writing has on memory was recognized already by Plato (*Phaedr.* 275a) and the modern field of media ecology continues on that tradition today of recognizing that media are not neutral, but that they impact not only the message but also the culture and the people. Since the ability to read subconsciously communicates to a person that the information can be accessed by means other than memory, this hinders one's ability to memorize. This is all the more the case in a technological world where information is readily accessible at any moment through smartphones and the internet. The effect that these media have on children's minds as they develop underscore the importance of them engaging in rote memorization of Scripture while they are still preliterate as they are most equipped for it at that time, and also so that they do not lose that skill. While older people may believe that they will always be able to look passages up, this is not as certain an assumption as they believe it to be, and even if they can, the fact that they need to externally access the information interferes with their meditation on and use of it as compared to if the information were internalized.

It is further important that parents begin having devotions and reading Bible stories to their children from the time that the child would sit to have other books read to them. Beginning this habit is beneficial not only for the child but also especially for the lay parent. There are many parents who desire to take more active roles in their children's religious education who nevertheless do not do so because they feel poorly equipped. For example, they are afraid they themselves lack the knowledge to explain things or answer questions and so they choose to leave these things to professionals. Teaching a baby presents a much "safer" environment for a parent to cut their own teeth as a theological educator and become more comfortable in this role as the child grows.

[30] Lenski suggests that Paul's referring to Scripture by the less common designation "Letters" brings to mind the picture of young Timothy even being instructed in the alphabet and in reading using the Biblical text. R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 839.

[31] Meier points to this reference of Paul to Timothy's early instruction in Scripture as evidence that the historical Timothy is not the original audience of the epistle and that neither is the historical Paul the epistle's author, but that the letter is by someone given the anonymous designation "The Pastor," coming from a Pauline school, and writing not deceptively but piously under the pseudonym of his school's founder to the pastors generally of his day, pseudonymously called "Timothy." This reading of these verses is all based on two assumptions: First, that an uncircumcised Timothy, even if his mother was Jewish, would have been considered a Gentile, and so there is no plausible reason to think he would have been brought up in the Jewish Scriptures, especially since typically the spiritual education of sons was primarily done by fathers. Second, that it is unlikely that Lois and Eunice would have themselves been literate and even more unlikely that they would have had access to their own copies of the Biblical text. John P. Meier, *The Inspiration of Scripture: But What Counts as Scripture (2 Tim 1:1–14; 3:14–17; cf. 1 Tim 5:18) Mid-Stream* 38 (1999): 71–78, esp. 73–74. However, these assumptions on Meier's part are far from certain.

special outpouring of wisdom on the infant Timothy, since we see the same thing happen with young children today. When brought up in God's Word, children can grasp the Bible's simple yet most important message, and readily confess that to the extent that their speech abilities allow.

As for Meier's first assumption, we know the aversion many non-Jews had to being circumcised (For a thorough treatment of the literary and archaeological evidence to confirm this point, see Frederick M. Hodges, "The Ideal Prepuce in Ancient Greece and Rome: Male Genital Aesthetics and Their Relation to Lipodermos, Circumcision, Foreskin Restoration, and the Kynodesme," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 75.3 (Fall 2001): 375–405). Perhaps this Gentile aversion to circumcision accounts for the sizable number of the Gentile "God-fearers" (Acts 10:2, 22; 13:16, 26, 50; 17:4, 17; cf. also "God-worshippers," 16:14; 18:7) who evidently believed in the God of Israel yet were unwilling to take the necessary steps, circumcision in particular, for full inclusion within the people of Israel. (On the status of such Gentile converts see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission, Vol. 1 & 2* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004), 122–72; Atsuhiro Asano, *Community-Identity Construction in Galatians: Exegetical, Social-Anthropological, and Socio-Historical Studies*. JSNTSS 285 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2005). 104–112). Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 22; 11:3) is the clearest example of this. Such a Gentile aversion to circumcision may also, from a human perspective, account for why female conversions to both Old Testament Judaism and early Christianity seemed to outpace male ones (Cf. Acts 13:50; 16:13–14; 17:4; 1 Pet 3:1. See also Schnabel, *Mission*, 125). So the fact that Timothy's Greek father would share this mindset and keep his son from being circumcised is not unexpected and also tells us nothing more about the environment in which Timothy grew up. While it does not seem that Timothy's father was himself a believer, we do not know what his level of outward opposition towards the Israelite faith was. One can plausibly assume it was not too overt and aggressive if he is married to a woman who was known to be both Jewish and a believer (Acts 16:1). Timothy's father may not have been against his wife instructing their son in the Jewish Scriptures, but as a Greek pagan, it makes sense culturally that he would not have allowed for his son to be circumcised. So there is no reason to conclude from Timothy's Greek father or his not originally being circumcised that he could not have been trained by his mother in God's Word from little on.

As for Meier's second assumption, ancient literacy rates, as with any other ancient demographic statistic, can be notoriously difficult to pin down. There is really no way of proving the likelihood of an individual person being able to read. However, for Paul's point to Timothy, it really does not matter if Lois and Eunice were themselves able to read. In an oral culture, such as the First Century world was, it was not uncommon for large sections of Scripture to be committed to memory. They could have memorized and recited, even if they could not have read letters themselves. And, just as today, one can teach the Scriptures to children apart from direct quotations of Scripture but by using simplified summaries of its main truths, that method was certainly available to Timothy's mother and grandmother as well. And when that main message of Scripture is grasped, even via childlike paraphrase, it can be said of a child that he knows Scripture.

For a more thorough treatment of how the early spiritual education of a child would have been carried out by Jewish women at this time, see Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ* (London: The Religious Tract Society), 103–38; Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 228–30. For an analysis of and response to the principle arguments made against Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, see Michael K. Smith, "A Brief Examination of the Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles," *LSQ* 55.4 (Dec 2015): 271–85.

Here we see what has been called the clarity, or perspicuity, of Scripture.[32] While some of its truths remain enigmatic even after a lifetime of scholarly study, its main message is so profoundly clear that it can literally be grasped by an infant. From the clarity of Scripture it is also seen that Scripture is not dependent on an external interpreter (for example, a pope, a council, a reading community, a magisterial use of reason, etc.) for its correct interpretation to be recognized, and as such Scripture remains its own proper interpreter.[33] Because Scripture is clear, we are right to let Scripture interpret Scripture, and to let it bring us to its single intended sense.

Additionally, since the Holy Spirit speaks clearly through Scripture, we are right to recognize that the proper understanding of Scripture does come through the Spirit's illumination of that individual; however, this illumination itself is mediated through Scripture, not merely alongside of it.[34] In other words, the Holy Spirit illuminates an individual through Scripture, and uses the clearer light of one portion of Scripture to bring out more clearly for them the less clear light of another portion of Scripture. The Holy Spirit does not illuminate either Scripture or an individual reader of it through some immediate means.[35]

5. God's Word Is Effective And Saving

τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (15b)

Paul describes this Sacred Literature not only in terms of what it is but also in terms of what it can do. It has the capability (τὰ δυνάμενά)[36] to bring about an effect. The capability that Scripture has is to make wise (σοφίσαι).[37] We speak of this capability in

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[32] See Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 319–29; Hoenecke, *Dogmatics I*, 477–86.

[33] See Hoenecke, *Dogmatics I*, 486–97.

[34] Hoenecke, *Dogmatics IV*, 16–29.

[35] This does not speak against the study of history (context) and grammar (language) so as to be able to employ the historical-grammatical method. Such study is an attempt to grapple with the human language employed by the Holy Spirit at a certain time and in a certain place. However, even as such study is done employing extra-biblical information to understand the words themselves, one must recognize that the Holy Spirit alone, speaking through those words of Scripture, is the one who illuminates the reader. This speaks to the importance of, even in a more scholarly approach to Scripture study, always placing yourself below the text that it might teach you, not above the text that you might solve it.

[36] δύναμις and its paronyms are too often today defined in terms of raw force and radical power, and this through the illegitimate reverse etymologizing of the word "dynamite" which is denounced as a "semantic anachronism" in D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 33–34. Instead, the noun δύναμις and the verb δύναμαι usually speak not of raw destructive might but of capability. Not, for example, "I have the power to" but "I am able." On the use of δύναμαι in the middle, see Jensen, "Middle," 106.

[37] σοφίζω, employing the suffix –ίζω, is a factitive verb, meaning that its object takes on the quality of the root adjective. Furthermore, the choice to morphologize this infinitive using an aorist tense-form denotes perfective

dogmatic terms when we say that Scripture is efficacious, that is, always inherently possessing the ability to have such an effect.[38] The capability, the efficaciousness, the ability to have such an effect, is always present whether or not such an effect occurs, because it is an attribute here predicated of Scripture itself,[39] not merely of God acting occasionally alongside of it[40] or of man bringing in an active capacity of his own to activate it.[41]

   While any form of literature, to the extent that it teaches and conveys true content, can be said to "make wise" in a sense, there is a significant difference between the efficaciousness of Scripture and what could, in a sense, be called the efficaciousness of other literature. That difference resides in the nature of the content they convey.[42] The Gospel message which itself bears that capability and efficacy is found within it,[43] and the effect which the Gospel is capable of is of a kind entirely distinct from that of any non-Gospel communication in that it accomplishes a wisening which consists of faith (διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) and results in salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν). The capability to effect such things is found in no communication other than the Gospel, and the Gospel, with respect to origin,[44] is communicated only through the prophetic and apostolic proclamation written in Scripture.[45]

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aspect, meaning, in this case that the verb embraces the endpoint of the action, here, namely, the accomplishment of the event itself. What this means is that here Scripture is capable not only of being engaged in the act of wisening someone up but also of actually bringing about that result.

[38] See Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 315–17; Hoenecke, *Dogmatics IV*, 7–29.

[39] τὰ δυνάμενα follows [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα as an attributive adjective.

[40] This view is typical of Calvinism.

[41] This view is typical of Arminianism.

[42] It is true that there is also a significant distinction between the respective authorships of Scripture and non-Scriptural writings, as well as between their respective claims on absolute truth. However, the efficaciousness of Scripture relative to other writings does not lie in the fact of its divine authorship in and of itself or in the fact of its absolute truthfulness in and of itself. For there are many statements in the Bible which on their own are all authored by God and all true but on their own would not be efficacious for making one wise for salvation. I am thinking here both of a number of bare, unapplied historical details as well as the dictates of the Law. Similarly, a secular book could be one hundred percent without error and yet would not make one wise for salvation. Likewise, someone could author a book which never quotes a single Scripture passage and yet, by presenting a correctly paraphrased Gospel, produce a writing which is able to make one wise for salvation. So for these reasons Scripture's unique efficaciousness should not be seen purely as a product of its divine author or of its status of being absolutely true but as a product of the unique Gospel message the divine author in absolute truth has communicated via this written word. However, here we are separating for precision things which cannot be separated in actuality, for the divine authorship and absolute truthfulness is what supports the veracity of Scripture's unique evangelical proclamation.

[43] Cf. Rom 1:17; 10:17.

[44] As in, someone can read the Bible and then speak the Gospel or write the Gospel, and that is still the Gospel and retains the power of the Gospel even in paraphrased form.

