

All Scripture is inspired of God

(2 Timothy 3:16a) All Scripture is inspired of God

What do the words "*all scripture*" refer to? The previous verse gives us that answer.

(2 Timothy 3:15) and that from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

When Paul wrote those words in verse 16, he was not referring to his own letters, or the recent writings of any others of his time that today make up the Greek scriptures, some of which hadn't even been written yet. No, he was referring to the scrolls "*that from infancy you have known.*" Yes, the "*the holy writings*" he was referring to were the Hebrew scriptures.

In many places in the Hebrew texts we find where it tells us that the words written were dictated or given to the writers directly from God. (e. g. Ex 6:10) They were unquestionably inspired.

In all 53 instances where "*scriptures*" or "*scripture*" is found in the Greek scriptures, it is always referring to the Hebrew scriptures. Does that mean that the Greek scriptures are not inspired? Well that depends on what "*inspired*" means. The original Greek word (theopneustos) means "God breathed." So if the question is: Are the Greek texts a dictation from God? then no, they are not inspired. At no time do the writers of the Greek scriptures tell us that they were told what to write, with the exception of the book of Revelation of course. (Re 1:1)

Does that mean that the Greek scriptures were not influenced by God at all? No it does not. Much of the Greek scriptures were influenced by information from God, when the writers were anointed with holy spirit. Here is what Christ said about it:

(John 14:26) But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you.

When he said that the holy spirit would teach them "*all things*", did he mean that the holy spirit would make them all-knowing? No. Only what he (the holy spirit) heard did he pass on. (1Jo 2:27)

(John 16:13) However, when that one comes, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak of his own initiative, but what he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things to come.

Yes, everything that the holy spirit was told to pass on to the apostles, was passed on, leaving nothing out.

(1 John 2:27) And as for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to be teaching you; but the anointing from him is teaching you about all things and is true and is no lie. Just as it has taught you, remain in union with him.

Here is how Luke described his writing process:

(Luke 1:1-4) Seeing that many have undertaken to compile an account of the facts that are given full credence among us, ² just as these were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and attendants of the message, ³ I resolved also, because I have traced all things from the start with accuracy, to write them to you in logical order, most excellent The·oph'i·lus, ⁴ so that you may know fully the certainty of the things that you have been taught orally.

[w82 2/15 p. 13] Luke here assures his readers that he is not proceeding on the basis of hearsay or mere oral tradition. Why? Since Luke evidently did not become a disciple while Jesus was on earth, when Luke was preparing his Gospel he did careful research among "eyewitnesses." Also, he investigated contemporary records, 'tracing all things from the start with accuracy.' This should build our confidence in Luke's writings. But how did Luke obtain his detailed information? At a certain point in its account of Paul's travels, the book of Acts switches from the third person ("he," "they") to the first person ("we," "us"). It is understood from this that Luke began to travel with Paul during his second missionary journey. (Acts 16:10) Evidently by accompanying Paul to Jerusalem at the end of the third journey, Luke would there have been able to interview men and women who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry. (Acts 21:1, 7, 15-18) There Luke may also have examined documents, such as those used in preparing the genealogy at Luke 3:23-38.

Does that sound like Luke wrote under inspiration? Did the holy spirit or an angel tell him what to write? No. Luke "*composed*" (manufactured, produced) them himself. (Ac 1:1) He tells us that it was hard work and research that provided the information we have in the books of Luke and Acts.

At Luke 1:1-3 Luke tells us that the other Bible writers of his time had also "*undertaken to compile an account of the facts.*" Yes, those "*eyewitnesses and attendants of the message... resolved*" to trace (investigate) "*all things from the start with accuracy.*" Their writings were the result of effort and inquiry. No investigatory work would be needed if they were inspired dictations.

Note that the book of John itself is entitled "*According to John*". A longer title is also used: "*The Good News According to John*". The accounts recorded in that book are not according to Jesus, or the holy spirit, or even according to God, but the contents of that book are according to John. All four gospel accounts are named that way: "*According to...*"

Note what John says in this verse:

(John 19:35) And the one who has seen it has given this witness, and his witness is true, and he knows that what he says is true, so that you also may believe.

