

EXPOSITION OF II PETER

Message #6

II Peter 1:16-21

One of the satanic arguments that is used to attack the Bible is the argument that the Bible is just another religious book written by men. That is exactly what Satan wants you to think; because if you think that, then you will not be as apt to carefully study it for the rest of your life, and if you don't carefully study it for the rest of your life, you will not be able to live in this sensual, lustful world in such a way as will give you an abundant entrance into heaven.

What we need to realize is that our growth in knowledge is completely dependent upon our attitude toward, belief in, and confidence of the reliability of the inspired Scriptures.

Most people just don't see this or get this. They do not see the need to carefully understand every single book inspired by God. They go to church week after week and the church they attend could care less if it ever takes them through one book of the Bible.

When the Apostle Peter was about to die, he knew the importance of these believers keeping their mental focus on carefully and accurately understanding God's Word and God's truth. False religious teachers will always exist, but so will the great treasure of the inspired Word of God.

These verses are very apologetic in that they are given to defend God's truth in view of the fact that Peter would soon be gone. Peter wanted believers to stay focused on God's Word because this is the key to an abundant entrance into heaven. What he writes here is this:

A KEY TO BEING GODLY IN A GODLESS WORLD IS TO STAY MENTALLY FOCUSED ON UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES AND REALIZE THAT THEY ARE NOT THE PRODUCT OF DELUSIONAL MEN, BUT THE SCRIPTURES ARE INSPIRED BY GOD.

We are living in a world that is very depraved and very lustful. It is a world filled with false concepts and ideas about life and religion. False teachers and false teaching abounds. All one has to do is read the religious section of the paper to see that not too many churches care whether or not you know the inspired Scriptures.

When the Apostle Peter wrote II Peter, he knew it was important for believers to stay focused on the truth of the written Word of God. He did not want them focused on their feelings or their experiences; he wanted them focused on the written truth of the Word of God, and the reason for this is because the Word of God is totally and completely reliable and it is inspired by God.

One of the things that all the apostles taught was the future return of Jesus Christ. Apparently, this doctrine was under attack and some were questioning the validity of what they were teaching (II Peter 3:3-4). So Peter takes the time to make sure that believers really understand the importance and the reliability of the inspired Scriptures. The Bible is not a book written by men; it came from God. If you expect to have an abundant entrance into heaven you better get this point.

I want you to observe that Peter changes the pronoun in this section from “I” (verses 12-15) to “we” (**verses 16-19**). He is now going to place himself with the other apostles and men of God who saw and wrote inspired truth.

Now as near as I can grammatically determine, Peter is intent upon establishing four key realities in order to establish the reliability of the Word of God:

REALITY #1 – We did not follow cleverly invented myths. **1:16a**

The words “cleverly devised tales” in Greek literally refer to crafty myths (μυθοίς) which have been cleverly devised (σοφίζω) and invented by men (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 413). The noun “myths” is plural meaning all kinds of men make up and invent far-fetched religious stories that they get people to believe. Peter said we have not done this.

Peter starts this section by saying you need to know that we did not just make this stuff up. You need to know that the Bible is not a bunch of fairy tales or myths. It is an historical, factual, and inspired document.

Peter wants to establish the fact that when the apostles continually taught that one day Jesus Christ would come in all of His glory to establish His Kingdom on this earth, they were not following a bunch of cleverly invented fables or myths.

The word “follow” is one that means to go out with someone and follow them. Peter uses an aorist participle which means he is saying there was never any moment in time when we followed cleverly invented myths that men invent.

One of the things that the apostles preached and stressed was the fact that Jesus Christ was going to come in majestic power. They taught that there would come a day when the Lord Jesus Christ would return in majestic glory to establish His Kingdom here on this earth.

When you are given over to sensual and lustful behavior, the last thing in the world you want to think about is the return of Jesus Christ. You do not want to think about the eternal because you are all focused on the sensual and temporal. Many religious people will go to great lengths to not face the reality that they will face Jesus Christ. They will invent religious fairy tales.

Peter says, what we have written about the return of Jesus Christ is no mythological fairy tale; this is an inspired prophetic promise of God.

REALITY #2 – We were eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty. **1:16b-17**

Peter says, the reason we know this future truth to be true is because we actually saw His royal majestic glory. Peter says, look, I am a reliable reporter of these things. Peter says, we were eyewitnesses of it. In other words, Peter is saying we have already seen what Christ will look like when He establishes His Kingdom when Jesus Christ comes back to reign on this earth. The Apostle Peter had already seen a glimpse of the majesty of Jesus Christ that will be seen when He sets up His Kingdom here on earth.

Now the episode to which Peter is referring is the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ shows up in Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:1-13, and Luke 9:28-36. The event is referred to here by Peter as he gives us his own account; and when we examine the gospels, this reference in II Peter is closest to what is revealed in Matthew.

The reason why Peter brings this episode up is because this gives a provable glimpse of the return and rule of Jesus Christ. This proves that one day Jesus Christ will be seen as the King of the world. This information is not just about our morality in an immoral world; this is about the glory of God that will be seen in Jesus Christ who will one day take over and rule this world.

