

exploreGOD

"IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?"

2 PETER 1:19-21

This Week's Core Competency

Authority of the Bible – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The authority of the Bible stems from the divine origin of its message and the infallibility of its writings. The divine origin of its message is Peter's point in 2 Peter 1:21, "For no prophetic message ever came just from the will of man, but men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they *spoke* the message that came from God" (TEV, italics added). One author writes, "There are several ways in which the Bible gives witness of its divine origin. One of these is the view of New Testament authors regarding the Scriptures of their day, which we would today term the Old Testament. Second Peter 1:20-21 is a cardinal instance . . . Here Peter is affirming that the prophecies of the Old Testament were not of human origin. They were not produced by the will or decision of man. Rather they [the prophets] were moved or borne along (*pheromenoi*) by the Spirit of God. The impetus *which led to the writing* was from the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Peter's readers are to pay heed to the prophetic word, for it is not simply

The first fact to be affirmed about the Bible is its divine authority.

– Carl F. H. Henry

man's word, but God's word" (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1: 201 italics added). Peter is talking about the proclamation of the prophets, first spoken, then later written. The content of their proclamations—whether indictments, warnings, commands, or promises—was not concocted by them; it came from God. Again and again the prophets either declared, "This is what the LORD says," or wrote, "The word of the LORD that came to . . ." Jeremiah alone uses the first expression more than 100 times and the second more than 40 times in the book that bears his name.

The infallibility or truthfulness of its writings is Paul's point in 2 Timothy 3:16, another cardinal passage on the authority of the Bible. In that verse he tells Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living" (TEV). The key phrase in this verse, "inspired by God," is translated more literally "God-breathed" (NIV) and "breathed out by God" (ESV) in two other versions. "In modern usage the term inspiration, unfortunately, suggests an act of 'breathing into.' Moreover, it is used in secular society as a synonym for a wide variety of phenomena, ranging from a hunch to artistic genius. The apostolic emphasis is that God 'breathed-out' what the sacred writers convey in the biblical writings. The emphasis falls on divine initiative and impartation rather than on human creativity; Scripture owes its origin and nature to what God breathed out. In short, the Bible's life-breath as a literary deposit is divine" (Carl F. H. Henry, "The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1: 13).

cont. pg. 2

Paul's choice of words implies that "inspiration" pertains to the text of the Bible rather than its authors or readers—"Not everything an apostle wrote was inspired, for it was not the writer who was inspired but his writings, and not necessarily all of them," [Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 120])—and leads to the following definition: "God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings" (81). Adding to Peter's point, Paul affirms that what the prophets first proclaimed as the word of LORD is faithfully conveyed by the Scripture, which explains why Scripture is useful for teaching the truth, etc. His logic goes something like this. The message of the prophets came from God, the Scripture is breathed out by God who cannot lie, so the Scripture is useful for teaching the truth etc., since it must be without error or fault in all its teaches.

When all is said and done, Christians believe in the authority of the Bible by faith for good reason. And one of the best reasons is because Jesus did. When facing Satan's challenge, he simply replied, "It is written." One writer rightly observes, "We are on a pilgrimage through our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the word of God" (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*, TNTC, 100).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Vv. 16-18

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

2 Peter 1:19-21

19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "stories" in v. 16.
- * Underline "power and coming" in v. 16.
- * Box "but" indicating contrast in v. 16.
- * Circle "majesty" in v. 16.
- * Bracket the temporal clause "when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory" in v. 17.
- * Bracket the temporal clause "when we were with him on the sacred mountain" in v. 18.
- * Underline "made more certain" in v. 19.
- * Circle "the day" in v. 19.
- * Circle "the morning star" in v. 19.
- * Underline "came about by the prophet's own interpretation" in v. 20.
- * Box "but" indicating contrast in v. 21.
- * Circle "carried along" in v. 21.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. False teachers leveled a charge at Peter and the other apostles. What was it?
2. Describe Peter's first line of defense against it.
3. What has the transfiguration got to do with the powerful coming of Christ?
4. Peter avoids referring directly to "the voice of God." How so and why so?
5. Why bother adding the reflexive pronoun "ourselves" in verse 18?
6. Peter says, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain." Explain by what.
7. Describe the practical value of "the word of the prophets," i.e., the Scripture.
8. Will the practical value of Scripture ever be diminished? Explain.
9. Put what verse 20 means in your own words.
10. **Discussion:** With regard to the power and coming of Christ, Peter says, "we have the word of the prophets" (v. 19) and the word of the Father (v. 17). What do you infer from the link of the former to the latter?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Peter tells why he has written his readers a second time in 3:2. There he explains that he wants them to remember the words of the prophets contained in Scripture and the commands of the Lord proclaimed by the apostles. Then in the next verse he warns them, "You must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'" His words in the closing chapter echo those in the opening one. In a last will and testament of sorts in 1:12 he explains that before he makes his "departure" (v. 15) he wants to remind them of God's "very great and precious promises" (v. 4) especially with respect to "the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v. 11)—not because they are ignorant of this truth but because in his words, "I think it is right to refresh your memory" (v. 13). Whereupon in verse 16 he defends himself and the other apostles against charges leveled against him by those he later refers to in chapter 3. "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," he responds. Testifying on his own behalf, he denies that his proclamation was concocted for purposes of deceit. Peter's opening reference to the Lord's coming together with his closing reference to the scoffers' denial of the Parousia form what literary critics call an *inclusio*, two statements that function a bit like parentheses.

