

# **Exegesis of 2 Timothy 3:16-17: Revitalizing the Church Through Scriptural Authority for Faith and Practice**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The church today needs thorough revitalization. By revitalization I mean total rejuvenation, complete revival and discipline in all ramifications of church life. The only tools for revitalizing the church is the word of God and when God's word is no more a sole authority for faith and practice then the church will lose her authority and position in the world and this is what we are witnessing today.

The contemporary church seems to have lost her vigor and vitality. It needs urgent attention because worldliness and materialism has already taken over the church.

Nihinlola rightly said in his address at the 2020 virtual Baptist Ministers' **Conference** that "the church in Africa is in distress for it has been plagued with various kind of diseases ranging from shortage of blood leading to fainting,, drowsiness, yawning, sneezing and coughing and it is about to fall asleep"<sup>1</sup>

This is true from observation; the contemporary church requires urgent surgical operation to free it from COVID-19 of bigotry, unhealthy rivalry, and immorality of all sorts, worldliness and materialism, the pandemic that has taken

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<sup>1</sup> Emiola Nihinlola Opening Address at the Virtusl Minister's Conference 2020

over the church in recent times. This a true saying from the observation and participation in church activities of different denominations one sees that the word of God is no more given a primal place in the church. Therefore, this writer would like to revisit 2 Tim. 3:16-17 in light of scriptural authority for faith and practice and point our attention to some crucial and critical issues the scripture is passing across to us at this period in time.

This paper is exegetical in nature. It utilizes exegetical and grammatical method to investigate the sole role the word of God is playing to revitalize the church in contemporary times. The paper is divided into three sections. Section one discusses critical issue to Paul's letter to Timothy, section two explains some grammatical nuances of 2 Timothy 3:16-18 and the last section concludes with various instruction to the churches as per the word of God for faith and practice.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Paul's Epistles to Timothy is one of the Pastoral Epistles a term used to designate three letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus (1Timothy, 1Timothy and Titus). These Epistles were generally accepted to be written by Paul, though some scholars argued against Paul's authorship.<sup>2</sup> There are two things that distinguished these three epistles from Paul's other letters.<sup>3</sup> First, they are among the last letters Paul wrote, reflecting the sort of concerns which burdened the apostle near the end of his ministry. Two, they are ostensibly written

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<sup>2</sup> Clifton J. Allen et. al. ed, *The Broadman Bible Commentary vol. 11* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), 299.

<sup>3</sup> The designation of all three letters as the Pastoral Epistles however came much later. This attributed to the German scholar Paul Anton (1661-1730) who used the term collectively in lectures and writings in the eighteenth century. The term is descriptive of the aim and contents of the three letters. Among other things they provide instructions for pastoral oversight of congregations and they speak of the qualities and duties of church leaders

to both the congregation and to two young men who were functioning as church overseers (that is, Timothy and Titus).

The Epistles show a clear sign that the author's intention was to use this epistles as a handbook on pastoral duties. There are distinct theological interests in the letters which is common to early Christian tradition and to the New Testament as a whole, this makes the Epistles to be distinct among Paul's letters. They are highly personal, practical, and systematic in nature; and the epistles deal with some theological issues which were not discussed in other undisputed Pauline corpus.

This letter was designated to Timothy who was a leader in the Church at Ephesus. About 10 years earlier, Paul had already warned the elders of the Church at Ephesus about the imminent apostasy which will shake the foundation of the Church. He noted that "some unscrupulous men and impostors would proceed from within and outside the church and would bring damnable heresies to destroy the foundation of the church that was built on Christ.<sup>4</sup> To safeguard the Gospel, Paul wrote this letters from the bottom of his heart as an evolving need to the pastors which eventually serves as the hall mark of his second letters to Timothy. Paul was concerned about the preservation of the doctrines that was handed to him by the apostles and he did not want anything to tamper with the tradition. This concern was evident in 2 Timothy 1:13 when he said 'Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us" (NKJV). He went further to challenge Timothy to "remind the people of "these things" charging them before the Lord not to strive about words of which are not profitable to the ruin of the hearers. "These things" is a preformed tradition incorporated

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<sup>4</sup> E. E. Ellis, "Pastoral Letters" in *Dictionary of Paul and Its Letters*.(Leicester, England : IVP, 1993), 664-665.

into the letters of Paul, it usually occur at the end or conclusion of the letters where some cited materials appears and introduces its application to current situation.<sup>5</sup> He also advised them to “be diligent to present themselves approved to God a work man that need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth “(2 Tim. 14-15).

