

## ***The Canon of Scripture - 2 Peter 1:16-21***

### **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

#### **Notes from the Sermon**

The Bible is definitively the most read book in human history. Far more copies made and sold than any other book, and by far the book translated into the most languages. And no book has more impact on human culture and history than the one Christians hold as holy. Those facts alone make the Bible special and important. Yet, couple the beliefs of Christians about the Bible as a whole with those of Jewish people throughout the ages, and the stakes go up. The historically held doctrines affirm that the Bible is more than just a holy book, it is the very revelation and therefore Word of God. We believe that the Bible is way more than just human speech about God flowing from experiences and reason. Christians hold this high view of the Scriptures for a myriad of reasons, but those reasons begin with the fact that the words of the Bible affirms this for itself. Over and over again the human authors hear the voice of the Spirit directing them to write phrases affirming the full inspiration of every word of Scripture, and calling it the Word of God, the Word of the Lord, or saying "Thus saith the Lord." Our passage this week has one of those phrases as Peter declares that "no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation," going on to declare that, "Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The word "Scripture" in this text refers to the writings collected and affirmed by the Jews as the Word of God and read as His very message to them about Him.

Our question this week wonders how early Christians knew which books to include and if we can trust our Bible. Our Top 10 Question this week states, *How did we get the Bible and how do we know we can trust the canon we have?* In all honesty, one sermon and post cannot address this fully, so my plan is to focus on the question of the canon, or the list of books contained in our Bible. A quick refresher here, the Bible is not really one book, rather it is a library of books written by over 40 human authors over a span of 1500 years from 3 different continents and originally in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). And the Bible is broken into two sections, the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament tells the story from creation and the fall of mankind and through the story of Israel as God's chosen nation. The Old Testament was given to and through the descendants of Abraham, and the whole Old Testament shows the human need for a Redeemer King (called the Messiah) and points the reader to a hope that one day this person would appear in human history from Israel. The New Testament focuses on the arrival of Jesus, the promised Messiah and then shows us how human history, the church, and our lives are different because He has come. But here is the underlying point. Both the Jews in the Old Testament era and the early Christian church in the New Testament era knew that certain books, certain works to be received not only as human works about God, but as the very Word of God. And that is what raises the stakes. How would they know?

It begins with certain marks both on the works themselves and on the people who composed them. While not perfect, the prophets in the Old Testament had a life record of faithfulness to God, and prophetic words from God predicting future events. According to God himself, one mistaken prophecy and Israel would know that the prophet was not authentically from God. So while we don't know exactly how these books were affirmed by Israel, we know that nobody got a book without the life record of a prophet. By the time of Jesus' life and the writing of the New Testament, the canon of the Old Testament was set. Both Jesus and the New Testament authors quote the Old Testament, receiving it with the authority of God's own voice, and they quote from every book with the exception of Esther. In the era of the early church, they too knew that a set of books were to be received as Scriptures. But the criteria of these books was even narrower. They knew that the words of and record of Jesus' life were the Word of God, because Jesus is God. And Jesus distinctly passed both this information and the commission to spread this to others through the Apostles and early eyewitnesses accompanied with the promised to protect their words and writings from error. While this is an over simplification, the early church received the books that were written by these first generation

believers who knew Jesus and received this commission with a promise, and from the first days of Christianity they knew the weight of this, so they made copies upon copies upon copies of these books to be distributed to churches around the Roman world. Archeologists have discovered thousands of these ancient manuscripts, which show the care that would be demonstrated if people believed they were transmitting the very Word of God.

My encouragement then, is to research this on your own, discover the truths that support the claim the Bible makes about itself. There are a bunch, and we can read these Scriptures knowing that they are true, that every word is inspired by God, and that where it speaks our response is to trust and obey its words. More importantly, we know that these 66 books tell a single story whose hero and point is Jesus. As he said, "You search the Scriptures believing in them you will have eternal life, and it is these very Scriptures that testify of Me (John 8:39)." The greatest way to know the Bible is from God is to search the Scriptures and find Jesus in them.

### **Bible Reading for the Week**

#### **Daily Bible Readings**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Matthew 9	Matthew 10	Matthew 11	Matthew 12	Matthew 13	Matthew 14	Matthew 15

Reading from this past week's sermon: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Luke 8:1-3, 23:55-24:12

### **Family Worship**

Song - *Help us See Christ*

[https://youtu.be/SXFu\\_hx0nbU?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/SXFu_hx0nbU?feature=shared)

#### **Gospel Project**

Unit: King Solomon

Story: Solomon Became King

Big Picture Question: What does God know?

Answer: God knows everything about the past, present, and future.

Scripture: 1 Kings 2-3

#### **New City Catechism**

Question 32: What do justification and sanctification mean?

Answer: Justification means our declared righteousness before God. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness.

Verse: 1 Peter 1:1-2

#### **2 Peter 1:16-21**

- How does Peter claim authority to write Scripture (1 Peter itself) in this text? How does being an apostle who saw the transfiguration help us understand the nature of the His writing?
- What doubts about the Bible do you have? How can we strengthen our faith in the Bible as God's Word?
- If Peter's words (as well as the hundreds of times the Bible speaks of itself as God's word are true, what does this mean about how we read, understand, and apply the Bible?
- Why is it important to understand that the Bible is about Jesus before it is about me? What are some ways we can be careful to find what a text teaches us about Jesus before asking, "What does this mean to me?"

### **Prayer**

\*Pray that we believe the Scriptures, and therefore search them to find Jesus.

\*Pray for St. Louis Mission Metro, the partnership of 110 churches linking arms to do mission, plant churches, and care for brokenness in our region, and the Executive Director Darren Casper.