



ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE

By

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2 Timothy 3:16-17

"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 good works."

King James Version

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

New International Version

pasa graphē - every Scripture (writing, passage)

theopneustos - God-breathed

kai ophelimos - and (also) profitable (useful)

pros didaskalian - for teaching (with a view toward that which is taught)

pros elegmon - for conviction (to rebuke for the purpose of conviction of sin)

pros epanorthosin - for correction (to set up straight, restoring to an upright state, setting right)

pros paideian - for instruction (training, discipline)

en dikaiosune - in righteousness (the character or quality of being right or just)

The Scriptures are breathed by God and useful for:

1. teaching
2. conviction
3. correction
4. training and discipline in righteousness

This is so the man of God may be "filled or furnished completely" for every good work.

Is the Apostle Paul saying that every passage of Scripture is written for our obedience? Should we kill and eat the passover lamb? Should we bring offerings to the high priest? Should we worship on Saturday? Should we sprinkle the blood of the trespass offering round about the altar? Should we burn the bullock with its hide, flesh and dung outside the camp? Should we circumcise every male child? Should we obey those who sit in Moses seat? Should we heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the leper, and cast out demons? Should we handle deadly snakes and drink poison as a sign to the unsaved? Should we baptize people in water for the remission of sins? Should we go forth and preach the gospel without taking any money for food or lodging? Should we wait for the Holy Spirit to come on us in fire and

Speak in tongues and prophecy? Should we preach to the Jews only? Should we take Law-breakers outside the camp and kill them?

All of these are from Scripture passages which Paul says are for our teaching, conviction, correction, and training in righteousness. What do we do with them?

Most Christians around the world pick and choose which sections of Scripture they want to practice. Most believe the church started with Christ and His disciples. Most believe what Christ taught in the Gospel accounts and teachings in the Book of Acts are for them. But do any of them practice everything in those Scriptures? The answer is no. We pick and choose based on a variety of personal, political and religious reasons.

2 Timothy 2:15

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

King James Version

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

New International Version

"rightly dividing" and "correctly handles" are translations of a Greek word that means "cutting straight" (*orthotomounta*). It was what a stone cutter would do when preparing stones for a walkway or road. He had to cut them exactly right so they would fit together perfectly. As we cut straight the word of God, we need to observe carefully how the Lord works with people, what He commands them to do, and how He changes or adds to those commands. If we miss one detail, that could be the difference between a perfect cut and a sloppy cut. The way must be prepared to perfection.

The Bible is a Book of progressive revelation. God reveals His Will slowly and carefully - a point at a time.

1. God created man. Man was completely obedient to God. God told man he may eat of the fruit of every tree in the Garden of Eden, except for one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man obeyed and continued in a state of perfect peace and harmony with God. No other rules are mentioned. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Innocence.

Dispensation or administration is a term that means the law of the household (*oikonomia*). The English word "economy" comes from it. The dictionary defines the term as "the management, regulation, and government of a household."

Genesis 2:25 states man and woman were naked and were not ashamed. The Hebrew word for "ashamed" (*buwsh*) carries the idea of guilt. Man and woman had no guilt because they had done nothing wrong. It was disobedience and the ensuing guilt that separated man from God.

2. Man disobeyed God. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The perfect peace was gone. The innocence was gone. Things could not continue as they were. God expelled man and woman from the perfect garden into a hard, cruel and imperfect world. Man was guilty and ashamed. Man murdered his brother. Man ran from trouble. Man married, had children, earned a living by the sweat of his brow, and died. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Conscience.

God taught man how to make a blood sacrifice. Some did it. Some did not. Eventually, mankind was so wicked and perverse, God's heart was grieved to the point He decided to destroy His creation. God would have destroyed man from the face of the earth, except that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

3. God destroyed everyone and everything on earth, except for Noah, his family and the animals on board the giant ark God taught Noah to build. The sacrifices continued, but God allowed man to eat the meat. God also instituted the death penalty for any person who murdered another person. God established an agreement (covenant) with Noah. God promised He would not destroy the earth with water again. The rainbow was the sign of that agreement.

Nations of people grew up after the flood. Those nations developed systems of human government with rules and regulations. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Human Government.

4. God called out one man from all of mankind. His name was Abram (Abraham). God promised to make a great nation out of him and bless all nations through him. God promised Abraham's seed a vast area of land and national salvation. The sign of God's agreement with Abraham was circumcision. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Promise.
5. Conscience, Human Government and Promise continued for hundreds of years. Then, God used Moses to lead the people of Abraham's promise out of Egypt and captivity toward the land God promised Abraham centuries earlier. During the lengthy journey, God gave Moses and the people of His promise a large group of Laws. It was the new way God would manage His household. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Law.
6. Conscience, Human Government, Promise, and the Mosaic Law continued for hundreds more years. God's prophets called the people of His promise and the Law to repent and obey God's Word. There were various stages and times of obedience and disobedience, repentance and sin. The people of God's promise and His Law demanded a physical king. God gave them kings. Some were good.

Many were bad. God's prophets predicted the coming of a Mighty and Holy King; a Messiah and Savior who would deliver the people of God's promise and His Law and establish an everlasting Kingdom. Jesus Christ is that King, Messiah and Savior.

