

08. The Epistle of 2Peter—1:19-21

(11/14/18)

Peter is a pastor, and as a pastor he had a shepherd's heart for the flock of God.

Not only did he want to warn them against the dangers of false prophets who would enter the church and seek to destroy it with false doctrine—but he also wanted to warn them about the dangers of *'false professions'*.

You see, as a pastor Peter was painfully aware that in any given church, on any given Sunday the congregation will contain people who had *professed* faith in Christ but were not *really* saved.

And therefore, he wants to warn them to make their **'calling and election sure'** lest they stand before Jesus someday and hear Him say, "*Depart from Me, I never knew you.*" (Explain)

Careful self-examination to determine the genuineness of our own faith is not only critical—it's commanded in Scripture! (2Peter 1:10; 1Corinthians 11:31)

And so, with that weighing on his mind, he transitions quickly from talking about the blessings that are ours in Christ (v.2-4) to a warning directed at all *professing* Christians to make sure they are *really* in Christ.

And that is why he started out this epistle by encouraging us (actually commanding us) to stay close to the Lord so that His character will grow in us and bear fruit thru us—the fruit of godliness and Christlikeness (v.5-7).

Not only will this help to guard us from the devil's condemnation (for living a carnal life) but it will assure us that our faith is real, and our salvation is sure.

2 Peter 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, **for if you do these things you will never stumble...**

Peter is saying, if we keep living godly lives of moral virtue as believers—we will never stumble into doubt or fear with regard to the genuineness of our salvation or our inheritance in heaven someday.

2 Peter 1:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ **for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** ¹² **For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.** ¹³ **Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you...**

The term ‘**stir you up**’ is a compound word in the Greek meaning “*to arouse completely,*” or “*to thoroughly awaken*”—as from lethargy, drowsiness, or sleep.

Even true believers in Christ can become sluggish, lethargic and even fall asleep in the light by not remaining vigilant and watchful for the Lord’s return—

1 Thessalonians 5:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

2 Peter 1:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me**
¹⁵ **Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.**

The ‘**reminder**’ Peter had in mind were his two epistles (and maybe Mark’s gospel which Peter provided information for).

I believe that Peter knew God was using him to write down, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, what would become N.T. doctrine.

This written Scripture would remain after Peter was gone so that his readers could be reminded of what he told them when he was still alive—of course we’re thankful that his writings have endured down thru the centuries for all Christians in the Church Age to read and be benefitted by.

But Peter especially seems to have had in mind prophecy—and specifically, prophecy that deals with the return of Jesus to establish His Kingdom.

This seems to be what he most wanted to put them in constant remembrance of.

I say that because he mentions the experience he had with Jesus (along with James and John) on Mt. Hermon when Jesus was transfigured before them and Moses and Elijah appeared.

This ‘Mount of Transfiguration’ experience impacted Peter in a powerful way as he and the others got a little ‘preview’ of Jesus’ Second Coming glory—

Mark 9:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." ² Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. ³ His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

And with that in mind, Peter now relates what he saw on the mountain that day—

2 Peter 1:16-18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ **For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.** ¹⁷ **For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** ¹⁸ **And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.**

“**cunningly devised fables**”—literally means “*sophisticated lies*” or “*well-crafted deceitful fabrications* (the Greek is a word we get the word ‘myths’ from).” (Comment)

So, Peter acknowledges that he was an eye-witness of Jesus' transfiguration (Second Coming glory) up on the mountain that day.

And even though he acknowledges that eye-witness testimony is important (especially in a court of law) he implies that eye-witness testimony isn't always reliable.

He goes on to say that we have something much better than eye-witness testimony—we have prophecy in the Word of God that Jesus is coming back again!

2 Peter 1:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed”—is literally, *“we have more sure the prophetic word”*.

More reliable than the eye witness testimony of man, Peter is telling us—is the prophetic Word of God!

God told us things before they came to pass to validate the Bible as His Word and Jesus as His Son.

For almost four-thousand years the Jewish prophets had been foretelling the coming of the Messiah. (Jude v.14-15; Job 19:25)

Hundreds of details were given about everything from His birth, life, death and resurrection.

