***A Completed Canon of Scripture

RV65-01***

In our study of the letter to the church in the city of Laodicea, we have come to segment number 14. We are seeing in this letter thus far that the Lord Jesus Christ has declared that a state of carnality existed in the local church in Laodicea. This condition is described for us in this letter which is found in Revelation 3:14-22. This carnal state had, as a matter of fact, been persisted in so long that the believers there had degenerated into reversionism.

**Reversionism**

All believers at one time or another are guilty of personal sins. Any time we, as believers, sin, we have fractured our temporal fellowship with God our Father. We are no longer on communicative terms within Him. God the Holy Spirit is no longer leading us. He is now seeking to convict us of that fracture brought about by some mental attitude or overt sin. If we do not confess, and if we do not return to temporal fellowship, then a more serious condition develops within the soul. Persistent carnality eventuates in the condition of reversionism, and our total spiritual life then begins going downhill. We can actually come right down to the very bottom where it is very difficult to distinguish a believer from a non-believer. He can go down to the Skid Row spirituality. He's still going to heaven, but he is totally devoid of any direct guidance from God; any understanding of spiritual things; stability in his life; any peace; any happiness; and, any orientation to the will of God for him.

For this reason, the Lord Jesus Christ has been speaking very severely to this congregation. He has described for them, in very revolting terms, how they appear to Him, and the condition in which they exist. He has used that strong language of "Vomiting them out of his mouth." The carnal states that existed in this smug congregation had degenerated into serious reversionism. Spiritual reversionism had made the congregation, consequently, insensitive to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, so that they held a very distorted view about themselves. They evaluated themselves, and esteemed themselves, totally out of reality with what they were. They credited themselves with a relationship to the Lord that was far above anything they actually held. They just had lost their basis of being able to judge themselves.

Instead, they saw themselves as prosperous and self-sufficient. They saw themselves as being under divine blessing and favor. They just had the attitude that they were a people who were in the know. But the Lord Jesus Christ comes along in this letter, and He says that their true condition before God is that they are miserable; they are pitiable; they are poor; they are blind; and, they are naked. These were all of the things that they thought they were just the opposite of.

Such an evaluation must certainly have caused no small stir in that elitist congregation in Laodicea when this letter was read to them. They did view themselves as elitist, spiritually and materially. They lived in an intellectual center of the ancient world. They lived in a great economic center – a commercial center of the ancient world. They were a people who viewed themselves as prosperous in every way, and as in touch with their society. But to find themselves so completely condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ must have been a blow indeed.

In Revelation 3:18, where we have come, the Lord Jesus gives advice to them for correcting the reversionistic status that existed in the church. This is an invaluable passage of Scripture, because what the Lord has to say to them is exactly what you and I need to know when we find ourselves on spiritual Skid Row.

Jesus Christ advises them to get really rich, first of all, by buying from Him something which he calls refined gold. The Bible uses gold and silver as the basis of all monetary systems. It isn't just that people have always looked upon gold and silver as something to be used for money. This is part of a divine institution. The Bible says that gold and silver is the basis of money. God, by creation, provided these metals in such a way, in His creation, that they had the qualities that were necessary for a metal to be used as money: to have the value; to have the portability; and, all the other factors. For this reason, every nation is obliged, if they are living by God's rules, to use a monetary system that is based upon precious metals, basically silver and gold.

**The Gold Standard**

When a nation no longer has this as the basis of its money, it is in violation of a divine ordinance. You will remember that this condition was recognized when our Constitution was written. The Constitution of the United States very explicitly states that the only thing that can be considered money in the United States will be a coinage based upon gold and silver standards. We have now, in our courts, battles which are being fought to determine whether that piece of paper that you carry in your pocket book and wallet, which has no precious metal backing anymore, is legitimately legalized money (legal tender), or whether it is in violation of our Constitution. It is certainly in violation of the divine ordinance.

