**Grace to You** :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

**Our God-Breathed Bible**
Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17
Code: 55-17

As you know, we're studying 2 Timothy, and I would like to draw you back to 2 Timothy chapter 3, as at least a starting point for our message this morning. What I want to share with you this morning is really just a departure from this text, but based on that which this text affirms.

You remember last Lord's Day, we looked at verses 16 and 17, which says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, fully equipped for every good work. All Scripture is inspired by God."

We went into some detail studying those two verses in the framework of the context of this chapter. I told you last week that I couldn't leave this particular section of Scripture without a bit more of a general look at this idea that our Bible is inspired by God. So if I might depart a bit from this text and look at some other portions of Scripture, I would like to do that in order to enrich all of our understanding of what it means to have in our hands, the Word of the living God.

I hope you have an appreciation for the Scripture. I hope you have an appreciation for it, not as a fetish, but because it is the greatest treasure apart from God Himself that we have. It is His very Word, His very self-revelation. When people ask me why it is that I systematically teach through book after book, why it is that I pay so much attention to detail and to every verse and every phrase, and touch all the words; it's because I understand them to be the words of God revealed to us from Him. I would not second guess the necessity of those words being then presented, taught, and understood by all of us.

We're committed here at Grace Community Church to a biblical ministry, to an expository preaching method because we believe this to be the Word of the living God. God has revealed Himself in His book. When you read the words of your Bible, you're reading the words out of the mouth of God. That is a tremendous reality. That gives confidence to everything we do. It also binds us to obedience and submission to everything the Scripture teaches. Let's talk a little bit about what it means that all Scripture or every scripture is inspired by God. Just what is inherent in that thought? Let me see if I can't take you to a couple of scriptures to maybe enrich that, and then launch into some other things that are on my heart to share with you.

Turn in your Bible to Hebrews chapter 1, and let's look at the first part of the second verse. Hebrews chapter 1. It begins like this, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers by the prophets in many

portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son." Now, that's the statement I want you to focus on. I don't intend to exhaust all of the ramifications of that statement, but in its simplicity, it is abundantly clear and deeply profound.

It's giving us the essence of revelation. Mark that word. Revelation in its simple sense means to reveal, to reveal, to make something known that prior was not known; to make something understood that was not understood; to disclose truth never before known. God has revealed Himself, and here you have a statement with regard to revelation. God spoke long ago and God has spoken in these last days. The writer of Hebrews is, in effect, saying God spoke on two occasions. He spoke once long ago. He speaks in these last days by His Son.

Now, I believe that we are fair in assessing the fact that he has in mind here Old Testament revelation and New Testament revelation. God spoke long ago to the Jewish fathers. Those were the Old Testament prophets, those who received God's Word long ago under the old covenant. He spoke to those fathers by means of the prophets in many portions, *polumers*, many books, many sections, and you know that. There's the Pentateuch and there are the prophetic books and the historical books, and there are the books of poetry. In many, many portions and in many books God spoke. He spoke to the Jewish fathers. He spoke by means of the prophets.

He also spoke, it says, in many ways, *polutrops*. That means through vision and prophecy and parable and type and symbol and ceremony and theophany, and sometimes audible voice, and he even wrote with His finger on stone. There were many ways in which God spoke many things, collected in many texts, put into many books, and He spoke to those of old by means of the prophets. That is a statement with reference to the fact that the Old Testament is God speaking.

Now, let me make it as clear as I can to you, the Old Testament is not a collection of the wisdom of ancient men. The Old Testament is not a collection of the best of religious thinking. The Old Testament is not a collection of the good musings of godly people. The Old Testament is the Word of God. It's not the thinking of any men; good men, godly men, or ancient men in and of themselves. It is the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews says, "God spoke." God spoke. The Old Testament was God speaking to the fathers by means of the prophets.

In these last days since the coming of Christ, He has spoken again, and He has spoken in the Son. The gospels record God speaking through His Son; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The book of Acts; God speaking through the extension of the proclamation of the message of His Son. The epistles; God speaking through the deep and profound understanding of the meaning of the life and ministry of the Son. Even Revelation, the consummation when the Son comes back in glory, the consummation of God's communication to this world.