The prophet Daniel even predicted the exact day Jesus would present Himself to Israel as their Messiah.

God's Word is sure and can be trusted—**“which you do well to heed...”**

There are over 300 prophecies in the O.T. concerning Jesus' First Coming and 500 concerning His Second Coming—and an overwhelming number of these have already come to pass.

If all the prophecies of His First Coming (and many concerning His Second Coming) have been fulfilled with flawless accuracy—does anyone want to bet that the rest won't come to pass with that same flawless accuracy?

So, to quote Peter once more, when it comes to the prophecies in God's Word—a person would do well to heed what God has said about the Second Coming of Christ and adjust their lives accordingly (get saved) and start living for the Lord!

There are many verses in the Bible, especially in the Psalms and Proverbs, that affirm the wisdom of those who listen to what God has said and live in obedience to what He has said!

Peter goes on to liken God's Word to a *light*—**“which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place...”**

Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

¹⁰⁵ Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Psalm 119:130 (NKJV)

¹³⁰ The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

Proverbs 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ For the commandment *is* a lamp, And the law a light...

The phrase '**dark place**' in the Greek is a reference to *“the murky blackness of the fallen world”*—a darkness of spiritual deception that can only be penetrated by the **light** of God's truth.

The ultimate revelation of God's light (truth) was the incarnation of His Son into human flesh—

John 1:4-5, 9 (NKJV)

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it...⁹ [He, Jesus Christ] ...was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

John 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

In Scripture “*light*” and “*darkness*” are used quite often as metaphors.

“*Light*” is often used in the Scriptures to represent—*spiritual truth*.

“*Darkness*” is often used in the Scriptures to represent—*spiritual error or simply the devil’s lies*.

Furthermore, in the Bible God Himself is called ‘*light*’ (1John 1:5), and the devil is called the *power* or the *personification* of ‘*darkness*.’

The conflict between light and darkness is as old as mankind itself because it also got its start in the Garden of Eden.

God placed the first man and woman into this beautiful garden and gave to them His Word.

But it didn’t take long for the devil to introduce his lie into the world (a world that had only known God’s truth up until that point)—and now the darkness and light became locked in an epic and constant battle for the minds and souls of mankind.

Vance Havner

“We are living in the dark. We were born into it and it was born in us. We were children of darkness at one time but when we received the gospel, we became children of light. At that point

the darkness inside us was replaced with light but we found ourselves still living in the moral and spiritual darkness of this world which is all around us.

We are living at the close of an age that is dominated by the prince and powers of darkness—a world where men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

But the night is far spent, the day of Christ's return is at hand—and yet it's always blackest before the dawn. The darkness has never been more pervasive and persuasive in my lifetime than it is today in our nation. Not only do we live in the dark as Christians—we've gotten used to the dark.

We have all had the experience of walking into a very dark room where all we could see was blackness—but after a few seconds our eyes adjusted, and we got used to the dark. This has happened to many Christians spiritually and morally. We are all experiencing a slow, subtle and sinister brainwashing process that is gradually desensitizing us to the darkness. Little by little sin is being made to look less and less sinful until the light that is in us is darkness, and as Jesus said, *"If the light that is in you is darkness—how great is that darkness."* The result is we no longer hate evil. We don't abhor it—we've gotten used to the dark.

“which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place—until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”

The phrase **“until the day dawns”** is a reference to Jesus' return when He will establish His Kingdom upon the earth and a new day will dawn for mankind—

Malachi 4:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ "For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But to you who fear My name The Sun [dawn of a new day for mankind] of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings...

The Greek word translated **“morning star”** literally means *“light bringer.”*

One author said,

“Morning star was the name for the planet Venus, which precedes the morning sun in the sky, and is used here for Christ, whose coming inaugurates the promised millennial kingdom...In Scripture, there are several places which refer to Christ as a star (Num. 24:17; Rev. 2:28; 22:16; cf. Matt. 2:2).”