**The Word of God**

So, when God talks about wealth, He talks about wealth in the terms in which He established wealth – on the basis of precious metals. And He uses this symbolism to talk about the most valuable thing that human beings possess. He is saying, "Do you want to be rich? Do you people think you are rich? You're poor. If you want to be rich, buy from Me refined gold." What He means by that term is "genuine wealth." We have already indicated, from other passages of Scripture, that refined, pure gold in the Bible stands for doctrinal truth. The refined gold that He's talking about here is the Word of God. Such Bible doctrine gold has been refined to absolute purity by the holiness of God. We sometimes refer to this as true truth. This is what we can rely upon on the basis of the integrity of God. God's holiness has refined His Word so that the information that we have in the Bible is true truth. And that's the only place in all of human experience that you can find that kind of truth.

**Faith**

This refined gold of doctrine is to be bought. We have seen from Isaiah 55:1 that the coin with which you buy the refined gold of doctrinal truth is the act of faith. This is the coin of believing what God has said. Bible doctrine is the revealed mind of God, enabling our minds to possess the infinite wealth of divine viewpoint. With this kind of doctrine wealth functioning in the soul, the believer is provided with personal stability in times of crises. He is provided with happiness, which does not depend upon people, things, or circumstances. He is enabled to function in the performance of divine good works which will earn him enormous eternal rewards in heaven.

All of these things are made possible by doctrine alone. This is stability in your life when things are going well, or when things are in crisis – to have the happiness that God intends you to have. God wants you to have what He has – His character reproduced in you. God has never been unhappy. God always has been happy. It is inherent in God's nature to be happy. Therefore, when we are unhappy, we are not reflecting anything in God. We are reflecting something that is characteristic only of Satan. To have that happiness, it is important (it is necessary) that we have doctrine upon which it is based. Any good works that we perform are the direct product of doctrine functioning and residing in our souls. The rewards that we are going to enjoy in heaven then (whatever rewards you and I are going to have in heaven), make no mistake about it, will be in direct ratio to the amount of doctrine stored in your human spirit, and to the extent of positive volition toward that storage. If it is in your human sphere, you have already reacted positively toward it.

So, Jesus Christ said that the smug Laodicean church lacked Bible doctrine understanding, and they lacked positive volition to divine viewpoint truths. These people were losers and they didn't know it.

The Holy Spirit repeatedly states, in the Bible, the supreme value and importance of knowing Bible doctrine truths. We will not review those passages now, but there are many of them, and you're acquainted with a lot of them. This full knowledge is called in the Greek Bible "epignosis" knowledge, and it is stored in the believer's human spirit. What you have stored as "epignosis" knowledge in your human spirit is your true bank account. That is your true basis of wealth. That is the true extent of your wealth.

That's not just a cute little religious saying. That's not just something the preacher will say. That's not something that people like to say that the Bible says. This is a fact of life. The extent of your wealth is the extent of doctrine stored in your human spirit. You might as well face it: Most of us are on the downhill side. Until you reach 18, you're physically improving. But once you're 18, you've crossed over the hill, and you're on the downhill side.

My number one daughter became 19 a day or two ago. She is now, as we say, "over the hill." Her life from now on is downward. It's all over. The highest point has been reached, and she's commemorating it this Sunday. Sooner or later, you're all going to face the terminal point. Those of you who are lax on the exercise and the vitamins are going to get there sooner. Those of you that are a little more careful may prolong the end, but ultimately, you're going to face it. When you get out there, you're going to find that what you heard today was not just some cutesy-pooh preacher talk. You're going to find that the real wealth that you have is what is stored in your human spirit in true truth from the Word of God. That is the thing that counts.

Only an unmitigated fool would make no room in his life for storing this kind of wealth to take over to the other side with him. When you cross the river into the presence of God through death, those of you who have built your house upon the rock will look back and will rejoice in the fact that your life was summarized by the fact that the main thing in your life was: the Word; and, the Word; and, the Word. That's what counts. That is your true wealth.

Some of you, sooner or later, are going to prosper materially. In our free enterprise system, everybody has a wide open chance. And the time that you begin hitting it in a big way, this is the time when you may become the fool, as the man in the Bible who thought that his real wealth was the stuff out in the barn. So, he built even bigger ones. God jerked his soul right out of his body, and took his life that night. What kind of a fool is it that does not grasp that real gold is not the stuff out in the barn, but is the Word of God stored in the human spirit?