[45] Cf. 1 Cor 1:21; 2:9–12; Eph 2:13, 19–20.

To repeat what was just said before, the result of Scripture's act of making wise is salvation (εἰς σωτηρίαν).[46] For this reason, the means of grace are dogmatically classified as the instrumental cause of salvation.[47] The fact that the Scriptures are said to be able to *make* Timothy wise for salvation through faith, when he already *was* wise for salvation through faith, suggests a conceptualizing of the work of the Scripture which is not limited to the initial creation of faith but also embraces its continued work of sustaining, preserving, protecting, and strengthening that same faith until the time when final salvation is received. This saving work of Scripture, from beginning to end, is Scripture's primary purpose.[48]

While the Word of God which the minister is called on to use is saving for others, Timothy is pointed to the Word's salvific effect here first and foremost for himself (σε).[49] The Word as a cause of one's personal salvation serves as an encouragement to employ it professionally as well. It is simply unthinkable that a pastor who has discovered and experienced the benefits of the Word for himself would think that something else should ever supplant the Word as the means for his ministry to others.

6. God's Word Is All Centered On Christ

διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (15b)

As was also said before, the wisening which Scripture accomplishes takes place through faith (διὰ πίστεως). Paul clarifies the nature of this faith with the attributive prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. While the phrase could potentially be used to denote Christ as the object of faith,[50] as Paul does elsewhere using a genitival construction in the

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[46] Whether one wants to classify the εἰς as denoting purpose, result, or reference vis-à-vis the Hebrew לְ, the understanding here remains unaffected: the one who is made wise by Scripture will be saved thereby.

[47] Hein, "Synergy," 3–11.

[48] Cf. also John 20:30–31. From the fact that this is Scripture's primary purpose and importance, it is seen that there are some passages and doctrines of Scripture, namely, those which more directly contribute to that purpose, which are of a more fundamental nature than other passages and doctrines of Scripture, namely, those which less directly contribute to that purpose. While we will see below that all Scripture passages are equally inspired, that does not necessarily mean that all Scripture passages are inspired as equals. Keeping in mind the larger context and purpose of all of Scripture, as well as paying attention to the way that authors mark discourse prominence, will help a reader to place greater focus on what Scripture itself places greater focus on. When Scripture is taken as a whole, that greater focus is on the salvation found through faith in Christ.

[49] This is obscured somewhat by English translation, since in English we frequently use the second person as a sort of indefinite or generic pronoun. This, however, is not standard practice in Greek, which tends to retain the third person for such constructions, and so young Pastor Timothy specifically should be understood as the antecedent of the pronoun and not people generally.

[50] Beyond such well-known passages at the center of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate (discussed in the following note) many additional passages throughout Scripture do present Christ Jesus as the object of faith: Isa 28:16; 42:4; Matt 12:21; 18:6; 27:42; Mark 9:42; John 1:12; 2:11, 23; 3:16, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 7:5, 31, 38, 39, 48; 8:30; 9:35–38; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45, 48; 12:37, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; 17:20; Acts 3:16; 9:42;

famously debated πίστις Χριστοῦ formulations,[51] on the strength of the parallel constructions, especially those found in the Pastorals,[52] it seems preferable to understand ἐν

10:43; 11:17; 14:23; 16:31; 18:8; 19:4; 20:21; 22:19; 24:24; 26:18; Rom 9:33; 10:11; Gal 2:15–16; Phil 1:29; Phlm 5; 1 Pet 1:8; 2:6; 1 John 3:23; 5:10, 13.

[51] The Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate revolves around whether such phrases as found in Rom 3:22, 26, Gal 2:16, 20, 3:22, Eph 3:12, and Phil 3:9 are better understood according to the traditional interpretation "faith in Christ" or according to the more novel interpretation "the faithfulness of Christ." For the leading proponents of this "the faithfulness of Christ" interpretation," see Richard B. Hayes, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). For a semantic, grammatical, and exegetical explanation as to why the traditional interpretation of "faith in Christ" should be retained and the novel interpretation of "the faithfulness of Christ" should be rejected, see Aaron Michael Jensen, "Faith in Christ: An Answer to the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate," Senior Thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (2015). Since this passage in 2 Timothy grammaticizes "Christ Jesus" as the object of the preposition ἐν instead of as a bare genitive (and also because not all participants in the Debate hold to Pauline authorship of the Pastorals), 2 Tim 3:15 is not typically included as part of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate. Luke Timothy Johnson, however, has claimed that διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ refers to Christ's own faithfulness because the preposition used is ἐν and not εἰς (Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 420, 424). This argument on the basis of Paul's choice of prepositions is well refuted by David J. Downs, "Faith(fulness) in Christ Jesus in 2 Timothy 3:15," *JBL* 131.1 (2012): 143–60, esp. 149–51. Downs, however, himself takes the phrase to describe both Christ's act of faithfulness and believers' believing/faithful participation in that act, following Morna Hooker's "concentric" view of the πίστις Χριστοῦ formulation that it "begins, always, from the faith of Christ himself, but which includes, necessarily, the answering faith of believers, who claim that faith as their own" (Morna D. Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *NTS* 35 (1989): 321–42, esp. 341.) This is basically the fallacious linguistic approach of Wallace's "plenary genitive" (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 119–21. This incorrect understanding of this phrase is rightly rejected by Moisés Silva, who argues, "It has become increasingly popular to argue that genitives could be *both* subjective and objective. We are even told that this approach avoids false dichotomies and that it does more justice to the richness of Paul's thought. Unfortunately, this solution confuses concept with grammar, and perhaps even theologizing with exegesis. . . . It is important to appreciate that, if we do [understand the phrase in this way], we are not really saying that the apostle, because of his rich thought, had both grammatical ideas in mind. Rather, we would be suggesting that he did *not* have any specific syntactical connection in view; that is, imprecision, rather than fullness, characterizes the expression." Moisés Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 67–68.

[52] The closest apparent parallels from Paul's Ecclesial Epistles would be πίστιν ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ (Eph 1:15) and τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Col 1:4). In both cases a parallel phrase denoting love towards the saints helps to clarify that Christ Jesus is meant as the object of the faith. The contribution provided here by διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι (Rom 3:25) and διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Gal 3:26) is unclear, since it is at the very least uncertain whether the ἐν-phrase is meant to modify πίστις in the first place. Likewise, τοῖς ἁγίοις τοῖς οὖσιν [ἐν Ἐφέσῳ] καὶ πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (Eph 1:1) could denote Christ as the object of faith, but it is uncertain here if the active or passive sense of πιστός is meant, and on the parallel phrasing of τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις (Phil 1:1) which like the address in Ephesians

Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as denoting not the object of faith but the sphere in which faith exists.[53] A saving trust in God is located in the person and work of Christ Jesus.[54]

For Scripture to wisen by effecting such a trust which is located in the person and work of Christ Jesus, this, of course, implies that it communicates a trust-evoking message about the person and work of Christ Jesus. That Scripture would center on this Gospel message of Jesus is for us no surprising claim, but in light of Paul's historical context it is worth noting. Paul is speaking here of the Old Testament Scriptures, the only Scriptures which would have yet been available from Timothy's infancy. The Old Testament Scriptures,

references saints but here omits the characterizing of them as being πιστός, it seems probable that here ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ denotes the sphere of πίστις and not faith's object.

The evidence, however, from the Pastorals is much stronger and more relevant. Outside of our present passage, the expression ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is used 8 times: μετὰ πίστεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tim 1:14); ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1 Tim 3:13); κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν ζωῆς τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 1:1); κατὰ ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν, τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 1:9); ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 1:13); ἐν τῇ χάριτι τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 2:1); σωτηρίας τύχωσιν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 2:10); εὐσεβῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (2 Tim 3:12). Outside of the cases where the phrase is used with πίστις it is already self-evident that Christ is never by this phrase meant to be the object of a verbal noun. Additionally, while 1 Timothy 3:13 and our present passage could hypothetically use the phrase to denote the object of faith, since πίστις appears there by itself, in cases where πίστις is the co-object of a preposition with ἀγάπη (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 1:13) it must mark the sphere in which that faith and love operate and not the object of faith or love. On the basis of these verses, it would seem to be a stronger interpretation to say that within the Pastorals ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is not used to mark the object of πίστις but instead the sphere in which it operates.

This preferring of the linguistic evidence within the Pastorals over the linguistic evidence within Paul's Ecclesial Epistles is not because they have different authors. Rather, it is due to the shifting nature of idiolect over time. A person's speech patterns change over time, and so letters written more closely together can be significantly more telling as to what a given construction might mean. One clear evidence that Paul's speech patterns have shifted in the years between writing his Ecclesial and Pastoral Epistles is that he has evidently developed a catchphrase of sorts with the "Faithful Saying" formula (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8).

[53] Contra George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids; Carlisle, England: Eerdmans; Paternoster, 1992), 444. See instead Harris, who argues for the same understanding in this and related verses on the grounds that in other places Paul uses εἰς to explicitly mark Christ as the object of faith and that in Paul ἐν seldom encroaches on the semantic range of εἰς. Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 234–35. The ἐν Χριστῷ and other related motifs do not have a single formulaic meaning which uniformly applies in every case. Instead, the context must determine the sense of the prepositional phrase. For a survey and analysis of the different way that ἐν Χριστῷ can function, see Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 67–199. Towner (*Timothy*, 584) here similarly describes Christ as being the "place" and "locus" where faith is found.

[54] Several other passages which present specifically faith in God the Father as being something which is brought about in connection with God the Son are John 1:7; Acts 3:16; 1 Pet 1:21. Not only is a believer's faith *in* Jesus, but it is also only *through* Jesus that one can have trust in God for either the present or the future.

and also Old Testament faith, were located in the sphere of Christ,[55] something which Jesus himself as well as the New Testament writers routinely draw attention to.[56] From this truth is drawn our homiletic practice of providing God's people a Christ-centered proclamation on the basis of any passage in Scripture.[57]

The converse of all this is the implication that any hermeneutic which divorces either the Old or the New Testament from Christ and faith prevents the individual who employs it from benefitting from Scripture's inherent capability to make wise and save. Studied without

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[55] This connection is the reason for the phenomenon which Mounce correctly notes: "In some places it appears that he is referring to the OT; in other places it appears that he is referring to the gospel message. Because of the flow of the discussion, it appears that Paul does not talk about the OT in distinction from the gospel message, or the gospel apart from its heritage in the OT." William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46 (Dallas: Word, 2000), 561.

[56] The clearest examples of this from the direct words of Jesus are Luke 24:25–29; John 5:39; 8:56, but there are too many other New Testament citations of Old Testament prophecy to cite here.

[57] The purpose of the sermon is not to give a commentary on the text or to proclaim Christ apart from the text but instead to proclaim Christ from the text, keeping in mind that the text has as its context the wider context of all of Scripture and God's plan of salvation. This means that, even when the pericope does not in itself seem to proclaim Christ, Christ must still be proclaimed, but this is not done by importing Christ into the text but by connecting the particular text to how it fits within the wider context of all of Scripture and God's plan of salvation. For an overview of some of the ways to locate a text within its wider context, specifically the Old Testament texts which can at times prove more difficult to preach, see Sidney Greidanus, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," *BibSac* 161 (Jan-Mar 2004): 3–13.

