

WRITTEN BY GOD (2 Peter 1:19-21)

BIBLE SKILL

Memorize a verse and apply it to a real-life situation.

Memorize 2 Peter 1:21 in your preferred Bible translation.

Write the verse in your own words.

Finally, write two or three sentences here or in a journal stating how this verse can help you make a difficult decision or face a challenging situation.

¹⁹So we have the prophetic word strongly confirmed. You will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dismal place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

What did Peter mean when he said the Morning Star would rise "in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19)? Did he spiritualize the second coming of Christ, believing it would happen only in a spiritual sense, or was there another meaning? If he did spiritualize it, it would be counter to the teaching of the remainder of the book, because Peter was looking for a bodily return of Jesus Christ. Peter was displaying the effect of Christ's return. When the Morning Star (Christ) rises, it will shine the full light of Christ's presence into our hearts, and believers will be transformed by it.

²⁰First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation.

There are two ways to understand the meaning of the word *interpretation*. It could mean *interpretation*, but it could also mean *origin*. Translated as *interpretation*, the meaning of the verse is that no person is able to interpret Scripture without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Private interpretations devoid of the Spirit's teaching aren't acceptable. If the word is translated as *origin*, it means people can't make up their own meanings of Scripture. The meanings don't originate with them but with the biblical writers and the Holy Spirit.

Both of these interpretations are similar. The principle Peter expressed is that prophecy originates with the Holy Spirit and is neither man-made nor freely interpreted by man. The false teachers in the first century were distorting Scripture for their own usages. Peter called them to follow the leading of the Spirit.

²¹... because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

This verse provides the clearest example of the way inspiration worked as fallible men wrote infallible Scripture. Peter stated that "no prophecy ever came by the will of man." Biblical writers didn't sit down one day and say, "I'm going to write the Bible." They wrote

with their natural abilities, and yet God overshadowed the process to produce the inerrant Word of God. Even though many of them were writing letters, histories, or biographies, God intended their work for more. Though humans wrote, their words came from God. In a union of humanity and divinity, the Word of God came into being, just as Christ had entered the world in His incarnation—divinity wrapped in humanity.

The finished product appeared only as men “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to record the words God desired for them to write. The verb *moved* is a nautical metaphor taken from sailing a boat. It can be translated *carried along*, like a boat whose sails have been hoisted to the breeze. This same verb occurs in Acts 27:15,17, describing Paul’s ship as it was “driven along” by the wind. The Holy Spirit acted to reveal the words, record the words, and preserve the truth of what should be contained in Scripture. God used imperfect men to write a Book that’s perfect in every way. We can trust the Bible because while men were the writers, God was the Author.

How would you explain the inspiration of Scripture to someone who wonders why they should believe a book written by humans?

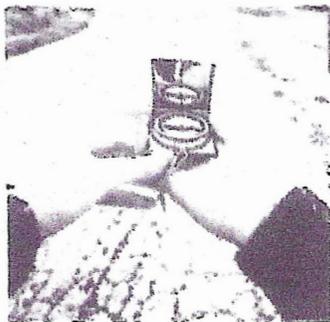
► OBEY THE TEXT

Believers can remind one another of the truth of the gospel and the Scriptures. Believers can affirm the power of the gospel through the demonstrations of that power they've witnessed. The Bible is reliable and can be trusted as the Word of God.

What can your Bible-study group do to help others who are struggling to believe the Bible? List actions that can be taken within the group and beyond the group that demonstrate trust in the Bible.

How have you seen God demonstrate the power of the gospel in your life? How can you share with others what you've experienced?

How do you approach people who are skeptical about the message of the Bible? Record ways you could use passages studied in this session to address a skeptic.



MEMORIZE

... because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
—2 Peter 1:21

JANUARY 25

Respond with Love

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-13 (NIV)

DOES IT SEEM that people are more critical than they used to be? If you are the target of someone's criticism, reflect on Scripture and align with God's Word to use compassion, kindness and gentleness, and to "bear with each other and forgive one another."

Lord, when I am holding onto a harsh word or having trouble forgiving, wrap me in Your loving arms and comfort me. Give me the courage and strength to rise above my hurt feelings.
