



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

JUNE 30, 2014

In the President's book, *The Audacity Of Hope*, He goes to great lengths arguing that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Accordingly, sitting in the Oval Office is America's first full-fledged Postmodern President. Postmodernism is a philosophy that says absolute truth does not exist, and that all viewpoints are equally valid. Could this insight help explain why SCOTUS has now rebuked his understanding of "truth" twelve times in a row?

Could this insight explain why, when investigating his Administrators in your Committee hearings, that they evidence little if any presuppositional sense of right and wrong? Are not your investigative committees classic portrayals of clashing worldviews – Absolutists confronting Postmodernists? I truly feel for you: how frustrating it must be for one who believes in objective truth to interact with smug and elusive, slippery and indefinite, arrogant and audacious Postmodernists.

This week's study examines the basis for holding to God's presupposition that truth is both objective and knowable: Unfortunately for our President and his administration, they seem to disagree with God on this point.... But from my perspective as a Bible teacher, what better time – or better illustrations – to lacerate the cultural cancer of Postmodernism. Read on!

Weekly Bible Study During Session

Wednesday Mornings 8:00 AM Sharp. Capitol Building Family Room H324
Hot Breakfast Served.

Robert Aderholt, *Alabama*
Michele Bachmann, *Minnesota*
Spencer Bachus, *Alabama*
Marsha Blackburn, *Tennessee*
Jim Bridenstine, *Oklahoma*
Paul Brown, *Georgia*
John Campbell, *California*
Tony Cardenas, *California*
John Carter, *Texas*
Bill Cassidy, *Louisiana*
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Michael Conaway, *Texas*
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Rick Crawford, *Arkansas*
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Jeff Denham, *California*
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Mary Fallin (Gov.), *Oklahoma*
John Fleming, *Louisiana*
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Trent Franks, *Arizona*
Scott Garrett, *New Jersey*
Louie Gohmert, *Texas*
Tom Graves, *Georgia*
Tim Griffin, *Arkansas*
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Gregg Harper, *Mississippi*
George Holding, *North Carolina*
Bill Huizenga, *Michigan*
Randy Hultgren, *Illinois*
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Jim Jordan, *Ohio*
Steve King, *Iowa*
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James Lankford, *Oklahoma*
Cynthia Lummis, *Wyoming*
Mike McIntyre, *North Carolina*
Mark Meadows, *North Carolina*
Gary Miller, *California*
Jeff Miller, *Florida*
Randy Neugebauer, *Texas*
Allen Nunnelee, *Mississippi*
Steve Pearce, *New Mexico*
Mike Pence (Gov.), *Indiana*
Robert Pittenger, *North Carolina*
Mike Pompeo, *Kansas*
Bill Posey, *Florida*
Tom Price, *Georgia*
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Cathy McMorris Rogers, *Washington*
Austin Scott, *Georgia*
Tim Scott, *South Carolina*
Lamar Smith, *Texas*
Steve Southerland, *Florida*
Steve Stockman, *Texas*
Marlin Stutzman, *Indiana*
Glenn Thompson, *Pennsylvania*
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Tim Walberg, *Michigan*
Randy Weber, *Texas*
Daniel Webster, *Florida*
Lynn Westmorland, *Georgia*
Roger Williams, *Texas*
Joe Wilson, *South Carolina*
Rob Wittman, *Virginia*
Steve Womack, *Arkansas*
Rob Woodall, *Georgia*
Ted Yoho, *Florida*



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

I. INTRODUCTION

The objectivity of truth is a foundational premise of Scripture; The Bible knows nothing of Postmodern “subjective truth” – the “truth” that is whatever you think it to be, and that it can be different and equally valid for different people. When you think about it, every Postmodernist could be called an absolutist, in the sense that they are *absolutely convinced* that there are no absolutes – a revelatory insight into the idiocy of their philosophy.

Winning the argument for absolutism hinges on the veracity and authority of the Bible because therein absolutism is declared. If the Bible is *inspired*¹ by God, then, contrary to what Postmodernists believe, it is not just another equal opinion. If or not God breathed the Scripture determines the validity of the Postmodern alternative to truth.

If you follow my deductive reasoning, **there** are several questions that will help you as a Public Servant, or for that matter any individual, address the question of God’s *spiration* of Scripture and hence its final authority as the source of truth. Those questions follow. Postmodernism is defeated when Scripture is exalted.

First, what is the testimony of Scripture itself? Did the authors of the Bible know they were penning Holy Writ – did they say they were writing God’s words? Did they make this claim themselves or is this an idea later foisted onto them by others wanting that to be the case?