This also means that Law and Gospel preaching is to be drawn from the text, both using God's Law to shine a light on a particular sin in the hearts of the hearer (specific Law) and also displaying the particular facet of the Gospel gem put on display for the hearer's appropriation (specific Gospel). Stereotyped and canned Gospel presentations should not simply be dropped within the sermon in an attempt to meet the bare requirement of having Gospel present. One gets the impression in such cases that Jesus shows up more to save the sermon (from the charge of omitting the Gospel) than to save the hearers (from their sin). Goldsworthy discourages the predictability of such a "Jesus bit" in Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), xi-xii.

On the other hand, recognizing that every pericope makes a unique contribution to Scripture's overall proclamation of Law and Gospel advises us not to reduce every pericope into a basic two-part Law-Gospel template but to instead let the structure and flow of the sermon reflect that contribution, while at the same time respecting the proper distinction of Law and Gospel and the spiritual and psychological effect such Law-Gospel preaching is likely to have on the hearer. For more discussion in walking this narrow Lutheran middle road between what he calls "Law/Gospel Negligence" and "Law/Gospel Obsession," see David R. Schmitt, "Law and Gospel in Sermon and Service," in *Liturgical Preaching: Contemporary Essays*, ed. Paul J. Grime and Dean W. Nadasdy (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 25–49. When our task in preaching is understood and approached rightly, one never has to choose between being textual and Christ-centered, or attempt to force them together in a way which is really neither of the two, because the text, as a whole, from which a given pericope is drawn, is Christ-centered.

Christ and without faith Scripture can make one smart, but studied without Christ and without faith[58] Scripture cannot make one wise.[59]

7. God's Word Is All Breathed Out By Him

πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος (16a)

Using asyndeton to emphatically introduce a new point which does not develop the supporting arguments of verse 15 but instead provides a distinct proposition which is related

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[58] By this I am speaking not of whether or not someone previously without faith could be converted through Scripture, which they certainly could, but of whether one can be in any real way made wise while continuing to approach Scripture from a position of unbelief and a lack of trust in the Gospel of Jesus. Even Proverbs, a divine handbook of practical wisdom, recognizes this, beginning by saying that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7). The expression "fear of the Lord" is, as Schaller relates, an Old Testament expression comparable to "saving faith." John Schaller, *Biblical Christology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1919), 247 fn 1.

[59] This has a significant implication in crafting sermons evangelistically, that is, so they will specifically benefit any in attendance who may be unconverted. A model which has become popular within mega-church theological approaches is to attract and connect unbelievers to Jesus by proclaiming the Law to them and showing them how following Jesus makes their life better, and once they are already impressed by the way Jesus benefits them via his instruction for life, then they will also accept him as Lord and Savior. (For more on this point, see the evaluation on the use of the Law in evangelical preaching in Andrew Bauer, "An Evaluation of Modern Evangelical Preaching," Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium on Preaching (2014), 25–28.) While this approach is right in its understanding that God's Law is good, and therefore following it will tend to result in things working better than if one did not, this is not a theologically sound approach to, nor is it the proper goal of, evangelistic preaching, since that is aimed at the Spirit's working of faith through the Gospel. In proclaiming the Law as instruction for living to the unconverted, one is not preaching the Law as guide but the Law as curb. All that is accomplished is helping them to improve their lives outwardly while nothing is done to address the spiritual condition of sin. Such curb-based preaching may even make things worse in that it could lead to Pharisaical pride. It is imperative to remember that the Law prepares for the Gospel by carrying out its function as mirror, not its function as curb.

While the Law as curb has no role to play in evangelism in the narrow sense and therefore no ability to bring spiritual wisdom or benefit of itself, we are right, however, to recognize that the Law as curb can rightly play a role in pre-evangelism, in that people can be attracted to outward morality and its earthly benefits (Cf. Matt 5:16; Tit 2:10; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:1). This is ultimately what we are doing in pre-evangelism efforts where we display to the people around us blessings that God provides us for this life (such as Christian acts of charity, marriages and families more intact than those of the world, or the benefits of a Christian education with respect to academics or morality) in the hope that this will spur them to give an audience to the Law as mirror and especially the Gospel. While these benefits are really worked in us through the Gospel, as perceived by the uncoverted they function on their hearts as a curb, much like the Law, as their desire to share the outward benefit can curb them into giving God's Word an audience. This all being said, when we are using the Law as a curb to gain an audience for Law and Gospel, it is imperative to recognize that this is still, strictly speaking, in the sphere of pre-evangelism, and therefore is inappropriate for it to be the predominant message to the audience gained. The appropriate message for evangelism is Law as mirror followed by a predominant proclamation of Gospel.

but not formally parallel with the imperative of verse 14,[60] Paul makes claims as to Scripture's origin and further utility. While the opening words of this verse are the most well-known of the paragraph, they are also the most fraught with exegetical difficulties. We can delineate several interrelated questions: 1) the meaning of πᾶσα; 2) the meaning of γραφή; and 3) the kind of adjective θεόπνευστος is in reference to the implied copula. A subsequent, more self-standing exegetical question concerns the meaning of the biblical *hapax legomenon* θεόπνευστος.

πᾶς could mean "every" or "all of."[61] γραφή could refer to Scripture either collectively or in reference to an individual Scripture, as in, speaking of what we refer to as a Book of the Bible, or additionally it could even refer to individual portions of Scripture, as in, speaking of what we refer to as a passage. Between these two words, then, several configurations are possible: "Every Bible Book," "All of a Bible Book," "Every Bible Passage," or "All of the Bible."[62] The immediately preceding context provides little help. While γραφή anaphorically connects to ἱερὰ γράμματα, it is, as mentioned above, impossible to tell from a word such as γράμματα, which is always plural when used in this sense, whether Paul is here conceptualizing Scripture as a single book or a collection of books.[63] Any evidence for this question will have to be drawn from the wider usage of the word γραφή.

γραφή, although in theory can refer to any written document, within Hellenistic Jewish writings,[64] and especially within the New Testament,[65] it is used exclusively of

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[60] On this discourse use of asyndeton, see Steven H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 118–23.

[61] Attic Greek's basic distinction for the uses of πᾶς with singular nouns is that with the article it means "all," and without the article it means "every." (Cf. Herbert Weir Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York; Cincinnati; Chicago; Boston; Atlanta: American Book Company, 1920), §1174.) While Robertson finds that this rule generally holds true in Hellenistic Greek as well (*Grammar*, 771), this does not make the interpretation "every" a certain matter, since Robertson also observes that "even without the article πᾶς may be 'all,' if it is a proper noun, like πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα (Mt. 2:3), πᾶς Ἰσραήλ (Ro. 11:26). In Ac. 2:36, πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραήλ, there is only one "house of Israel," so that 'all' is the idea" (*Grammar*, 772). As a technical term (demonstrated below), when used in its collective sense, γραφή would be functionally monadic (as it clearly is in 1 Pet 2:6; 2 Pet 1:20), and the absence of the article before a monadic noun makes the noun no less definite (Cf. Robertson, *Grammar,* 794–96; Wallace, *Grammar*, 248.) It would seem impossible to resolve this phrase on the basis of the lack of article, or even to state an interpretive preference on such grounds. From the use of πᾶς here both "every" and "all of" remain equally viable options.

[62] Inconceivable combinations for this phrase would be "Every Bible" and "All of a Bible Passage."

[63] Contra Edward W. Goodrick, "Let's Put 2 Timothy 3:16 Back in the Bible," *JETS* 25.4 (Dec 1982): 479–87, esp. 480, who assumes that the plural of ἱερὰ γράμματα speaks of a collection of scrolls and so he also assumes that πᾶσα γραφή too speaks of individual scrolls.

[64] In the Old Greek γραφή does not seem to take on this technical use. Likewise, Josephus and Philo do not seem to use the word in a technical sense unless the word is qualified by the adjective ἱερός (*C. Ap.* 2.4 §§ 45; *Opif.* 77, *Her.* 106, 159, 286; *Congr.* 34, 90; *Fug.* 4; *Abr.* 4, 61, 121; *Mos.* 2.84; *Decal.* 8, 37; *Spec.* 1.214;

canonical writings. Just as here in our passage it is difficult to discern whether γραφή views Scripture as passages, as books, or as a whole, some other uses of the word prove likewise uncertain in this respect. A number of uses, however, do specifically confirm that γραφή can speak of Scripture as passages,[66] or speak of Scripture as a whole,[67] but as a general rule γραφή is arthrous when it speaks of individual passages and anarthrous when speaking collectively of the whole.[68] That distinction helps little in 2 Timothy 3:16, because while γραφή lacks the article here, the word is already modified by πᾶσα, which would allow either of these two interpretations to stand. However, no passage where γραφή is found in the singular can conclusively be shown to speak of an individual biblical book.[69]

2.104; 2.134) In every such case except *Mos.* 22.84 γραφή is found in the plural. But their use of the phrase "the Holy Scriptures" is perhaps a relic of the development of this designation "the Scriptures" or just "the Scripture," as in time the specifier "holy" was omitted.

[65] Cf. Matt 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 54; Mark 12:10, 24; 14:49; Luke 4:21; 24:27, 32; 45; John 2:22; 5:39; 7:38; 42; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28; 36, 37; 20:9; Acts 1:16; 8:32, 35; 17:2, 11; 18:24; 28; Rom 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor 15:3, 4; Gal 3:8, 22; 4:30; 1 Tim 5:18; Jam 2:8, 23; 4:5; 1 Pet 2:6; 2 Pet 1:20; 3:16.

[66] Cf. Mark 12:10; Luke 4:21; John 7:38; 13:18; 19:24, 36, 37; Acts 1:16; 8:35; Rom 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2 Gal:3:8; 4:30; James 2:8, 23; 4:5.

[67] Cf. Acts 8:32; Gal 3:22; 1 Pet 2:6; 2 Pet 1:20. Contra José M. Bover, "Uso del adjetivo singular πᾶς en San Pablo," *Biblica* 19 (1938): 411–434, esp. 432–33; J.W. Roberts, "Every Scripture Inspired of God," *ResQ* 5 (1961), 33–37, esp. 35, who deny that such a collective use of γραφή was possible.

[68] Possible exceptions to this general rule would include: John 2:22, where, if one specific Old Testament passage is meant, it is not positively identified; John 7:42, which seems to be referring to several different prophecies, since Jesus' descent from David and his birth in Bethlehem are not prophesied in the same place; John 10:35, which is commonly taken to refer to all of Scripture, and certainly treats the inerrancy of all of Scripture by implication, and yet contextually is more likely seen as speaking of the specific passage Jesus has just cited, and so would not be an exception; John 19:28 in which it is debated whether ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή is meant to continue the explanation preceding it ("knowing that all things were now finished for Scripture to be fulfilled"), in which case ἡ γραφή is arthrous even while speaking of Scripture as a whole, or as an additional explanation ("knowing that all things were now finished, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled"), in which case ἡ γραφή is arthrous because it speaks of an unidentified passage, likely Ps 69:21, fulfilled in connection with Jesus' cry, "I thirst"; John 19:37 where the use of the adjective ἑτέρα would make the inclusion of the article abnormal, and the sense is still sufficiently clear; Acts 8:32, where, following Apollonius' Canon (Cf. Wallace, *Grammar*, 239–40), the arthrous τῆς γραφῆς has as its head noun the arthrous ἡ περιοχὴ ; Gal 3:22, where no clear individual passage is alluded to; 1 Tim 5:18, where a single ἡ γραφή introduces two separate quotations.

