**ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED**

2 Timothy 3:1-17

Key Verses 16, 17

**“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteous, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

**Introduction**

 This book was written from Paul who was in the prison in Rome, not long before his martyrdom. Paul wrote this letter to encourage Timothy who was in charge of serving Ephesian church. False teachers penetrated into the church and some people departed from the truth already(2:18a). Paul says in 2:16, **“**Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.” Also he says in 2:15 **“**Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.**”** In today’s passage, Paul continues to teach the nature of the Holy Scripture and its usefulness. Paul also teaches us what to love the most in the last days. May God help us to understand the great value of God’s word and strive to go back to the Bible in the new year so that we may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. **Read verses 1-5. How does Paul characterize the last days? What do you think the “last days” refers to? (Acts 2:17, Luke 17:27) What will people be like during the last days? (2-4) In what respect do they have nothing to do with godliness? (5)**

1-1, Read verses 1-5.

**But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.**

1-2, How does Paul characterize the last days?

 ***“But mark this.”*** As a spiritual leader, Timothy should look for spiritual status of the church members. As he observes what is coming into the church, he can pray and teach them with proper prayer topics instead of being ignorant as a naive leader.

  ***‘terrible times’*** Terrible means perilous, dangerous, or hazardous. The ‘terrible times’ was translated in other versions as perilous times(KJV), times of stress(RSV) or very difficult times(NLT).

1-3, What do you think the **“last days”** refers to? (Acts 2:17, Luke 17:27)

The last days refers to the time from Jesus’ ascension to the time of his second coming.

Jesus mentioned about ‘the days’ in Luke’s gospel.

**26** “Just as it was in **the days of Noah**, so also will it be in **the days of the Son of Man**. **27** People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

**28** “It was the same in **the days of Lot**. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. **29** But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. - **Luke 17: 26-35**

 ***The times of Noah*** was terrible because the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence.(Ge 6:11) People married any of them they chose based on instinct and outward attraction. They became flesh. Then, God sent flood destroying all the ungodly people except Noah and his family members in the ark.

 ***The times of Sodom and Gomorrah*** was also terrible because their sins was out of control, especially homo-sexuality was rampant. People regarded God’s word as a mere joke. God sent burning sulfur from heaven and wiped out these cities and its people. Those times are characterized by no spiritual life. Genesis 6:3 says, **“My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal.”** God’s Spirit left sinful people and only freshly desires remained in men’s heart. These terrible times brought God’s imminent judgment.

These examples are the foreshadows of terrible times of the last days.

Despite terrible times of the last days, still we have hope from God’s point of view. The prophets Joel saw vision. The apostle Peter quoted what he had prophesied.

**Acts 2: 17** reads, “‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

1-4, What will people be like during the last days? (2-4)

 The first nature of terrible times is **lovers of themselves**. Here, “the lovers of themselves” means they love themselves more than they love God and others. NLT says “for people will love ***only*** themselves.” ‘***I, my, me’*** generation. In others words, people become self-centered.

 The second one is **lovers of money.** A godless man put money in God’s place for he thinks that money talks, bringing him happiness and security. Apostle Paul(1 Timothy 6:10) said, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

 The people in the last days become **boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy**.

 **“Without love”** This results in **unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, and conceited.**

 Jesus also says in Matthew 24:12 regarding end times, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.” People will be easily emotional and angered without self-control(4).

 “**Lovers of pleasure**” People seek pleasures, stimulating their sensual desires through indulging in drinking alcohol, immoral relationship, abusing drugs, game addiction, watching violent movies and etc.

 Their life philosophy is ***‘let us eat and drink for we die tomorrow.’*** (1Co 15:32)

 Paul named ***19 natures of the last times***. It tells the conditions of man’s heart without God. Times are terrible when people love the wrong objects.

 \*\*\*Then what is the right thing that men must love? The last phrase of the list says **“lovers of God.”**

Jesus replied: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’.*” - Matthew 22:36-38

 **Two Commandments are ‘love’ commands.** The object of love is God first and others second. So loving God is the most important command in the Bible.

 When we love God, we love his word. When we love God we love what God loves and we hate what God hates. When we love God, God’s images are formed in our heart. Then God’s Spirit will dwell in us and bless our lives abundantly through the fruits of the Holy Spirit. May God help us to be the lovers of God in the last days.

1-5, In what respect do they have nothing to do with godliness? (5)

having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

 These people are not only in the world but **also inside** of the church. Many believers so called Christians in church practice religious life in the last days.

 But they do not believe God’s power. They do not depend on God. They do not have God’s word in their hearts. They do not pray. They are godless people(atheists).

1. **Read verses 6-9. What do they do with gullible women? (6a) Why do they not able to come to a knowledge of the truth? (6b-7) How do they oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses’ work? (8, Exodus 7:10-11) What is their fate? (9)**

2-1, Read verses 6-9.

**6 They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, 7 always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. 9 But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.**

2-2, What do they do with gullible women? (6a)

 In Paul’s time, Gnosticism invaded Ephesian church with false teachings. Women at that time used to invite teachers of new philosophy, arts, and new learning at home.

 The people of Gnosticism tempted the women through using this custom, poisoning their hearts.

