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# Article I. The Scriptures

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The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16 ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

(Sermon Title)

**2 Timothy 3:16**

I brought some books with me to chapel. This is a Geometry textbook. I took Geometry in the tenth grade and have not studied it since then. In this book there is something called the Pythagorean theorem. I need some help with this theorem. Prof. Mac (math professor at BCF), "I need some help with this idea" . Let me call on Pythagoras: "Pythagoras, Help Me" Since there is no response, I guess I will throw this book on the floor.

This is a college Literature book. This book has some Shakespeare in it. I have not read Shakespeare in a long time. I need some help to understand him. "William, help me!" Since there is no response, I guess I will throw this book on the floor.

I have another book. This is a college psychology book. I took almost enough psychology courses to have a minor in it. "Freud Help me out!" Since there is no response, I guess I will throw this book on the floor.

This is the Bible: God, help me understand this book! Thank you, Lord, for speaking to me through your book. This book is the word of God. This book is different from any other book. This book is where we find our answers when we cry out. When a person comes to this book, that person is informed that this book, all scripture, is God breathed. It is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training. Those statements came from 2 Timothy 3:16. This book is

different because when we cry out to the author of this book, He answers! He hears us!  
He comes to us!

Now, just incase there are some skeptics. I want to share two testimonies, one of myself and one of somebody else. These testimonies will show the difference between this book and any other book.

I had the privilege of hearing the testimony of Bobby Welch. He shared his experience with the attendees of a F.A.I.T.H. Evangelism conference. "Why do we go out on Sunday afternoon or Monday night, why do we bother going to take the gospel to other people, why do we bother to interrupt their lives and share with them a message of hope." Bobby shared with us an experience that underscored for him the necessity to do this, but his experience also illustrates that this book is alive because its author is alive. This book is God's word. Bobby approached a home in a rather affluent neighborhood of Daytona Beach. It was one of those neighborhoods with a gated entrance, manned by a security guard. The guard came out and asked Bobby who he was and asked where he was going, and in fact that guard had to call ahead to see if it was all right for him to allow Bobby to proceed. The folks gave Bobby permission to see them. This was not the best day to be visiting. When Bobby pulled in to the driveway it was pouring rain. Bobby said from the time he got out of his car till he got to the front door, he was drenched. He said he looked like a wet puppy. But when he rang the door bell and the lady of the house answered the door, these were her words, "You will not believe this but I just finished praying, 'God if you are real, send someone to share the word'". Bobby Welch went in and shared the living word of God with them.

This Bible is different. This book is different. Now a personal testimony:

How do I know it is different? The date Aug. 26, 1992 is firmly etched in my mind. It was eleven days after my father died and went to be with the Lord. You need to understand something about my family. I am the youngest of five in my family and I am separated from the 4<sup>th</sup> by 10 years. So, what does that make me? That makes me the baby of the family in more ways than one. You can imagine the closeness I had with my father.

Eleven days after he died, I was the pastor of Coosada Baptist Church, I left the church office to make a hospital visit. I was driving on Interstate 65 south going into Montgomery. As I was making my way across the bridge spanning the Alabama river basin that morning, these words came to me:

Psalm 55:22 <sup>22</sup>Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you;

1 Peter 5:7 <sup>7</sup>Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Matt. 7:7 ask and it will be given to you;

As I was journeying across that bridge, In my heart I said, “God, take this grief from me. Lord, it would be so nice if you could just replace this grief we are feeling with a child in our family.” Roberta and I had been approved to be adopted parents about a year earlier and in that process of waiting I wondered, “Lord will it ever happen. Are you going to do it. Will it ever happen? Will we ever have the joy and responsibility of being parents?” When I got back to the office, the secretary handed me a sheet of paper with the name and telephone number of our social worker at the adoption agency, with a message to call him. He had left messages before and I would call him, but when I called him that afternoon I heard words I had never heard before. “James, we have a baby boy we want to place in your home. Would you and Roberta be willing to receive a baby boy?” What do you think my response was? God’s word is different from all other books.

Now what makes this book different, why is it different?

1. It is different because of its Author. This book is God breathed. This book is a joint venture, on the one hand God is its author and on the other men wrote the words of this book. God collaborated with men to give to us a revelation of himself. This book is the revelation of God.

God brings knowledge of who he is to you and me through the words written here. God gives instruction to you and me. God reveals himself as our creator, covenant maker, deliverer, our leader, our shepherd. He uses all kind of images to help remind us of who he is. He is a husband, a father, and a judge just to name a few.

How is it that God chose to reveal himself? How did he communicate who he is to us? He did it to and through men. Let me remind you of what Peter had to say on the subject of God’s inspiration and on the subject of how we came to be the recipients of these words.

Peter said this:

2 Peter 1:20-21 <sup>20</sup>Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

You see this is God’s word because it is God breathed. We could spend the rest of the morning talking about what kind of inspiration is it? Is it verbal inspiration, is it dynamic inspiration? Yes, there are places where, in the scripture, where I believe God said, “say this” and the men of God said exactly what God told them to say. There are other places in scripture, in particular the Psalms, look at those who worship God and in

response to their encounter with God they simply pour out their hearts to God. Did God inspire them, Yes. Did God dictate exactly what to say, Maybe not. Maybe God said, "I am going to let you function in the capacities I gave you, and I am going to let you pour out your heart and it will be right because I am behind you." So these are God's words. Yes they are framed into the language of men. Yes, they are put together with nouns and verbs and subjects, objects and all of those kind of things. But this is God's word, it is different, because it is not just the words of men. There are a lot of books out there. In fact, Solomon said, "of the writing of Books there is no end". This book is different because of its Author.