[69] However, the use of this word in the plural in the expression αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν (Matt 26:56) as well as its anarthrous use in the expressions διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις (Rom 1:2) and διά γραφῶν προφητικῶν (Rom 16:2) would seem to attest the linguistic possibility of speaking of the individual books as each being a γραφή. Even then, however, the fact that all these passages include some adjectival or genitival qualification of γραφή means they still fall short of providing proof that γραφή can on its own stand as a technical term for a book of Scripture. Additionally, a number of other plural uses of the word would allow for such a sense, even though they do not necessarily require it (Matt 21:42; 22:29:26:54; Mark 12:24; 14:49; Luke 24:27, 32, 45; John 5:39; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:24, 28; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 15:3, 4; 2 Pet 3:16). Another mark

It seems less likely, then, that individual books are meant here by γραφή and more likely that either the whole of Scripture or all of its individual passages are meant. Deciding between these two stronger options, however, proves difficult. This exegetical question cannot be answered with absolute certainty, but in the end the difference between the options is negligible, especially considering that, as people who preceded the introduction of verse and even chapter enumerations, Paul and Timothy would not have conceived of Scripture atomistically as if some sentences within a book could have a different status than others.

What has made this question a source of debate is really the next of the interrelated questions: What kind of adjective is θεόπνευστος in reference to the implied copula? Is it an attributive adjective preceding the implied copula (in which case the καί is adverbial) or is it a predicate adjective following the copula and coordinate with ὠφέλιμος? It is claimed that θεόπνευστος can be seen to be an attributive adjective from the frequency with which an adjective following a noun preceded by πᾶς is attributive,[70] and there is some ancient support to such a construal.[71] Such an attributive configuration that would speak of "every inspired Scripture" as if only a subset of the canonical γραφή were θεόπνευστος is an interpretation that would be attractive to the claims of Gospel reductionism. It is not necessary, or even likely, that such an attributive configuration would result in this meaning, however. The adjective still would not have to be meant to limit γραφή but could be meant only to describe it.[72]

Yet while the attributive configuration need not trouble us theologically, there is still strong reason to retain the predicate configuration: "Every Scripture *is* inspired." In equative clauses[73] an anarthrous adjective which follows an anarthrous noun is statistically

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against the idea that the word here speaks of individual books is Marshall's observation that, had such a meaning been intended here in 2 Tim 3:16, βίβλος may instead have been the more natural vocabulary choice. I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles,* ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 791.

[70] Roberts, "Scripture," 35.

[71] The Syriac Peshitta uses for the first adjective a relative clause (ܐܠܗܐ ܟܬܝܒܬܐ), the Sahidic Coptic uses a genitival construction (ⲚⲚⲓ̈ϥⲉ ⲚⲦⲉ ⲠⲚⲟⲨⲦⲉ), and Origen once paraphrases the passage as πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος οὖσα ὠφέλιμός ἐστι (*Hom. Jes. Nav.* 20.2). In all these cases, however, the renderings may just as well reflect the minority reading which omits the καί. Note additionally that it is clearly taken as a predicate adjective by Athanasius, who writes: Πᾶσα μὲν, ὦ τέκνον, ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Γραφὴ, παλαιά τε καὶ καινὴ, θεόπνευστός ἐστι καὶ ὠφέλιμος (*Ep. Marcell.*) and Chrysostom, who comments on this verse: Πᾶσα, ποία; Περὶ ἧς εἶπον, φησὶ, πᾶσα ἱερά· περὶ ἧς διελέγετο, ταῦτα εἴρητο· περὶ ἧς ἔλεγεν, ὅτι Ἀπὸ βρέφους τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας. Πᾶσα οὖν ἡ τοιαύτη θεόπνευστος. Μηδὲν οὖν ἀμφίβαλλε, φησί (*Hom. 2 Tim.* 9).

[72] Ed. L. Miller, "Plenary Inspiration and II Timothy 3:16," *The Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (Feb 1965): 56–62, esp. 59.

[73] An equative clause would be a clause where the subject is in some way "equated" with the predicate. Most often this is done with the verb "to be" or some other linking verb. The alternative to an equative clause, a non-equative clause, would be a clause where the predicate consists of an action verb.

significantly more likely to be a predicate adjective than an attributive adjective.[74] This pattern consistently holds true in the New Testament and the Old Greek specifically with nouns preceded by πᾶς.[75] Also, from a probability standpoint, καί[76] is statistically far more likely to be conjunctive than an adjunctive adverbial.[77] Finally, since γραφή is a technical term, it is definite even without the article,[78] and since πᾶς serves to make the noun it modifies just as definite as does the article,[79] this all means that a subsequent adjective may operate more like an anarthrous adjective following an arthrous noun, which too would make it a predicate adjective.[80] We are on solid ground keeping θεόπνευστος as a predicate adjective syntactically coordinate with ὠφέλιμος.[81]

Syntactic coordination, however, does not imply a rhetorical parallel. When it is claimed in favor of the attributive configuration that the thrust of Paul's argument here is to lead to ὠφέλιμος and not both ὠφέλιμος and θεόπνευστος,[82] a valid observation is being made, even while the wrong conclusions are being drawn from it. While θεόπνευστος and ὠφέλιμος are coordinated grammatically with a καί,[83] they occupy different positions within Paul's purpose.[84] That Scripture is θεόπνευστος is an assertion whose truth was already

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[74] Daniel B. Wallace, "The Relation of Adjective to Noun in Anarthrous Constructions in the New Testament," *NovTest* 26.2 (1984): 128–67.

[75] Wallace, *Grammar*, 314.

[76] The manuscript evidence in favor of omitting καί here is extremely weak.

[77] NIV translated approximately 350 instances of καί and its contracted forms in and adjunctive way (using the glosses "also," "too," or "like"). ESV did so in about 410 cases. HCSB did so in about 490. This is of the over 9000 times καί appears throughout the New Testament. These rough counts are consistent with Wallace's claim that "καί means 'and' twelve times as often as it means 'also'" (*Grammar*, 313).

[78] Such is true whether it means "Every Scripture-passage," in which the πᾶσα would function as a sort of improper article, or "All of Scripture," in which case "Scripture" would be practically monadic and consequently automatically definite.

[79] Wallace, *Grammar*, 314.

[80] Cf. F. Blass, A Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Revision of the Ninth-Tenth German Edition Incorporating Supplementary Notes of A. Debrunner* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), § 270.1.

[81] Goodrick ("Timothy," 483) is correct when he notes, "Although one might grammatically accommodate each word individually in this manner, I see no way that one can say, 'Every inspired Scripture is also profitable" or "Every profitable Scripture is also inspired.' It simply would not scan."

[82] Roberts, "Scripture," 36.

[83] Meier ("Inspiration," 75) labels this a consecutive καί, giving the clause the sense: "every passage of Scripture is inspired and *therefore* useful." On the consecutive καί, see Robertson, *Grammar*, 1183; Blass et al., *Grammar*, § 442.2.

[84] Syntactic analysis and sentence diagramming, like any other method of text study, have their limits. They are rightly supplemented by approaches such as discourse-structural analysis and rhetorical analysis.

known to Timothy,[85] in favor of which no supporting evidence is offered, and from it is established Scripture's resultant status of being ὠφέλιμος. That Scripture is ὠφέλιμος for Timothy's ministry is the point to which this paragraph from Paul is building, as can be further seen from the fact that Paul expands on ὠφέλιμος and not θεόπνευστος in 16b–17. Paul's speaking of Scripture as θεόπνευστος to support the fact that it is ὠφέλιμος is in keeping with Scripture's practice of treating its most foundational truths (e.g., the existence and attributes of God,[86] the Trinity,[87] the resurrection of Christ,[88] the inspiration of Scripture[89]) as axiomatic and facts which, although observable in their own way, are chiefly argued from, not argued for. The fact that in this verse Scripture's usefulness is here derived from its divine inspiration and not its divine inspiration from its usefulness is an important observation to make against the dangerous claims of Gospel reductionism, which locates Scripture's inspiration in its evangelical and soteriological utility.

Having addressed the important syntactic questions of the verse, that brings us to the equally important lexical questions surrounding the important word θεόπνευστος.[90] The compound θεόπνευστος is perhaps a neologism coined by Paul here.[91] This means that while

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[85] Therefore the logic between the two predications of Scripture is causal not conditional. Scripture is useful *because* it is God-breathed, not useful *if* it is God-breathed or *to the extent that* it is God-breathed, as if some alternative or exception were allowed.

[86] Cf. Gen 1:1; Exod 3:14; Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:26; Deut 6:4–5; 1 Sam 2:3; Ps 19:12; 25:8; 139:7–12; Isa 57:15; Jer 23:23–24; Mal 3:6; Matt 5:48; 19:26; Luke 18:27; John 4:24; Heb 13:8; Jam 1:17; 1 Pet 1:15–16; 2 Pet 3:8.

[87] Cf. Matt 3:16–17; 28:19; Luke 1:35; John 14:16; 15:26; Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 12:4–6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:18; 4:4–6; 1 Pet 1:2.

[88] Cf. Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30–31; 10:40; 13:30; Rom 1:40; 4:24–25; 6:4, 9; 8:11, 34; 1 Cor 15:11, 20–21; Eph 1:20; Phil 3:21.

[89] In addition to the passages which discuss the divine origin of Scripture more thoroughly (many of which are cited at some point in this writing), see the many passages where Scripture unapologetically asserts, "Thus says the Lord."

[90] While the adjective θεόπνευστος is feminine, modifying the feminine noun γραφή, it uses a second declension (typically masculine) ending, showing that the adjective has two terminations (masculine-feminine -ος and neuter -ον) as opposed to three (masculine -ος, feminine -α/η, and neuter -ον). This adjective having only two terminations would follow the regular tendency noticed by Moulton for compound adjectives to only have two terminations. James Hope Moulton and Wilbert Francis Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Volume II: Accidence and Word Formation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), § 64.