John's source for the recorded information was an eyewitness. He does not claim that what he wrote was inspired, even in the conclusion of his book:

(John 21:24) This is the disciple who gives this witness about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true.

Did the holy spirit have a hand in making sure that all those writings survived down through history for us to have today? Of that I have no doubt.

Although the holy spirit did not dictate the Greek texts to its writers as they were writing them, the writers did have knowledge given to them by the holy spirit when they were anointed, and they shared that information with us in their writings. For instance, we know what Jesus prayed about in the garden of Gethsemane, not because the writers heard him praying, but no doubt because the holy spirit told them what he prayed about. (Lu 22:41-45)

But not everything in the Greek scriptures is information given to the writer by the holy spirit. At times the writer also included his own personal opinion, and deductions based on personal reasonings. Paul often did this.

(1 Corinthians 7:25, 26) Now concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who had mercy shown him by the Lord to be faithful. ²⁶ Therefore, I think that it is best for a man to continue as he is in view of the present difficulty.

And it would seem that he thought highly of his own opinion since he described it as *"appropriate"*.

(1 Corinthians 7:35) But I am saying this for your personal advantage, not to restrict you, but to move you to what is appropriate and to constant devotion to the Lord without distraction.

When someone called Christ *"good teacher"*, he said: *"Why do you call me good? Nobody is good except one, God."* (Mr 10:17, 18) While Christ showed humility and referred others to God, Paul often thought that others should imitate him. (Php 3:17; 1Th 3:9)

(1 Corinthians 4:16, 17) I urge you, therefore, become imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I am sending Timothy to you, because he is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation.

(1 Corinthians 11:1, 2) Become imitators of me, just as I am of Christ. ² I commend you because in all things you remember me and you are holding fast the traditions just as I handed them on to you.

But Peter tells us who we should imitate:

(1 Peter 2:21) In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving a model for you to follow his steps closely.

(John 13:15) For I (Christ) set the pattern for you, that just as I did to you, you should also do.

If you read the book of Galatians carefully, you will see that Paul was a bit of an outsider. He begins in verse 11 pointing out how none of the brothers taught him the good news, but that he was given the good news by Christ himself, and then he immediately began his ministry without any other human consultation.

(Galatians 1:11, 12) For I want you to know, brothers, that the good news I declared to you is not of human origin; ¹² for neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it was through a revelation by Jesus Christ.

(Galatians 1:15-17) But when God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his undeserved kindness, thought good ¹⁶ to reveal his Son through me so that I might declare the good news about him to the nations, I did not immediately consult with any human; ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before I was, but I went to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus.

(Acts 9:20) and immediately in the synagogues he began to preach about Jesus, that this one is the Son of God.

After 3 years in his ministry he visited Peter in Jerusalem for 15 days. While there, none of the apostles in Jerusalem even came to visit Paul, except for James. (Ac 9:26)

(Galatians 1:18, 19) Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Ce'phas(Peter), and I stayed with him for 15 days. ¹⁹ But I did not see any of the other apostles, only James the brother of the Lord.

Then 14 years later Paul returned to Jerusalem for a second time where James, Peter, and John took Paul aside and privately scrutinized what he was preaching to make sure it was acceptable.

(Galatians 2:2) I went up as a result of a revelation, and I presented to them the good news that I am preaching among the nations. This was done privately, however, before the men who were highly regarded, to make sure that I was not running or had not run in vain.

Here is how he describes that encounter.

(Galatians 2:6-10) But regarding those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me, for God does not go by a man's outward appearance—those highly regarded men imparted nothing new to me. ⁷ On the contrary, **when they saw** that I had been entrusted with the good news for those who are uncircumcised, just as Peter had been for those who are circumcised—⁸ for the one who empowered Peter for an apostleship to those who are circumcised also empowered me for those who are of the nations—⁹ and **when they recognized** the undeserved kindness that was given me, James and Ce'phas(Peter) and John, the ones who seemed to be pillars, gave Bar'na·bas and me the right hand of fellowship, so that we should go to the nations but they to those who are circumcised. ¹⁰ They asked only that we keep the poor in mind, and this I have also earnestly endeavored to do.