This is not emphasized enough. This is not stressed. When I get away from Berean church, and have occasion to visit other groups of believers, and sometimes other denominational groups, I'm appalled at the ignorance; at the emptiness; and, at the utter nonsense of a church service, because everything else is there except the one thing that the people of God need – an alerting of them to the Word of God as the real wealth they possess, and the only food upon which they can nurture their souls. That's the one thing that is not presented to them. Not only are they not alerted to it, but the Word of God is not presented so that they can feed upon it. The Holy Spirit, therefore, emphasizes again and again the supreme value and the importance of knowing Bible doctrine truths. This knowledge, stored in our human spirit, is our true bank account.

The pattern of the genuinely wealthy believer is that he learns the Word of God; he loves the Word of God; and, he lives the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ certainly made this very clear to us, as we pointed out last time, that, in His dying breath upon the cross, He quoted from Psalm 31:5. In that verse, we have the expression of praise to God as the God of truth. That means the God who has revealed true truth (the God of doctrine). I think that is terrifically exhilarating to realize that Jesus Christ, in the moment of His intense suffering, as He is about to take His last breath, He gathers up all that is left within Him, and He quotes from 31:5 as an expression of praise as He commits himself to whom? To the God of doctrine.

The Bible says that the most valuable thing, therefore, in all the universe is wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to do the right thing at the opportune time. That's what wisdom is. Dumbness is the inability to do the right thing at the opportune time. Wisdom is Bible doctrine applied in one's life. That's how you know to do the right thing at the opportune time. It is doctrine in application that is wisdom. From divine viewpoint wisdom, we secure understanding or discernment, so that we know the score, and we move through life as we deal with people and events.

In Job 28:28, we have an interesting statement relative to true truth and wisdom: "And unto man he says, 'Behold the fear of the Lord. That is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding.'" The fear of the Lord is wisdom. That is applied doctrine. When you know the essence of God, and when you have learned the truth about the nature of God, there comes into your being a fear and awe – a respect for God. You realize that He's not somebody that you can play footloose and fancy free with. You begin immediately to have a deep sense of respect (of fear) for the integrity of God.

And to depart from evil is understanding. That is knowing the score. Godly living, according to the wisdom that you have secured from doctrine, is knowing the score. That's the person who knows what life is all about. It is not the guy who is going out and stealing. He doesn't have understand. He doesn't know the score. It is not the person who is out fornicating and adulterating. He doesn't know the score. It is not the person who is using the name of God in foul words, and everything associated with Satan's realm: the "hells" and "damns" and everything that goes with it. He doesn't know the score. He's out of touch with reality. The violation of the whole moral system is reflecting a person who does not have understanding. You may be a sophisticated snob as you portray these characteristics that demonstrate your lack of understanding, but you're not kidding God, and you're not kidding doctrinally oriented people. They spot you right away.

Another interesting verse is in Proverbs 3:7: "Be not wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil." "Be not wise in your own eyes (human viewpoint), but fear the Lord" (from wisdom). Doctrine applied gives the wisdom of respect for God, and the consequences that you will have understanding, so that you will depart from evil.

Proverbs 1:7 says that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But fools despise wisdom and instruction." Only a fool would despise instruction in the doctrines of Scripture.

So, of course, this brings us up to a very serious question. If the Word of God, resident in our souls and our human spirits, is so important, how do we get it? How do we go about securing that storage of divine viewpoint wisdom within ourselves? To the extent that your spirit is filled with God's wisdom, to that extent, God the Holy Spirit is able to lead you. He is able to direct to your thinking, from your human spirit, what you need to guide you so that you act in a wise way at the opportune time. If it's empty, there's nothing He can give you. I'll guarantee you that those of you who are erratic in your church attendance – you're on the low side of storage, because it's right here in this room, under this condition of this local church operation and this public gathering, where maximum storage is made possible. It's a divine arrangement. While there is storage in other ways, the maximum opportunity and maximum storage comes here.

So, again, we're talking about some very serious things. Do you want to be rich? Do you want to be wealthy? Do you want to have true wealth? First of all, understand that it's the gold of doctrine that really counts, and then there is a way for you to secure it. In Ephesians 6:14, this gold is referred to as the belt of truth, and it is part of the Christian warrior's protection. In a Roman soldier's military uniform, it was his belt that tied everything else together. All the important accouterments of his profession were hung from the belt. His supplies and all the things he needed in combat and in transporting to combat were hung on that belt. That belt clinched everything together that consisted of his uniform. So, this is a very important part – the belt of truth. Without this, you don't have anything.