[91] *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* lists Paul's use of θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3:16 as being perhaps the word's fourth extant use, but this is rather misleading. The Egyptian historian Manetho (third century BC) is listed as providing its earliest extant use: (*Aeg.*, frag. 2). However, the word in question itself appears in a comment which clearly belongs not to a third-century-BC Egyptian historian but a post-fifth-century-AD Christian polemicist in that it not only speaks in favor of God and his Word but also references Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339 AD) and Pandorus (fl. c. 395–408 AD): "Thus Pandorus exerts himself to show that the Egyptian writings against God and against our divinely inspired Scriptures [τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν] are really in agreement with them. In this he criticizes Eusebius, not understanding that these arguments of his, which are

in most cases a word's etymology or diachronic development is of almost no help in discerning its sense at the time a speaker uttered it (especially in comparison to more synchronic approaches, unless the data for this is lacking), if Paul is inventing this word at this moment its etymology will coincide exactly with what the word was meant to communicate.[92] This compound is derived from the noun θεός "God" and the verb πνέω "breathe." At one time the meaning of this word was debated, as some claimed that the verbal suffix -τος bore an active sense ("breathing") and θεο- served as the object of that verbal action: "Every Scripture breathes out God."[93] This meaning would have seemed advantageous to the claims of Gospel reductionists, who, in seeking to harmonize a true

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incapable of proof or of reasoning, have been proved against himself and against truth." Translation taken from William Gillan Waddell, *Manetho: History of Egypt and Other Works*, LCL 350 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1940), 13–15. In other words, this comment, being an interpolation added to Manetho at a much later date, likely owes its language to Paul, not the other way around.

The second and third extant uses of θεόπνευστος listed in the *TLG* both come from the Sibylline Oracles. Unlike with the above interpolation in Manetho, these uses are not really parallel with Paul's use here. θεόπνευστος is used to characterize streams (5.308) and people (5.406). Even if this Sibylline Oracle had predated Paul, these phrases are unlikely to have had any influence on his expression. However, while some of the fragments which make up the Sibylline Oracles may be traced to the second century BC, much of the fifth book, in which these uses of θεόπνευστος occurs, is assumed to be from the second century AD (See Robert Henry Charles, ed. *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 373.

TLG also lists another use of the word which it locates in the first century AD, coming from the long recension of the pseudepigraphrical *Testament of Abraham*, where it is used to describe ointments (20:11). While the exact dating of this work is uncertain, it is true it may have in some form originated in the first century. However, Allison finds that the recension as it currently stands includes language otherwise not attested for centuries and may in its extant form be essentially a Byzantine-era work. Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Testament of Abraham*, Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2003), 40. Even were the word θεόπνευστος able to be traced back to something roughly contemporary to Paul, there is no indication that he had any familiarity with this work likely originating in Egypt (See Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, 32–33).

A last possible first-century-AD occurrence of the word is reported by *TLG* as coming from the *Sententiae* of Pseudo-Phocylides. However, it too is found in a statement which is marked as a later interpolation.

In the end, it is, of course, impossible to know one way or the other whether Paul was the word's originator, but it is safe to say that, if he was not, we have no uses of the word which precede Paul. This suggests that the word, if it had been used before, was at the very least not commonly enough in use for us to have record of it. As such we are safe to treat it as a neologism of Paul and allow etymology, governed by context, to be determinative in our interpretation.

[92] Carson (*Fallacies*, 33) further relates how rare words, such as this one is, are the exception to the "Root Fallacy" of etymologizing, as that is all the information one has to go on. See also Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 42.

[93] Most notably, Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, trans. William Urwick (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895), 730–32. Cremer's argument is based on several later occurrences of this word for which he thinks contextually only the active sense will work, as well as the fact that ἄπνευστος and εὔπνευστος often bear the active sense.

Gospel with the field of source criticism, could then use such a meaning to say that all of Scripture is not divine as to its origin but as to its overall Gospel effect. More lately, however, there has been a consensus that the correct interpretation is the traditional interpretation,[94] which holds that –τος has a passive sense, which is the more common meaning for the suffix,[95] and that θεο- denotes the agent of the verbal action, which is by far its more common use when compounded with verbal adjectives.[96]

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[94] Credit for the refutation of Cremer's interpretation belongs to Benjamin B. Warfield, "God-Inspired Scripture," in Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, Volume 1: Revelation and Inspiration* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 227–80. Warfield dismantles all of the alleged parallels pointed to by Cremer in support of his claim, both with respect to the question of their dating and origin and also with respect to the question of their meaning, then takes up issues of morphology, and finally corrects Cremer's misrepresentation of what is being asserted by the traditional interpretation.

[95] Robertson, *Grammar*, 1097; Max Zerwick, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples,* Vol. 114. English ed. (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1963), § 142.

[96] Based on the data available in LSJ, the active sense is found in θεοδήλετος "by which the gods are injured," θεομᾰχος "fighting against God," θεομῑμος "imitating God," θεοπαίγμων "sporting with the gods," θεοποιός "making gods," θεοταρβής "god-fearing," θεοταρπέ<ε>ς "delighting God," θεοτερπής "pleasing to God," θεοτρεφής "feeding the gods," θεουδής "fearing God."

The passive sense is found in θεοβλαβής "stricken of God," θεογενής "born of God," θεογεννής "begotten of God," θεόγνητος "born of a God," θεόγνωστος "known of God," θεογονος "born of God," θεοδίδακτος "taught of God," θεοδμητος "god-built," θεοδόσιος "given by God," θεοδώρητος "given by God," θεοθελής "willed by the gods," θεοθρέμμων "maintained by God," θεοθρεπτος "maintained by God," θεοκατάρᾱτος "accursed of God," θεοκατασκεύαστος "made by God," θεοκέλευστος "ordered by God," θεοκίνητος "roused by the gods," θεοκλητος "sung by gods," θεοκμητος "wrought by a god," θεοκραντος "ordained by the gods," θεοκτητος "acquired by God," θεοκτιστος "created by God," θεοκτῐτος "created by God," θεοληπτος "possessed," θεομᾰνής "maddened by the gods," θεομήστωρ "devised by God," θεομορος "destined by the gods," θεοπαιστος "struck by a god," θεοπαράδοτος "delivered by God," θεοπειθής "obedient to God," (note that "obey" is the meaning for πείθω in the passive), θεοπεμπτος "sent by the gods," θεοπιστος "faithful to God" (note that "faithful" is the passive sense of πιστός), θεοπληκτος "stricken of God," θεοπνοος "inspired of God," θεοποιητος "made by the gods," θεοπόνητος, θεόπτυστος "detested by the gods," θεόπῠρος "kindled by the gods," θεόρακτος "struck, i.e. maddened, by God," θεόρρῠτος "spoken of God," θέορτος "sprung from the gods," θεόσδοτος "given by the gods," θεόσπορος "sown by a god," θεοστεφής "crowned by god," θεοστήρικτος "supported by God," θεοστῐβής "trodden by God," θεοστῠγής "hated by the gods," θεοστύγητος "hated by the gods," θεοσύνδετος "united by God," θεόσῠτος "sent by the gods," θεοτείχης "walled by gods," θεοτέρᾱτος "with divine portents," θεοτευκτος "made by God," θεοτίμητος "honoured by the gods," θεοτῑμος "honoured by the gods," θεοτρεπτος "turned by the gods," θεόφθεγκτος "uttered by God," θεοφίλητος "loved by the gods," θεόφοβος "fearing God" (or better, recognizing the middle passive morphology of φοβοῦμαι, we could say, "frightened by God"), θεόφοιτος "driven by divine frenzy," θεοφῠλακτος "protected by God," θεοχόλωτος "under God's wrath," θεοχρηστος "delivered by God."

Both the active and the passive sense is found in θεοκλῦτος "calling on the gods" (active) or "heard by God," θεομῑσής "hated by the gods" (passive) or "hating God" (active), θεοφιλής "dear to the gods" (passive) or "loving God" (active), θεοφορητος "possessed by a god" (passive) or "carrying a god" (active), θεοφορος "bearing a god" (active) or "possessed by a god" (passive), θεοφρᾰδής "speaking from God" (active) or "indicated by God" (passive).

It is important to remember here, however, that such verbal adjectives, strictly speaking, do not have voice.[97] Our speaking of "active" and "passive" is only to express the implicit logic of the way the modified noun (or in this case, compounded noun) relates to the action suggested by the adjective. In hearing a new compound such as this one, Timothy, like any other hearer, would have instinctively relied on the combination of contextual clues and his encyclopedic understanding of the relationships between God, breathing, and Scripture to arrive at the same understanding of the word as intended by its speaker.

A number of passages throughout Scripture speak of God breathing,[98] but we never hear either of God being breathed or of Scripture breathing. A number of passages speak of God's Word as specifically coming from his mouth.[99] A number of other passages associate τὸ πνεῦμα "the Spirit", a paronym of πνέω, with the giving of the revealed Word of God.[100] And while it can be said and supported scripturally both that God gives us his Word and that the Word brings us God, the former is a much more frequent proposition within Scripture than is the latter. Taken cumulatively, in the light of the larger context of Scripture, the passive sense of "breathed by God" would have been very natural for Paul to speak of and very readily understandable for Timothy. On the other hand, the active sense of "breathing of/out God," would seem far too unprecedented and complex to be proposed like this in such an unspecified form as a compound adjective.[101] The early church too received Paul's word θεόπνευστος in the passive sense of "breathed by God." Contexts which make clear that such was their understanding are found already in Clement of Alexandria (150–215 AD)[102] and

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Note also how many of the adjectives ending in –τος were in the category of the passive sense. Warfield chronicles over 75 compounds which begin with θεο- and end with –τος which have the passive meaning, and only 11 which have an active meaning, several of which are formed from so-called deponent verbs ("God-Inspired," 265–67).

[97] Robertson, *Grammar*, 1095–96;

[98] Cf. Gen 2:7; Exod 15:10; 2 Sam 22:16; Job 4:9; 15:30; 26:13; 32:8; 33:4; 37:4; Ps 18:15; 33:6; Isa 11:4; 30:28, 33; 33:11; 40:7; 59:19; Ezek 21:31; John 20:22; Acts 2:2, 4; 2 Thess 2:8.

[99] Cf. Deut 8:3; 1 Kgs 8:15, 24; 2 Chr 6:4, 15; Job 22:22; 23:12; 37:2; Ps 119:13, 72, 88; Prov 2:6; Is 1:2; 11:4; 34:16; 40:5; 45:23; 48:3; 55:11; 58:14; 62:2; Jer 9:20; 23:16; Lam 3:38; Hos 6:5.

[100] Cf. Num 11:25–26; 24:2–3; 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 19:23; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Chr 15:1; 20:14, 20; Neh 9:20, 30; Isa 59:21; Ezek 2:2; 3:24; 8:3; 11:1, 5, 24; 37:1; 43:5; Joel 2:28–29; Zech 7:12; Matt 10:20; 22:43; Mark 12:36; 13:11; Luke 1:67; 2:25; John 6:63; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13, 15; Acts 1:16; 2:17–18; 4:8, 25, 31; 10:19; 11:28; 13:2; 15:28; 20:23; 21:4, 11; 28:25; 1 Cor 2:10–13; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:7; 9:8: 10:15; 1 Pet 1:10–12; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 4:2; 17:3; 19:10; 21:10.

[101] "Breathing of/out the *Spirit*" would not seem impossible, but, even while rightly recognizing that the Spirit is true God, it must be admitted that as a direct statement of Scripture "breathing of/out God" would be to introduce a new manner of speaking.