It was only then, 14 years after his first visit and 17 years into his preaching work, that his ministry to the nations was accepted by the brothers as being from Christ. So they gave him "*the right hand of fellowship*" and agreed to continue to go their separate ways, Paul and Barnabas to the nations, and the rest of the Christian leadership to the Jews. (Ac 15:2, 3)

Paul did not seem to hold those men taking the lead in *high regard*, and if you read carefully, you will notice that he refers to himself quite a lot. (Ga 5:2, 21) And he often refers, not to Christ's words, but to his own.

(2 Timothy 1:13) Keep holding to the standard of wholesome words that you heard from me with the faith and love that result from union with Christ Jesus.

He also describes the men from Asia, not as rejecting Christ's teachings, but as rejecting him.

(2 Timothy 1:15) You know this, that all the men in the province of Asia have turned away from me, including Phy·gel'us and Her·mog'e·nes.

Yes, it seems that Paul's view of his own self-importance was a bit higher than it should have been. And Paul was not shy about sharing his personal opinion. (1Co 10:15, 20; Ga 3:17; 5:16; Eph 4:17; Phm 21)

(1 Corinthians 7:12) But to the others I say, yes, I, not the Lord: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is agreeable to staying with him, let him not leave her;

(1 Corinthians 7:25, 26) Now concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who had mercy shown him by the Lord to be faithful. ²⁶ Therefore, I think that it is best for a man to continue as he is in view of the present difficulty.

(1 Corinthians 7:29) Moreover, this I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. From now on, let those who have wives be as though they had none,

(1 Corinthians 7:40) But in my opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is; and I certainly think I also have God's spirit.

(2 Corinthians 8:10) And in this I give my opinion: This is for your benefit, seeing that already a year ago you not only initiated the action but also showed your desire to do it.

(2 Corinthians 8:13) For I do not want to make it easy for others, but difficult for you;

His habit of self reference most likely attributed to the forming of the fourth faction that named him as their leader. (1Co 4:14-17; 9:1, 2; Ro 11:13; 2Ti 3:10; Phm 19)

(1 Corinthians 1:12) What I mean is this, that each one of you says: "I belong to Paul," "But I to A·pol'los," "But I to Ce'phas," "But I to Christ."

(Acts 9:25) So his disciples took him and let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.—(see Col 4:11b)

Here is what Paul wrote about head coverings for women:

(1 Corinthians 11:1-7) Become imitators of me, just as I am of Christ. ² I commend you because in all things you remember me and you are holding fast the traditions just as I handed them on to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn, the head of a woman is the man; in turn, the head of the Christ is God. ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head shames his head; ⁵ but every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head, for it is one and the same as if she were a woman with a shaved head. ⁶ For if a woman does not cover herself, she should have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, she should be covered. ⁷ For a man should not have his head covered, as he is God's image and glory, but the woman is man's glory.

(1 Corinthians 11:13-16) Judge for yourselves: Is it fitting for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not nature itself teach you that long hair is a dishonor to a man, ¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her instead of a covering. ¹⁶ However, if anyone wants to argue in favor of some other custom, we have no other, nor do the congregations of God.

Before he was a Christian Paul was "*zealous for the traditions of (his) fathers*" (Ga 1:14), and among the traditions that were handed down to Paul (1Co 11:2) was that a woman should have her head covered to pray, even though "*her hair is given to her instead of a covering.*" He says that if she prays without covering her head, she should have her head shaved. JW publications say that it was not uncommon at the time for a woman who was caught committing adultery or fornication to have her head shaved as part of her punishment. [it-1 p. 246]

So was Paul saying that the custom that must be adhered to is that if a woman is caught praying without a head covering (other than her hair which was a covering, but not really) that her head should be shaved as punishment? That doesn't make sense when verse 6 is considered, since there it seems Paul is giving women the option to either have their head covered or shaved, if they want to pray. But if shaving your head shames your head, how does bringing shame on your head by shaving it make you acceptable to pray? (1Co 11:5)

What does Paul tell us that a head covering does for a woman?