The structure in the churches, combined with Paul's awareness that there are antagonists within and outside the churches who were bent on destroying the Church with their heretical arguments, and damnable heresies and like cancer are eating up the churches to the foundation must be stopped knowing fully well that is own steadying influence would soon be passing from the scene, this prompted him to defend the scripture and bring out its authority and inspirational influence to Timothy.

This paper is exegetical in nature. The writer attempts an exegesis of a particular *pericope* of 2Timothy 3:16-17 and how it can help the church to understand the inspirational nature of the Word of God for faith and practices. This study begins by looking at some critical issues such as authorship, Date of writing, occasion and purpose of writing, the recipients before moving to discourse analysis of 2Timothy 3: 16-17.<sup>6</sup>

In this paper, the doctrine of inspiration of scripture, theories of inspiration, spiritual utility of scripture and purpose of scripture are discussed and finally conclusion are drawn for the church.

The methodology used is historical-grammatical method which involves both discourse and exegetical analysis of the passage

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<sup>5</sup> Ellis, 664.

<sup>6</sup> Discourse Analysis is a term used for a variety of processes that examines or deconstruct the underlying meaning in a speech or other forms of communication text. The focus of discourse analysis is on languages used and what are the implicit underlying taken for granted orconcealed Herring

and makes it relevant to both the original audience and the modern day recipient.

## **Authorship**

Among all Paul's letters, it is the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus) that is most disputed, although they were widely attested to as Pauline in the early church. Five major arguments have been advanced against Paul's authorship of the epistles. According to Hultgren, the lack of universal knowledge of the Pastorals among the letters of Paul in antiquity is significant for questioning their having been written by Paul.<sup>7</sup> Another issue raised against Paul's authorship is the way the author expressed himself in terms of the vocabulary, grammar, and style used that vary clearly from other letters written by Paul. The strongest argument against Paul's authorship is that of vocabulary, grammar, and style. As they stand, the pastorals contain a higher percentage of words not found in any other letter of Paul and of words found in any other New Testament writing than the other ten letters which bear his name, did not use some key Paul's words, and used some words in a different manner.<sup>8</sup> Another issue is that the theological terms and concepts known from Paul's undisputed letters are missing in the Pastoral or are used differently in this letters. For example the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ that is much prevalent in the undisputed letter of Paul is missing here. Also the familiar Paul's expression of faith in Christ, in Christ, Walk in the Spirit etc was not found in Pastorals. Generally the doctrine of the Pastorals does not totally agree with that which was discovered in the undisputed Pauline epistles. The dichotomy which does appear can be attributed to the fact that much of the doctrinal materials appear in the quoted sections and to the influence of the Roman situation

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<sup>7</sup> Aland Hultgren "The Pastoral Epistles" in Cambridge Companion to St Paul Ed by James D. G Dunn. Cambridge University Press, 2003), 140-142

<sup>8</sup> Allen et. al., 300.

upon Paul's thought at the time of writing. For instance, the usual application of the term Saviour to both God and Christ reflects the opposition of the church in Rome to the emperor cult which was burgeoning under Nero after apostle Paul had died.<sup>9</sup>

Three, the ecclesiastical organization depicted in them is more advanced and of necessity later than that presupposed by other Pauline writings. The ecclesiastical organization presupposed by the Pastorals is a twofold office – of presbyter-bishops and deacons (1Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:5). It is true that the undisputed Pauline epistles contain no reference to presbyters, Philippians 1:1 proves that at least one church founded by Paul the Apostle had twofold office before his demise.

