

**2 Peter 1:16-21    You Can Be Sure About the Bible    February 22-24, 2020**  
**Pastor Don Sutton – St. Paul’s Lutheran Church – New Ulm, MN**

**2 Peter 1:16-21**

<sup>16</sup> For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. <sup>19</sup> We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, 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. <sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**Introduction**

What do people think about the Bible? A 2016 Barna survey of Americans indicated their attitudes were that the Bible is ...

- ... 22% - the actual word of God and should be taken literally.
- ... 30% - the inspired word of God; no errors; some verses symbolic (WELS).
- ... 16% - the inspired word of God; has some factual or historical errors.
- ... 9% - not inspired; tells how the writers understand the principles and ways of God.
- ...15% - just another book of teachings written by men that contain stories and advice.

I was surprised that 52% believe the Bible is God’s word and should be taken as it. It’s interesting that Barna projects that within a short time these numbers will change significantly as older generations who believe the Bible is God’s inspired and inerrant word will die out and generations less religious and more skeptical will take their place.

What about you? What do you believe about the Bible?

Today God speaks to us through the Apostle Peter telling us: **YOU CAN BE SURE ABOUT THE BIBLE.**

**1.**

**The Bible is all about Jesus.** The Old Testament points ahead to the coming Savior. The New Testament points to the Savior who has come. The Bible tells us: “You’re sinners. You deserve to die and be damned. You can’t save yourself. But what you can’t do, God has done for you. He sent his eternal Son to take on human nature in the person of Jesus. He lived God’s law to perfection for you. He died on the cross to pay for your sins in full. He rose again from the dead to declare you innocent, forgiven. Through faith in Jesus you are saved from hell and have eternal life. He is coming at the end of time to raise the dead, create a new heaven and earth where we will live with him forever.”

In Asia Minor – Turkey – where those to whom Peter wrote lived, **false teachers** appeared. They seemed to either deny that Jesus even came or that he is the Savior. In 2 Peter 2 Peter wrote that they came up with “destructive heresies evening denying the Sovereign Lord that bought them.”

So, Peter counters (v. 16): **“For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”** Peter emphasized: “We saw his coming. We were with him for three years. We lived with him, talked with him, walked with him, and ate with him. We saw his power in his miracles, his preaching, and his rising from the dead. We saw his majesty, his glory,

as he pointed to the Old Testament and declared that he was its fulfillment, as he changed water into wine, and ascended into heaven.”

Then Peter pointed to the Transfiguration: **“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.’<sup>18</sup> We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.”**

Peter emphasized: “We saw Jesus’ glory as he glowed. We saw Moses and Elijah as a testimony that Jesus is the Savior promised in the Old Testament. We heard them talk about his suffering, death and resurrection. We heard the voice of God affirming Jesus as his beloved Son. We know Jesus is real. We know what the Old Testament said about him is true. You can be sure about the Bible.”

So, what about you and the Bible? Does your sinful nature rise up and like those false teachers who denied Jesus, say, “I don’t think I need a Savior? God is good. God loves us all. Therefore, I’m saved no matter what I believe or do.” Or, “I’m good and don’t need saving. I am ... I do ... I give ... I serve ... I deserve God’s love and goodness.” Remember Jesus’ words, **“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through me (Jn 14:6).”**

Or, are you one of those who every time there is a new documentary or article questioning the reality of Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior or the reliability of the Bible, let’s you sinful nature run rampant and question whether the Bible is God’s word or Jesus is really the Savior?

John wrote after one of Jesus’ resurrection appearances: **“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31)**

**Point 1: You can be sure about the Bible: It gives eyewitness testimony about Jesus.**

## **2.**

Peter gives another reason you can be sure about the Bible: **“<sup>19</sup>We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, 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.”**

The prophetic messages to which Peter refers are the prophecies of the Old Testament the with which the prophets especially pointed to Jesus. Conservatively some say there are 300 of them; generously others say there are as many as 700. These are promises that Jesus would be a descendent of Abraham and David. He would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem. He would be the Son of God, perform miracles, die on a cross, and rise again from the dead.

One of the things that points to the reliability of the Bible is the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. All the promises about the coming Savior in the Old Testament, the New Testament shows Jesus fulfilled. Those not fulfilled, are those promises dealing with the end of time and when we are all in eternity.

The message of the Old Testament fulfilled in the New Testament is a light shining in darkness. This is the darkness of unbelief, fear of death, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness, meaninglessness, helplessness and hopelessness. But when the good news of Jesus touches our souls, the Holy Spirit brings light. The light begins to shine like the Morningstar, Venus, shines early in the morning in the eastern sky announcing that morning is here. As God’s love shines more brightly through the gospel, we believe we are loved, we are saved, we are precious, God with us, and we have eternal life.

When you wonder about the Bible, think of the billions of people to whom the Holy Spirit has brought the light and life of God through the gospel of Jesus. This has been going on in spite of all kinds of opposition. It will go on to the end of time.

Also, think about all those Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the New Testament in spite of the passing of time and seemingly impossible circumstances. That can only be because they are God's word.

Jesus told the leaders of the Jews: **"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me..."** (John 5:39)

**Point 2: You can be sure about the Bible: It changes lives and fulfills the Old Testament in the New Testament.**

### 3.

Peter makes a third case why you can be sure about the Bible: **"<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."**

Isaiah didn't say to his wife one day, "Honey, I'm going to write a book," and then camped out in a cabin in the mountains of Israel until completed a 66-chapter book. The Apostle John didn't say, "I'm going to make sure I'm the most prolific New Testament writer" and decided to go to write the Gospel of John, three epistles, and Revelation.

God the Holy Spirit chose men who believed in and loved God. He moved them to want to write. He revealed whether in dreams or visions or direct communication what they were to write. Think of Moses living in the 1400's B.C. and writing about things that happened centuries before him going all the way back to creation. Then the Holy Spirit used the background, experiences, and vocabulary of writers and directed them even as to the words they would use in the Hebrew or Greek. He even let Daniel and Ezekiel include some Aramaic since they lived in Babylon and Persia. John was a simple man and used simple language with deep meaning. Paul was educated and used big words and long sentences. But the words they wrote were God's word.

St. Paul emphasized about the apostles and prophets: **"...These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)."** Paul also wrote to Timothy, **"All Scripture is God-breathed ... (2 Timothy 3:16)."** The Holy Spirit breathed it out – like with speaking – and breathed it into the writers of the Bible.

This brings us to **Point 3: You can be sure about the Bible: It is inspired by God.**

How can we be sure that what the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers to write is what we have today in our Bibles? Consider the words of Jesus in three Gospels: **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Matt. 23:35)."** St. Peter wrote, **"... The word of the Lord endures forever (1 Peter 1:25)."**

#### **YOU CAN BE SURE ABOUT THE BIBLE:**

- 1) It gives eyewitness testimony about Jesus ...**
  - 2) It changes lives and fulfills the Old Testament in the New Testament ...**
  - 3) It is inspired by God ...**
- IT IS GOD'S WORD!**

So, read it! Think about it. Let God light you up and change your live through it! Then share it!