(1 Corinthians 11:10) That is why the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels.

The verse reads "*a sign of authority on her head*" but the original Greek does not say "sign of". It says "*ought the woman authority to have on the head.*" And the Greek word used here for authority is "exousia", which refers to the wielding of authority, not to the submission to authority.

If the head covering was a sign of her acknowledgment and acceptance of the headship of man over woman, then it would be a sign of submission, not of "*authority.*" So if a woman covers her

head she then has the authority to "pray" and "prophecy" and "exercise authority over a man", right? (1Ti 2:12)

Do you accept, or even understand, what Paul is saying? If not, you should just do what Paul says and "judge for yourselves" what is fitting. (1Co 11:13) How do you do that? By letting "nature itself teach you" the facts. For instance, the fact of nature that "*long hair is a dishonor to a man*" (1Co 11:14), even though a man's hair will continue to grow and become long naturally as God designed it to. What happened to king Nebuchadnezzar's hair when nature took its course? His "*hair grew long just like eagles' feathers.*" (Da 4:33) So does nature teach us that men should have short hair?

Remember: Paul tells us that this is a **tradition** and a **custom** that should be followed, therefore these are **not** mandates from God or Christ. (1Co 11:2, 16; Col 2:8)

(Acts 15:28, 29) For the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things: ²⁹ to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"

The "we" there were "*the apostles and the elders.*" (Ac 15:22, 23) With direction from the holy spirit they added "*no further burden*" except the listed "*necessary things.*" Yet Paul added traditions and customs to also be followed.

What does Jesus say about the traditions of men? (Isa 29:13)

(Matthew 15:3) In reply he said to them: "Why do you overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition?

(Matthew 15:6) he need not honor his father at all.' So you have made the word of God invalid because of your tradition.

(Mark 7:7, 8) It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines.' ⁸ You let go of the commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men."

(Mark 7:13) Thus you make the word of God invalid by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this."

Although Paul required his followers to follow traditions of men, it would seem that the holy spirit moved him to write the following:

(Colossians 2:8) Look out that no one takes you captive by means of the philosophy and empty deception according to human tradition, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ;

Here is another personal opinion Paul interjected regarding women:

(1 Corinthians 14:34, 35) let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak. Rather, let them be in subjection, as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they want to **learn** something, let them **ask** their husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the congregation.

Here Paul is not saying that a woman should refrain "from trying to assume the role of a male and instruct the congregation", as current JW teaching on the matter claims [w06 3/1 p. 29], but Paul does not even permit a woman to ask questions in order to learn. Asking questions in order to learn has nothing to do with 'instructing the congregation'. Paul said that a woman's voice is not even to be heard in the congregation; it would be "*disgraceful*". I wonder how Paul would have reacted to Deborah, who was a prophetess and a judge in Israel, if he had lived in her day? (Jg 4:4, 5) And i bet that Jael, the wife of Heber, may have had a thing or two to say to Paul about his opinion of women. (Jg 4:21)

(1 Timothy 2:8-15) ⁸ So **I desire** that in every place the men carry on prayer, lifting up loyal hands, without anger and debates. ⁹ Likewise, the women should adorn themselves in appropriate dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive clothing, ¹⁰ but in the way that is proper for women professing devotion to God, namely, through good works. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with full submissiveness. ¹² **I do not permit** a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but she is to remain silent. ¹³ **For Adam was formed first**, then Eve. ¹⁴ **Also**, Adam was not deceived, but the woman was thoroughly deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ However, she will be kept safe through childbearing, provided she continues in faith and love and holiness along with soundness of mind.

Yes, it was Paul's "*desire*". He did not permit it. Why? He gives two reasons for his opinion based orders about women, and they are not that he got directions from God or Christ. His reasonings were:

1) "*For*" man was created first.

2) "*Also*" Eve was deceived and became a transgressor.