“and the morning star rises in your hearts”

When Jesus finally returns and establishes His Kingdom on the earth, not only will the light of God’s truth shine throughout the world—it will arise in believers’ hearts who have finally been transformed completely into His image (at the rapture) and no longer have a fallen nature to corrupt their love and service for the Lord.

1 John 3:2 (NKJV)

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

That same author went on to say—

“At His second coming, Christ will replace the perfect temporal revelation of Scripture with the perfect eternal revelation of His person. He will fulfill the written Word and write it forever on the hearts of the glorified saints.”

2 Peter 1:20-21 (NKJV)

²⁰ **knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were moved* [like a sailboat being moved along by the wind] **by the Holy Spirit.****

The word ‘**prophecy**’ in the O.T. comes from a Hebrew word that literally means “*to bubble forth*”—but the idea was you were “*speaking on behalf of another.*”

In particular a prophet was someone who was a spokesman for God—unless of course the person was a *false prophet* (Peter deals with them in chapter 2).

As the Holy Spirit moved each writer of the Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) the writers didn’t just take ‘dictation’.

The Holy Spirit allowed each writer’s personality and style to come through each book but made sure that the final product was absolutely error free in the original manuscripts.

The classic evangelical position with regard to the Scriptures is described with the phrase, “verbal plenary inspiration.”

What does this phrase mean?

Verbal inspiration means that *every word* of Scripture is God-given.

The idea is that every single word in the Bible is there because God wanted it there—there are no exceptions.

(Of course, once again, this only applies to the original manuscripts not to subsequent copies and later translations).

Plenary means that *all parts* of the Bible are divinely inspired and authoritative.

Now, we make the mistake of thinking that prophecy is only *foretelling* or *predicting the future*—and certainly, that was part of what a prophet did when God sent them to speak on His behalf.

But most of what the prophets did when they spoke for God was simply to declare His words to His people.

In other words, most of their ministry consisted not in ‘foretelling’ but in ‘forth-telling’, i.e.—speaking forth the Word of God.

Here in verses 20 and 21, I think it’s safe to say that Peter had the *predictive* kind of prophecy in view since he tied it to Jesus’ Second Coming in verses 16 and 19.

Peter tells us that no true prophecy ever came from man as an act of human will—but was in fact from the Holy Spirit who used man as a mouth-piece thru whom to declare His Word.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

And so, Peter says eye-witness testimony is not infallible—but the Word of God is!

Paul tells us, in 2Timothy 3:16, it is infallible (incapable of containing error) because it was given by *inspiration* of God.

“Inspiration” is a translation of the Greek word *theopneustos* which literally means “God-breathed.”

The idea is that God breathed “life” into the Scriptures the same way He breathed life into the first man—

Genesis 2:7 (NLT2)

⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a living person.

And even as Adam became a living person when God breathed life into him—so did the Scriptures become “living and powerful” (Heb.4:12) when God breathed His life into them!

If all Scripture has been given by inspiration of God, and God is perfect and incapable of error—then it only stands to reason that all of the Scriptures (all 66 books) are absolutely true, error free and perfect as God Himself is perfect—

Psalms 19:7 (NKJV)

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

And because God’s Word is perfect in its entirety—“*The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*” (Ps. 119:160)

Because God's Word is perfect—we can therefore confidently live by *“every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”* (Matt. 4:4)

Warren Wiersbe—

“Peter discussed Christian experience in the first half of 2 Peter 1, and in the last half he discussed the revelation we have in the Word of God. His purpose is to show the importance of knowing God's Word and relying on it completely. The Christian who knows what he believes and why he believes it will rarely be seduced by the false teachers and their devious doctrines. Peter underscores the dependability and durability of the Word of God by contrasting Scripture with men, experiences, and the world.”

He goes on to say—

“The best defense against false teaching is true living. A church filled with growing Christians, vibrant in their faith, is not likely to fall prey to apostates with their counterfeit Christianity. But this Christian living must be based on the authoritative Word of God. False teachers find it easy to seduce people who do not know their Bible but who are desirous of “experiences” with the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to build on subjective experience alone and ignore objective revelation.”

Peter addresses the danger of false prophets and teachers in the church in chapter 2 which we will begin to look at next time.