

TXT MSG: What We Believe about the Bible

"INSPIRATION: BREATH OF GOD"

2 PETER 1:16-21

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, 17so 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).

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Paul's choice of words implies that "inspiration" pertains to the text of the Bible rather than its authors or readers 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" (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 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).

A Situation for Discussion

Don trusted Christ when he was a student in elementary school, but now he's not so sure. He finds himself questioning things he used to believe without giving them a second thought. He always thought the Bible was the authoritative word of God. At least that's what he used to tell his Christian friends, but now he's not so sure. None of his college buddies believed that. They might have thought the Bible was one of the world's great books if they ever thought about the Bible, but they didn't. What's more, he always thought Jesus would one day return to earth, but now he's not so sure of that either. None of his middle-aged, professional peers believe it. After all, how long has it been? Christians in the first century believed Jesus would come in their lifetime; he didn't. Two thousand years later, his father believed Jesus would come in his lifetime; he didn't. Generations come and generations go but nothing changes. Why should he believe that Jesus will come in his lifetime or ever for that matter? What bothers him most, however, is this. If he doubts these things, how can he not doubt his own salvation? "How pathetic," he thinks. "Maybe I'm a middle aged man who's been deceived for years by nothing more than old wives' tales."

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

2 Peter 1:16-21

16We 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. 17For 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." 18We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven

when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

19And 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. 20Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21For 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:** Talk about how God might have "carried along" the prophets without dictating every word they spoke or later wrote.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning 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.

The Message of this Passage

You can be sure about the Lord's powerful coming because of the testimony of the apostles who saw him receive honor and glory conveyed from God the Father and the testimony of Scripture conveyed from God not man.

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 suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage.**

- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**

- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
 - o Belonging
 - o Becoming
 - o *going Beyond*

- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)

Do you ever wrestle with doubts? Have you ever doubted something you professed to believe since you trusted Christ? Talk about something you've wrestled with lately or doubted in the past and how you resolved your doubts—if you did.

“Inspiration: Breath of God”
(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 16 **cleverly invented 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). "In the light of 3:3-4, we can assume that the false teachers were dismissing the truth of Christ's return by attributing the apostles' teaching to fables or myths" (Moo, 69, 70). "The eschatological teaching of the apostles is held to be, not prophecy inspired by God, but the fabrication of merely human cleverness, doubtless with some unworthy motives" (Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 50, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 214).
- 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 coming** Cf., "the powerful coming" (NLT). "'The power and coming' can, of course, refer to two distinct things: Christ's inherent power and his coming again in glory. But the two words probably form a hendiadys; that is, they together refer to a single entity: Christ's 'coming in power' (cf. TEV: 'mighty coming'). [This is usually the case with 2 Peter's pairs of words (Bauckham, 215).] 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., Bauckham, 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" (Green, 93). "Here Peter interprets the transfiguration as the expression of Jesus' divine glory and the anticipation of his glorious return at the *parousia*" (Daniel J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Sacra Pagina Series, 15: 256).
- 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). "Bright, shining, or white clothing often symbolizes purity and victory and is associated in Jewish apocalyptic with the coming of Messiah" (Moo, 72).
- v. 17 **Majestic Glory** "God is depicted as 'the Majestic Glory,' a circumlocution for God [or "a periphrasis for God" (Bauckham, 218)] which emphasizes the divine transcendence and honor" (Neyrey, 172).
- v. 19 **word of the prophets** I.e., perhaps the entire Old Testament—Bauckham argues the term is virtually synonymous with "Scripture" (224)—but certainly specific prophecies about Christ's future kingdom.
- 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)? (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 rises** 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" (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]. 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" (Green, 102). Verb repetition 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).
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Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Instruct the family to be very quiet and listen for God to speak. After a few minutes of silence, read I Samuel 3:1-21. Ask, "Did you hear him?" God spoke to young Samuel verbally, but today God most often speaks through the Bible. When you read the Bible, it is just like God having a conversation with you.



Pray it!

Pray God's will for your child by praying scriptures. Insert your child's name in the blanks as you pray.

Dear Father, I pray You will be _____ refuge and shield. I pray he will put his hope in your word. Ps 119:114

Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

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

Memory verse – "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2Ti 3:16, 17

Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

Read 1 Samuel 3:1-21

- * What was Samuel's answer when he heard his name being called?
- * Who did he think was calling him?
- * Why do you think Samuel thought it was Eli calling his name?
- * What was Samuel's response the next time the Lord called his name?

Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Since the Bible is God's book that tells you what to believe and do, it makes sense that you would want to read it! The Scrolls are a great way for the family to read and study the Bible together. Commit to completing The Scrolls each week during the TXT MSG series. Choosing a specific night, time and even place helps everyone keep the commitment.



Challenge

Kids preschool through sixth grade receive a prize for completing a Connect the Family activity.

My family completed at least one Connect the Family activity this week.

Child's name _____ Parent's signature _____

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 *Psalms 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 *Psalms 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 *Psalms 95:1-7*

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

Prayer *Psalms 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

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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.