[102] *Strom.* 7.16: "And those have a craving for glory who voluntarily evade, by arguments of a diverse sort, the things delivered by the blessed apostles and teachers, which are wedded to inspired words [τοῖς θεοπνεύστοις λόγοις]; opposing the divine tradition by human teachings, in order to establish the heresy." Translation from Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata, or Miscellanies," in *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James

Origen (184–253 AD),[103] and later patristic writers as well.[104] The ancient versions too reflect this interpretation.[105]

In describing Scripture's character as being "God-breathed," Paul provides for us the *sedes doctrinae* for the article of Inspiration. "God-breathed" depicts for us not a particular method for how such inspiration occurred (and a variety of them seem to have been used),[106]

Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 2 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1185), 553–54.

[103] Origen, in a chapter entitled "On the Divine Inspiration of the Divine Scripture [Περὶ τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς θείας γραφῆς]" writes (*Princ.* 4.1.6): "And while we thus briefly demonstrate the deity of Christ, and (in so doing) make use of the prophetic declarations regarding Him, we demonstrate at the same time that the writings which prophesied of Him were divinely inspired [θεοπνεύστους]; and that those documents which announced His coming and His doctrine were given forth with all power and authority, and that on this account they obtained the election from the Gentiles. We must say, also, that the divinity of the prophetic declarations, and the spiritual nature of the law of Moses, shone forth after the advent of Christ. For before the advent of Christ it was not altogether possible to exhibit manifest proofs of the divine inspiration [θεοπνεύστους] of the ancient Scripture; whereas His coming led those who might suspect the law and the prophets not to be divine, to the clear conviction that they were composed by (the aid of) heavenly grace. And he who reads the words of the prophets with care and attention, feeling by the very perusal the traces of the divinity, that is in them, will be led by his own emotions to believe that those words which have been deemed to be the words of God are not the compositions of men. The light, moreover, which was contained in the law of Moses, but which had been concealed by a veil, shone forth at the advent of Jesus, the veil being taken away, and those blessings, the shadow of which was contained in the letter, coming forth gradually to the knowledge (of men)." Translation from Origen, "De Principiis," in *Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minculus Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Frederick Crombie, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 354.

Comm. Jo. 1.5: "Consider on this point the language of St. Paul. When he declares that "Every Scripture is inspired of God and profitable," does he include his own writings? Or does he not include his dictum, "I say, and not the Lord," and "So I ordain in all the churches," and "What things I suffered at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra," and similar things which he writes in virtue of his own authority, and which do not quite possess the character of words flowing from divine inspiration." Origen, "Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John," in *The Gospel of Peter, the Diatessaron of Tatian, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Visio Pauli, the Apocalypses of the Virgil and Sedrach, the Testament of Abraham, the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, the Narrative of Zosimus, the Apology of Aristides, the Epistles of Clement (Complete Text), Origen's Commentary on John, Books I-X, and Commentary on Matthew, Books I, II, and X-XIV*, ed. Allan Menzies, trans. Allan Menzies. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 9 (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1897), 299.

[104] See the overview found in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), s.v; Warfield, "God-Inspired," 256–59.

[105] Latin Vulgate: *divinitus inspirata* ("divinely inspired"); Syriac Peshitta: ܟܬܒܐ ܟܠ ܒܪܘܚܐ ("written by the Spirit"); Sahidic Coptic: ⲛⲛⲓϥⲉ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ("of the breath of God").

[106] This would include, but not necessarily be limited to, dictation, research, total recall, visions, and Spirit-guided extemporaneous thoughts. There is nothing in Scripture that would suggest that the intellect, emotion, and will of the holy writers were necessarily unengaged in the writing processes, yet that truth of human

but instead the nature of such Scripture that the Spirit of God was authorially operative in its writing.[107] All of Scripture—including every individual excerpt from it, even down to the letter—can be said to be and is God's Word, words spoken by God himself through human writers.

Our use of the term "inspiration" for this teaching, drawn from the Vulgate (*omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata*),[108] is somewhat unfortunate, and not merely on account of the much looser sense in which creative works are today commonly said to be "inspired" or "inspiring." *Inspiro* denotes a breathing into,[109] which would more properly have been the rendering if Paul had written θεοέμπνευστος, built from ἐμπνέω, which shares *inspiro*'s sense.[110] Better would have been for Jerome to match the form of his source language and use the prefix-less *spiro*, meaning a breathing out,[111] which more closely imitates the meaning of πνέω,[112] from which Paul formed θεόπνευστος. This unfortunate translation choice implies a different picture than what Paul describes here. According to the form of the words themselves, *Divine Inspiration* would seem to communicate that God breathed something into the Scriptures.[113] More closely following Scripture's own language here,

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authorship in no way compromises or minimizes the extent to which God is the primary author of all their words.

[107] Even though derived from a verb, as an adjective, θεόπνευστος is aspectually neutral (Cf. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1096). So strictly speaking, it cannot directly specify "having been breathed by God" but merely "God-breathed."

[108] Jerome also used the word in 2 Pet 1:21: *Spiritu Sancto inspirati*.

[109] Cf. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), s.v.

[110] Cf. LSJ, s.v.

[111] Cf. LS, s.v.

[112] Cf. LSJ, s.v.

[113] This confusion in terms seems to be part of the reason why Goodrick ("Timothy," 484–85) tries to make θεόπνευστος in 2 Tim 3 an allusion to God breathing into Adam the breath of life. However, beyond the fact that the word refers to being breathed out, not being breathed into, on several other grounds this passage falls short of the necessary criteria for making an allusion. Cherney identifies "plausible intentionality" on the part of the author as the most important criterion for judging whether an allusion is present, and that this can be gathered from "shared lexis and/or syntax" (recognizing that such could on its own, however, be due to "coincidence, common vocabulary, limited alternatives, similarity in images, motifs, and themes") or some other "allusion marker," but even more tellingly whether "there is some kind of 'gap' in the alluding text that requires the alluded-to text to fill" in order for the reader to perceive the author's full communicative intent. Kenneth A. Cherney, Jr., "Allusion as Translation Problem: Portuguese Versions of Second Isaiah as Test Case," PhD Dissertation at Stellenbosch University (2014), 45–46. Since LXX Gen 2:7 uses not πνέω but ἐμφυσάω to speak of breathing into Adam, it seems unlikely that Paul would have recalled this verse here in 2 Tim 3 by perhaps making up a word from a different verb. Additionally, nothing also in context would alert the hearer to the presence of this single-word allusion. Finally, as far as Paul's point in this verse goes, nothing noteworthy seems lost by missing such a proposed allusion, and nothing noteworthy seems gained by recognizing it.

what we might more precisely call *Divine Spiration*[114] depicts that God breathed out the Scriptures. They are words from God's own mouth. Since it is a γραφή, the written Word, which is here said to be breathed from God,[115] it becomes clear also that the extent of the Spirit's influence on this writing process did not stop short of the very words themselves.[116] God likewise does not merely vouch for the words as if they are not his but he approves of their message—they are his very words.[117] We rightly explain the character of such inspiration (or, spiration) when we show it pertains down to the word-level by attaching to it the clarifying designation "verbal." Likewise when we show that such inspiration (or, spiration) is comprehensive of both Scripture's thoughts and words and without a single exception within Scripture by also including the adjective "plenary."[118]

Lastly on this topic, regardless of the precise sense of πᾶσα γραφή, its referent is clear. The phrase, anaphorically referring to the same entity as ἱερὰ γράμματα in the previous

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[114] While it might seem that since the meaning is "breathe out of" instead of "breathe into," a word like "expiration" might fit better, the word "expiration" in English can also frequently refer to breathing one's last and perishing. The same phenomenon is found in Greek, and may be why Paul would not have built his new word from ἐκπνέω (Cf. LSJ, s.v.). One additional advantage of the term *Spiration* would be that term already does function as a less-used synonym for what we in English call the *Procession* of the Holy Spirit. There is an internal spiration of the Holy Spirit, that by which he eternally hypostatically proceeds from the Father and the Son. There is also an external spiration of the Holy Spirit, that by which in time proceeds from the Father and Son to the human race. Because the coming of the Holy Spirit to people is coterminous with his bringing to them his Word, it would seem natural to use the same designation for them. In time, the Father through the Son breathed forth the Spirit, and this happens as the Father through the Son breathed forth Scripture.

[115] If we feel any awkwardness from the way that Paul speaks of the written Word of God as if it were a spoken Word breathed from God's mouth, it may help to remember that in Paul's time there would have been no such dichotomy between the oral and the literary. Written documents would have been considered a permanent record of a spoken word. See Ernst R. Wendland, *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language: The Case of the New Testament Epistles* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Wales: Edwin Mellen, 2008), 1–56. For this reason 2 Pet 1:21 similarly speaks of the written prophetic word as being a spoken word (ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι). The apostles would have been inspired in the oral proclamations of the Gospel as well, since nothing in Scripture suggests that the Holy Spirit was imparted to them only when they wrote. (See Hoenecke, *Dogmatics I*, 406, 413, 415. Of especial interest is how Hoenecke demonstrates the inspired status of the apostolic writings from the inspired status of the apostolic speech). We, however, are to focus only on those God-breathed messages which God wanted committed to writing so that they would be preserved for the church of all time.

Since these Scriptures were spoken by God in their creation, through their being preserved for posterity in written form, it is also fitting to say not only that God did speak them but also that, as they are being read at the present time, God is speaking to people today through them.

[116] See Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 217–19. Note that in speaking against an "inspiration of the person" Pieper is not suggesting either that the words were somehow inspired by God apart from the Spirit working through that individual or that such revelations were not inspired before written down. He is rightly arguing that inspiration pertains to the very words, not *merely* the people writing or the topics written about.

[117] See Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 219–20.

[118] For more on the topic of inspiration, see Hoenecke, *Dogmatics I*, 405–49.

verse, speaks of the canonical Old Testament Scriptures, and asserts they are both inspired and useful in their entirety.[119] It is, then, technically correct when it is said that this verse is not spoken specifically in reference to the status of the New Testament Scriptures.[120] However, since Paul here speaks of Scripture as a *class* of writings,[121] whatever other writings belong to this class of canonical writings would share this description, even if Paul was not specifically intending the New Testament Scriptures, some of which had not yet even been written. That the New Testament Scriptures belong to the same class as the Old Testament Scriptures is made clear in a number of places in the New Testament.[122] As for this verse's contribution to questions of canonicity (regarding *homologomena*, *antilegomena*, *spuria*, etc.), in describing γραφή as being θεόπνευστος, Paul here implicitly accepts and confirms for us the Old Testament canon, and he also shows not *which* specific writings belong to the New Testament canon (since he does not identify them by name), but *which kind of* writings belong to the New Testament canon, namely, those which are θεόπνευστος. Put in other terms, God's breathing out the Scriptures is what makes them canonical, but Paul, in telling us this, explains the qualifications for a book being recognized as canonical, even as he does not provide us a list of books which make up the New Testament canon.

