

CARRIED ALONG

In 2Peter 1, the apostle Peter highlights three important truths about holy Scripture: 1) the Bible is God's Word, "not cleverly devised myth"; 2) the Bible is God's Word, "more fully confirmed"; and 3) the Bible is God's Word, written down by godly men "carried along by the Holy Spirit." Peter says we have God's prophetic word more fully confirmed. "Prophetic" refers not just to the fore-telling of God's Word, as in prediction, but also the forth-telling of God's Word, as both spoken and written in the Bible. In this way what Old and New Testament prophets spoke has already been written down, so anyone claiming to be a "prophet" today must speak in agreement only with what God has already confirmed in the Bible.

A WORD-PICTURE - Peter presents the integrity and authority of God's Word written, "*the prophetic word more fully confirmed*," he points out the divine nature of Scripture. In 2Peter 1:20 he says, "*knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" Prophecy of Scripture does not specifically refer to prediction, but to the words of God spoken and written. In his excellent book "*Nothing But The Truth*," BH Edwards notes this passage tells us how we got the Bible, even as 2Timothy 3:16 tells us where it's from, as "*all Scripture is breathed out by God.*" The written word of God comes from the breath of God's mouth. The word "*spirit*" refers to breath or wind.

The Bible pictures the Spirit of God as the breath of God, as all creation was breathed out, spoken into existence by God. "*Carried along*" pictures wind in the sails of a ship. The prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah all testify to God putting words in their mouths. This does not mean some kind of trance as though God dictated His words to them. Not breathing into the words of men, but breathing out the words of God through them, by ink to parchment. Edwards notes the Bible was written over some 1,600 years in three languages by some 40 men, using their unique personalities and life experiences, as they were "carried along" by the Holy Spirit. God superintended their expression of thought and choice of words, so that they recorded accurately and without error all that God wanted them to say - to produce the inerrant and infallible Word of God, without error and incapable of error, because it is the very words of God.

AN ILLUSTRATION - Perhaps your family history includes recollections and family stories, which you may be able to confirm or deny. Sometimes family stories are faulty or skewed. One of my great uncles was a World War II Army colonel. I heard stories about him, met him and knew him. All of this was confirmed in newspaper photos and accounts of him as an aide to General MacArthur. Real as the heresay and experience of him was, the authoritative truth was what was written down. That's what Peter says about "*the prophetic word more fully confirmed.*" And just as my uncle would convey the exact wording of orders from headquarters to troops on the field, so did God produce His written Word.

2Peter 1:20-21 says, "*no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" No prophet made up his own mind what to say, without supernatural superintending by the Holy Spirit. No "personal interpretation" was added to what God said through them. That's why the apostles regarded the Bible as not merely the history of God's redemption in Christ, but also God's real authority and relevance. We today should have the same attitude toward God's written-down Word.

AN AFFIRMATION - That's why Peter speaks so sternly against false prophets, and why Christians are not interested in gnostic mysticism and personal revelations, rather than God's written Word. As Martin Luther said, "I have asked God to send me neither dreams nor visions nor angels, but to give me the right understanding of His Word, the holy Scriptures; for as long as I have God's Word, I know that I am walking in His way, and that I shall not fall into any error or delusion." Believers must not adhere to some fallible person's or institution's interpretation, but rather to what God Himself says, to be understood by all.

Probably your church affirms propositions similar to this statement of faith: "We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises." Rejoice in God's providential preservation of His Word, that you hold in your hands. Read it daily. Believe it always. Live it moment by moment. By the Holy Spirit's power. □