The use of the term *presbuteros* in both a non-technical (1Tim. 5:1, 2, 17, 19) and a technical (Tit. 1:5) sense proved that the Pastorals were composed at a primitive transitional period in the formation of the office.<sup>10</sup> Four, The heresy attacked, probably Gnosticism, is late. The heresy attacked in the Pastorals was definitely not second century Marcionism or Gnosticism. The quotation of 1Timothy by Polycarp alone virtually eliminates the anti-Marcionite thesis. At best we have a Gnosticized Judaism involving still an opposition to the Gentile mission.<sup>11</sup> And five, the historical data recorded in them cannot be fitted into the framework of Paul's lifetime as recorded in Acts. Two observations can be made in reply, one, modern scholarship has proven that Luke did not give complete picture, and two, it is quite possible that Paul was released after a period of imprisonment in Rome, traveled

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<sup>9</sup> Allen et al., 301.

<sup>10</sup> Allen et. al., 301-302.

<sup>11</sup> Allen et. al., 302.

extensively and then was re-imprisoned, tried and executed by beheading sometime between A.D. 64 and 67.<sup>12</sup>

However, there are still several evidences to prove Pauline authorship of these books. Both early tradition and the salutations of the Pastoral Letters first and second Timothy and Titus themselves claimed Paul as their author. (See 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1) there are still convincingly need for support of Paul's authorship.<sup>13</sup>

### **Date of Writing**

On the premise of Pauline authorship, the Pastorals are generally believed to have been written toward the end of his life, about A.D. 62 or 64. This would mean that Paul was released from his detention as described in Acts 28:30-31 and complete the journeys presupposed in the Pastoral Epistles, as suggested also by early Christian tradition.<sup>14</sup> Those who date these letters later than Paul must date them late enough to allow for the re-use of Paul's name pseudonymously, and many date them to the mid-second century.<sup>15</sup>

### **Occasion and Purpose**

- To give specific guidelines for the organization of the church. The Old Testament gives specific guidelines to the worshipers of God, but the New Testament did not contain specific instructions concerning the organization or polity of the body of Christ. The Pastorals are as close as it comes to church guidelines and polity.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Allen et. al., 303.

<sup>13</sup>Craig S. Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Intervarsity Press, 1993), 233.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Barker et. al., ed. *The New International Study Bible* (Michigan: Zondervan Corporation Publishers, 1985), 1833.

<sup>15</sup> Olugbenga Olagunju, *A Concise Introduction to the New Testament* (Ogboso: Ogunniyi Publishers, 2012), 170.

<sup>16</sup> Olagunju, 171.

- Another purpose was to combat the emerging heresies. They went by the way of Ephesus en route to Macedonia. There, they encountered false teachers who have virtually taken over the church - just as Paul has predicted they would (Acts 20: 29-30). Two of them, Hymenaeus and Alexander, were excommunicated by Paul, 1Timothy 1: 19-20. The major heresies may be a combination of Jewish and Gnostic tendencies.<sup>17</sup>

Paul had to pass on to Macedonia (Philemon 2:24), but the situation at Ephesus needed help. He left Timothy in charge of the church, giving him instructions to deal with the heretics who had become leaders in the church (1Timothy 1:3-4).<sup>18</sup>

There appeared to be sound doctrine which rings through these epistles that Paul desired to pass on to Timothy and the body of Christ. It was now the duty of Timothy to commit the correct teaching unto reliable men in the church.<sup>19</sup>

## **REVITALIZING THE DOCTRINE OF THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURES**

**2 Timothy 3: 16-17:** πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ,

### **What is Inspiration?**

Inspiration is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Biblical writers so that their written accounts are the accurate revelation of God's nature and purpose (2Peter 1:22-24). The word used for inspiration in 2 Timothy is *theo,pneustoj* (*theopneustos*) which means God's breathe.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Olagunju.

<sup>18</sup> Olagunju.

<sup>19</sup> Olagunju, 171-172.