So the Old Testament is God speaking and revealing Himself. The New Testament is God speaking, and revealing His Son. The Old Testament is God's self-revelation, and that is the theme of the Old Testament. From Genesis to the very end of the Old Testament to Malachi and all in between the main character is God. It is the revelation of God, who He is. What are His attributes? What are His attitudes? How does He react to every possible given human situation? What is He like? What does He do? That's the Old Testament. It is the revelation of God. It is not the story of man. It is not the story of Israel. Those stories are there, but it is the revelation of God, and we see God revealed through man, through history, through Israel, through all that happens. God's attributes are sometimes listed very clearly, as in the Psalms. On the other hand, sometimes we see His attributes very clearly, and He's not even mentioned such as in the book of Esther where no mention of God is made, and yet He is the dominant force and dominant character throughout the entire book.

The Old Testament is the revelation of God to show men what God is like, who God is, what God tolerates and does not tolerate, how God desires holiness and punishes sin. The New Testament is God revealed by His Son in the life of His Son, in the message of His Son, in the understanding of the work of His Son, and in the culmination and the coming of His Son to establish His eternal kingdom. But in either case, Old Testament, New Testament, God spoke. What we have is, indeed, the Word of God. This is not the word of man. The New Testament writers wrote down the Word of God.

Jesus promised, "I will bring all things to your remembrance. I will teach you all things. I will lead you into all truth. I will show you things to come." And in so promising, gave those apostles and along with them, the other writers of the New Testament, the promise of divine inspiration; that they like the Old Testament prophets would write the Word of God. So what we have in our hands, beloved, is not the word of man. It's not the word of religious men. It's not the word of wise and godly men. It is the Word of God, the Word of God.

Hebrews 1:1-2 talks about revelation, the revealing of God. What process then did God use to reveal Himself? Let's look at another text, 2 Peter 1. Now, we go to the process God used to reveal Himself, and that has come to be known as inspiration, inspiration. In 2 Peter 1:20 it says, "Know this first, know this first. First of all, that no message –." The word "prophecy" here has a very generic sense not meaning some kind of prediction of the future, but message. No telling forth. "No message of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation," *epilusis*. Now, notice this, no message of Scripture is a matter of one's own *epilusis*. Now, what does that mean? It could mean releasing, and that might be the truest essence of the term.

No message from Scripture is of one's own releasing. Some have suggested that the best way to translate it would be "inspiration" because that's what it's intending to say. No message of Scripture is a matter of one's own inspiration. That is to say, Scripture does not come out of inspired men in the sense that some men are inspired because of some level of religious genius. The genitive case here suggests that Peter has in mind source or origin of Scripture, and that he's really not talking about

interpreting the Bible in the sense that you would describe what it means. But He's talking about the origin so that it could say this, "No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of origination in one's own mind." No message of Scripture comes out of any human source. That's the idea.

"For," verse 21 says, "no message was ever made by an act of human will." Scripture is not the product of men. It is not the product of the will of men, but men moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God. Very clear and very vital. No message was ever made, aorist passive indicative. The verb is *pher*. It means to bear, carry along, convey, produce, bring forth, bring along. No message was ever conveyed, borne, carried along, produced, brought forth by an act of human will, but men – same verb, *pher* – were borne along, carried along, conveyed, brought forth by the Holy Spirit to speak from God. The Holy Spirit filled them. The idea is like putting your sails to the wind on a ship and being borne along by the breeze. The Spirit of God moved them along, blew them along.

Now that tells us the process. The content of the Bible is revelation. The process by which that content was written down is called inspiration. It wasn't a high level of human activity. It wasn't even a high level of religious human activity. Men were in the process, but it didn't originate with them. It didn't come from their desire and their will. They were used as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit and enabled to speak from God. They spoke diving words. God use them. It was their personality. It was their background, some of their insights, their experiences, their perceptions, but every word was the Word of God. That's the miracle of inspiration.

Men, they were used, carried along by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God. That's what the Scripture says. So when you pick up your Bible, you're not reading the word of men. You're reading the Word of God that was written by men who were moved along in the process by the power of the Holy Spirit, not apart from their personalities, and not apart from their experiences, and not apart from their vocabulary, and not apart from their heart, passion, and compulsion. But integrating all of that into the power of the Spirit of God and never compromising the truth that every word came from God: a great and glorious miracle. So vital.

So, God spoke in the Old Testament to the fathers by the prophets in many ways and in many portions. God has spoken in the New Testament by His Son in the gospels, and then about His Son in the rest of the New Testament. The process by which God gave us that revelation is inspiration. Inspiration was God putting His revelation in, as it were, the hands of men to be written down. First, to be spoken and proclaimed, and then written down as they were energized, carried along by the Holy Spirit. Men were used, and yet no Word of God was ever violated. The totality of Scripture *pasa graph* , all Scripture, every Scripture is *theopneustos*, God-breathed. It is the breath of God, the writing of Scripture.

