

## What Are The Scriptures?

In the New Testament the words “scripture” or “scriptures” are most often translated from the Greek, *graphe*; a word which denoted “a drawing, painting; then a writing” (Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine). In the New Testament, the word “scripture” is used only to refer to sacred writings — writings which came by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16); holy men of God writing as the Spirit of God directed them to write (2 Peter 1:20-21).

When used in the New Testament, the term “scripture” often refers to the Old Testament or a portion of it, but not exclusively. It is also used of the writings of Paul. Today, both the Old Testament and New Testament make up “The Scriptures.”

When Jesus asked the chief priests and Pharisees if they had not read in the scriptures how “the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner” (Matthew 21:42), He referred to a portion of the Old Testament (Psalm 118:22).

When Jesus told the Sadducees that they erred, not knowing the scriptures (Matthew 22:29), He had in mind an Old Testament passage (Exodus 3:6).

When Jesus expounded on the scriptures to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, He taught them things the Old Testament had said about the Christ, beginning with Moses and the prophets (Luke 24:27).

Many things were done during the life of Jesus that “the scriptures might be fulfilled” (Matthew 26:54, 56; Mark 15:28; Luke 4:21; John 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 36; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The events fulfilled were things the Old Testament prophets had said would come to pass that would identify the Christ (Isaiah 53:12; 61:1-2; Psalm 41:9; 22:18).

Peter had the prophets of the Old Testament in mind when he said, “No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

However, when Paul told Timothy that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17), he spoke “of the Old Testament Scriptures (those accepted by the Jews as canonical) and all those of the New Testament which were to be accepted by Christians as authoritative ... but that was not complete when the apostle wrote Timothy” (Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine).

This is evident because today, the Old Testament alone is not sufficient for doctrine nor instruction in righteousness. Today, the only way the Old Testament can make one “wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15) is to direct one to Christ and to the New Testament scriptures.

Peter indicated that Paul's epistles were "scriptures" by equating them with "the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). If Paul's epistles were scripture, would not all of the New Testament be scripture? The New Testament writers were inspired (1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 3:3), just as the Old Testament writers were inspired. Inspiration is what makes these writings sacred — scripture! Since the Old Testament and New Testament both came by the inspiration of God, they are both scripture.

What are the scriptures? They are the writings given by God to men through inspiration — Old Testament and New Testament. The scriptures are the sacred writings which furnish us with everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). They are our guide and our source of authority (John 10:35).

Harold Hancock