

## “YOUR WORD IS... Inspired (Part 2)”

By looking at messages *from* the Word of God, *about* the Word of God – the hope is that a deep love and passion will be stirred in our hearts for the Bible, resulting in increased study and obedience to the Holy Scriptures. The Apostle Paul told Timothy in 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,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” I pray that you will be blessed as we continue to look at some *truths* about *The Book of Truth*.

The word, “Bible,” means *a book or collection of books regarded as authoritative on a topic*. No other book is more authoritative on the topic of the Christian faith, the origin of creation, God’s plan of salvation, and God Himself – than the Bible. God’s Word gives us specific insight into *who* God is, and *what* He expects of us. It’s God’s autobiography, and His commentary on His-story. It’s also the Owner’s Manual that God intends for everyone to read, understand, and follow. The Christian Bible is a collection of 66 different books divided into two sections, Old and New Testaments. It was written by over 40 different authors of various backgrounds, over a span of 1,500 years, in primarily two languages (Hebrew and Greek) – and yet, it presents a unified message of God’s plan and purpose for humanity (because God’s breath/inspiration was the source). Thirty-nine books make up the Old Testament, which was written between 1,500 BC and 400 BC. The twenty-seven books that make up the New Testament were written over a 50-year span, and they deal with Jesus Christ’s birth, life, death and resurrection, the beginning of the Christian church, and instructions about how to live as a follower of Jesus Christ. The Bible was the first book ever printed on the printing press, and it’s the best-selling book of all time. It’s been translated into over 2,000 different languages and has been the foundation for the Christian faith since its very beginning. As Americans we are very blessed with abundant access to the Scriptures. The Bible has been attacked and will continue to be attacked. But the more it is attacked the more it multiplies. Many critics have preached the funeral of the Bible only to find out that that corpse outlives the pallbearers!

2 Peter 1:20-21 says, “*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,<sup>21</sup> for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*” We can’t just take one or two verses from the Bible and try to make them say what we want them to say; we must read the Scriptures in their context. In fact, we must really try to hear what the Scripture meant to the original hearers, and then apply those same timeless principles into our lives. We cannot read our own ideas (or “private interpretation”) into the Bible, we must draw out of the Bible what it has to say on its own terms. These verses in 2 Peter tell us that the Bible is “prophecy.” Not only does that include predictions about future events, but it generally refers to God revealing things that we cannot figure out on our own. Aren’t you glad God has revealed Himself in the Bible? The human authors of Scripture faithfully delivered what God had given to them. When Peter says they were “*moved by the Holy Spirit,*” this utilizes a sailing term to depict wind blowing into a sail. The human authors were consciously involved in the writing process (they weren’t robots), but behind the process God *moved* them and *carried them along* and *blew His breath/wind into their sails* – to ensure that the end result would be what God wanted to say.

Since God has spoken through the Bible, it's important for us to listen to its message. The Bible is our final and absolute (unchanging) standard for what is true, right, and wrong. There are no errors or mistakes in the Bible; the Bible never contradicts itself; even the difficult passages can be harmonized with diligent and careful study. The Bible's focus is telling us the truth we need in order to have a relationship with God, and how to understand God's purposes. This is truth we can only discover through God's inspired revelation. Since the Holy Spirit is the true author of Scripture, it's exhilarating to know that the Author Himself is right there with us when we engage the Holy Scriptures. Since the Bible is alive and powerful, it changes us. The powerful truths in the Bible are meant for *transformation*, not just *information*. God works through the Bible to transform us into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who wholeheartedly love God and others.

## **Discussion Guide/Action Steps**

1. What is your favorite translation(s) of the Bible?
2. Check out <[biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)> which has 63 English translations of the Bible.
3. Are you able to make these declarations:
  - *The Bible is the authority, standard and absolute truth on God, the way life is meant to be lived, and the source of eternal salvation;*
  - *I will love, treasure, study and obey the truths in the Bible;*
  - *I will be true to the true message of Scripture;*
  - *I will allow the living, powerful Word of God to keep on changing me into the image of Jesus Christ.*