The totality of it, according to Romans 3:2 is called the oracles of God. When Paul is talking about the benefit of Israel, what is it that they had that set them apart from other nations? He has reference to

the Old Testament, which he calls the “oracles of God,” the speeches of God, the words of God. Jeremiah is a good illustration of this process. Jeremiah, called by God from before he was born, “The Word of the Lord came to me, - ” verse 4 of chapter 1, “ – ‘Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I consecrated you. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.’ Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord God! I do not know how to speak because I am a youth, - ” verse 9 “ – and the Lord stretched out His hand, touched my mouth. The Lord said to me, ‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.’” What a tremendous statement.
“I have put my words in your mouth.” That was the promise for the writers of Scripture.

All Scripture is God-breathed. All holy writing comes from God. We recognize that. We recognize the divine uniqueness of Scripture. The early church recognized it. Even though it wasn’t until 393, 397, the Council of Hippo, the Council of Carthage, about that time that the church sort of officially established the canon of Scripture comprehensively. It didn’t take that long for people to recognize it. The church didn’t invent the canon of Scripture any more than Newton invented the law of gravity. Newton discovered gravity, which God invented, and the church from the very earliest discovered inspired documents, which God Himself wrote. Though there was some time before some official church laid down some official label on all of it, it was eminently clear to the early church what was the Word of God, and what was not the Word of God. There are all kinds of erroneous books that have been left out, but what was the Word of God was the Word of God. God is the author of Scripture.

In fact, in the Scriptures, frequently God and the term “Scripture” are used interchangeably. In Galatians, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you.’” The Scripture says, “All the nations shall be blessed in you.” If you go back to Genesis 12, you see that God said that. God said/Scripture said, same thing. What Scripture says, God says. What Scripture says, God says.

In Acts chapter 13, there’s a most interesting note in the sermon of the apostle Paul. He says in verse 32, “We preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers that God has fulfilled this promise to our children, and that He raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art my Son; today I have begotten Thee.’ Then and as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ Therefore, He says also in another psalm, ‘Thou wilt not allow Thine Holy One to undergo decay.’” In other words, God is speaking in the Psalms, and that is exactly what the apostle is affirming. When the Psalms speak, God speaks.

In Romans – I was thinking just a moment ago of chapter 9, verse 17. The Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up,” and so forth. The Scripture didn’t say that in the Old Testament, God said it. But when God speaks, that’s Scripture. When Scripture speaks, that’s God. So you’ll find such terminology interchanged. Just as a footnote, the Bible does not say that the

writers were inspired. Paul does not say that. Peter does not say that. What is inspired is the Scripture. The men themselves were not inspired in the sense that they had some supernatural ability, which they could use at any point to produce Scripture. The only time they were ever inspired was when God gave them His Word. The rest of the time they spoke independent of any inspiration.

So the Bible knows nothing technically of inspired men; only of inspired words, of God-breathed words. Not Isaiah, not David, not Paul, not John or any other Biblical writer was inspired as a person so that he could write any scripture any time he wanted to. No, there were only very special moments in their lives when they were given directly from God His Word to write, and the rest of the time what they wrote was their own, was their own. So, men were not inspired, but Scripture is. God breathed into them, and they wrote it down word by word what God breathed into them. It was more than dictation. They weren't just listening to some voice and writing mechanically every word. It was flowing through their heart and their soul and their mind and their emotions and their experiences, but it came out every word the Word of God.

As God breathed into them the message, and they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, they said it and some of them wrote it down. Miraculous, supernatural, inexplicable process that yields to us the Word of God.

Now, let me talk about it from a negative viewpoint just to illustrate the major thrust. I said that there is nothing in the Scripture about inspired men, and what I want to point out that is when we talk about the Bible being inspired, we're not saying that there were some men who had a high level of human ability, some kind of religious geniuses. The world is full of people like that. There have been geniuses in music, who were prolific, who were profound, who were way beyond the common people and maybe way beyond even the best of men. There were geniuses in and are geniuses in literature, geniuses in prose, geniuses in poetry, great men and women of monumental capability that we were say were inspired poets, inspired musicians, inspired writers, inspired thinkers or whatever.