Which do you think is worse, being deceived into transgression, or intentionally transgressing with full understanding of what you are doing, which is what Adam did? And before you become too critical of Eve, remember that we don't know how old she was at the time. She could have been months, weeks, or even just days old. We just don't know. In Genesis we are told of Eve's creation. (Ge 2:22-25) Then the very next thing written about was Satan's deception of Eve.

And don't forget that it was punishment for Eve's sin that a husband "*will dominate*" his wife, (Ge 3:16) showing that a wife being dominated by her husband was not how God initially intended the husband/wife relationship to be. (Ge 2:18) The Hebrew word yim-šāl, translated here as

"dominate", has the meaning of ruling over. (Jg 8:23; Pr 17:2; 22:7; Isa 19:4) So apparently before Eve sinned, Adam did not rule over, or hold dominion over his wife.

Paul shared another reason why he thought that men were better than women at 1 Corinthians 11:7. There he said that man is God's image and glory, but the woman is man's glory. Of course at Genesis 1:26, 27 God tells us Himself that He created man (mankind), both male and female, in His image. Yes man and woman were made in "our" image. That is to say, the image of Jehovah and His only begotten Son. When God said: "*Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness*", (Ge 1:26) did that also include the relationship that they held? (Jn 5:18) Was God's Son, the subordinate one in their relationship, also to remain silent and keep his voice unheard? (1Ti 2:11, 12) Note that in verse 28 God told them both to "*have in subjection*" the living creatures of the earth. (Ge 1:28) He did not tell man to have all living things in subjection, including his wife.

But do not fret sisters, you "*will be kept safe through childbearing, provided (you continue) in faith and love and holiness along with soundness of mind.*" (1Ti 2:15) Of course if you remain single, as Paul recommends (1Co 7:8), you will not bear children, so i guess you will not be "*kept safe.*"

Peter seems to hold a different view of women:

(1 Peter 3:7) You husbands, in the same way, continue dwelling with them according to knowledge. Assign them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since they are also heirs with you of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered.

Paul's view of women also influenced his view of marriage. Even though Paul wrote many fine instructions regarding the marital arrangement, he recommended against marriage.

(1 Corinthians 7:25) Now concerning virgins, I have **no** command from the Lord, but I give **my** opinion as one who had mercy shown him by the Lord to be faithful.

(1 Corinthians 7:1, 2) Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is better for a man not to touch a woman;² but because of the prevalence of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband.

(1 Corinthians 7:8) Now I say to those who are unmarried and to the widows that it is better for them if they remain as I am.

(1 Corinthians 7:38-40) So also, whoever marries does well, but whoever does not marry will do better.³⁹ A wife is bound as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in death, she is free to be married to whomever she wants, only in the Lord.⁴⁰ But in **my** opinion, she is happier if she remains as she is; and I certainly think I also have God's spirit.

(1 Corinthians 7:28) But even if you did marry, you would commit no sin. And if a virgin married, such a person would commit no sin. However, those who do will have tribulation in their flesh. But I am trying to spare you.

Apparently his opinion wasn't that unusual at the time since other disciples of Christ thought it unwise to get married if you couldn't divorce her whenever you felt like it.

(Matthew 19:10) The disciples said to him: "If that is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry."

Though Paul advocated against marriage, we all know God's opinion on the matter:

(Genesis 2:18) It is not good for the man to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.

And once married, "*they will become one flesh.*" (Ge 2:24) I don't know about you, but i don't think Paul's conception of a marriage relationship fits the "*one flesh*" scenario. (1Co 7:29)

Christ also wanted women taken care of, not discarded on a whim. (Mt 5:32; 19:5, 6)

(Matthew 19:9) I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery."

Personally i wouldn't take marital advice from someone who thinks it is unwise for a man to marry if he can't just divorce his wife whenever he wants to, and that marriage will just cause you "*tribulation*". (1Co 7:28) That tells me that Paul thought of marriage merely as a means for sexual release.

(1 Corinthians 7:9) But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to be inflamed with passion.

Advising someone to get married because they are young and filled with lust is **terrible** advice. Everyone has lust at that age. If you get married because you have no self-control, like an animal in rutting season, you most probably will end up with a loveless marriage filled with "*tribulation*". Saying you just couldn't stop from committing adultery is a lie and an attempt to excuse bad behavior. You are a human, not an animal. Get a hold of yourself. (1Th 4:4)

Marriage should be based on love, not lust. If you want to be married "happily ever after", then you should only marry someone you have fallen in love with, and who has fallen in love with you. That means you have each gotten to know the other well and love their personality traits. "Love at first sight" is not love, it's infatuation. Do you have similar tastes? Do your hopes and dreams line up? Do you hold similar values? Waiting till you have passed the "bloom of youth", as Paul called it, is not a bad idea either. (1Co 7:36-38) But not so you can avoid marriage altogether, as Paul recommends, but so that you can make a good choice of a marriage mate without being overly influenced by lustful desire (1Ti 5:11), and so that you have a bit of maturity to help you with your decision. Young men can confuse lust with love. And young women can merely be in love with the idea of love. Marriage is forever, which is a mighty long time, so choose well. But i digress.

It seems that Paul also thought that he was exalted above, not just women, but all of Christ's disciples, and had the authority to order them around as though they belonged to him.

(Philemon 8) For this very reason, though I have great freeness of speech in connection with Christ to order you to do what is proper,

Christ held a different view on the matter:

(Matthew 20:25-28) But Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. ²⁶ This must **not** be the **way** among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. ²⁸ Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many."

What does "*lord it over*" mean? The original Greek word (katakyrieusin) merely means to exercise authority over others, to be in charge of others. It does not refer to ruling harshly or oppressing others. The same goes for the Greek word (katexousiazousin), translated here as "*wield authority over*." No negativity is associated with those Greek words. (Mr 10:42-45) In fact, at Luke 22:25 Christ referred to those rulers as "*Benefactors*." The Greek word for benefactor is euergetés and means *a doer of good, a well-doer*. Other Bible translations render it *gracious lords, friends of the people, and everyone's friends*, showing the positive view of their rulership.

If what Jesus meant was that the apostles should not rule harshly, as current JW teaching on the matter claims, then he would have told them to do the opposite of that, which would be to rule gently and lovingly, to be "*Benefactors*". But he did not.

So if Jesus was not talking about harsh rulership, what was the "*way*" that he was referring to? He was referring to the mere act of exercising authority. And what is the opposite of that which he directed them to do? To not rule at all. Yes, he said that "*whoever wants to be first (great) among you*", meaning whoever wants to be in charge (Mt 20:21; Lu 22:30), must instead be your minister and slave. Instead of presenting themselves as authority figures, they were to take the opposite position of a slave and perform the lowly act of ministering to others.

Even if we did not understand what the original Greek for "*lord it over*" and "*wield authority over*" meant, the fact that the other side of the coin was to be a slave and a minister defines them. Jesus even gave himself as an example to make sure that what he said was understood: "Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister." Rulers are ministered to. A slave ministers to others.

Peter reiterates Christ's view on the matter:

(1 Peter 5:2, 3) Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming **examples** to the flock.

Peter points out that the flock are "*God's inheritance*". The flock do not belong to the shepherds and therefore they do not possess the authority of ownership for them to be able to exercise it over the flock, just as they did not exercise authority over another man's slave. (Ro 14:4) They were to shepherd, not by exercising authority, but by setting the right example. (1Pe 5:3; He 13:7; Tit 1:9)

Other than a woman's hair being a head covering, but not really, Paul also contradicted himself about tongues and prophesying.

(1 Corinthians 14:22) Therefore, tongues are not a sign for the believers but for the unbelievers, whereas prophecy is not for the unbelievers but for the believers.

Yes, the holy spirit gave them the ability to speak in different tongues in order to preach to those unbelievers of different nations who spoke different languages. (1Co 14:21) And prophecy is for believers, not for the unbelievers. (1Co 3:2) But what does Paul say next?

(1 Corinthians 14:23-25) So if the whole congregation comes together to one place and they all speak in tongues, but ordinary people or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you have lost your minds? ²⁴ But if you are all prophesying and an unbeliever or an ordinary person comes in, he will be reprov'd and closely examined by them all. ²⁵ The secrets of his heart then become evident, so that he will fall facedown and worship God, declaring: "God is really among you."