8. God's Word Is Inerrant And Authoritative

πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν,
πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ (16)

Paul has stated that all of Scripture is inspired by God. Does it follow from this that all of Scripture is inerrant? Though we commonly argue from Scripture's divine author its inerrant status, there are those who have challenged the validity of this deduction.[123] On the

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[119] Towner (*Timothy*, 587–88) suggests that Paul may have had reason to assert the inspired and useful status of all the Old Testament writings if part of the false teaching which Timothy was dealing with was a tendency to develop a "canon within the canon," where inappropriate inferences were drawn from some parts of Scripture while other parts of Scripture were denigrated or merely ignored.

[120] For an example of such a statement made within confessional Lutheran circles, see Jeffrey Kloha, "Text and Authority: Theological and Hermeneutical Reflections on a Plastic Text," (2013), 9, who states that this verse, and others like it (John 10:35; 2 Pet 1:21) "say nothing about the source and authority of the New Testament."

[121] Zerwick (*Greek*, §189) notes on this verse that "it is correct to insist on the absence of the article as showing that inspiration belongs to Scripture Scripture *as such* («all Scripture.…»), whereas with the article («all the Scripture …») it would simply register the fact that the existing Scripture was inspired, without establishing a formal principle."

[122] Cf. Matt 10:19–20; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13–14; 1 Cor 2:12–13; 14:37; 2 Cor 5:20; 13:3; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 5:18 (cf. Luke 10:7); 2 Pet 3:16; Rev 22:18–20.

[123] For an example which makes such an argument not to challenge the doctrine of inerrancy but as an effort to place it on more solid footing, see Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr., "The Argument from Inspiration to Infallibility," *Reformed Journal* (June 1960): 15–18. For an example of a someone within confessional Lutheranism making such an argument as a way to allow factual errors in Scripture, see Hermann Sasse, "On the Doctrine *De*

grounds of logic, such a challenge, to some degree, makes a legitimate point.[124] The fact that God wrote Scripture through these men does not demonstrate inerrancy unless two other things are proven: first, that God himself is inerrant; second, that his inerrancy is not in any way mitigated by the otherwise fallible human authors through whom he speaks. For example, lacking any evidence to the contrary, one could hypothetically argue that the Spirit's work of authoring the Scriptures is to an extent mixed together with human errors in the same way that his work of sanctification within the regenerate is to an extent mixed together with human vices. In other words, it is true that the statement that Scripture is God's Word is not by itself an *a priori* rationale[125] for inerrancy.

This discussion is, of course, all hypothetical, because the necessary co-premises to deduce inerrancy from divine authorship are all found in Scripture. Scripture maintains that God himself is inerrant and constant.[126] Scripture also maintains that this inerrancy is not in any way mitigated by the otherwise fallible human authors through whom God speaks and that this inerrancy can be attributed to the Scriptures themselves.[127] Because the truth of inerrancy is taught by Scripture itself, this means that, while the doctrine of inerrancy is an *a posteriori* inference from a statement of the divine authorship of Scripture (the concluding co-evidences for which are the other statements of Scripture itself), it remains an *a priori* teaching of Scripture as a whole,[128] requiring no investigation into the truth status of all its statements before being appropriated as inerrant by faith for no other reason than that Scripture itself asserts it.

We may say more, though, on how the divine authorship of Scripture confirms its inerrancy, since Paul in this very passage says far more than merely that in some nebulous

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Scriptura Sacra," trans. Ralph Gehrke, in Hermann Sasse, *Letters to Lutheran Pastors, Vol. 1:1948–1951,* ed. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), 240–84; Hermann Sasse, "What Does Luther Have to Say to Us on the Inerrancy of the Holy Scripture?", trans. Ralph Gehrke, in Sasse, *Letters*, 332–66. Note that Sasse did recant his position later on in life and recognized the inerrancy of Scripture (Cf. Herman Sasse, "Documents Pertaining to Letter 14," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, in Sasse, *Letters*, 285–86).

[124] This was admitted by Edmund Reim, "Dr. Sasse on Inspiration and the New Missouri," *WLQ* 49.1 (Jan 1952): 59–61. Reim goes on to explain how the doctrine of inerrancy does not raise Scripture above the Gospel but supports the Gospel as being entirely free from all error.

[125] An *a priori* justification would be an argument which requires only the use of logic or reason and no outside empirical evidence. The opposite of an *a priori* justification would be an *a posteriori* justification, which would be an argument which is at least in some manner dependent on outside empirical evidence.

[126] Cf. Num 23:19; 1 Sam 2:3; 15:29; Job 12:13; Ps 33:11; 147:5; Prov 15:3; 19:21; Isa 40:13–14; Mal 3:6; Rom 3:3–4; 11:29; 16:27; 2 Tim 2:13; Titus 1:2; Heb 4:13; 6:18.

[127] Cf. 1 Sam 3:19; 2 Sam 7:28; 1 Kgs 17:24; Ps 33:4; 119:43, 86, 142, 160; Eccl 12:10; Isa 8:20; John 10:35; 17:17; 19:28–30; 2 Tim 2:15; Jam 1:18; Rev 3:14; 19:9.

[128] On the inerrancy of Scripture as an *a priori* belief, see Theodore Engelder, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1944), 35–52; Gottfried Wachler, "The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture: An Examination of Hermann Sasse's *Sacra Scriptura* based on the History of Doctrinal Theology and Dogmatics," *WLQ* 82.1 (Winter 1985): 39–62, esp. 42–43.

way God is the author of Scripture. In speaking of all (πᾶσα) the canonical written texts (γραφή) as have been breathed out by God (θεόπνευστος), he clarifies the nature of that authorship in a way which allows for nothing within the Scriptures which could have a non-divine, and therefore, errant, character. Even if an unclarified assertion of divine authorship for Scripture would not demonstrate its inerrancy (without the help of the rest of Scripture), the teaching given here of plenary verbal inspiration is sufficient demonstration that Scripture is inerrant, and an argument for it which can be considered *a priori* justification, requiring neither parallel passage nor external verification of Scripture to support such a claim. Plenary verbal inspiration means absolute inerrancy.

Paul's application of the doctrine of inspiration in this verse further shows that he considers the doctrine of inerrancy to be a valid inference from it. Applying the fact that all Scripture is God-breathed, he states what it is profitably to be used for (ὠφέλιμος). A document must be entirely without error if all of it (πᾶσα) is to be a beneficial source of teaching (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν) or training in righteousness (πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ). Likewise it must be entirely without error if all of it (πᾶσα) is to serve as a beneficial basis for refuting (πρὸς ἐλεγμόν) and correcting (πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν). Dogmaticians refer to Scripture's status as the source of true teaching as being its causative authority, and its status to stand as the measure and judge of all teaching as being its normative authority,[129] and both of these imply and assume that Scripture is inerrant. If Scripture were not true and inerrant in its entirety, in what way could it serve as the sole standard and authority for establishing and judging either teaching or behavior? Allowing for even the possibility of error would require something else to be the standard and authority, or at least the co-standard and co-authority. While there are many who to various degrees allow for reason, emotions, ecclesial structures, or tradition to function as such co-standards, Paul places an inspired Scripture, and all of the inspired Scripture, as the only such standard here, because he recognizes that a divinely inspired Scripture is a divinely inerrant Scripture.

9. God's Word Is All Useful

ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν,
πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ (16b)

Employing element-level asyndeton for emphasis,[130] likely signaling with this staccoto effect that this phrase is the climax of the present discussion, Paul enumerates four purposes for which Scripture is useful (ὠφέλιμος).[131] These purposes can be divided in two

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[129] See Hoenecke, *Dogmatics I*, 451–52.

[130] Cf. Robertson, 427.

[131] While not a compound noun, ὠφέλιμος is simply a two-termination adjective, and so here the form which might otherwise suggest a masculine noun being modified can be used in agreement with the feminine γραφή.

ways, either with respect to what they address: the first two terms (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν[132] and πρὸς ἐλεγμόν) address doctrine; the last two terms (πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν and πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ[133]) address morality. Or they can be divided with respect to the manner in which they address that issue: in chiastic form the first and last item (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν and πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ) speak of the positive instruction of promoting what is good and right; the middle two items (πρὸς ἐλεγμόν and πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν) speak of negative instruction in that they speak of countering what is bad and wrong.

All Scripture, then, is useful for both positive and negative instruction as to both doctrine and life.[134] While many individual passages certainly on their own and in isolation do not accomplish as much,[135] when set within their context and considered according to their purpose, every individual passage contributes in some way to Scripture's propositional teachings. Scripture's propositional teachings, in turn, all find some application to both doctrine and life, that is, both to what we are to believe and what we are to do.[136]

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[132] While this word can take on the passive meaning of "that which is taught," here, in view of the three parallel expressions which follow, it must have the active meaning of "the act of teaching." Still, however, if the Scriptures are useful to employed in the act of teaching, it is because they are useful as the source and standard of all doctrine.

[133] While often the abstract noun δικαιοσύνη speaks is used in reference to justification to speak of the righteous status believers have before God for Christ's sake, the word is also often used in reference to what we call sanctification (in the narrow sense) to speak of righteous behavior and actions (Matt 5:10; Acts 10:35; 13:10; Rom 6:16, 18–20; 14:17; 2 Cor 6:7; Eph 5:9; 6:14; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22; Heb 1:9; 12:11; Jam 1:20; 3:18; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:14; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10; Rev 22:11).

[134] Harold Wicke writes, "Those who might like to compartmentalize Scripture and say: Yes, this is good for doctrine, but that is good for reproof, etc., should note that God in this passage does not do so. He places no 'or' between doctrine—reproof—correction—instruction in righteousness; not even an 'and.' 'All' or 'every' Scripture is profitable for each one of these. As far as I am concerned, therefore, 'doctrine' and 'Scripture' are synonymous: we can eliminate no statement in Scripture from having the character of or from being 'doctrine.'" Harold Wicke, "What Is 'Doctrine' According to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions?" (Part 2) *WLQ* 57 (1960): 81–97, esp. 84.

[135] And it would be fair to note that even some entire books of the Bible would not seem by themselves, in isolation from the rest of Scripture, to be sufficient to work saving faith. Hoenecke (*Dogmatics I*, 468): "The words do not say that every individual book *alone* is to be profitable for this."

[136] To illustrate this, the chart on the following page shows examples of the same biblical teaching being set before us to both to appropriate by faith and also to apply in our lives. Often the doctrinal appropriation is primary and the life-application is secondary, but both are present within Scripture. This close relationship between "believe" and "do" underscores the truth that, while for conceptually clarity it is crucial to keep justification and sanctification distinct from each other so that the article on justification is in no way compromised, these two articles are very closely connected to each other.

