



Daily Verse and Comment

2 Timothy 3:16

(16) ^aAll Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, ^band *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for¹ instruction in righteousness,

New King James Version

Is this verse to be taken literally, or as many Bible critics allege, could the inspired Word of God—the Holy Bible—contain discrepancies? Can we find conflicts within the books of the Bible's many authors, or is there a consensus of truth and inspiration that transcends all other written works?

To the nonbeliever, the Bible is full of contradiction and error, but this opinion is predictable, coming from one who lacks the guidance and direction of the sacred book's Divine Author, our great [God](#). But by the same token, the Bible is not an easy book to read and understand (see [Acts 8:30-31](#)). Even for the elect of God, there are difficult passages that at first read may seem to conflict with others.

While there are various contributing factors, most alleged biblical discrepancies are likely the result of two factors: 1) spiritual confusion and misunderstanding, and 2) honest misinterpretation.

In light of this, how should Christians deal with these so-called “inconsistencies” of Scripture so as to avoid the dangerous traps that any resulting misconception may produce? How do we ensure that we can provide a “ready answer” ([1 Peter 3:15](#)) to those who may inquire?

First, consider the most common contributing factors that may confuse and obscure our understanding of the most important Book ever written:

1. There are vast, fundamental contrasts between the cultures and dialects of the modern West and those of the ancient Middle East. These contrasts add a

layer of difficulty and uncertainty to prevailing translations from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages.

Consider also that the Bible was written by over thirty different Middle-Eastern authors over a span approaching two thousand years. Some wrote prose, while others wrote poetry. God inspired some to describe visions of the future, while He moved others to write more historical narratives. Some authors, like the apostle Paul, created accounts that even the apostle Peter found nearly impenetrable ([II Peter 3:16](#)). Moreover, since languages are constantly evolving, many words tend to change meaning and usage over time, while others virtually disappear from the lexicon altogether.

2. God's truth is often paradoxical ([Ecclesiastes 7:15](#); [8:17](#); [Psalm 73:1-16](#)). While God reveals Himself and His truth in His Word ([Daniel 2:22](#); [Job 12:22](#)), He also actively conceals Himself and His truth as well ([Proverbs 25:2](#); [Job 36:26](#)). With focused effort, almost anyone can learn about God from the Scriptures, but in His [wisdom](#), He places restrictions on what He allows to be revealed, sometimes masking His truth through the use of [parables](#) ([Job 11:7](#); [Romans 11:33](#); [II Thessalonians 2:11](#); [Mark 4:11-12](#), 33-34). Regardless of individual effort, [faith](#), or closeness with God, there are certain mysteries that—by design—remain unexplained for now ([Deuteronomy 29:29](#)).

3. Satanic influence and human nature have exploited the inherent biblical complexities to prompt translator bias, transcription error, and even not a few perplexing and confusing translations.

While God inspired Scripture to both reveal and conceal in accordance with His will, [Satan](#), in concert with human nature, has always worked in direct opposition ([Romans 8:7](#); [II Corinthians 4:4](#); [Matthew 13:19-22](#); [Ephesians 4:18](#); [II Thessalonians 2:9-10](#)). We should never underestimate our evil adversary's desire to influence the Bible's many translators, “inspiring” transcription inaccuracies, ambiguity, and obscurity wherever possible ([II Corinthians 3:14-15](#); [Revelation 12:9](#); [Mark 4:15](#)).

As Christians, we are tasked with gaining a deeper understanding of God through the study of His inspired Scriptures. This requires great faith and personal effort to dig far beyond the superficial meanings of translated words and phrases, and with the aid of divine revelation, to discover the genuine

intentions of the divine Author. By recognizing that difficulties do exist, and by anticipating the satanic effort to exploit those difficulties, we can hope to avoid the pitfalls caused by misconception and poor translation ([II Timothy 3:16](#); [Romans 15:4](#); [I Corinthians 10:11](#)).

— Martin G. Collins

To learn more, see:

[Does the Bible Contain Discrepancies?](#)

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