<sup>20</sup> Exegetical Dictionary of the NT

This metaphorically suggests the fact that the scriptures are produced by the creative breath of God or that the Scriptures are divinely stimulated or breathe out. Calvin says “the bible has come down to us from the mouth of God.”<sup>21</sup> There are some versions that are not correct in their readings of 2 Timothy 3:16-17; for example RSV margin renders this passage as “every Scripture is inspired by God and is also profitable for doctrines, this rendering erroneous since it suggests that not all scriptures are divinely inspired and originated.”<sup>22</sup>

### **Analysis of Related Corollaries**

The concept of inspiration of scripture has its related terms which must not be glossed over. Such concepts include the inerrancy of Scriptures, the infallibility of Scriptures, the authority of Scriptures and what conservative Theologians call the perspicuity of Scriptures.<sup>23</sup> According to C.F.H Henry, the leading evangelical theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, inerrancy refers to

- The fact that what the Bible teaches regarding matters of theology, ethics, spirituality, history and science are the very objective truths of God.
- 2. God’s truth resides in the very words, propositions and sentences of the Bible. The position CFH Henry and many others was adopted as the cardinal of the Chicago statement on Biblical inerrancy in 1978<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Calvin

<sup>22</sup> Carson, 377

<sup>23</sup> Carson

<sup>24</sup> C F R Henry was a leading speaker at the 1978 Biblical Conference holding in Chicago, US and there the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture was adopted by the cardinal of the Chicago statement on Biblical inerrancy.

By the infallibility of the scriptures, it is meant that the very words, sentences and propositions of the scriptures are without errors. Therefore the scriptures are inerrant in its teachings and infallible in its wordings.

The authority of the scriptures suggests the fact that the scriptures have the supreme right over what we believe and how we conduct ourselves according to the standards of biblical revelations.

The concept of the perspicuity of the Scriptures maintains that the Bible was written with sufficient clarity and coherency without ambiguity so that its readers are responsible and accountable to all its faithful teachings and injunctions. We are here faced with a crucial question on the processes of the inspiration of Scripture. How were the biblical writers inspired by the Holy Spirit?

### **Theories of Inspiration**

The theories of inspiration have been propounded by various scholars from different persuasion. I am not concerned about the liberal thought that does not believe in the theory of inspiration but rather they explain the reality of it away. But the evangelical and reformed scholars have come with different theories of inspiration the summary of which is highlighted in this article.

- Intuition theory: which emphasizes the fact that the writer of the scripture wrote abundantly out of their heightened intuitive powers.<sup>25</sup> The Scriptures are mainly the product of their brilliant insights into the nature and purpose of God. The writers of the scriptures were not under any divine influence.

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<sup>25</sup> F. F. Bruce Exegetical Commentary on 2Timothy2:16-17, 1984.

- **Illumination theory:** This asserts that there is no special communication of truth, nor guidance in what is written but merely an increase sensitivity and perceptivity to spiritual matters under the influence of the Holy Spirit
- **Dictation theory:** Some scholars affirm that the Holy Spirit literally dictated every word, statement and proposition of the scriptures to the writers. They were totally under the impulse of the Holy Spirit that their mental faculties were suspended as they begin to write the scripture.
- **Existential encounter theory:** The proponents of the neo-orthodox view of biblical inspiration hold that the Bible is only a fallible witness to the word of God which is Jesus Christ. It is time-bound, culturally conditioned and only record of the past revelatory encounters of the writers with God. They maintain further that the Bible only becomes the word of God when a believer in a moment of an existential crisis fully surrenders himself or herself to the lordship of Christ. Brunner notes that “The orthodox doctrine of verbal inspiration has been fully destroyed. It is clear that there is no connection between it and scientific research and honesty; we are forced to make a decision for or against this view”<sup>26</sup>
- **Dynamic Theory:** This theory states the biblical writers wrote under the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit. Everything they wrote was under the superintendence, guidance and control of the Holy Spirit. Their mental faculties were however not suspended. Each writer retained his distinctive

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<sup>26</sup> Emil Brunner, 24

personality and literary style. Many evangelical scholars subscribed to this view point

- Verbal Theory: This is concomitant to the dynamic theory. The theory holds that the very words, sentences, propositions and letters used by the biblical writer are the very words and sentences of God. So, all Scriptures are without error. Thus the Scriptures convey the totality of God's nature and reveal his mind and purpose for humanity. Other questions relate to the extent of divine inspiration of scripture to which we submit is that ALL SCRIPTURES is given by the inspiration of God (*Grk nasa graphe theopneustos*) and to the intensiveness of the scriptural inspiration to which we all submit is that all scriptures are "God's breathe"

