

**Text: II Peter 1:16-21**

**Title: “Cracking the Da Vinci Code” Pt.2**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Last Sunday an article appeared in the Dallas Morning News under the headline “History in the Remaking.” The article opens like this: “The Da Vinci Code has become more than a record-breaking best-seller. It has spurred an unprecedented level of speculation about the history of Christianity.”

And while “The Da Vinci Code” is found in the fiction section of the book store or library, I’m convinced by reading other things that Brown has said and written that he wrote the book with the intention of spurring this speculation about the Bible, and the history of the Christian faith.

In a critical part of the story of “The Da Vinci Code,” the three main characters, Leigh Teabing, Sophie Neveu, and Robert Langdon are engaged in an intense conversation about the Christian faith. And Leigh Teabing, the retired royal historian says this, “What I mean is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false.”

As we think about “The Da Vinci Code” and any number of other books, movies and documentaries, the real question is this: “Can we trust the Bible that has been the accepted authority for the church for 2000 years? And are the truths found in the Scriptures that we have come to call our “faith,” really the truth that Jesus wanted passed on to us today?”

Great questions!

Open your Bibles to II Peter 1:16-21. The Christian faith that has been passed along to us, was passed along via the Bible. And if the Bible is not reliable, then what has been passed along to us truly is, according to Teabing, false. So it seems that every generation has to reestablish for itself their confidence in the Bible, God’s Word. Read text. (Pause after v.16 and review from last week.)

1. OUR FAITH IS NOT BASED ON CLEVER STORIES INVENTED BY MAN.
2. OUR FAITH IS BASED ON EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIES OF ACTUAL EVENTS.

Now in an unmistakable way there is a supernatural continuity to the Bible that we have in our hands ... from the OT Law and Prophets pointing to the coming of the Christ ... to Jesus Christ stepping onto the scene of history fulfilling hundreds of those prophecies ... to Jesus communicating with His apostles the truth that He wanted to be passed along to future generations ... to eyewitnesses like Peter, himself, writing these things down.

That’s why Peter repeatedly uses the plural “we” in the verses I just read. He wasn’t alone. There were other eyewitnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus who passed along their accounts in a reliable manner.

How God's Word came to us is nothing short of a miracle! God presided over the process of delivering His Truth to us so that we may have confidence in the Scriptures. We find two powerful images of how God's Word came to us:

## **1. LIGHT SHINING (v.19)**

**2 Peter 1:19 - And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, 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.**

**This is also known as illumination.**

Now by this we mean that God's word is light shining to us in the darkness of our sin-infested world and showing us the way. This light doesn't come from within ourselves. It comes from above. We do not have it naturally.

Now we also know that this light comes to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**John 14:26 - But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**

**John 16:13 - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**

Now Jesus first spoke these words to His apostles, who would be responsible for making sure that the word was passed along. In the crowd that day were men who would write down their account of the life and teachings of Jesus. And so Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would make sure that they remembered all that Jesus had said.

And in an amazing way, when you and I read the Bible today, the same Holy Spirit who gave light to those first writers, also teaches us as we read the Bible.

## **2. WIND BLOWING (vv.20-21)**

**2 Peter 1:20 - Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.**

What does this tell us? It tells us that the prophets whose words became the OT scriptures were not speaking their own opinions or ideas. If they were doing that, what would make Scripture anything different than other religious books written about God?

**2 Peter 1:21 - For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

“as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” – The word Peter uses here is a nautical term that describes the wind catching the sail of boat and carrying that boat along. In other words those who wrote the Scriptures were not going under their own power. They were carried along by the Spirit of God.

**This is also known as inspiration.**

The result is that when these inspired prophets spoke, “men spoke from God...”

So God presided over the process of the receiving, the speaking and the writing down of the so that when they actually came to the point of putting pen to paper, the words were fully their own words but also fully the words that God wanted them to write, words that God would also claim as his own.

So the Bible is not a collection of religious thoughts of men down through the years as they tried to describe God. Rather, the Bible comes to us by God’s illuminating, revealing and inspiring.

If this is true that we have strong reason to disagree with Dan Brown for instance when he says this...

From “The Da Vinci Code,” p.234:

“The vast majority of educated Christians know the history of their faith. Jesus was indeed a great and powerful man. Constantine’s underhanded political maneuvers don’t diminish the majesty of Christ’s life. Nobody is saying Christ was a fraud, or denying that He walked the earth and inspired millions to better lives. All we are saying is that Constantine took advantage of Christ’s substantial influence and importance. And in doing so, he shaped the face of Christianity as we know it today.”

“The twist is this,” Teabing said, talking faster now. “Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite history books Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history.” Teabing paused, eyeing Sophie. “Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.”

“Fortunately for historians,” Teabing said, “some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hamadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ’s ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why wouldn’t they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda – to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.”

I’m grateful to have with me again this morning, Dr. Craig Blaising, Provost at SWBTS, renowned theologian and author, and ... my friend. Craig, help us sort this out.

- What was it about the 27 books we now have in our NT that the early church recognized about them that made them authoritative?

- Many of the so-called "lost books of the Bible" were written by a group known as the Gnostics. What do we know about them? Do we see any manifestations of Gnosticism today?
- Didn't the Holy Spirit reveal to many of the NT writers that heresies and false gospels would emerge and be used to confuse believers?
- The Gnostics denied the deity of Christ. And next week, we'll answer those questions about Jesus' life. Was He married to Mary Magdalene? What about Mary Magdalene? What do we know about her?

## CONCLUSION

Now what is our response to this light to be?

**v.19 – “you do well if you pay attention to it...”**

We are to follow the light. Obey the light. Live by the light.

**Psalm 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.**

Are you letting God's Word shine into your life?

Are you paying attention to it? Is guiding the steps of your life?

**ILLUSTRATION** – I want to show you how this works out, practically speaking, in a believer's life. Last week I received an email from a young wife and mom, whose husband was recently laid off from his job. She has given me permission to share part of her email with you today: