

2 Timothy 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Analysis

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. This is one of Scripture's most crucial verses on its own nature. "All scripture" (pasa graphē, πᾶσα γραφή). Pasa (πᾶσα) means all, every—no exceptions. Graphē (γραφή) means writing, Scripture—technical term for sacred writings. Paul refers minimally to the Old Testament, but the principle extends to New Testament writings (2 Peter 3:15-16 calls Paul's letters "Scripture"). All Scripture, every part, carries equal divine authority.

"Is given by inspiration of God" (theopneustos, θεόπνευστος). This compound combines theos (θεός, "God") and pneō (πνέω, "breathe")—literally "God-breathed." Scripture isn't human writing about God but God's own breath, His spoken word written down. Theopneustos describes Scripture's origin and nature: God exhaled it. This is verbal plenary inspiration—God superintended the writing of every word, using human authors' personalities and vocabularies while ensuring His intended message was inerrantly recorded. Scripture is simultaneously human and divine: human authors wrote, yet God breathed every word.

Because Scripture is God-breathed, it's "profitable" (ōphelimos, ὠφέλιμος)—useful, beneficial, advantageous. Four functions follow:

1. "For doctrine" (pros didaskalian, πρὸς διδασκαλίαν)—teaching truth, establishing beliefs.
2. "For reproof" (pros elegmon, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν)—exposing error, convicting of sin.
3. "For correction" (pros epanorthōsin, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν)—restoring to right path, fixing what's wrong.
4. "For instruction in righteousness" (pros paideian tēn en dikaiosynē, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ)—training in righteous living, disciplined godliness.

Scripture provides comprehensive guidance for belief and behavior.

Historical Context

The doctrine of inspiration distinguished Christianity from other religions. Greco-Roman religions had myths and legends but no authoritative sacred texts. Greek philosophy offered human wisdom. Judaism had Torah but many rabbis elevated tradition equally. Christianity boldly claimed Scripture as God's own word, carrying absolute authority because God Himself spoke it. Early church councils recognized this by identifying which books bore marks of divine inspiration (canonicity). The Reformation rallied around sola scriptura—Scripture alone as final authority—rooted in passages like this affirming Scripture's divine origin and sufficiency.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Do you truly believe all Scripture is God-breathed, and does this belief affect how carefully you read, study, and obey it?
2. How are you using Scripture's four-fold profit—doctrine, reproof, correction, training in righteousness—in your daily life and spiritual growth?
3. What areas of life have you withheld from Scripture's authority, treating it as interesting but not absolutely authoritative divine speech?

Interlinear Text

πᾶσα	γραφὴ	θεόπνευστος	καὶ	ὠφέλιμος	πρὸς
All	scripture	is given by inspiration of God	and	is profitable	for
G3956	G1124	G2315	G2532	G5624	G4314
διδασκαλίαν	πρὸς	ἔλεγχον,	πρὸς	ἐπανόρθωσιν	πρὸς
doctrine	for	reproof	for	correction	for
G1319	G4314	G1650	G4314	G1882	G4314
παιδείαν	τὴν	ἐν	δικαιοσύνῃ		
instruction	G3588	in	righteousness		
G3809	G1722	G1343			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:4 (Word): For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Hebrews 4:12 (Word): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Mark 12:24 (Word): And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

Psalms 119:9 (Word): Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Proverbs 6:23 (Word): For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

2 Timothy 4:2 (Word): Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Psalms 119:11 (Word): Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalms 119:130 (Word): The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

2 Samuel 23:2 (Word): The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

Proverbs 15:31 (Parallel theme): The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.