Jesus Christ, the Eternal and Only Son of the Living God, came to earth in human form. He preached that the promised Kingdom was "at hand." The people of God's promise and His Law killed Jesus their King. Christ rose from the grave, taught His followers what to do, ascended back to Heaven, and sent His Holy Spirit to His followers to enable them to do what He had told them to do. His followers were filled and empowered with the Holy Spirit and preached boldly about their King and His Promised Kingdom. Christ's followers obeyed the Law, had all things in common, baptized converts in water for the remission of their sins, and preached only to fellow people of the Promise (children of Israel). Their message was about the King and His Kingdom. It was seated in prophecy and expected fulfillment in their King. The message was not heeded by the people of God's promise and His Law. The people killed the follower of the King. Some students of the Bible have called that time the Dispensation of Kingdom Gospel.

7. The leaders of Israel refused God's offer of a King and a Kingdom. God set aside Israel and called a new man, Saul (Paul), to do something new. God told a prophet named Ananias that Paul would preach God's message to the Gentiles, their kings, and to the

children of Israel. Jesus Christ the King called Paul personally, just as He had His other Apostles of the Kingdom Gospel. However, Paul's ministry would not include the Law or Circumcision or a national kingdom. Paul's ministry would be about God's Grace to all the people of the earth. Paul preached his message of Grace and did battle about the Law and Circumcision. Paul said Christ had not sent him to baptize in water but to preach the Gospel. Paul taught the world that the Gentiles were heirs of God's promise to Israel through their faith in Jesus Christ.

"Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:21-29

Paul stated clearly that his message was different from that of the Kingdom Apostles.

"As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews." Galatians 2:6-9

The message of Peter, James, John and the other Jewish Apostles was grounded in the Mosaic Law and Old Covenant prophecies.

Paul's message is grounded in Grace, Freedom and Mystery.

"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles--Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other

generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things." Ephesians 3:1-9

This is our dispensation: the Dispensation of the Grace of God.

The Promise, Law and Kingdom Dispensations will come into play again (the Book of Revelation). But for now, God is managing His current household under Grace and the Mystery of the Body of Christ.

So, what does that mean to Bible students today? Paul stated that every Scripture passage in the Bible is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. However, Paul also makes it clear that not all Scripture is written "to" us.

When we study any portion of Scripture, we should ask some basic questions:

1. Who is speaking?
2. Who are they speaking to?
3. Is their speech principle or dispensational? In other words, is it horizontal (meant for all dispensations) or vertical (meant for a particular dispensation)?
4. Is it prophecy or mystery? Is it predicted in the Old Covenant or a mystery God revealed to Paul?
- 5.

A "principle" is a settled rule of morality or conduct.

Example: Before the giving of the Law, murder was wrong. Under the Law, murder was wrong. Under Grace, murder is wrong.

God hated sin before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace. God saved men from His Love, Grace and Mercy before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace.

A "dispensation" is the way God manages His household. In previous dispensations God required people to perform works as part of their salvation. In the Dispensation of Grace God has no such requirement -- "it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

God's Principles of Right and Wrong never change, but His dealings with people do.

Is it prophecy? or Mystery?

The ministry of the Old Covenant writers was prophetic. The ministry of the Gospel writers was prophetic fulfillment. The Words of Jesus during His earthly Ministry were prophetic and prophetic fulfillment. The ministry of the disciples of Christ after the Lord ascended to heaven were prophetic fulfillment. They repeated and explained prophecies about Israel, its King and Kingdom.

Then there was Paul. Jesus Christ called him personally to salvation. Jesus Christ tutored Paul Face to face, Mouth to ear, Mind to mind. This was the same Jesus Who called and taught the Kingdom disciples--Peter, James, John, Matthew, Andrew and the others. Since Paul was just "another" disciple of Christ, the message Jesus gave him was identical to what He taught the others. Right?

Wrong! Paul was not just "another" disciple of Christ. Christ called Paul outside of His calling of the Kingdom disciples. Paul is not a Kingdom disciple. He is the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Read these passages to see what Paul said about the message that Jesus Christ gave only to him.

- Ephesians 1:1-14
- Ephesians 2:1 - 3:12
- Colossians 1:23-29
- Galatians 1:1 - 5:25

It was Jesus, not Paul, Who changed the way He managed His Households of Faith. It was Jesus, not Paul, Who kept a secret from previous generations of believers and gave it first to Paul. It was Jesus, not Paul, Who set Israel aside and put the Gentiles in the forefront of His plans for earth temporarily. It was Jesus, not Paul, Who postponed His Prophesied Kingdom and built His Mystery Body instead. It was Jesus, not Paul, Who abolished the Law and made peace between Jew and Gentile by His Cross. It was Jesus, not Paul, Who did all of it.

Jesus determined--Paul delivered. Jesus hid it away--Paul handed it out. Therefore, when we read the Bible, we must realize that Jesus speaks in this Dispensation of Grace through the writings of the Apostle Paul. The principles are for all time. Prophecy is for other times. Mystery is for this time.

How was that Mystery revealed to Paul? Gradually. Read Acts 26:16-18, 1 Corinthians 1:13-17 and 13:8-10, and 2 Corinthians 12:1-7. They are just a few examples.

The Twelve Apostles

The Apostle Paul

Representatives of Israel

12 tribes -- 12 men -- 12 thrones
reconciled

Representative of the Body of Christ

1 man -- both Hebrew and Gentile

Called by Christ on earth

Called by Christ from heaven

Sent to Israel and the nations

Sent to all men everywhere

Sent to proclaim God's fulfilled
prophecy

Sent to proclaim God's secret

Agree to confine their ministry to
Israel after raising up of Paul

Supersedes 12 as Apostle to the Gentiles
as Israel rejects the King and Kingdom

Taking God's Grace to the World!

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