In his first line of defense Peter argues that the apostles were both eyewitnesses and earwitnesses to the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ that will be on display at his coming (see Mt 24:30). They were with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration when "his face shown like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light" (Mt 17:2; cf. Mk 9:3; Lk 9:29). They were with him when a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (2Pe 1:17; cf., Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35; Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1). But why would Peter refer to the transfiguration in defense of the truth of the Parousia? Because the link between the two is strongly suggested in the Gospel accounts. In

Matthew 16:28 Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," and then follows the account of the transfiguration in 17:1-13. The same is true in Mark (cf., 9:1-13) and Luke (cf., 9:27-36). "Clearly Peter and the other apostles did not know how the timing would work out; even after his resurrection, Jesus had to warn them that they would not know 'the times of dates' when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6-7). But the apostles could be certain that the Parousia would occur; they had, in effect already seen it" (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter, Jude*, 80).

In his second line of defense Peter argues that "the word of the prophets" or the Scripture itself testifies as well to the Lord's powerful coming (see Da 7:13, 14; cf. Mt 24:30). And the testimony of the prophets has been made "completely certain" by the eyewitness testimony of the apostles to Christ's majesty, so much so that we ought to pay attention to the Scripture. It's like a light shining on our dark path showing us the way until the dawn of a new age when Jesus, the morning star (Rev 22:16), appears, Scripture is fulfilled, and all our hopes for the future are realized. What's more, Peter assures us we can trust God's word because "no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation" (v. 20). In other words, no prophecy stemmed from the prophet's personal view of things, his thoughts regarding the future, or take on his personal experiences. Instead, the prophets "spoke from God"—their message originated with him—"as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." God didn't necessarily dictate what they were to say, but he guided them in their choice of words to best express what he meant. Peter's view of the word of the prophets amounts to his view of the Old Testament and by extension to our view of the Bible as a whole. What's more, he grants the same trustworthiness and authority to the word of the prophets as to the word of the Father (v. 17).