Second, what is the testimony of the early Church regarding the books that now make up the Bible? Were the Scriptures deemed God’s Word by those closest to the human authors of the Bible? And....

Third, how exactly did our Bible get to be in the form we have today? It’s not as if the Bible suddenly dropped out of the sky. Again, and akin to my prologue, the answers to these questions are

extremely important to our understanding of truth. *If the Scriptures are from God, that is to say they are inspired by Him, then the Bible is the objective source for truth – and the final arbiter in one’s formation of principles, values and policy, i.e., truth is objective.* Correctly, Francis Schaeffer deemed *spiration* to be the watershed issue relative to the objectivity of truth.²

HOLDING TO, OR ELSE REJECTING THE SPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE GREATLY IMPACTS VALUE FORMATION

When Paul said to the Ephesian Elders whom He had ministered to for over three years, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:17)³ he was expressing his conviction that what he was saying and writing was indeed inspired by God – and the source of objective truth – therefore it is irresponsible for a teacher of it, or a believer following it, to be slack regarding it. Paul’s statement assumes that what he is saying is objective truth because God is the source of it. Such a statement would be nonsense if Paul did not believe his speech and writings were infused with His authority.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHORS

If the whole of the NT is to be taken as the inspired, authoritative, inerrant oracle of God, then it stands to reason that the writers would know this, and would say so. Note in this regard:

A. THE APOSTLE PAUL.

1COR. 14:37; 2:13; 2COR. 2:17

If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

As he said in Acts 20:17 (quoted in the introduction), the Apostle Paul clearly understood he was speaking and writing for God.

B. THE APOSTLE JOHN. REV. 1:1-2

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. (Cf. Rev. 1:10-11; 21:5; 22:6; 22:18, 19).

This passage serves to indicate that the Apostle John (i.e. His bond servant John) realized that he is writing what Jesus Christ told him to reveal.

C. THE APOSTLE PETER. 1PET. 1:12

.... these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look.

Here the Apostle Peter testifies that he (and other Apostles) who preached the Gospel did so via the Holy Spirit, the message being sent from heaven.

D. JESUS. JOHN 12:48

He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

Jesus speaks of God the Father's judgment for one who rejects what Jesus says.

The skeptic will often reason that since the written NT did not exist when these men penned the aforementioned testimonies regarding the inspiration of Scripture, that their statements must have been in reference to the OT, which was then existent in canonical form. In rebuttal of this, note that the Apostles cross-pollinate one another: Peter testifies that Paul was writing Scripture, Paul testifies that Peter was writing Scripture, etc. Such is evident in what follows.

E. PETER TESTIFIES OF PAUL.

2PET. 3:15,16

And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Peter directly testifies that what Paul wrote was Scripture. How do TL's discount the strength of this passage when they debate spiration? Since this is such a strong and straightforward passage of the Apostle Peter attesting to the Apostle Paul's writing of Scriptures *graphie*, many TL's of the *twentieth century* have tried to claim it was written much later, and not by Peter. However, 2Peter was widely circulated and accepted by Church leaders in the *second century*! They were obviously much closer to the book's creation and publication and they classified it as being spirated just as they did the other 26 books of the NT; they did not question its authenticity nor its date of authorship!

F. PAUL TESTIFIES OF PETER.

1THESS. 2:13



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

Wow! How much more direct can you be? Paul is referring not only to himself but to the other apostolic preachers as recorded in the birth of the Church, the chronological account of which is located in the NT Book of Acts. **Heard from us** refers to the other preachers, such as the Apostle Peter. What was **heard**? The **word of God**.

G. JUDE TESTIFIES OF THE APOSTLES. JUDE 17-18

But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

An **Apostle** is someone not only saw, but who spoke on behalf of the second member of the Trinity Jesus Christ. As such, Jude is saying that the **Apostles** spoke for God!

H. ALL OF SCRIPTURE

In addition to referring to their own and each other's writings as inspired by God, both Paul and Peter attest to the whole spiration of Scripture – **all of Scripture** – elsewhere in their various letters. What follows are several examples....

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2Timothy 3:16).

This is another very clear and straightforward passage that scores points for “team spiration!”

Of course TL's attempt to interpret this important passage in another way. Here's their twist: this passage means *All Scripture inspired by God is...* thereby leaving open the possibility that some Scripture is not inspired and therefore it is incumbent upon man to figure out what is and what isn't inspired (something they enjoy doing, witness the “Jesus Seminar” wherein TL “scholars” voted on what was inspired and what was not). Don't fall for their Scripture twisting antics! Save a lengthy grammar lesson in Greek, it is clear from similarly constructed passages in the Greek NT (Rom. 7:12; 2Cor. 10:10; 1Tim. 1:15; 2:2; 4:4; and Heb. 4:17) that such a translation is intentionally misleading. **All Scripture is inspired** is the proper translation. Peter adds....

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2Pet. 1:20-21)

This passage clearly states that the Bible was not and is not the product of **human will**. Rather, the writers were carried or **moved** along by **God**.

In summary of this second Roman Numeral point in the outline, the testimony of the authors whom God inspired to write Scripture roundly indicates that they knew that what they were writing was from God! In the attempt to convey that spiration was an idea later foisted onto their ancient writings, one is left with the inability to argue that these men were unaware of it when they wrote, i.e. that God was inspiring in and through them. That argument is not open to TL's! These passages clearly indicate that the Apostles (granted some used amanuenses⁴) knew it when they wrote! Equally, it does it make sense to say that these men were lying about what they wrote simply because of everything else that surrounds and comes forth from their writings: It is obvious that these were great men of integrity!



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

SPECIFICS ON WHAT SPIRATION ACTUALLY MEANS

1. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE WRITERS WERE INSPIRATED EVERY MINUTE OF THEIR LIVES

It is **All Scripture** *graphe* that is **inspired** *theopneustos* (or better, God-breathed; spirated). Specifically it's not the writers; it's the **Scriptures** that are given by the breathing forth of God in and through the writers. When speaking and writing apart from penning Scripture the writers were human and subject to fallibility and inaccuracy.⁵

2. IT MEANS THAT GOD WORKED IN UNISON WITH THE WRITER'S MIND

Sometimes God dictated through the writer (Jeremiah 1:9, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth") but most often God utilized the personality, education, and setting of His Prophets and Apostles.⁶ Note the following in this regard:

"But, as clearly seen in Scripture itself, God's divine truth more often flowed through the minds, souls, hearts, and emotions of His chosen human instruments. Yet, by whatever means, God divinely superintended the accurate recording of His divinely breathed truth by His divinely chosen men. In a supernatural way, He has provided His divine Word in human words that any person, even a child, can be led by His Holy Spirit to understand sufficiently to be saved."⁷

3. IT MEANS THAT ONLY THE ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPHA⁸ WERE INSPIRATED

Being pro-spiration infers one believes only in the error-free original *autographa*. Critics point out that none of the original manuscripts is in existence today. This is a challenge: copying scribes could and did err. But it does not decide the spiration debate. Note the following in this regard:

"The NT Scholar is not significantly hampered by the unavailability of the autographa, however, because of the science and art of textual criticism. The abundance of manuscripts of the NT or portions thereof and the earliness of their dates in relation to the original compositions places him in a better position to know precisely what was originally written than for any other ancient writing."⁹

III. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SECOND-CENTURY CHURCH

The last book of the NT to be written was the apocalypse, which we call today the book of Revelation. The Apostle John around A.D. 94-96 wrote this. Thus the era of the first-century church came to a close and the writing of the NT was completed (cf. Rev. 22:18-19). Many of the NT books were known as encyclicals, meaning they were intended for more than one audience to read. Soon all 27 books would become encyclicals as the various papyrus¹⁰ manuscripts that contained the NT books were passed around and often recopied as they circulated from church to church during this period. Importantly, they were immediately viewed as authoritative because in addition to Christ's words, the Apostles had always been seen as Christ's representatives, having been appointed by Him (cf. Acts 1:8). There was never any reason for the second-century church to doubt that the Apostles were Christ's spokesmen. As a matter of fact, after the ascension and the day of Pentecost they were even given miraculous sign gifts by Him to further legitimize their appointment and authority. Given their own written affirmations (as previously mentioned) they were viewed and accepted by the early church leaders as authoritative. There was never any doubt.

Moreover, the Apostles' writings contained commands that they be read in the church services. In that the early church patterned their services after those of the Jewish synagogues (where the inspired OT Scriptures were given preeminence and authority by their regular reading in the worship service) the internal demand by the Apostles to have their Apostolic writings read along side of the OT readings communicated a huge message both to the audience then and to the reader of the Bible today: their apostolic writings are equally Scripture! Note such apostolic commands to the early church in the following passages:



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

A. COLOSSIANS 4:16

When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea [Ephesus].

B. 1THESSALONIANS 5:27

I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren.