## **REVITALIZING DIVINE UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES**

We have first explored the assertion that ALL SCRIPTURES are inspired by God. Now we shall turn our attention to the profitability or usefulness of the scriptural revelation. The Bible is the only sacred writings that are capable of performing all the functions below:

καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, *„Και σπηλιμοσ προσ διδασκαλιαν.* which is translated and is profitable for doctrines kai is a conjunction which means "and" ὠφέλιμος means useful or profitable πρὸς (pros) is preposition which means for and διδασκαλίαν (didaskalian) is derived from the root word διδασκαλια which means doctrine or teaching.<sup>27</sup> All scriptures mean the Bible is useful for doctrine or teaching. We often hear people saying we don't need doctrine except only life and power. But the Bible says all scripture is useful for doctrine. Jesus said while he was going to heaven to the

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Green Tyndale New Testament Commentary. (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1984), 157

disciples “to teach all nations” so how come that the people disregard or show repulsive attitude to the teaching of God’s word. The Bible is potent in power to save people and to bring healing and deliverance to the people. Doctrine simply means “teaching” regarding God’s nature, His purpose and will for the humanity. This teaching is embedded in the Gospel of Christ. All teaching and doctrines must be built on Christ the solid rock. Our fundamental teaching of the Christian faith must be based of Christ and him crucified. We should avoid creating an impasse between doctrine and life. Every faithful living being must flow from a correct belief about Christ and his work on the cross. And ungodly living must of necessity flow from perverse doctrines. We must also be careful that every doctrine is ruled by scriptures *norma normata* and not the scriptures being ruled by the doctrine *norma normas*). Holding to this, God’s servant must pay attention to three major things in formulating doctrinal statements

- Logical non contradictory all doctrines must consistently relate to one another
- Empirical agreement with data of biblical revelation. All doctrinal statement and formulations must be grounded upon the foundation of Scriptures and
- Existentially viability---- the doctrine must be practically useful for human relationships, life, ministry, authentic spiritual experiences etc. Any doctrines that Lacks these three commended test for truth is an error and does not proceed from God. The whole pastoral epistle of which 2 Timothy from which we derived our text is derived are a concern for sound doctrine”, pattern of sound word deep truths of faith etc SEE 1Timothy3-11; 3:9; 4:6, 16; 3-5

πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, , *προσ ελεγον*. translated for reproof or for rebuking and may also be translated for refuting errors within the

church and para churches organization. The history of the Christian church has been riddle with many theological and doctrinal heresies right from the early century from the time of the Apostles errors has crept in to the church and the apostle had to refute and contend for the faith.<sup>28</sup> From the apostolic era to the early church fathers various damnable heresies and doctrine of demons, has been propagated. The doctrines of Jezebel and Balam is an example of the doctrinal error that crept in which the apostles has to contend with plus the gnostics and the philosophers that brought in error into the church. The fundamental teaching of the Bible has been eroded way such as the nature of God, the work of Christ on the cross, salvation and redemption of mankind, justification, resurrection of Christ and the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>29</sup> The church has been faced with different heretical doctrine right from the early days though the medieval period to the reformation era which later culminate into its height during the enlightened period that paved way to the advent of higher biblical criticism in Germany school of history of religions where all the evangelical traditions were subjected to empirical research and debunk some of the traditions and belief that has sustained the Christian faith through ages. Christianity has witnessed the plethora of errors regarding the authentic teaching of unworthy theologies which include theological liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, liberation, black theology, feminist theology, Marxist, political theology, communism, humanism talk less of the cult and cultic doctrine that has pervaded the whole of Christendom at this period, also the advent of the social gospel movement is a factor etc. Based on some common presuppositions these theological aberrations undermine the objective truth of God's word ; it rejects the infallibility of the Scriptures and stress the intrinsic goodness of man's nature; emphasizes only the ethical values of scriptures against the objective propositions of God's revelation and repudiates the need for personal act of faith in

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<sup>28</sup> Green, 156

<sup>29</sup> Green, 156-157

Christ resulting in salvation etc. There is also the major theological error which dichotomizes Christ into historical Jesus and Christ of faith.<sup>30</sup> This view maintains that the Jesus who actually lived is different from the portrait of Christ we have in the New Testament. The apostle of Christ painted a false image of Jesus in order to formulate their doctrines influenced by Jewish, Hellenistic and Gnostic presuppositions. Their doctrines called the Apostolic Kerygma were regarded as axiomatic and normative for the apostolic community. This view is untenable since the apostles of Jesus are true witnesses of his life and ministry and so their kerygmatic proclamation of Him is eternally authentic (Luke 1:1-4; John 1:14; 21:24 1John 1:1-5).