**The Grace System of Perception**

So, now we're going to look at what we may call our system for learning or perceiving spiritual things. Because God has arranged this so that everybody is on equal ground for learning, we call it a grace system – the grace system of perception.

**IQ**

When you were born physically, you were also born with a certain level of IQ. IQ is the acronym for "intelligence quotient." An IQ of 100 is considered normal. What goes above that is more than normal. What goes below that is less than normal. Some of you were born with an IQ of 110; some with 120; and, some with 130. When you start pushing up toward 130, you are getting awfully bright. As a matter of fact, you're just about a low-class genius at that level. You're pushing the bottom of the upper capacity levels. In the other direction, some of you were born with an IQ of 90; some with 80; some with 70; and, some with 60. You're way down the line.

You may find out what your IQ level is, and, of course, you can. There are tests for this. You might say, "I'd like to improve this. I'd like to make this 80 come up here to 110; or, at least to 90 – I want to be smarter than Charlie Boozer, or somebody else." You want to push it up. But I'll tell you right now that you can't do it. Marie Boozer is back here visiting us from Texas University. She's desperately trying to do it. She went to a big school to do it. That was no good. She's stuck where she is. That's what you have.

Certain circumstances depress the expression of our physical IQ. Other circumstances of our surroundings encourage it so that you use your capacity. But it's like buying a car. Some of you buy a car and it has a 10-gallon fuel tank; some of you buy a car, and it has a 20-gallon tank; some of you buy another car, and it has a 30-gallon tank; and, so on. You can't change that, unless you take the tank off and put on a new tank. And unless you can change your brain, and exchange it for a new model, you're not going to increase its capacity. Your brain is born with a mental capacity. It is our hope, in the field of education, to enable you to capitalize your capacity in a maximum way. That's what school is all about. The tragedy of the American public school system is that it is not permitting people to live up in full capacity to the IQ with which they were born.

**Spiritual IQ**

Now, in spiritual things, none of this applies. It is very important that you understand that we're all acquainted with this IQ business, and we live with that. But this is not the case when we talk about spiritual IQ. Spiritual IQ is strictly up to you. You can change the size of the tank. That is entirely dependent upon your functioning on the grace system for perceiving spiritual truth. If you want to read about this in detail, it is recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 1:19 through 1 Corinthians 2:16. That's a whole section that talks about the contrast between human IQ and spiritual IQ.

I would like you to look at James 1:22-25, which points out a very important principle to us concerning spiritual IQ. A lot of people make the mistake of thinking that if they learn Bible doctrine that they have secured refined gold in their human spirits, and that they have stored, and made themselves wealthy, with refined gold, just because, intellectually, you learned doctrine; or, that you have produced a belt of truth that Ephesians 6 says we must have to go into spiritual content. That is not true. There are a lot of people who have learned doctrine, but along with learning doctrine (which is the important and indispensable first step), there is something else that must be done, and James points that out here:

"But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." There must be a positive volition response and application: "For if any be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural place in the mirror, for he beholds himself and goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty (the Word of God), and continues with it, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

So, the principle you must remember is that it is not only learning, but it is also a positive volition response and acceptance of that truth. When you learn doctrine, you store it in your mind as understanding. We call that "gnosis." That's in your perceptive mind. That's the function of your mind that's able to learn things. "Gnosis" knowledge is of no value to you in spiritual combat. It's just information that you have sitting up in your head.

Have you ever heard somebody say, "I can't understand this person? He grew up as a child, being taught spiritual things all his life. He went along. He had understanding. He was taught the Word of God. I can't understand this man (or this woman) – all the teaching that they've had in the Word of God, and then they're off the deep end into reversionism, carnality, and the animal lifestyle." Don't be surprised by that. Don't be confused by the fact that they were exposed to a lot of good teaching. What you have is an example of a person who is a hearer only. He had "gnosis" knowledge sitting up in his head, but he had a resistance against it; he had a rebellion; he had a neutrality; or, he had an indifference. It was not positive: "Amen, Lord. That is true, and I subject myself to it." If he is positive to it, immediately "gnosis" knowledge is transformed to "epignosis" (full knowledge), and stored in the human spirit as the belt of truth. All Christians are equally free to believe doctrine or to reject it, and thus, to build an IQ, or to fail to build a spiritual IQ.