The Message of the Passage

The Father himself and the Old Testament prophets, who spoke from God, testify to the power and coming of the Lord.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on the first two "living questions" below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“Is the Bible Reliable?”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 16 **we** I.e., the apostles. Note the change in pronouns. Speaking personally, Peter uses "I" in verses 12-15; speaking as an apostle, he uses "we" in verses 16-18.
- v. 16 **stories** Cf., "cleverly concocted fables" (the NET Bible). The adjective translated "cleverly invented" was a term applied to the claims of quack doctors (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NICB, 177).
- v. 16 **eyewitnesses** "The author responds as one charged with deceit, namely, that his remarks on Christ's coming and God's judgment are 'cleverly devised myths.' Testifying on his own behalf, he denies that his proclamation was concocted for purposes of deceit. To the point, he claims to be an eyewitness (*epoptai*) at the giving of the prophecy" (Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, AB, 170).
- v. 16 **power and** Cf., "the powerful coming" (NLT). "Peter could here be referring to Christ's first 'coming'; his incarnation and powerful redeeming ministry. But the word 'coming' is used throughout the New Testament as almost a technical term for Christ's return in glory—so much so that the underlying Greek word, *parousia*, has passed into our theological vocabulary . . . Especially significant perhaps for the New Testament use of the word is the application of *parousia* among the Greeks to the official visit of a ruler. Hence, as in verse 16 here, the word occurs seventeen times in the New Testament to refer to Christ's return in glory" (Moo, 71; cf., Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 50, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 215).
- v. 16 **majesty** Peter, James, and John witnessed the majesty of Christ at the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-10; Lk 9:28-36). "*Megaleiotes*, majesty, is a very rare New Testament word: in both its other occurrences [Lk 9:43; Ac 19:27] it means the majesty of the Divine. So here it expresses the divine majesty as revealed in the transfiguration of Jesus" (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*, TNTC, 93).
- v. 17 **honor and glory** Cf., Ps 8:5; Dan 7:14. Perhaps another example of hendiadys—"honorific glory"—denoting the majesty of Christ's appearance. "The meaning of the double expression may be that God conferred honor on Jesus by glorifying his appearance. This sense of [*doxa*] permits the inference that at the Transfiguration Jesus received from God the glory in which he will be seen by all at the Parousia" (Bauckham, 217).
- v. 19 **word of** I.e., perhaps the entire Old Testament—Bauckham argues the term is virtually synonymous with "Scripture" (224)—but certainly specific prophecies about the kingdom to be established by the Messiah at the end of history.
- v. 19 **made more certain** Perhaps "completely certain" (Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, PNTC, 207). "Does it mean that the Scriptures confirm the apostolic witness (Av, NEB mg.)? Or does it mean that the apostolic witness fulfils, and thus authenticates, Scripture (RV, RSV, NEB, NIV)? Most commentators follow the second alternative and take it that the voice at the transfiguration makes even more certain the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Lord" (Green, 97). "Peter is suggesting that his testimony about the Transfiguration gives to the prophetic word an even greater certainty than it had before . . . The Transfiguration, an anticipation of Christ's ultimate kingdom glory, shows that the words of the prophets, at this point at least, must be taken with full literal force. Thus Christians can be even more confident of their fulfillment" (Moo, 76).
- v. 19 **day dawns, star** Together these two expressions refer to the mighty coming of Jesus Christ who will bring an end to present darkness and bring the dawning of a new day. "Thus the rising of the morning star [Scripture elsewhere uses "star" as a messianic reference (Nu 24:17; Rev 22:16)] is a symbol for the Parousia of Christ which inaugurates the eschatological age . . . Prophecy, as a partial revelation pointing forward to the full eschatological revelation, will become superfluous when the full revelation arrives. Naturally it will be 'in their hearts' that Christian believers will receive and perceive this revelation" (Bauckham, 226).
- v. 20 **own interpretation** This expression has been interpreted to mean many things. "Two main ways of taking it are, first, no prophecy arises from the prophet's own interpretation—i.e. it is given by God [cf. NIV]; and second, no prophecy is to be understood by private interpretation—i.e. but as the church interprets it" [cf. TEV, REB]. And although the second view prevails among most commentators according to Green, verse 21 suggests that "Peter, then, is talking about the divine origin of Scripture, not about its proper interpretation" (Green, 100; so also Moo, 78; Bauckham, 229-33; and Davids, 210-13).
- v. 21 **carried along** As a ship by the wind, i.e., the Holy Spirit (cf., Ac 27:15, 17). "The prophets raised their sails, so to speak (they were obedient and receptive), and the Holy Spirit filled them and carried their craft along in the direction he wished. Men spoke: God spoke. Any proper doctrine of Scripture will not neglect either part of this truth" (Green, 102). The repetition of the verb is made evident in this paraphrase, "no prophecy was carried out by the human will, but human beings were carried along by the Holy Spirit." This is the same verb used to describe the voice that 'was carried to him [Jesus]' in v. 17" (Davids, 213).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Like many of your families, mine gathered outside on the evening of September 27, waiting to watch the lunar eclipse. Thankfully we live on a cul-de-sac with very little traffic because our best view was from sitting in the middle of the street. To pass the time, we sang as many songs as we could think of that had the word "moon" in them. There aren't very many! As the moment grew closer for the earth's shadow to completely cover the moon, our neighbors came out and joined us on the street. It was beautiful to watch it disappear and then slowly reappear as a sliver of bright light. I found myself wishing we had a telescope. A telescope would bring into sharp focus what was happening so many miles away. That reminds me of what God's True Word does in our lives. It brings things into focus for us. It illuminates God's love for us. It penetrates my heart and reveals sin. It tells us how to live for God and for others. It gives my life purpose and a calling. The Bible should be regarded highly in our homes. It should have a prominent place, be opened and read often and obeyed. It brings our Creator, Redeemer and Best Friend into sharp focus and helps us know and love Him better. Make time for His Word this week. I will too!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2 Peter 1:19-21

1. How does Peter describe the "word of the prophets"?
2. "For prophecy never had its origins in the will of _____, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the _____." (v. 21)

What Do You Think

What do you think it means to be "carried along by the Holy Spirit"? Talk to your parents or small group leader about it.

What R U Going To Do

The Bible is God's special love letter to us. He wants you to read it so you will know Him better. Make a 7-day chart and commit to read your Bible every day this week. Put a smiley face on your chart each day you do!

Core Comp

Authority of the Bible - I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

Memory Verse

Psalm 145:5 - *They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed Scrolls _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty-six years and have one son, Zach.

Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.