2. This book is different cause of its authorship, but also because of its purpose. I trust that you are aware of the Baptist Faith and Message statement: "The Bible has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth for its matter." Notice, salvation is the reason this book is given. It is so we can understand and know God and know Him in a perfect relationship, so that we can experience God's presence in our lives. What we discover is by knowing God, we discover things about our selves, about the world in which we live, we discover what we are and who we can be.

When it comes to understanding who God is and who man is, those are specific messages that are addressed in the Baptist Faith and Message. I do want to say at least this much about the purpose of this book. God did not write this book so we could know everything about math, science, or about any other subject. The purpose of this book is so what we can know how to live eternally with him.

You want to see an illustration, look at Isaiah chapter 6. In Isaiah 6, in the context of worship, Isaiah received a revelation, he had a vision, He said, "I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple". Now understand that the train is really the hem of his robe. All it takes for God to fill up the best we have to offer him is just a little bit of his garment. But in that, what happened to Isaiah, he heard the angelic beings crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty." Isaiah understood who God is, he is not like us, he is distinct and different from us. What happened to Isaiah when he comprehended what he had just seen? He said, "Woe is me, I'm undone, there is nothing I can do." Why? "Because I'm a sinner, I am a sinful man, but I'm not the only man, I live in a land of sinners." Then, you know the amazing thing that happened to Isaiah, God dispatched one of the Seraphim to the altar and from the altar the Seraphim took one of the burning coals and he came and he touched Isaiah's lips. Then a strange thing was spoken to Isaiah, "Your sin is been atoned for". God said, "Your sin, Isaiah, that which causes you to be undone, that which causes you to be ruined, I've taken care of it, its gone, and then what? Then Isaiah heard a voice, "Who will go for us, who shall I send?" And what did Isaiah say, "O Lord, here I am send me."

So, you see the purpose of God revealing himself. That is just one snap shot, if you will, that indicates what you find cover to cover in this book. God wants people to know him, so they can know the purpose that he has in making them. He wants us to know him, so we will know who he is. Then, we can be about his purpose for our lives.

Many other things could be said about the purpose of this book. But let me emphasize: the general purpose of this book is different, it is because this book's purpose is SALVATION.

This book is different because of its Author, its Purpose, and there is one more reason this book is different.

### 3. This book is different because of its Content.

When you look at the content of this book it is different from the content of any other book. This book is true. This book stands for that which is real and fact. This book is reliable. This book you can count on.

You would be amazed. Go look at a science book written in the 1900's and then compare it to one written in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Are there any difference or changes that have occurred?

Can you think about the atomic structure? The picture used to be a little nucleus in the middle and then things orbiting around it. That is not the way atoms look at all, but that is what we thought they looked like. You see, books written by men are subject to change, because we might make discoveries we did not know about before. The Bible will never change because it has truth as its substance, for its matter.

In case you have forgotten what truth is, let's look at what Webster says truth is: "fidelity, constancy; sincerity in action, character and utterance; the state of being the case: a fact; the body of real things, events or facts;

What the Bible says about itself is that it is without error. Trust me, you can rely on it.

Now I understand that there are some of you who are technical in nature and you say, "Now what a minute Dr. Newell, We can go to the original language, to the Greek text and to the Hebrew text". Some of you might know Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" KJV very good. NIV, "I can everything through him who gives me strength". How could those be the different? There are different manuscripts. Its just a manuscript. This is a copy of a copy, etc. of the original written by Paul.

The Bible is not only without error it is without contradiction. You will not find in one place and instruction to do this and then in another place find instruction to do that.

Now some of you may know that Proverbs 26:4 and 5 say, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. **5** Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes. Well what do you do, answer him or not?”

Let me share with you a little experience. A friend of mine, Jay Wolf, the pastor of First Baptist Church of Montgomery pulled out of a sports complex in Montgomery, he pulled out in front of an on coming car. Now I’m sure that if he had seen that car coming he wouldn’t have pulled out, but he pulled out anyways. The person who was driving the other car must have been deaf because he began to communicate with him in sign language. He began to honk the horn, and mouth obscenities at him. The man even pulled up next to him at the next light. He rolled his window and shouted at him. You know what Jay did? Jay let his window down and Jay said, “I’m sorry, may the Lord bless you”. When they pulled up to the next light that man’s face had completely changed. He looked like he had been in the desert for several days. He was wilted completely and he said to Jay, “I’m sorry”. That is how you follow Proverbs 26:4-5.

See, there is never an inconsistency in the scripture. If there is ever an inconsistency, it is in us, not in the word. Our challenge is to determine, what we need to get rid of in order that we see the truth that God’s word is revealing to us.

This book is different because of its Authorship, Purpose, and Contents. How many of you agree with what I have said so far about the Scriptures? One thing remains to be said: We stand in the company of the people of the Old and New Testaments: Who God chose to wrote this book and give this book, we stand with them.

Exodus 24:3-8 <sup>3</sup> When Moses went and told the people all the Lord’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the Lord has said we will do.”

James 1:22-25 <sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

The Word of the Lord: Do it!

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