**Building a Spiritual IQ**

Here are the elements that are involved in building a spiritual IQ. We're not going to get too far right now, because the very first one that we hit is the crucial heart of the whole thing, so we have to pause upon it. But thank God often for these steps that you're going to see, that enable you to store the refined gold of doctrine in your spirit.

1. **A Completed Canon of Scripture**

The first one that God has provided in the grace system of perception is a completed canon of Scripture.

**Inerrancy**

This is the inerrant Old and New Testament. Inerrant: Why? Inerrant because God gave us a Bible which He inspired.

**Inspiration**

A definition of inspiration is this: By "inspiration," we mean the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, without interfering with their control and style, so that the Bible is free of all error in words and thoughts, and thus possesses divine authority and trustworthiness. We are saying that the Bible is a product of God and man. It is a product that man produced through writing, but which God superintended in giving him the information and the controls so that what was recorded was absolutely without any error at all. It is absolute truth: true truth. That's why we say that the Bible is inerrant. Therefore, if that is true, when the Bible speaks on any subject, that's it. There is no debate. There is no argument. There is nothing more to be said.

Now, if you match up against our society, you very quickly see what our society thinks about the Bible. There are an enormous number of things now that are accepted in our society that the Bible condemns. Take this whole realm of homosexuality. Jerry Brown, the governor of California, living up to his liberal human viewpoint style, now has the dubious honor of having appointed the first homosexual judge. A few years ago, that kind of debasement on the most important level of our society, in the dispensing of justice, was unthinkable. The Bible says, "That's wrong." It condemns it. God wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah to make it very clear what He thought about that lifestyle. It is not an alternate lifestyle. It is what the Bible calls it: sin. The Bible never calls anything "sin" that you can say no to. It calls it "sin." It doesn't call it "sin" if you're helpless to it. If you can say no to it, it's sin.

Yet, who cares what the Bible says on that subject in America today, and the boldness upon which that depraved quality is flaunted in the media, and before young and old alike. The Word of God is inspired. It is without error. It is the product of the living God. Therefore, what it says is absolute authority, and that's what people hate.

Suddenly, if that's true about the Bible, then this book has become enormously important to us. Suddenly, you realize that this is a book that you do want to learn; that you do want to love; and, that you do want to live by. Suddenly, you realize that whatever else you're doing in life: making money; getting an education; getting ahead in your profession; getting yourself fame; and, whatever else, the one thing that is the most exciting thing in your life will be learning doctrinal truth, because that transforms you into godliness, and that transforms you into the image of God Himself.

**The Image of God**

Can you imagine a human being walking in the image of Almighty God? What does that mean? Its means being like God: to walk like God; to act like God; to think like God; and, to speak like God. Did you ever have anybody, when you tried to explain Scripture to them, and you've driven home the point because you have the conviction of the authority of the Word of God behind what you're saying, and they snap back at you, "Who do you think you are? God?" I love it when they say that, because I know exactly what to say back: "You got it, baby. Anytime I speak divine viewpoint truth, you're listening to God. I'm his representative. You are hearing God. That's exactly what you're listening to, and that's what's bugging you."

Get a frame of reference toward the Bible, and then you won't be indifferent toward it. Then it won't be a sometime thing in your life. Then you won't be sympathetic to all of this religious guff that goes out, and all of this religious activity that takes place in churches and denominations, which is so totally devoid of the Word of God, because they've got zero nothing. They have money; they have people; they have prestige; and, they have fame, but they have zero nothing with God. You know what God thinks of them.

So, the Bible says that it has been inspired. Two verses of Scripture establish this critical point. You should be acquainted with them both. One is 2 Timothy 3:16-17. This verse tells you where the contents of the Bible came from. Where did all this stuff that's written in the Bible actually come from? You know that people are going to challenge what you say on the basis of the Bible by saying, "Well, it was just written by men. These are just the opinions of men. This is just the expression of the religious experience of people. This is just what people think about religious matters, and about God, and about right and wrong. And that's where the content of the Bible came from."