But when we talk about Bible inspiration, we're not talking about some high level of human achievement. Not so. We're not talking about men, as I said, who could because of their religious genius, write Scripture any time they wanted to, no. None of them could do that. Only when God gave them what He wanted said or written could they do it and under the work of the Spirit of God. They, by the way, haven't produced anything else, any other writings. If Peter was inspired, why isn't there a whole lot of stuff floating around that Peter wrote or said that we're collecting? Why didn't they write other books? So why didn't they go on and write more and more and more and more and more if it's only a high level of human genius?

The Bible writers themselves claim that what they wrote, God wrote. They didn't write. It's kind of curious to me that they had a sort of a strange air of infallibility. They said they wrote for God, and they never seemed to be self-conscious about it. I mean you basically look at the Bible writers and for

the most part, they are unlearned and common men. Yet, they're supremely confident that they write the Word of God. In fact, about 4,000 times in the Bible, the writers claim to be writing the Word of God. And they're never self-conscious about it. I mean, you would imagine that somewhere along the way they would say, "And this is the Word of God. Now, I know you find that hard to believe that I'm giving you the exact Word of God, but you've got to understand this is really true, guys. I mean I cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye. I'm not woofing you. This is really true."

There's none of that. There's none of that, "I don't know why you ought to believe this, but I'm telling you this is really the Lord. He told me to tell you this." There's no sense of self-justification. There's no sense of self-defense. Even though most of them had no extensive education and were in no earthly position to be in a role of a literary genius, particularly, they wrote this profound far-reaching supernatural wisdom, prophecies of the future, things to come to pass that were absolutely accurate.

They wrote on the nature and character of God. They wrote on God's divine purposes unfolding in the world. They were right about every single thing they ever said. They all claimed that it came from God, and yet they were never self-conscious about such a claim. Amazing, amazing. They just assumed that it was the Word of God, and they wrote it as such.

James described the authority of the Scripture when he said in chapter 4, verse 5, "Do you think the Scriptures speak for no purpose?" They're authoritative. Paul said the law of God was, "Holy, just, and good," and he had in mind that revealed law of God, the Old Testament. The New Testament writers, yes, affirmed they wrote the Word of God just as Old Testament writers had. There are about 320 direct quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament. About 1,000 inferences. The New Testament writers clearly believed the Old Testament was inspired. They also clearly believed their own New Testament was inspired, as we saw last time. They knew they were writing the Word of God, and it wasn't just some high level of human genius. They were moved by the Spirit of God to do what they otherwise could never do, never.

Secondly, there are some people who say, "Well, the Bible is inspired, but only concepts; not the real words." I have tried to deal with that through the years, people who think that they were inspired by God with great religious thoughts and they wrote it in their own words. "So we don't really have the words of God, so don't get bogged down in the words, just kind of grab the concepts and kind of go with the ideas and the flow. Don't worry about the words. That's just details that get in the way." You hear people say, "Well, the Spirit gives life; the letter kills," and that kind of thing.

Well, I would like to ask somebody how you communicate ideas without words. I'm not sure I understand that. How in the world could you communicate if you were God to somebody an idea without words? It doesn't make any sense. When Moses wanted to excuse himself from speaking for the Lord because he wasn't eloquent, God didn't say, "I will be with your mind and teach you what to think." He said, "I will be with your – " what? "your mouth, and teach you what to say." Isaiah said, "I

heard the voice of the Lord saying, and He said, ‘Go and tell this people.’” Jeremiah said, “The word of the Lord came unto me saying.” Ezekiel said, “He said unto me, ‘Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel. All my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thy heart and hear with thine eras, and go and speak to them.’” It was words; not thoughts without words, whatever they are.

Amos said, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees, and Jehovah took me from following the flock and Jehovah said to me, ‘Go, prophesy unto my people, Israel.’ Jehovah said to me.” Paul’s marvelous conversion experience, he was confronted by Ananias. He records it in Acts 22, “The God of our fathers has appointed thee to know His will and to see the righteous one, and to hear a voice from His mouth.” God appointed Paul to listen to Him and speak was he was told.

John said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a great voice saying, ‘What you see, write in a book. Write, therefore, the things which you saw, the things which are, the things which will come to pass hereafter.’” Even Christ, the Word made flesh, said that He received His message from His Father. Isaiah said of Christ, “Jehovah has made Him a mouth like a sharp sword. The Lord Jehovah has given me,” he said, “the tongue of them that are taught.” He even taught Christ what to say.

