



Canon: Which Books Belong?

Lesson One: The Divine Assurance of 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

- There has to be a normative standard by which man can know the divine will.
- The consequences of Scriptural inspiration are dramatic—*IF* Scriptures are God-given, then they are authoritative! *IF* Scriptures are not God-given, then our faith rests upon uncertainty. *IF* Scriptures are only partially inspired we are left perplexed without an acceptable way to know what the Divine will is (or even if there is a “divine will”).
- If there is no normative standard in religion, then there will be chaos.
- Sincere hearts will be the target of this issue. Some accept only 66 Books as inspired, some accept more, others accept less. Who is right? We must do all we can to determine which books are from God (Jn. 12:48).
- This series focuses attention upon *the most significant* doctrine in the Christian’s faith.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 | DIVINE ASSURANCE

- “All Scripture is inspired of God.” It literally means “breathed-out of God.”
- God assures us that the writings (the words of the Scriptures) are inspired!
- Because these writings originate with God, they are “profitable.”
 1. For **teaching**—provides a foundation of divine Truth (Deut. 4:36; Ps. 94:12)
 2. For **reproof**—produces conviction, refutes error that exists because of ignorance (Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12).
 3. For **correction**—leads the erring back to the right way.
 4. For **instruction**—builds up and establishes the believer by giving spiritual instruction (Ps. 119:98, 99, 130; 2 Tim. 3:15)
 5. For **completeness**—It brings salvation to man by giving one the knowledge of the Lord that is necessary to find forgiveness of sins (Jms. 1:4)

2 PETER 1:19-21 | INSIGHT INTO INSPIRATION

- Christ was destined to become the Author of our salvation (1 Pt. 1:10).
- The salvation was explained by the Holy Spirit revealing to the prophets the time and circumstances of the Messiah’s coming (1 Pt. 1:10).
- The Holy Spirit “superintended” in such a manner that they spoke and wrote only what God desired to have communicated (2 Pt. 1:21; 1 Pt. 1:12).



- The messages of the prophets are identical—they follow one thesis with no contradictions (1 Peter 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Peter's words support 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. The Holy Spirit guided those who were writing. This divine superintending assured man that God's Word would be infallible. The nagging query arises—"How do we know what is the product of the Holy Spirit's superintendence? The claim of the writing itself? Tradition? Council decrees?"

The determining factor for deciding which literature is "inspired" and which is not inspired, is the "Canon of the Bible." Canon asks, "How were the books of Scripture, those that were truly inspired by God, collected? What criteria were used to decide which were inspired? Why were some accepted while others rejected?"

TERMS AND MEANINGS

- **CANON**—a rule that serves as a measure (2 Cor. 10:13, 15, 16; Gal. 6:16)
- **APOCRYPHA**—writings omitted from the Hebrew canon but included in the Septuagint. This term comes from a Greek term meaning "secret; hidden." These were accepted by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox at the Council of Trent (1546). They were omitted from Protestant Bibles in the 16th century. This category often adds 11 books to the Old Testament (three more are found in some Episcopalian and Lutheran Bibles).
- **PSEUDEPIGRAPHA**—means "things falsely ascribed" and are writings not permitted in any collection of Scriptures. These books are attributed to influential biblical characters (Noah, Enoch, etc.). These were written from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. These writings target the unrevealed topics of Scripture and were read publicly for edification and were often included in the codex volumes with inspired Scriptures.

THE APPLICATION OF THE "CANON" TO RELIGIOUS WRITINGS

- The "canonicity" of writings is a debated issue.
- Some seek to evade Scriptural authority by claiming that many books of the Bible are "lost."
- Some claim that "inspired," "latter-day revelations" have been given to mortals (i.e. the Book of Mormon).
- Some claim that religious writing of other world views are just are "inspired" as the Christian's Bible (Koran; Sacred books of Hindus; Talmud; Confucius; Buddha; etc.).

CONCLUSION | MAN'S PERPLEXITY CAN REMOVED AND FAITH SETTLED

- The question of Canon is historically reliable and proven trustworthy.
- The study of Canon helps seekers find God's Word even when they are living in the midst of a pluralistic society.