Well, here you have the Bible's own declaration as to where the content (the material that constitutes the Bible) came from: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (thoroughly furnished) unto all good works." And that word "man" in verse 17 means that the believer (the human being – the male and the female believers) – the person who is a believer may be perfect; that is, spiritually mature and thoroughly furnished unto all good works by which to earn rewards.

It says, "All Scripture." What does that refer to? You have to go back to verse 15, because that's the context of this word "Scripture." In verse 15, the apostle Paul says to Timothy, "And that from a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures." What do you think that refers to? What were the Holy Scriptures that Timothy knew from his early childhood that his mother and grandmother taught him? Well, obviously what he knew was the Old Testament Scripture. There was no New Testament.

So, verse 15 uses the term Holy Scripture to refer to the Bible that Timothy knew: "Which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Then, verse 16 says, "All Scripture." Now, it has expanded upon verse 15, with the words "All Scripture," to include the latest addition by God to inspired Scripture, which is the New Testament. So, "All Scripture" goes from Holy Scripture to the New Testament Scriptures.

The New Testament, as a matter of fact, is equated with the Old Testament as Scripture by the writers of the Bible. For example, 2 Peter 3:15-16 is a case in point: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him, has written unto you, as also, in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable rest, as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction." The "other Scriptures" refers to the Old Testament Scriptures. He equates what Paul has written in his epistles as being Scripture also. The New Testament is very clearly declared to also be an inspired declaration of the living God.

Add to that 1 Timothy 5:18: "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his reward." You will find that those two statements there come from the Old Testament and the New Testament: part from the Old Testament; and, part from the New Testament.

Let's add another one. 2 Peter 3:2 says, "That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandments of us, the apostles, of the Lord and Savior." This is referring to the words spoken by the prophets of old that produced the Old Testament; and, the apostles whose words produced the New Testament.

**God-Breathed**

Exactly what does the Bible claim for itself here in Timothy 3:16? It says that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." This word "inspiration" looks like this: "theopneustos." This is a word that is only used once by God the Holy Spirit in the Bible. You'll never find this word anyplace else in the Greek New Testament except here. Grammarians call this a "hapax legomena." This means that it happens only once. Your eye can immediately see that this first part, "theo," comes from the Greek word "theos," which is the word for "God." You can see that this last part, "pneustos," comes from the verb "pneo." "Theos" means "God," and "pneo" means "to breathe." Therefore, what you have in this word is "God-breathed." All of the Bible is God-breathed.

Now, you know what breathing means. It's exhaling. All Scripture is exhaled by God. All Scripture is the product of the breath of God. That is the picture that you have here. That is, all Scripture is inspired of God. The Bible claims to be the product of what God has breathed out. That's why we say that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tell us where the contents of Scripture originated. The Bible is not merely an expression of the highest ideals and hopes of good but fallible men, into which the Holy Spirit then breathed something divine. That's a great mistake to think that these good men wrote the best they could, and then God the Holy Spirit breathed an inspiration into it; but, nevertheless, because they're fallible, there are mistakes in it. Everything they got was delivered to them by God. The English word "inspiration" really means "to breathe in." This Greek word "theopneustos" means "to breathe out." It is God exhaling His true truth, which is how the contents of the Bible was produced.

This supernatural origin, in content (in the words and in the written form), makes the Bible profitable in spiritual things – in the angelic warfare. It is profitable for doctrine; for reproof; for correction; and, for instruction in righteousness. It results in making a believer, who is on positive response, spiritually perfect. That means "capable" and "fully-equipped" for spiritual combat in order to produce divine good works. It is the content of Scripture that makes it all possible for us.

There is a second point. The other most important verse to defend why the Bible is pure gold, and to be treated as such, is 2 Peter 1:21. This tells us how the content of the Bible was recorded to ensure its accuracy. Let's get it again: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us where the content came from – the exhaling of God of His truth. 2 Peter 1:21 tells you how the content was recorded so that there was no mistake in its recording, so that we can say that the Bible we have today is inerrant: "For the prophecy did not come at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." This is referring particularly to the prophetic portions of Scripture. It says that they did not originate by mere human conjectures. Obviously, the prophecies that we have in the Bible, delivered about something that's going to happen hundreds of years in the future, could not have been produced simply by human reason. This had to be information that came to the writers of Scripture by God breathing out that truth to them. Human viewpoint investigations and reasonings did not produce that.