You can’t have thoughts without words. That kind of concept is foolish. You might as well talk about a tune without notes or music without a melody. You might as well talk about sun without light or a sum without figures or geology without rocks or anthropology without men, as thoughts without words. Quite the contrary, look at 1 Peter for a moment. I’ll show you an interesting thing, 1 Peter 1:10-11. This illustrates a principle. Peter is writing with reference to the Old Testament prophets as they recorded truth regarding the Messiah. He says, “As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating.” In other words, here they were, prophets of the Old Testament being borne along by the Holy Spirit and being borne alone to speak and write about the Messiah. As they were speaking or writing about the Messiah, they were making careful search and inquiry to figure out what they were talking about.

The point is this: not only does the Bible not teach that there are thoughts without words, it does teach that sometimes God gave words without thoughts in that sense. I don’t mean mindless, mechanical dictation, but there were many things that the writers of the Old Testament wrote that they did not fully comprehend. It is not a question of them writing down the distillation of their religious genius. It is a question of them writing the words that God gave them, whether they understood them fully or not. That’s why in Matthew 24:35 it says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words,” not my thoughts, “shall not pass away.”

Then somebody else comes along and says, “Well, but the Bible is inspired when it speaks of sacred things; not when it talks about secular things like science and history and geography and all of that.” You have to deal with that periodically. There are those who say, “The history of the Bible is in error; the geography of the Bible is in error; the mathematics of the Bible is in error. The scientific statements of the Bible are erroneous, but don’t worry, inspiration only guarantees the sacred, not the secular,” which is like saying, “God is good at religious things, but He really needs help in other areas, doesn’t do well with other data.” There are all kinds of people who want to attack the Bible on that basis.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations, kind of curious ones. Well, one that you probably are somewhat familiar with is given, and we won’t look it up, in Joshua 10 where it talks about the fact that the battle was going on, Joshua 10, about verse 12 and following. It says that in the middle of the battle, the sun what? Stood still. The critics for years have laughed and mocked that and said, “The sun stood still? Now, how scientific is that? If there was an unchanging relationship between the earth and the sun, what it meant was the earth stood still. See, that’s scientific,” they say. “The Bible is so unscientific.”

But the fact is if you were there that day, it would look to you like the sun stood still. That same critic who wants to disparage what the Bible says would be the first guy in the morning to bounce out of bed, look out the back window of his house and say, “What a beautiful sunrise!” That’s not a sunrise by the way, but nobody goes out and says, “Oh, what a lovely earth-revolving!” Nobody says that at night either. We say things like that all the time. We say, “People in Australia live down under.” Down under what? That’s not any more down under than being here is, but that’s a figure of speech. We say, “Well, we searched the four corners of the earth.” What corners? There are some things we speak from human perspective that are not intended to be statements of the technical elements of scientific data.

Then there is the record in the book of 2 Kings chapter 18 where you have Sennacherib and you have the transaction that’s made with Hezekiah, and it says there that he gave 30 talents of gold and 300 talents of silver, which doesn’t seem like any kind of issue until archeologists discovered the Assyrian records of that transaction between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. In fact, they have discovered Sennacherib’s own record, and in Sennacherib’s record, he has 800 talents of silver instead of 300 talents. The critics said, “You see, this is the kind of thing the Bible messes up on because it’s not careful about little numbers.” Then further archeological studies have revealed that the standard of calculating gold was the same in Judea and Syria, but the standard of calculating silver was different. A Judean and Syrian talent were so different that it took 800 Syrian talents to equal 300 Hebrew talents, and that’s exactly what the Scripture said. Scripture speaking in the Hebrew and the Sennacherib record in the Syrian.

Let me show you another one. There are many like that where the Bible is supposedly in error, and it isn't if you look closely. One very curious one is in Numbers 11. Turn to it. It's the fourth book in the Old Testament. You can find it. Numbers 11:31. This I think to be an interesting one. "There went forth a wind from the Lord." Now, the children of Israel are wandering around the Saini at this time. They have to be fed, and so the Lord is going to feed them. How He feeds them is quite curious. He said, "A wind and it brought quail from the sea." This wind blew in quail, and the quail came into the camp. It says that, "They came beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side."

So not only were they around, but they were around for quite an extensive range of area. It says not only were they one day's journey on that side of the camp, one day's journey on this side of the camp, all filled with quail, but two cubits deep, two cubits deep, about two cubits deep. A cubit was originally sort of from your elbow to the end of your hand, maybe 18 inches give or take, so you're talking three to four feet. It's an about kind of figure. Let's take the critic who decided that it was kind of four feet. So, he thought he'd do some calculation. He said this is one the most ridiculous things he ever read. "You mean that one day's journey on that side and one day's journey on this side that that whole entire area around the camp of Israel is four feet deep in quail?"

