



We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, 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. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:19-21

God's love letter to you

The spaceships were coming to take them home. That's what Marshall Applewhite believed, the founder of the religious cult known as *Heaven's Gate*. Applewhite believed that he and his partner, Bonnie Nettles, were extraterrestrial agents with "higher level minds" that had come from outer space to unlock the path to paradise. Applewhite preached that this time on earth was a season of *metamorphosis*, where his followers could achieve a "next level" mode of existence and eventually evolve into aliens. But this bizarre tale takes a tragic turn. Applewhite and 38 of his adherents eventually coordinated a mass suicide. They went to sleep, never to wake up. Why? Because Applewhite claimed that, by dying, their souls would be received by an incoming UFO spaceship and shuttled off to heaven. But that ship never came. A total of 39 people—21 women, and 18 men—died for a cleverly invented science fiction story, a man-made religion, a myth, a *lie*.

I know plenty of people who would argue that Christianity is no different—that the Bible is just a bunch of manipulative fairy tales cooked up by human imagination.

The apostle Peter knew that objection, too. He wrote in defense, "We did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Christianity is not some back-alley cult, crafted in secret. The Bible isn't some mythological compilation of half-baked narratives and proverbial maxims like other religious texts—written in a vacuum, hidden from examination, study, and scrutiny. The events the Bible describes actually happened in real history!

Both the Old and New Testament writers 'marry' their text to history to a degree matched by no other religion. Christianity shamelessly joins the unfolding of salvation to real, historical events that are verified not only by archaeological evidence but also by ancient secular, non-Christian historians. Peter's point is that, the biographies of Jesus' life (the Four Gospels) are well corroborated accounts internally *and* externally.

The Bible actually *is* what it claims to be: the *true* story of the salvation of the world! The very words of God himself! For Christians today who daily wrestle with doubt, we might think, "Easy for *you* to say Peter. You were there! You witnessed these things with your own eyes!" And you'd be right. We weren't eyewitnesses of these events firsthand.



God's love letter to you - continued

But just in case we would see the Scripture as something less valuable than firsthand experience, Peter lovingly reminds us that what we have—God's Word—is completely reliable. Because *God* wrote it. "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

True, human beings recorded the words of Scripture—but they were just the "pen." God is the author who wrote with the "pen." Why would God write the books of the Bible? So that you would know with certainty who your God is and who you are because of who your God is.

At the beating heart of every biblical promise is your Savior: Jesus. God not only points to Jesus as the central figure of Scripture—the promised Messiah who had come to save the world—but God points to the cross as the way he would do it. True, we weren't at Calvary. *But our sins were.* Outside of Jerusalem the glory and majesty of God would be demonstrated not in flashes of lightning, but in darkness; not in radiance, but in the shame of the cross. Why? To ransom and rescue sinners like you and me.

So, you know that Bible you hold in your hand or scroll through on your smartphone? It might seem quiet and quaint when you page through it but make no mistake—your God is there. God gives of himself through the Bible—to strengthen and nourish your faith, to grow you in wisdom, to guide you on right paths, so that you, right now, are able to fellowship with God.

The Bible is not some manmade, cleverly cooked up story; it's God's undying love letter to you—one penned in the fulness of his grace, one that unfolded in real time and space, and one preserved throughout the ages so you could hold it not just in your hands, but, in faith, hold it in your heart.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, continue to work in us through your Word a trust in you and your gracious promises. Work in us a heart that delights in your Word, but a heart that rejoices in the love shown us through our Savior Jesus. Amen.