Men were set aside by God's specific selection to record what he had breathed out to them, and to produce the Old and New Testaments. These men spoke in their own words, and in their own style, as the Holy Spirit carried them along in the truth that He had given them, and as they wrote it down. The word for "carried along" is this Greek word "phero:" "But holy men of God spoke as they were moved ('phero')." What does that mean? This is the word that the Greek world used to describe wind blowing on the sail of a sailboat. If you talked about a sailboat being moved along by the pressure against the sail of the wind, you would use the word "phero." You sit there, and you're not doing anything, and there's a force that's simply taking you, and it is carrying you along, and you are simply being born along before the force of the wind. "Phero" is used to describe how God the Holy Spirit picked these select men up and carried them along.

This is in the present tense, which means that this was constantly the case of those who wrote the Scripture. Those books which have ended up in the Bible are the product of men who wrote them as God the Spirit carried them along, protecting them from deviating in any way from the true course of true truth. It is passive, which indicates that these men had nothing to do with it.

As we say, you can tell when you read, John, for example, that you are reading the language that would be common to a comparatively uneducated man. He is using the "Koine" language, the common Greek of the Greek world of that day. It was the commercial language, like English is today everywhere in the world. But you also can tell when you read a book like Luke that you are reading the Greek of a more educated man. It is written in the way that Luke (the doctor – the medical man) spoke. I think there must be something like 600 words that you don't find anyplace else except in the language of Luke, because it is a more sophisticated classical type of Greek.

We can sometimes see this today. If we have read the writings of people extensively, we may read something and say, "Oh, I know who wrote that. It's that person's style. You recognize it. Very often, the way people write is the way, of course, that they talk. You can recognize that just from knowing how they speak. When you've heard them, you can look at their writing, and you will recognize that it is their style.

So, these men wrote in their style, but they were passive to being carried along by the truth. For example, they might have had two or three things they could have said, and they said it in just the words, out of all their vocabulary, that accurately presented that breathed-out truth. They did not select the wrong word, and they did not say something that was not quite the truth. They could have had something that was almost true, but not quite truth, and really on the head, and God the Holy Spirit would always blow them toward exactly what was the truth. That's the thing to remember.

That's an amazing thing. Where in the world you're going to find a book anywhere in the world that can claim that. Is it any wonder that some people look at the Bible and they understand this, and they hold it (the book itself – this paper, and ink, and the pages) in esteem, and say, "Well, I can understand that."

One time, when I was a boy, I was sitting outside of the church we were attending in Chicago, and they had concrete railings. I was a junior-aged kid, and I was having to wait outside. It was a cold Chicago day in the old Windy City, and I put my Bible on the concrete railing, and then I sat on it because it was so cold to sit on the concrete. A lady came by and saw me sitting on my Bible, and she did a double-take, and said, "You're sitting on the Bible? You're sitting on the Word of God?" And I said, "No, I'm not sitting on the Word of God," and I jerked it out right away. What was she so up against? She had sensed that the Bible was a unique book, without error, breathed out from God, and written by men who were born along by the Spirit of God, so that it's a book unique in itself. She treated it with that awe. So, I'd suggest that people who understand that, while you are in their presence, don't sit on your Bible.

This is participle, which means that we have a spiritual principle given to us. Because God carried it along, the Bible is inerrant. He steered these people away from any error. That's fantastic. For this reason, we have an inerrant sword of the Spirit, forged for us to use in our spiritual warfare.

So, 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us the origin of the contents of the Bible. 2 Peter 1:21 tells us how it was recorded with absolute accuracy.

That is the first step of understanding how to store the refined gold of God's truth in your human spirit. That is the first point of the grace system of perception which God has provided us to enable us to do that. This is a completed canon of Scripture. It is a completed Bible that is absolutely pure gold, without any alloy, and without any deviation from true truth.

The further steps to enable us to secure this refined gold of doctrine in our souls we will continue with next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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