C. REVELATION 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

The second selection, 1Thess. 5:27, especially underscores the idea of apostolic commanding. The Greek word for **adjure** *enorkizo* means “to put under an oath.” This is very forceful language: Paul put the Church at Thessalonica under oath by God to read his letter to them and in the main service! Again: *The fact that all of these verses explicitly say to read the Apostolic writings in the church services is akin to placing these writings on par with OT Scripture.*

By the *middle* of the second century, “the authority of the apostles was accepted as equal to that of the OT. Apostolic writings were read in church services along with those of the OT. By the end of the period the principle of a fixed and written NT canon was established.”¹¹

By the *end* of the second century the classification of the NT writings as scriptural is evident in the apologetic writings of Irenaeus. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. Irenaeus wrote to defend the faith from heretical teachings in his compendium of books titled, *Against All Heresies*. In his treatment he quotes 21 of the 27 NT books as his authority in

refuting doctrinal errors. And his NT quotes far outweigh his use of the OT. As of yet, the 27 NT books still had not been formally “sewn together” in what is referred to as the canonization of Scripture.

What is especially important about the aforementioned is the acceptance and adherence of the second-century church leaders and believers to the scriptural authority of the apostolic writers.

**THE SECOND-CENTURY CHURCH HAD A MUCH CLOSER VANTAGE POINT THAN WE DO:
LOOKING BACK THEY COULD SEE THE BAKERY THROUGH THEIR BINOCULARS**

.... so to speak. How can liberal theologians criticize the apostolic writings from their vantage point 2000 years later? How can they think they have a better perspective than the second and third-century church leaders who personally witnessed and supervised the germination of the encyclicals into the formal canonization of the Scriptures? Comparatively speaking, today’s attempts to superimpose personal ideas on the clear pronouncements of apostolic authority, as well as first and second century church leader attestations, are not only arrogant but laughable!

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF THE CANONIZING PROCESS

The canonization of Scripture did not occur until the early fourth century. From A.D. 200 to 300 the church knew of the basic contents of the NT and continued to view them as inspired and authoritative (although precise limits had not yet been defined). Prior to discussing the actual formalizing of the canon, it is essential to point out what the word means.

The English word **Canon** is *transliterated* from the same word in Greek. Its etymology stems from its most literal understanding: “a cane or a reed” segueing into meaning a “rod” (since a cane or reed,



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

like a yard stick could be used as an ancient measuring device). Over time it took on the meaning of a “bar.” And since a reed became related to the idea of measuring, the word took on the metaphorical meaning of a “standard.” Used in literature, it meant, “A list of works correctly attributed to an author.”¹² Used in English today it means the authoritative books accepted as Holy Scripture.

In a proper sense, the **canon** actually came into existence when the original penning of the *autographa* occurred – even though it took the church many years to *recognize* that. In other words, the authority is in the books themselves – not the body that later “canonized” them.¹³

IMPORTANTLY, THE CANON CONSISTS OF THOSE GOD-SPIRATED BOOKS WHEN PENNED BY GOD’S AGENTS

Much more could be said about the historical authenticating events that led up to the official recognition of NT canonization. It is a fascinating story – for another time. Today for the sake of brevity I will cut to the chase...

Diocletian was the Roman Emperor at the dawn of the fourth century. He was a vicious man who ordered all religious books be burned in his attempt to have everyone worship *him* as god. Christians risked death by hiding a copy of Scripture. One person who lived through this ordeal was Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 270-340). He was a respected church leader and historian who spent a great amount of time and attention on the **canon**. The future of the Scriptures was at stake. In his book, *Church History*, he speaks much about this subject.

In 313 Constantine conquered the Roman Empire and declared Christianity a lawful religion. Soon thereafter he commissioned Eusebius to make him 50 copies of the NT. Eusebius followed through and this led to the actual “sewing together” of the books of the NT. Until this time the NT existed in

various codices¹⁴ and the criteria for determining which books would actually be in the canon had not been solidified. Eusebius may be credited with achieving that amongst the church leaders.

Athanasius then completed Eusebius’ work, and the extent of the NT is codified and ratified by the Church Council of Laodicea in A.D. 365. The pronouncement of this gathering read, “Psalms composed by private men must not be read in the church, nor books not admitted into the canon, but only the canonical [books] of the New and Old Testaments.”

Following the Laodicea gathering, in two subsequent church leader councils, the **canon** was further ratified by throughout the world. These councils were: The Council of Hippo in A.D. 393 and The Council of Carthage in A.D. 397. It is in this latter counsel that Augustine said, “[It is decreed] that nothing except the canonical Scriptures be read in the church under the name of divine Scripture...Of the New Testament the four gospels, Acts, thirteen epistles of St. Paul, the epistle of the same to the Hebrews, Peter (2), John (3), James, Jude, Apocalypse...” States Westcott,

“GENERAL ACCORD WITH THIS DECISION WAS EVIDENCED IN THE PRACTICE OF ALL THE CHURCHES FROM THAT POINT ON.”¹⁵

The NT was now canonized. The latently authoritative writings had now been formally recognized for what they always had been since their origination, collected and bound. The church had assented unanimously, – inspired by God!

