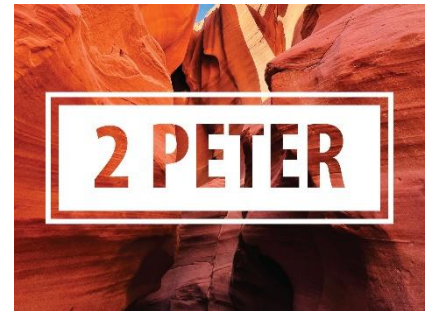


## Part 3 – More Fully Confirmed

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### 2 Peter 1:16-21

In the preceding section, Peter reminds Christians of the consequences of spiritual forgetfulness. Christians will suffer consequences if they forget the promises given by the grace of God (1:3-15). The underlying causes for spiritual forgetfulness are many, but in this letter, Peter sets our gaze on the forgetfulness that doubt and skepticism can produce, particularly when false teachers distort the gospel and undermine clear biblical doctrine.



### 1. The Eyewitnesses to Jesus (vv16-18)

Influential opponents to Christianity argue that the Holy Scriptures cannot be trusted. If they can “prove the Bible wrong” then, in their minds, Christianity falls. Peter addresses the claim that the events of the apostles were myths.

#### *Myths – The Stories about Truths*

- Myth is a narrative, displaying supernatural figures and beings, communicating deep truths about humanity, answering life’s deepest questions like, how did we get here, who are we, or what is the meaning of life? Historically, they serve a special, communal purpose, not for entertainment but for meaning.
- C.S. Lewis wrote that a myth is “at its best, a real though unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on human imagination.”<sup>1</sup>

#### *Christ – The God of History*

- Whenever the bible uses the word myth, it is always in a negative (1 Tim 1:3-4, 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4, Titus 1:13-14). “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4).
- First, Peter appeals to testimony. He was a firsthand eyewitness (1:16b). Peter appeals to the authority of his message on the basis of their apostolic experience. Contrary to Christianity, myths don’t care about actual history.
- Peter is recalling the historical moment known as *the transfiguration of Jesus* (Matt 7; Mk 9; Lk 9). Atop Mount Hermon Jesus transfigured (Gk: *metamorphed*) before Peter, James, and John. The inherent radiance of Christ as God, shined before them. The historical event was a temporary unveiling, or a lifting of the veil of Christ’s human flesh. And this gave the apostles a comprehensible taste of the eternal, boundless, magisterial glory of God in Jesus.
  - The transfiguration is proof of the deity of Christ. The incarnate Jesus is fully God and fully man, two distinct yet inseparable natures, human and divine.
- Peter, James and John, not only were eyewitnesses to the power of Christ’s transfiguration but they also were witnesses to the divine voice of God the Father, appropriately titled the Majestic Glory. These pick up on the language of Psalm 2, “Be warned O rulers of the earth, serve the LORD with fear...Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way...Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (2:11-12). Peter is saying we must rest in the truth that the voice of God is not ‘out there’ needing to be found, but it is clearly given to all right in the written word; the Bible (e.g. 2 Cor 4:6).

### 2. The Inspiration of Scripture (vv19-21)

- What is ‘the prophetic word’ which Peter refers to? We read in Hebrews that “long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets” (1:1). The prophetic word is the written

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<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 176.

word of the Old Testament. In the Gospels, when Jesus referred to the Old Testament, he spoke knowing that those sacred texts were God's divine word (Matt 12:3; 12:5; Mk 10:3; Lk 20:17; Jn 10:34)

- Jesus was convinced that the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) were themselves the inspired word of God which anticipated the final judgment. Just as the Prophets declared the final coming of the Lord, the Apostles upheld the prophecy of God's final coming.
  - The prophetic word (the Old Testament) is more fully confirmed or "made more sure" (NASB) because the apostles were eyewitnesses to the presence and power of Christ Jesus, the Son of God. He is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament writers, who anticipated Christ's coming. As witnesses to his divine power, testified in his transfiguration, the apostolic witness (the New Testament) is as much the inspired word of God as that of the Old Testament.
  - The apostles have confirmation because they were not only with Jesus, but Jesus called them to be his Apostles, taught them, commissioned them, and confirmed their sacred writings by God the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21, cf. 3:2).
  - The origins of the Inspiration of Scripture is grounded in who God is. The writers of biblical books, were supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit, preserved from errors such that the Bible, in all its parts, is the very word of God, entirely true in its matter of facts and its authority in what it commands.<sup>2</sup> Because it is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18; 1 Jn 5:6; Jn 4:24), and because Jesus made known to his apostles that the Helper (Holy Spirit) would come to lead them into all truth (Jn 14:26; 15:26), we can have confidence that these are the true words of God.
  - In the early 20C a neoorthodox movement created a gap between the inspiration of Scripture and the words of Scripture. They argued the Bible contains the word of God, but the words themselves are not the words of God. In the event that God inspires us during preaching, teaching, or studying this word then that event or moment is the word of God. The focal point for their claim became *the experiential*. The problem is that the Bible knows no such distance and does not locate truth in the experiential but in the written words.
    - *Prophecy* (1:21a) is the Greek word for writings (Gk: *graphe*). The Bible is written texts which God the Spirit superintend, divinely guided (inspired), through the uniqueness of each Biblical writer.
    - In all their faculties as men, they wrote these words. They utilized ordinary sources, testimonies, consulted documents, researched. In all these ordinary works, they were primarily superintended by God (e.g. Luke 1:1-4).
    - The word 'carried along,' is Greek for 'to ferry' along. God the Spirit made the prophets and the apostles confident that God carried their writings along.
  - Teachers who reject the inspiration of Scripture are not to be trusted. Matthew Barrett writes, "to reject inspiration is to abandon the authority of Christ and the apostles as our doctrinal authorities, for they themselves taught this doctrine. If Scripture is not inspired, as some argue, then the claims and exhortations of Christ and the apostles no longer hold water."<sup>3</sup> If you deny the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture you deny the authority of God's word. To deny the very words is sinful license to interpret them however you see fit. In so doing, you're rejecting the work of God the Holy Spirit, and you make him out to be a liar. Scripture attests for itself that God inspired it, and there is no other book in the world like it. All other books are mere texts at best.
1. Take God at his word. The doctrine of inspiration of Scripture is the answer to the question, "Says who?" Remember that the ultimate rule for faith and godliness is the Scriptures.
  2. Pay attention to the word of God like you would a light in the darkest of places (1:19a). Peter testifies that the day is coming when God will judge you, the Morning Star (Christ Jesus) will come to you. Will you be found on that day standing on the merits of Christ or on your own merits? Pay attention to the preaching and teaching of the Bible. Read it, study it, discuss it, and learn from these sacred writings, which make one wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15).
    - a. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105).

<sup>2</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *Things Unseen* (Westminster Seminary Press: Glenside, 2020), 25-40.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew M. Barrett, *God's Word Alone – The Authority of Scripture* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2016), 262.