10. God's Word Is Sufficient And Makes Sufficient

ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος (17)

Concluding and summarizing his appeal to Timothy to stick with the Word, Paul states that the intended and, when so employed, accomplished result (ἵνα) of Scripture's useful quality is that the Man of God (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος) be made capable for his task

Teaching	"To believe" (Doctrine)	"To do" (Life)
Trinity	All three persons focused on our salvation (1 Pet 1:2)	Unity with other believers (John 17:11, 21–22)
Active Obedience	As our substitute (Gal 4:4–5; Rom 5:18–19)	As our example (1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1–2; 1 John 2:6)
Passive Obedience	As our substitute (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2)	As our example of humble suffering (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:15; 1 Pet 2:21; 1 John 3:16)
Redemp-tion	Christ bought us from slavery to be his people (Rom 3:24; Gal 3:13–14; 4:5; Eph 1:7; Tit 2:14)	Christ bought us for himself to live as his people (1 Cor 6:20; Titus 2:4; 1 Pet 1:18)
Law	Shows us our sinfulness (Rom 3:20)	Shows us how to love God (1 John 5:3; 2 John 6)
Keys	When we receive the absolution, we are truly forgiven (Matt 18:18; John 20:23)	We are to extend the absolution to those who repent (Matt 18:18; John 20:23; 2 Cor 2:5–11)
Baptism	Baptism saves and forgives sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 3:21)	Empowers and encourages to live free of sin (Rom 6:1–11; 1 Cor 6:11)
Lord's Supper	Delivers and assures of the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:18–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25)	Unity with fellow believers (1 Cor 10:16–17; 11:33–34); Keeping away from false unions and religion (1 Cor 10:21)
Justifica-tion	By faith alone we are justified (Rom 3:21–31; Gal 2:15–16; Phil 3:9)	Accept other believers regardless of externals (Acts 15:19; Rom 14:1–4; 1 Pet 1:15–16)
Sanctifica-tion	We have been made holy by faith (1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10)	We are to live in a way which is holy (1 Thess 4:3, 7)
Invisible Church	Find status before God by faith in Christ, not externals (Matt 13:24–30)	Do not seek to root out hypocrites (Matt 13:24–30)
Resurrec-tion	We will rise bodily with Christ (1 Cor 15:20–22)	We should be willing to suffer no and to keep our bodies from sin (1 Cor 15:30–34)
Second Coming of Christ	Christ's return is hoped for as deliverance (Luke 21:28; Heb 9:28; 1 Cor 15:50–57; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 4:13–18; Rev 22:20)	Christ's return is an encouragement to watchfulness and holiness (Mark 13:32–37; Rom 13:11–14; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Thess 5:1–11)
Scripture	God's Word can always be trusted (John 10:35)	Scripture should be used and never changed (2 Tim 3:14–17; Rev 22:18–19)
Church Fellowship	God's truth is pure and important in every detail (Gal 1:6–7; 2 John 7–9)	Keep away from false teaching (Rom 16:17; Titus 3:10)
Marriage	Christ's self-sacrificing love for the church (Eph 5:25–33)	Husbands and wives fulfill their proper roles, the Church submits to Christ (Eph 5:22–33)

(ἄρτιος).[137] While in theory ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος could be used to designate any believer, on the basis of parallel usages it is clear that this term denotes at the very least a public minister of the Gospel, and specifically, one who has been entrusted with the words of God.[138] It is through the God-breathed and useful Scriptures that Timothy and all other Gospel ministers like him are made suitable for the work to which they have been called, something which

[137] Wallace observes that a predicate adjective which precedes the noun tends to be "slightly more emphatic than the noun," (*Grammar*, 307) and this is what is found here in this verse. This pattern of emphasis would be in keeping with the principle that the natural information flow is to begin with the established information and move toward the newly asserted information, and that deviations to this order, such as bringing new information to the beginning of the clause, serve to mark that information as emphatic. See Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2010), 181–205.

[138] Used of Moses (Deut 33:1; Josh 14:6; 1 Chr 23:14; 2 Chr 30:16; Ezra 3:2; Ps 90 title), the angel of the Lord when prophesying the birth of Samson (Judg 13:6, 8), the anonymous prophet who spoke to Eli (1 Sam 2:27), the seer consulted by Saul and his servant (1 Sam 9:6–8, 10), the prophet Shemaiah (1 Kgs 12:22; 2 Chr 11:2), the anonymous prophet who spoke to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13:1, 4–8, 11–12, 14, 21, 26, 29, 31; 2 Kgs 23:16–17), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:18, 24; 2 Kgs 1:9–13), the anonymous prophet who spoke to Ahab (1 Kgs 20:23), Elisha (2 Kgs 4:7, 9, 21–22, 25, 27, 40, 42; 5:8, 14–15, 20; 6:6, 9–10, 15; 7:2, 17–19; 8:2, 4, 7–8, 11, 19), David (2 Chr 8:14; Neh 12:24, 36), the anonymous prophet who spoke to Amaziah (2 Chr 25:7, 9), Hanan's father Igdaliah (Jer 35:4), and finally, Timothy in particular (1 Tim 6:11), and a more general reference which includes Timothy (2 Tim 3:17). Ignoring Igdaliah, about whom we know nothing else at all, all of the Old Testament usages are of people who carried out some sort of ministerial office. To be even more specific, most of the men called "man of God" were prophets, and the others functioned in ways similar to prophets (the angel of the Lord and David). It would seem safe to conclude that "man of God" denotes a minister of God, and likely also implies a man to whom God speaks. We are given no indication that Timothy himself functioned as a prophet in the sense that God directly communicated messages to him, but the use of this designation "man of God" for him suggests associating him as being, like those Old Testament prophets, a minister of God to whom God speaks and to whom God has given a message. And if, as seems likely, Timothy was not among those who received such messages directly, this again would show the God-breathed Scriptures as equipping Timothy, and all non-inspired ministers like him, to be "men of God." Towner (*Timothy*, 593) points out that this is not the first time even within this chapter (3:8–9) where Paul implicitly connects contemporary ministers of the truth with a minster of the past such as Moses. Both are further alike in that their proclamation of the truth is opposed by false teachers.

Sorum, however, is correct in noting the emphatic variation in word order in this phrase in 2 Tim 3:17, where Paul embeds the genitive τοῦ θεοῦ between ὁ and ἄνθρωπος, over against the Old Greek's always placing θεοῦ after ἄνθρωπος in a manner which more closely preserves the word order of the Hebrew. E. Allen Sorum, "Man or Servant in 2 Timothy 3:17?" *WLQ* 111.2 (2014): 108–14. This observation is in line with the observable tendency for genitives to be placed in front of the head noun as way of marking them as either "emphatic" or "contrastive" (Robertson, *Grammar*, 502–3). The point, then, is likely a light nod to the contrast initiated by σὺ δέ in verse 14: Other men may read and use other words, but men *of God* read and use *God's* Word. A similar contrastive use is found in 1 Tim 6:11, which, although not marking the phrase as emphatic or contrastive by word order, is contextually meant to contrast the godly life which should be lived by a man of God over against the worldly life that is being lived by the men of the world.

Paul asserted about himself and his apostolic ministry as well.[139] The proverb "A man is only as good as his tools"[140] applies well to the pastoral ministry. Since the Word is sufficient,[141] so is the minister of the Word.[142]

Paul emphasizes this point he has made with ἄρτιος by expanding upon it with a cognate verb with an intensive prefix: ἐξηρτισμένος. Through the Word Timothy was not just somewhat equipped but fully equipped.[143] Paul also makes explicit the extent of his ministerial task which this equipped-ment covers: not merely some of the work, but every good work (πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν)[144] to which he has been called.

Because Scripture is able to accomplish its task of making sufficient, Scripture too is here seen to be sufficient. This sufficiency does not imply that it answers to our subjective satisfaction every question our curiosity might ask of it, but that instead it is sufficient for carrying out every task for which God gave it, and such purposes were just enumerated in these very verses: teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, all of it centered on making us wise for salvation through the faith which centers on Christ Jesus.

Conclusion

Men of God, in so many ways this Word you have from God is worth sticking with. So stick with it, for yourselves, and for the people of God entrusted to your care.

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[139] Cf. 2 Cor 3:6.

[140] Attributed to the apparently otherwise unknown Emmert Wolf.

[141] See Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 317–19.

[142] Hoenecke (*Dogmatics I*, 462–63) works the opposite direction and demonstrates the sufficiency of Scripture from the sufficiency of its effect.

[143] Morphologically, the form is a perfect passive participle. Being formed from a factitive verb with an –ιζω suffix, the word should be classified as an Adjectival Process Middle (Cf. Jensen, "Middle," 94–96), which would mean that no agent is conceptualized. While it is difficult to conceive of someone becoming equipped without someone (themselves or others) carrying out the equipping, Buth explains how middles and passives, since they do not morphologize an action's agent, "are more prototypically pictured as a result, a state, without picturing the event that produced the state (Randall Buth, "Getting the Right Handles on the Greek Perfect," https://www.biblicallanguagecenter.com/handles-greek-perfect (2013)). I have confirmed that such is frequently the case for Adjectival Process Middles in the perfect (Cf. Jensen, "Middle," 95). This means here that an "equipped man" does not speak to the question of who did the equipping, only that his state would be "equipped," making the perfect passive participle functionally an ordinary (but emphatic) adjective. This is not unlike how many passive participles in English (including "equipped") come to function as adjectives. The so-called "divine passive," which would seek to make God the invisible agent of agentless passive constructions, is a construction which has been debunked by Peter-Ben Smit and Toon Renssen, "The *Passivum Divinum*: The Rise and Future Fall of an Imaginary Linguistic Phenomenon," *FN* 47 (2015): 3–24, and so it does not come into play here or elsewhere. While God is not the unnamed agent of the phrase grammatically, as the existence of an agent is in no way implicated or conceptualized by the participle, theologically-speaking, God is, of course, the one who does carry out such ministry-equipping through the means of grace.

[144] The similar expression εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν is found elsewhere within this letter in a context which too speaks to ministerial service (2:21).

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    Sir   Sirach

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Manetho
    Aeg.   *Aegyptica*   *History of Egypt*

Judaeo-Hellenistic
Josephus
    A.J.   *Antiquitates judaicae*   *Jewish Antiquities*
    B.J.   *Bellum judaicum*   *Jewish War*
    C. Ap.   *Contra Apionem*   *Against Apion*
Philo
    Abr.   *De Abrahamo*   *On the Life of Abraham*
    Congr.   *De congressu eruditionis gratia*   *On the Preliminary Studies*
    Decal.   *De decalogo*   *On the Decalogue*
    Fug.   *De fuga et inventione*   *On Flight and Finding*
    Her.   *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*   *Who Is the Heir?*
    Mos.   *De vita Mosis*   *On the Life of Moses*
    Opif.   *De opificio mundi*   *On the Creation of the World*
    Somn.   *De somniis*   *On Dreams*
    Spec.   *De specialibus legibus*   *On the Special Laws*
Pseudo-Phocylides
    Sent.   *Sententiae*   *Sentences*

Pseudopigraphic
    Sib. Or.   Sibylline Oracles
    T. Ab.   Testament of Abraham

Rabbinic
    ʾAbot   Pirqe ʾAbot   *Ethics of Our Fathers*

Patristic
Athanasius
    Ep. Marcell.   *Epistula ad Marcellinum de*   *Letter to Marcellinus on the*
                        interpretatione Psalmorum   *Interpretation of the Psalms*

Chrysostom
    Hom. 2 Tim.   *Homiliae in epistulam ii ad Timotheum*   *Homilies on 2 Timothy*
Clement of Alexandria
    Strom.   *Stromateis*   *Miscellanies*
Origen
    Comm. Jo.   *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*   *Commentary on John*
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