

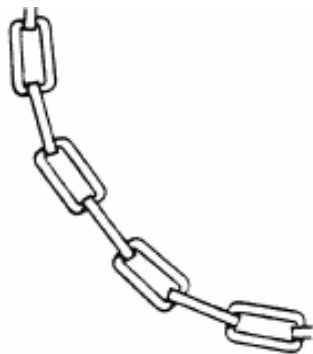
The Apostle Paul defined the word "Scripture" when he referred to it as "Sacred Writings." In II Timothy 3:15, Paul reminded Timothy of the importance of the Old Testament teachings, which he called "sacred writings." Then, in the next verse, he said that all "Scripture" is inspired by God. So ... in this Bible Talk, we shall use Paul's definition of "scripture" ... the sacred writings of those who were inspired by God. This would include the New Testament scriptures as well as the Old, for Peter referred to the writings of Paul as "scripture" in II Peter 3:15-16. In fact, Peter said that "no prophecy of Scripture ... was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (II Peter 1:20-21). Thus, we can see the chain of inspiration. It began with a message from the mind of God, apportioned through the ages in veiled revelations, then embodied in the person of Christ, and passed on to His Spirit filled apostles and prophets, and finally settled into a permanent package called Holy Scripture, the Sacred Writings, a message from the very mind of God preserved for the benefit of all people of all times.

Have you ever wondered WHY New Testament writers wrote? Do you think they understood the significance of their writings? Or do you think they considered their letters to be no more than friendly correspondence to one another? Why not let them speak for themselves and explain WHY they wrote. In Revelation 1:10-11, the Apostle John said that he was commanded by Jesus Christ to write what he saw in a book and to send it to the seven churches. He said that those who read what he had written would be blessed (Revelation 1:3). He said that his writing was a prophecy of things to come (Rev 1:1). He said, "I am writing these things to you that you may not sin" (I John 2:1). He intended for his writing to provide for its readers joyful fellowship with the Lord and His people (I John 1:4). And why did he write the Gospel of John? "...These have been written," he said, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). Indeed, our faith in Christ is based on Scripture. Without the written word, none of us could have faith. None of us could have life.

What about Luke? Why did he write? He said in Luke 1:3-4 that he wanted to present an accurate, chronological account of the things involved in the life of Christ; he said, "that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." His writing included "all that Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). What about Paul? Concerning his own writings he said, "when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4). He said that the things he wrote were "the Lord's commandment" (I Corinthians 14:37). He said that by the scriptures the mystery of God's revelation has been made known to all the nations (Romans 16:25-26). What about Peter? Did he believe his writings would be preserved for the ages? He said that the very purpose for his writing was to provide others a way to know what he had taught, even after his death (II Peter 1:12-18). Holy Scripture is the basis by which we determine spiritual truth. Luke commended the people in Berea because they were "examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Should we not be as diligent? Paul said that Scripture is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

You know ... Peter claimed that God has provided us with "... everything pertaining to life and godliness ..." (II Peter 1:3). From the very few verses cited in this Bible Talk, it seems evident that "everything pertaining to life and godliness" is supplied through the Holy Scriptures. We have seen that Scripture provides for us: 1) an orderly record of Jesus' deeds sufficient to build a saving faith; 2) a record of all things Jesus taught; 3) a record of what the apostles taught; 4) the inspired word of the Holy Spirit; 5) the commandments of the Lord; 6) a way to acquire the same understanding of the mysteries of Christ that was held by Paul; 7) criterion for recognizing true doctrine; 8) access to joyful fellowship with the Lord and His people; 9) protection from sin; 10) blessings from God; 11) prophecy of things to come; and, 12) all that is needed to equip the man of God for every good work. Scripture alone claims that all of these things are provided by Scripture alone. What else do we need beyond what Scripture provides to be well pleasing to God and to prepare for eternity?

1. How would you define "Scripture" as Paul used the term in II Timothy 3:15-16?
  
2. Did Peter consider the writings of Paul to be included in the collection of "Scripture"? (II Peter 3:15-16)
  
3. According to II Peter 1:20-21, how did the writers of "Scripture" know what to write?
  
4. Make your own notations on the following diagram to show your understanding of how the "chain of inspiration" has brought God's word to us today:



5. Beside each reference below, list what "Scripture Alone" provides for the people of God:  
Luke 1:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_  
John 20:30-31 \_\_\_\_\_  
Acts 1:1 \_\_\_\_\_  
II Peter 1:12-18 \_\_\_\_\_  
II Peter 1:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_  
I Corinthians 14:37 \_\_\_\_\_  
Ephesians 3:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Acts 17:11 \_\_\_\_\_