So, he calculated. That would be 19,538,468,306,672 (nineteen trillion, five hundred and thirty-eight billion, four hundred and sixty-eight million, three hundred and six thousand, six hundred and seventy-two) quail. So, naturally, that was cause for great laughter. Sure, 19 trillion quail all piled up. But he only showed his ignorance.

The Hebrew Scripture doesn't say they were stacked up from the ground up. What Scripture indicates in the Hebrew text is that God blew the quail into the wilderness from the Nile Valley, and the birds all came flying in about two cubits above the ground. That's what it says. Quail don't usually just come in and hover about two cubits above the ground, but they were blown in there by the Lord. It was easy for the people to get them that way. They'd just reach out and say, "Which one would you like?" "I'll take that one." Take a stick and whomp that one in the head. The quail were coming in flying at that level and hovering in the area until all the people had all that they wanted.

Listen, when the Bible talks about science, when the Bible talks about history, when the Bible talks about mathematics, whatever it is the Bible talks about, it is the Word of God. God is infallible and His Word is equally infallible. Critics want to mock the Scripture, and yet the Bible is scientifically accurate, contains the basic principles of science. You take science, for example, in its most basic elements, the most elements of science: time, force, action, space, matter, those five things. Herbert Spencer, 1903 he died. He reduced everything that is to those categories: time, force, action, space, matter. He said everything in the universe into those. That is the matrix of existence.

So, in 1903, he died having been hailed as a great brilliant man because he discovered that. What he didn't realize is it's in the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning, (that's time) God (that's force) created (that's action) the heavens (that's space) the earth (that's matter)." The matrix of existence was in the first verse. The universe is a continuum of time, force, action, space, matter, and one can't exist without the other. Therefore, the entire continuum must have existed simultaneously from the beginning. It all had to begin together. Science has to be in that matrix. No one element of that matrix can be missing or you can't have what we have in existence today.

Once the universe had been created, its processes were designed to operate in an orderly fashion. All of energy and matter was sustained by their interplay so that no further creation was needed. Once you generate time, force, action, space, and matter - that's it; that's all you need. Genesis 2:2 says, "God ended the work which God had made." He did it and it was done. He did it all at once, created the whole matrix. That was it. There's never been any creation since then because there doesn't need to be any creation since then. The complete cessation of creative activity has been called the First Law of Thermodynamics by science, or the Law of Conservation of Mass and Energy, which Einstein spent a lot of time on. It is the most basic, universal, certain of all scientific principles, and it's right there in the Word of God. He ceased from doing what He'd done. It was over. He did it all at once, and that was it. It would conserve itself by its very nature.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics is the Law of Increasing Disorder, that all of that system in that matrix is running down, disintegrating, and will eventually come up dead. That we're seeing in no uncertain terms. "The whole creation," Romans 8 says, "is groaning and groaning and groaning and waiting for the curse to be reversed." Science cannot explain – are you ready for this? – the Second Law of Thermodynamics. They don't know why everything is decreasing into disorder all running down heading toward deadness. The Bible is the only place you can go for an explanation, and the explanation is a little three-letter word that says sin, sin, sin. You can't even be a half-baked scientist if you don't believe in sin because you can't explain the nature of the matrix of existence.

The Bible is accurate on everything it talks about. It says, "He hangeth the earth on nothing." Whether you're talking about geology, geodesy meteorology, physiology, biology, anthropology, astronomy, hydrology – I don't care what you're talking about, when the Bible speaks, it's accurate.

Then you look at things in the Bible like prophecy. For example, maybe we have time to show you at least one. Look at Ezekiel, chapter 28, and I'll just give you this one insight, which is so great, to show you the accuracy of Scripture historically. Ezekiel 26-28. We'll go back to 26. Here comes a prophecy to Ezekiel about the destruction of the city of Tyre. Tyre was a Phoenician stronghold. Tyre was a fairly significant city, large city, on the coast of Phoenicia, now known as Palestine. The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel in verse 2 of chapter 26 telling about the destruction of the place.

“Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, ‘Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it is open to me. I shall be filled now that she is laid waste.’” In other words, because Tyre mocked Jerusalem, “Therefore, We preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers that God has fulfilled this promise to our children, and that He raised up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art my Son; today I have begotten Thee.’ Then and as for thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am against you, O Tyre. I will bring upon you many nations against you as the sea brings up its waves. They will destroy the walls of Tyre, break down her towers. I will scrape her debris from her, make her a bare rock. She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,’ declares the Lord God, ‘and she will become spoil for the nations. Also, her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword, and they will know that I am the Lord.’ For thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, king of kings, and horses, chariots, cavalry, and a great army. He will slay your daughters on the mainland with the sword. He will make siege walls against you, cast up a mount against you, and raise up a large shield against you. The blow of his battering rams he will direct against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. Because of the multitude of his horses, the dust raised by them will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of cavalry and wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city that is breeched. With the hooves of his horses, he will trample all your streets. He will slay your people with the sword; and your strong pillars will come down to the ground. Also they will make a spoil of your riches and a prey of your merchandise, break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses and throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water. So I will silence the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps will be heard no more. I’ll make you a bare rock; you will be a place for the spreading of nets. You will be built no more for I, the Lord, have spoken,’ declares the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God to Tyre.”

Now, that’s pretty detailed stuff, folks. I mean that is not some kind of general prophecy, very specific. This is a great Phoenician city. From the seventh century B.C., it controlled Phoenicia. It had strong walls. About 150 feet high was the wall. That’s very high. Fifteen feet thick, and it was flourishing when Joshua led Israel into Canaan. Hiram the first was its king. He helped David build the palace, and according to 1 Chronicles 22, he helped Solomon build the temple.

Three years after this prophecy was given, Nebuchadnezzar came and laid a 13-year siege on that city. See, they were walled cities, so all you had to do was if you couldn’t get in the city, you just cut off anything coming into the city, and they eventually starved. It took him 13 years from 585 to 573. Finally, the city surrendered because they were all dying. Nebuchadnezzar broke down the walls and the towers, destroyed the city, did every single thing Ezekiel said he would do. Of course, he wasn’t reading Ezekiel when he did it. He got in the city. He didn’t find the spoils. He thought he was going to find spoils, but they had used their fleet to take the spoils out. They took all of the spoils to a half-mile away island off the coast. Of course, in chapter 29, Ezekiel said, “You will gain no plunder. You will gain no plunder.” Just exactly that happened. When he got there, they had taken all of the valuables

off to the island. Nebuchadnezzar had no naval force to go off and get it. The island then became the new city and it flourished for 250 years out on that island. Only part of the prophecy was fulfilled, the part about Nebuchadnezzar, the part about destroying the wall, smashing it down, slaughtering the people, not getting the spoil. But not all of it was yet complete. The ruins were still on the old site. The rubble was still there.

After 250 years, a 24-year-old guy came by the name of Alexander the Great. He had 33,000 infantrymen. He had 15,000 cavalry. He had just defeated the Persians, and he was on his way to Egypt. He needed supplies, so he came by the now island city of Tyre, and he sent word, “I want you to supply all of my men and all of my horses and all of my army,” and they said, “Forget it, buddy. You don’t have a navy and we’re on an island. We’re not going to help you at all.” He didn’t like that, and it wasn’t good to get Alexander mad. He didn’t have a fleet, so he decided he had to get a way to go to that island. So he did what Ezekiel, the prophet, said would be done. It said the place would be scraped bare as a rock and all of the rubble would be thrown into the sea.

Well, what conqueror in his right mind would ever do that? Why waste your time once you’ve conquered the place, picking up everything and throwing it in the ocean, all the stone and all the rest of it? But that’s exactly what had to happen, so Alexander did it. He took all of the debris and built a 2,000 foot long, 200 foot wide causeway all the way to the island with all the debris.

Now, the island had fortified itself as well with powerful walls that reached right down to the edge of the sea. As Alexander got closer, he realized he was going to have to get over those walls. So, in order to pull it off, he built these massive towers called Heliopolis 160 feet high, according to the record, 20 stories high. They held artillery, and they held a drop bridge, and just pushed the towers out the causeway, shot at the people from them. When they got to the wall, dropped the bridges down and walked right in. In the process, of course, all the way along, the people are throwing things and shooting things off the wall, and they invented what were called tortoises, big shells that they held over the workers who were building the causeway.

It took him seven months. He went in and murdered 8,000 people over a period of a few months. Executed 7,000 more, and sold 30,000 into slavery, and fulfilled every single detail of the prophecy. Though the city of Jerusalem has been rebuilt 17 times, Tyre has never been rebuilt. That’s exactly what God said. “You will be built no more.” You know what they do? Go there today. You’ll find out what they do. They dry fish nets there, just what it said. What’s the probability in that? About 1 in 75 million happening by chance.

By the way, a sister city by the name of Sidon also received a prophecy. Verse 22 of Ezekiel 28, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘I’m against you, O Sidon. I will be glorified in your midst. Then they will know that I am the Lord when I execute judgments in her. I will manifest my holiness in her. For I will send pestilence, blood to her streets, and the wounded will fall in her midst by the sword upon her on

every side; then they will know that I am the Lord.'"

Hmm. Going to make it a bloody mess. It's the center of Baal worship, by the way, about 20 miles north of Tyre. Prophecy said blood in the streets, swords everywhere, but no prophecy of ultimate destruction. That's what happened. Blood everywhere, swords everywhere. That poor city was beleaguered and besieged again and again and again and again, but it's still a city. Today, it's called Saida, and it's still there.

In 351 B.C., it was ruled by Persia. There was a seizure of that city in the revolution then. All hope of saving the city was gone. The people being attacked by the Persians, 40,000 of them chose to die rather than submit to Persian violence, so they set themselves on fire and burned themselves up with their own houses. Blood flowed in the streets over and over again. That city, Sidon or Saida, was taken three times by the crusaders, three times by the Muslims. In 1840, it was bombarded by the combined forces of England, France, and Turkey, but it's still there because God didn't say it would be destroyed. It's still there.

You can study the Bible, and it will predict things historically that are absolutely accurate. Ezekiel 30 predicted the destruction of Egypt. Nahum 1, the destruction of Nineveh. Isaiah 13, the destruction of Babylon. Hosea 13, the destruction of Samaria. Ezekiel 25, the destruction of Moab and Ammon. One mathematician by the name of Peter Stoner took 11 of the prophecies with all their detail, and calculated the probability of that occurring by chance; 1 in 5.76 x 10 to the 59th power. You say, "What does that mean?" I don't know. I can't even think like that.

How do you calculate that? I mean how do you understand that? Well, he estimated it this way; that if the whole universe contained 2 trillion galaxies and each galaxy of 2 trillion had 100 billion stars, we could make all the stars in all those galaxies 2 x 10 to the 5th power out of silver dollars. Incredible number. These kinds of probabilities just don't happen.

So, when you see the Bible speak scientifically, geographically, historically, or whatever it is; it's accurate. This is the Word of God, and what is the benefit of it? Let's go back our original text and end up there, 2 Timothy 3. What's the benefit of it? "All Scripture is inspired by God, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, fully equipped for every good work." What a tremendous thing!

We not only have the Word of God, but we have the Word of God, which can fully equip us for every good work. I mean it would be one thing if we just had a nice Word from God, but we have a life-changing Word from God. What should be our response? Believe it, first of all. Believe it. Secondly, study it. Thirdly, honor it. God is exalted above His name. Love it. "Oh, how I love Thy law," David said in Psalm 119:97. Obey it, do what it commands. Fight for it, Jude 3, "Earnestly contend for the faith. Preach it, 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word."

Do you realize that in your lifetime, you will probably eat 150 head of cattle? Maybe a little more. You'll eat at least 3,000 chicken, conservatively, 225 lambs, 26 sheep. You'll eat 310 pigs in bacon and ham alone. Twenty-six acres of grain you will consume alone, and you will eat 50 acres of fruit and vegetables. Can I remind you of what Jesus said? "Man shall not live by – " what? "bread alone, but by every word that – " what? "proceeds out of the mouth of God." Dear friend, while you're eating all the rest of that, a little time in this book. Let's pray together.

"Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." What a statement. Father, how thrilled we are to know that that's what our Bible is, words that have proceeded out of the mouth of God, the God who not only knows history, but writes it; who not only understands science, but created it; who not only understands the spiritual dimension, but is that reality. Oh God, what a treasure! Help us to love your Word, to honor your Word, to believe your Word, to study your Word, to defend your Word, to proclaim your Word. Make us people of the book who while we're feeding ourselves all the rest of the things in this life do not forget that we really live by every Word that comes out of your mouth.

Father, help us to make the commitments that we each need to make to refresh our devotion to your Word, for in it you are revealed. We long so to know you. May we realize that knowing you comes through your Word and through those trials and experiences of life in which we apply that Word. Meet every need of every heart. In Christ's name, amen.

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