So in verse 22 he says that tongues are for unbelievers, but in verse 23 if an unbeliever hears them speaking in tongues they will think that they have lost their minds. And though Paul tells us in verse 22 that prophecy is not for unbelievers, in verse 25 he says that prophecy would reveal the secrets of their hearts causing them to "*worship God, declaring: "God is really among you."*

Paul also got things wrong, showing that it was his own thinking and interpretation of the knowledge passed on to him from the holy spirit.

(1 Corinthians 15:51) Look! I tell you a sacred secret: We will not all fall asleep in death, but we will all be changed.

That will occur at Armageddon, but Paul thought it would occur in his time, as did John and Peter.

(Hebrews 9:26) Otherwise, he would have to suffer often from the founding of the world. But now he has manifested himself once for all time at the conclusion of the systems of things to do away with sin through the sacrifice of himself.

(1 John 2:18) Young children, it is the last hour, and just as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared, from which fact we know that it is the last hour.

(1 Peter 4:7) But the end of all things has drawn close. Therefore, be sound in mind, and be vigilant with a view to prayers.

(2 Timothy 1:10) but now it has been made clearly evident through the manifestation of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has abolished death and has shed light on life and incorruption through the good news,

(1 Thessalonians 5:7) For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

Many people today have night jobs and sleep during the day. Even in Paul's day the keeper of the fold who watched over the sheep at night, slept during the day while the shepherds took the sheep out to pasture. And every time i drive somewhere during the day i see staggering drunks on the street corners begging for more booze money, often holding a sign that says "God Bless". (I'm tempted to hold out a sign that quotes 2Th 3:10.) No one in Paul's day got drunk during the day?

I'm not trying to pick on Paul, it's just that he did write a significant portion of the Greek scriptures. And although most of what he wrote was passed on to us from the holy spirit and is accurate and up-building information, he also injected his own personal opinions and views on matters.

Does that nullify the knowledge that Paul passed on to us from the holy spirit? **Not at all.**

Paul's heart was in the right place. But even as many of us have seen today with elders in our own congregations, elevated self-worth has taken hold of many.

Did Paul perform many good works, and suffer many hardships because of it? Definitely yes! We know this because he told us all about it. (e. g. 2Co 11:23-27) And although at Galatians 6:14 he said "*may I never boast, except in the torture stake of our Lord Jesus Christ*", he did write many a word about himself. (e.g. 2Co 11:21-27; 12:1-7)

Don't forget how Paul got his start in Christianity. He was not selected and rewarded because of his faithfulness and devotion to Christ. On the contrary, he was a very active opposer of Christianity.

(Acts 9:1) But Saul, still breathing threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

(Galatians 1:13) Of course, you heard about my conduct formerly in Ju'da-ism, that I kept intensely persecuting the congregation of God and devastating it;

The pillars of the Christian congregation (Ga 2:9) were spared the difficult and hazardous task of bringing the good news to the nations. That job was given to Paul. (Ga 2:8)

He tells us himself that he deserved this difficult and dangerous assignment. (Eph 3:1)

(Acts 9:16) For I will show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name."

(2 Timothy 1:12) This is why I am also suffering these things, but I am not ashamed. For I know the One whom I have believed, and I am confident that he is able to guard what I have laid up in trust with him until that day.

(Acts 8:3) Saul, though, began to ravage the congregation. He would invade one house after another, dragging out both men and women and turning them over to prison.

How arrogant and self-righteous must you be for you to go around dragging people out of their homes because you don't like the way they peacefully worship God? (Ac 9:1-2) Paul did not become a different man. (1Co 4:21; 2Co 13:10) He was merely shown the light (literally) and became a Christian. (Ac 9:3) No doubt he had to work hard not to be so arrogant in his new belief. He was even "*given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan*" to try and help bridle that ego of his "*so that (he) might not be overly exalted.*" (2Co 12:7)

Paul tells us a bit about his situation:

(Romans 7:14-25) For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing. For I do not practice what I wish, but I do what I hate. ¹⁶ However, if I do what I do not wish, I agree that the Law is fine. ¹⁷ But now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that resides in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good; for I have the desire to do what is fine but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good that I wish, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice. ²⁰ If, then, I do what I do not wish, I am no longer the one carrying it out, but it is the sin dwelling in me. ²¹ I find, then, this law in my case: When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me. ²² I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, ²³ but I see in my body another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my body. ²⁴ Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death? ²⁵ Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So, then, with my mind I myself am a slave to God's law, but with my flesh to sin's law.

Even while he was confessing to his sins, in verse 20 Paul tries to proclaim his innocence. He is not to blame. It is the sin dwelling within him that is the guilty one. It is sort of like the modern excuse: "The devil made me do it."

(2 Corinthians 12:8, 9a) Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it would depart from me. ⁹ But he said to me: "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you, for my power is being made perfect in weakness."

Yes, God forgave Paul for his weakness in giving in to sinful practices. But what became of Paul once his mission from God was concluded? (Ac 13:2; 18:10) "*Likely Paul suffered martyrdom at the hands of Nero shortly thereafter.*" [it-2 p.589]

So to separate what was Paul's personal opinion from what came from the holy spirit we must examine Paul's writings, and also compare them to the rest of the scriptures.

(1 John 4:1) Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired statement, but test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God,

It is actually easy to do. In many cases Paul himself tells us that it is just his opinion, or he refers to himself as the source, or that it is merely a tradition or a custom. (1Co 7:12, 40; 11:2, 16) For the remainder you just have to "*make sure*" it does not contradict the rest of the Bible. (Php 1:10)

Even though the brothers were unsure about Paul, 17 years after his ministry began his preaching work was examined, accepted, and he was given the right hand of fellowship. (Ga 2:9) Seven years later the brothers in Jerusalem welcomed him gladly (Ac 21:17), which was about 9 years before his death at the end of his 2nd imprisonment in Rome. (2Ti 4:6-8)

Don't get me wrong about Paul. The following scripture alone proves that he was a far better man than i am:

(1 Corinthians 4:12, 13) When insulted, we bless; when persecuted, we patiently endure; ¹³ when slandered, we answer mildly;

So apparently the Greek scriptures were not inspired and dictated to the writers. Each writer merely wrote down what he understood, or thought to be true, or remembered from what the holy spirit taught him when he was anointed, in regard to spiritual understanding that is. The spirit did not have to teach the writers what they did while with Christ. They wrote those things from their own memory, which is why human error from imperfect memories caused some minor differences in the four Gospels. (e. g. Mt 8:5 vs Lu 7:3; Mr 6:8 vs Lu 9:3) Even their memory of what the holy spirit had taught them was not perfect. (e. g. Mt 3:17 vs Mr 1:11; Mt 27:3-10 vs Ac 1:18-19)

Yes, the writers of the Greek scriptures were imperfect men. (1Co 1:27) And although there may be slight variations between their writings, the overall message from the holy spirit is the same.

Do you say that we should consider all of the Greek scriptures as though they came directly from God and obey them without question or scrutiny?

Do you obey these scriptures?

(Luke 14:33) In the same way, you may be sure that not one of you who does not say good-bye to (give up) all his belongings can be my disciple.

(Romans 14:21) It is best not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything over which your brother stumbles.

(2 Corinthians 13:12) Greet one another with a holy kiss.

(1 Timothy 5:23) Do not drink water any longer, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent cases of sickness.

Have you given up all of your belongings? (Mt 19:21)

Have you given up wine and meat?

Do you give a hello kiss to the brothers and sisters?

Do you drink wine instead of water when you are sick?

No, of course not.

Paul himself even admits:

(1 Corinthians 13:12) For now we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror, but then it will be face-to-face. At present I know partially, but then I will know accurately, just as I am accurately known.

So what should we do? We should follow the advice given to us by the holy spirit through the writers of the Greek scriptures:

(Philippians 1:10) make sure of the more important things,

(Romans 12:2) prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(Ephesians 5:10) Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord;

What do *you* think?

:^)

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