In the demythologization proposed by Rudolf Bultmann the leading 20<sup>th</sup> German NT scholar he maintained that much of the NT conceptions and doctrines are mythological and they must be demythologized that is re interpreted in existential terms to make them relevant to the modern man for instance, the meaning of the Jesus crucifixion is not that he was put to death in fact Jesus did not die for the sins of the mankind--- but rather his mission was to be found in Galatians 6:14 where Paul said The world has been crucified to me and I to the world<sup>31</sup>

The prosperity Gospel is a recent doctrinal error that places the love of mammon above supreme loyalty to God. Whereas Jesus teaches that it is impossible to serve God with a divided allegiance to Mammon in Mt 6:24 and in I Timothy 6-9, Paul warns against the idolatry of mammon and those who selfishly crave to be rich fall into 1. Temptation and 2. a snare 3. Many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. The supreme love for money is the root

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<sup>30</sup> Green, 157

<sup>31</sup> Rudolf Bultmann Demythologization 37-38).

of all sorts of evil and it has led many to wander from the faith and pierced them with many grieves.

There is also a prevalent doctrinal error in the 21<sup>st</sup> century church associated with the healing Gospel in which countless numbers run after God to gain the miraculous and nothing more.<sup>32</sup>

Some preachers also see the miraculous as a strategy for church revitalization. The use of the word healing Gospel is a misnomer and erroneous in the light of the New Testament revelation. The Gospel of Christ is the good news of the Kingdom of God which reconciles men to God and initiates the sanctifying work of grace in the heart of men. Healing and miracles are God's act of supernatural intervention which secondarily proceeds from the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation. Healings and miracles are meant to bear witness to the authenticity of our proclamation of the Gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus. To confirm the Gospel of eternal salvation (Heb 2:3-4). Therefore the miraculous should never be conceived of as a church growth strategy simply because we want to have a mega church. The contemporary evangelical scholar must be fully armed with the truth of God's word in order to counteract the upsurge of many doctrinal aberrations in our various denominations. The scholars must use their findings to uphold the integrity of the word of God and stand to contend for the faith that was once handed over to us. We must recognize the full verbal, inspiration of Scriptures and its authority for faith and practice and finally we must equally be ready to preach the fullness of the Word of God convincingly against every form of doctrinal pollution that is going on around us (2Timothy4:2).

C. πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, is translated for correction or for correcting, which is derived from the root word ἐπανόρθωσι which literally

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<sup>32</sup> Olugbenga Olagunju 'Health and Wealth Gospel : An Examination of Kenneth Hagin's Teaching on Healing Miracles' in *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* Vol XIX, 2009:23

means a restoration to an upright or right state (Vine 130). The biblical revelation serves a utility in restoring or correcting our spiritual or moral faults. When we are overtaken by an error, the Holy Spirit applies the word of God to restore us to fellowship with God.<sup>33</sup> The word of God performs a correction or reconstructive surgery in our hearts and minds removing all ungodly impulses, carnal passion, inordinate desires and ambitions and indeed everything that is contrary to the will of God. Aside from aligning our thought and intentions and bringing them into conformity with God's will, the word of God also corrects to rightness every wrong decision we may have taken in every aspect of our life.

Having learnt the corrective power of God's word we must therefore be willing to subject ourselves to its authority and obey its truth and all the righteous injunctions as enabled by the Holy Spirit.

D. πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, this is translated as “for instruction in righteousness” or for taining in righteousness. The theological terminology, “the righteousness of God” τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ is an important concept in the NT. At justification the believer is acquitted from all objective guilt and sins. He is imputed with the righteousness of God (Rom 4:1-8). Not only that the believer is credited with the righteousness of God he is in a forensic or judicial sense, declared, made or constituted righteous before God. (Rom 3:24-26; this righteousness is attainable through faith in Christ. Apart from the declarative nature of the righteousness of God, the believers' moral and ethical conditions must be brought into conformity with his legal status. This is the practical/ ethical side of the righteousness of God. The believer must subject him or herself to the standard of God's righteousness as revealed in the Scriptures. According to Clark the other side of the righteousness is the ethical

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<sup>33</sup> New International Bible Commentary, ed. F.F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House), 1490.

function of Scripture which is represented both negatively and positively by the expressions **correction** and **training in righteousness**. The Author of UBS New Testament Handbook Series notes that “**Correction** appears only here in the New Testament and denotes restoration to a better state, with the implication that there is some condition or fault that needs to be straightened up (so TEV "correcting faults"). One may also express this as "correcting people when they do wrong" or "telling people what they do wrong so that they may do good." (PC Study Bible) Adam’s Clark notes that “The positive counterpart of this is **training in righteousness**. **Training** translates a word that can mean "discipline" or "punishment," but in this context it refers to providing instruction to produce proper behavior.” He notes that **Righteousness**, is used here in a moral or ethical sense, referring to upright or ethically acceptable behavior (so TEV "right living"). This may also be rendered as "helping them to lead straight lives," "showing them how to live good lives," or "showing them how to walk the straight path." (Adam’s Clark Commentary in PC Bible Study). So, for Paul the word of God is profitable for training the believers in doing right and living right before God and the people.

In summary, Paul grounds the usefulness of God’s word on its full verbal inspiration. As we have seen. Scripture are unquestionably expedient to teach us what is true and right and open our eyes to that which is wrong. It straightens us out and teaches us to do the right thing.

#### **4. REVITALIZING THE PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURES**

**2 Timothy 3:17.** ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν One can see in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 why the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is indeed the *locus classicus* of biblical revelation. Paul justifyingly weaves together the ground for scriptural inspiration, its functionality utility and the radial purpose it is meant to efficaciously achieve in the lives of its obedient readers.

ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. or that the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good works*

The key phrase here is [**That the man of God**] this is Old Testament term that refers to the Prophet as the man of Yahweh, a man that has the attribute and nature of God. A man that is upright and blameless that is, one in whom there is nothing defective; for he asserts absolutely, that the Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable. Every one in Christ has the nature of Christ and as such they carry the spirit of God within them. The man of God is the teacher and preacher or the one that communicates the mind of God to the people. So he must live right and do right and love righteousness. He is a person who derives his commission from God, and always appears as his herald and servant.

He is complete and perfect. In order words he is complete in all the fruits of the Spirit as enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23. He is complete in all the qualities of the divine nature as listed in 2 Peter 1:4-9. He is above board his life is ruled and controlled by the Scripture. He is ready to protect the faith and contend for it. He is a man that is faithful in God's house.

[**Thoroughly furnished**] *Exeertismenos*. From *ex*, intensive, and *artios*, complete; Not only complete in himself as to his integrity, religious knowledge, faith in Jesus, and love to God and man; but that he should have all those qualifications which are necessary to complete the character, and insure the success of a preacher, of the Gospel. Timothy was to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct others; and was to be to them a pattern of good works.

As we conclude our expository study of the pericopes we must stress that as the scriptures are given by the inspiration of the Spirit they must also be received by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The illumination of the Spirit points to our complete understanding and condition that the Scriptures are the very words of God.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This writer has attempted an exposition of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 using exegetical method as my tools of rediscovering the nugget that is embedded in this periscope. It is high time for the church to be revitalized through upholding the integrity of God's word and stand for its verbal inspiration and contend against any force that will try to pull down or look down on the word of God. The church cannot be revitalized if it does not obey the word. The church cannot contend for the faith if she does not have the knowledge of the Word. So every hand should be on deck to rally round the word of God which has been given to us. Those that make the bible open, pay the price by shedding their blood so that we can have the bible open in our homes so it is not now that the bible should be defaced by anybody or should be mishandled or disobeyed.

The scripture are the very inspired breathe of God and it is profitable to initiate and continue the redemptive work of Grace in our hearts and lives that we might be a people that conformed to exact image and likeness of Jesus Christ our savior and Lord and we shall be fully qualified to advance His salvific purposes on the earth.