2-3, Why do they not able to come to a knowledge of the truth? (6b-7)

They including the women, were loaded down with sins and evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

2-4, How do they oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses’ work? (8, Exodus 7:10-11)

 Jannes and Jambres, or sometimes Johanai and Mamre, or Iannes and Mambres, or Janis and Jamberes, are names traditionally given to the magicians who contended with [Moses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses) and [Aaron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron) - wikipedia

 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. **11** Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and **the Egyptian magicians** also did the same things by their secret arts: **12** Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. **13** Yet Pharaoh’s heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said.

 Paul compares the false teachers of Timothy’s time as Jannes and Jambres —Egyptian court magicians who counterfeited the truth against Moses.

2-5, What is their fate? (9)

 They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. 9 But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

 But their folly would be clear to everyone by God’s power. We must turn away from such people, instead we must hold on the true gospel.

1. **Read verses 10-14. What does Paul remind Timothy of? (10-13, Acts 13:14-14:22) What does Paul tell Timothy to continue to do? (14) How do you think that the messages in these verses may apply to you in the new year?**

3-1, Read verses 10-14.

**10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,**

 3-2, What does Paul remind Timothy of? (10-13, Acts 13:14-14:22)

 Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, ***“Follow me as I follow the example of Christ.”***Thus when he says here, “my” way or “my” teaching mean Jesus’ way and Jesus’ teaching.

 My purpose, faith, love, endurance are also very important elements in spiritual battle.

 We are very thankful to the Lord our God for Jesus’ and many servants’ examples. Like verse 13, “while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

 Paul taught Timothy God’s words correctly, and he lived by it. He was now ready to die for it. Paul reminded Timothy of his personal life of faith through his examples.

 Paul, in his first mission journey in Lystra, was stoned and thrown away almost dead. But God saved him. Timothy witnessed all these.

 **“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”** Sufferings and persecutions are the marks of godly Christians.

 **“**They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. **“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God...” - Acts 14:21-22**

3-3, What does Paul tell Timothy to continue to do? (14)

 **‘But as for you.’** Regardless of how false teachers and godless people live, Paul exhorts Timothy to continue in what he has learned.

 Here **‘continue in’** means ‘remain faithful’. Since Timothy learned it from infancy, probably, his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice taught him. Timothy learned the gospel faith from faithful servants of God like Paul.

3-4, How do you think that the messages in these verses may apply to you in the new year?

We must also stick to the gospel truth that we have learned and become convinced of and live a life of mission.

1. **Read verses 15-17. What are the Holy Scriptures able to do for us? (15, John 5:39) What do you think about the phrase: “all Scripture is God-breathed?” (16a) What is Scripture useful for? (16b) How do you think we may be equipped thoroughly for every good work? (16, 17)**

4-1, Read verses 15-17.

**15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

4-2, What are the Holy Scriptures able to do for us? (15, John 5:39)

**The Holy Scripture has wisdom for salvation.**

**13** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. **14** But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. **15** Such **“wisdom”** does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. **17** But **the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.** - James 3:13-18

 The Bible is holy because it is the Words of God.

 The Bible gives us answers to our fundamental questions- where we came from, who we are, how we should live and where we are going. It tells us God’s plan of salvation.

 Through Bible study, we can know that we are sinners, and that God loves us, and that Jesus died for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life.

 Roman 1:16 says **“the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”** When we come to the word of God, it enlightens us to have wisdom for salvation through faith in Jesus.

4-3, What do you think about the phrase: **“all Scripture is God-breathed?**” (16a)

 According to NLT version, it is translated as “All Scripture is inspired by God.”

 When God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). Likewise, the God-breathed word is full of His Spirit and life in it.

 Hebrews 4:12 says **“For the word of God is alive and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword.”** The Bible was written by different authors. Yet it has a consistent topic - the kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.

 The Holy Spirit breathed on each writer with each Word. Since the author of the Bible is God himself, the word of God is the ultimately authoritative word of God.

 Although God is invisible. But God himself speaks to us through the Bible. Through words, we communicate each other and develop relationships.

 \*\*Through words, we understand others and express our opinions. Without words, building up healthy relationship would be impossible even among family members.

 Likewise, God has communicated and has developed relationships with humans through his words.

 When we come to the God-breathed word, we personally come to know God deeper, our spirits are revived and we grow in an intimate relationship with God. Praise Him!

4-4, What is Scripture useful for? (16b)

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

 The Bible not only leads people to salvation, but also **transforms their lives**. School education cannot change human beings. Only the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God can transform man’s inner person.

 The Bible is useful for teaching. The word of God convicts people of their sins through the work of the Holy Spirit and let them repent of their sins and correct their wrong ways.

 Also when the word of God grows in power within us, we are ready to train others in righteousness.

4-5, How do you think we may be equipped thoroughly for every good work? (16, 17)

We have countless examples like Ezra, Paul, or late Dr. Samuel Lee. May God bless us to be equipped thoroughly for every good work. Amen.

**In Conclusion**

 We live in terrible times in the last days. It is very very difficult for Christian to keep their faith. In such time, we need to be the lovers of God. All Scripture is God-breathed. We need to go back to the Bible. We need to study the Bible as a matter of life and death. May God help us to love God and God’s word passionately this year and bless us to be useful servants of God.

**One word: God-breathed!**