V. SUMMARY

There are still many who espouse TL, It is the “religious” seedbed of Postmodernism. But I must add that TL causes death: it provides little in motivation to save or evangelize the lost, and so, with too few converts, their churches are aging, merging, and closing.



Postmodernism: The Root Cause Of A Failed Presidency?

Whether or not the Bible is inspired by God is a watershed issue. Where one stands on spiration will either solidify or discount the Bible as authoritative in terms of one's personal formation of principles and values, and for a legislator, one's policy decisions. If you accede to spiration, then it follows that the Word becomes singularly authoritative in your life. If someone rejects spiration, he is concluding that he, or some TL pastor, is the final authority. That's the first step down the road toward Postmodernism. When you think about it...

IF A HUMAN IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY, WHO IS TO SAY WHICH HUMAN?

Intellectual arguments against spiration could be a smokescreen for a heart in rebellion to God. If your friend professes to be a Christian, but argues against the authors and those who knew the authors, he or she is arguing against history and the internal attestation of Scripture itself! Counsel your friend to submit to Scripture, submit to the revealed Christ of Scripture and follow the precepts of Him and His Book! Counsel your friend to allow Jesus and His Word to inform and determine his or her thinking, values, decisions, and actions, because God loves us and His ways are always best for elected officials and for the nation! After all, God created mankind and has left us with a manual to guide us personally. All the right solutions to our personal and national problems are right there in His *inspired* Book!

"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," states Psalm 19:7. God's Word will give you the skill to live life (wisdom). And He promises He will reward us personally and as a nation if we obey Him. Verse 11 of the same Psalm states, "In keeping them there is great reward." *Spiration* is a pivotal issue!

¹ The Greek word *theopneustos* is a Pauline and biblical hapax found in 2Tim. 3:16. It is a compound of *Theo* meaning "God" and *pneo* meaning "breathed." The compound is a predicate adjective used by Paul to describe Scripture *graphe*. Thus it carries the idea of God

breathing out *graphe*. Accordingly Paul is literally saying, "All Scripture is the direct and creative product of the breath of God" (cf. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* p. 133). Accordingly *spirated*, or *inspired* as I have used here and throughout, conveys I believe, more so the exacting English meaning of *theopneustos*. *Inspired* and *spirated* best describe the literal meaning of what *graphe* is: as having been the direct and creative product of God, versus the English word *inspired* which is often understood today to mean "motivation" and thereby failing to convey the more exacting, Greek-intended idea of "essence."

² Schaeffer, Francis *He is There and He is not Silent* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972)

³ Note too that Paul and other NT authors strongly condemned those who in any way adulterated or diminished the Scriptures (cf. Gal. 1:6-9; 2Cor. 2:17; 2Tim. 4:3,4; Rev. 22:18,19)

⁴ One who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.

⁵ Nowhere in Scripture, including Matthew 16:18-19, can one support the idea of ex-cathedra (Latin, "from the chair"). I.e. that there is supposedly a lineage of leadership stemming from the Apostle Peter to a present-day church leader, who when he speaks ex-cathedra is speaking for God.

⁶ Sometimes this included the use of an amanuensis, which is a secretary to whom they dictated.

⁷ MacArthur, John *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1995) p 143

⁸ Autographs, or manuscripts written by the author.

⁹ Dr. Thomas, Robert *The Canon of the New Testament*, excerpted article. p. 2

¹⁰ This was (and still is) a sedge plant that was made into a primitive form of paper. Later, vellum or parchment, a processed animal skin that was much more expensive than papyrus, was used in the copying of NT.

¹¹ Dr. Thomas, Robert *The Canon of the New Testament*, excerpt notes, page 13

¹² Tenney, Merrill *The New Testament, A Survey*, p. 417

¹³ In theology this is termed "a collection of authoritative writings" versus, "an authoritative collection of writings." Whereas the former stresses the latent authority of the documents, the later stresses the authority of the collection agency – i.e. the church rather than the books.

¹⁴ A *codex* (plural "codices") was an early, primitive form of a modern day book, contrasted with a scroll, which was a rolled up papyrus mss.

¹⁵ Westcott, *The Bible* p. 189