In Matthew's account, Jesus Christ had been teaching the disciples about His upcoming death (Matt. 16:21-23). He told them that some of them would actually see Him in His Kingdom glory (Matt. 16:28). Six days after this discussion, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain (Matt. 17:1). **Right before their very eyes Jesus took these disciples beyond the cross to His coronation when He was transfigured (Matt. 17:2).** Not only was He transfigured, but Moses and Elijah appeared as well indicating that the Word of God will rule the world one day (Matt. 17:3).

Moses of course was the one who wrote the Law and Elijah was an O.T. prophet. Together these two men represent O.T. believers who will one day live in the Kingdom when Christ reigns.

The implication of what Peter is saying is, keep working and developing your spiritual life, because we have not followed "cleverly devised tales" about the future; we have seen it and we have heard it.

Peter said, we saw His transformed glory on that mountain and we ourselves heard this utterance out of heaven which said, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased." Peter stresses that we all heard it when we were there on that holy mountain.

REALITY #3 – We ourselves heard heaven speak. **1:18**

Now Peter's death is imminent and was to specifically stress that they actually heard an out of heaven voice. It was "the voice" - the voice of God. Peter says do you grasp what I am saying; we heard the very voice of God. We are not telling you words of men but Words of God.

The contextual point is that when you follow our teaching, it is not a bunch of myths; it is the very Word of the very God and we actually heard His voice.

REALITY #4 – We have the prophetic, inspired written Word of God. **1:19-21**

The false teachers were apparently attacking the inspiration of the Bible. So Peter brings out four key Biblical facts concerning the Scriptures:

(Fact #1) - We have the prophetic Word made surer . **1:19a**

Now the question arises how can the Word of God be any surer than it already is? It is more certain because it is written down. In other words, Peter says you can read about the glorious return of Jesus Christ in the written Scriptures. Not only can we see prophetic truth in the Old Testament, but we have the entire New Testament that gives us the whole picture of the prophetic program of God.

Some people just don't get this point. Some say, if only I could have lived back then and seen it. If only I could have seen those O.T. things or even been with the apostles to see what they saw. We have something better. We have the inspired, written Word of God. We have the whole counsel of God. It is a more sure word of prophecy because we can carefully examine everything and do not have to take the word of any religious person.

Everywhere you turn, whether O.T. or N.T., there are predictions that one day Jesus Christ will rule the world in righteousness. When we look into the O.T., we see Jesus Christ is predicted to come; when we look at the Gospels, we see Jesus Christ is here; when we look into the Epistles, we see Jesus Christ is coming back.

(Fact #2) - We need to pay attention to the inspired Word. **1:19b**

If we are to survive in this world, we need to "pay attention" to the Scriptures. That word "pay attention" (προσεχω) means we need to turn our minds to heeding something and to devoting our minds to something (Smith, p. 385). Peter wants our minds focused on the written Scriptures.

The inspired Word of God is a lamp to our feet in a dark world, and we need this lamp until we see Jesus Christ. We desperately need the inspired Word of God until the day we get out of this dark world.

Don't kid yourself; this is a very dark world. It is a world that features a depraved moral atmosphere. This world can trip you up, and the key to that not happening is you put your mind on understanding the Word of God.

(Fact #3) - We need to know that Scripture must be properly interpreted . **1:20**

The first thing we need to know is the importance of the Word of God and the importance of proper interpretation of the Word of God.

The first thing we do see here is that that the Bible must be interpreted properly to be understood properly. The word "interpret" (επιλυσις) is one that means that the Bible must be interpreted in the sense solving and explaining and giving a solution to the text (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 171). The Bible is a book that must be explained.

There is much in the Bible that you may understand if you read it, but everything needs careful interpretation and explanation if one is to understand it properly.

Now one of the key points of interpretation that we need to know is that “no interpretation is of private interpretation.” There are three different interpretations of what this means that no prophecy is of private interpretation:

(Interpretation #1) - Some have said it means we should never interpret Scripture by our own whims.

We do not have the right to eisegetically (read into it what we want) approach the Bible, but we must approach it exegetically (draw out of it exactly what is there).

I suppose most of us have run into someone who says concerning the Bible, “Well, I have my own interpretation.” Although they are trying to make you think they are intelligent, in all reality they are revealing they are disobedient fools. There is no such thing as your own interpretation. It is either the true interpretation or it isn’t. There is one true interpretation of a text and that is what we are after.

(Interpretation #2) - Some have said it means we cannot isolate any Scripture apart from other Scriptures.

We have the responsibility to carefully study the Bible and examine other passages that refer to the same subject. We cannot just pull out a verse or two and build some new doctrine.

(Interpretation #3) - Some have said it means that no prophecy stems from the prophets’ own interpretation.

In other words, the prophets did not interpret or unravel what they wrote; they simply wrote inspired Scripture. No prophecy originated from the mind of a prophet. In other words, no prophet got up one day and said, “I’ll guess I’ll write a book of the Bible and lay out some prophecy.” God led them and God revealed the prophetic truth they wrote down.

The fact is, all three interpretations are true!

(Fact #4) - We need to know that Scripture is not inspired by men but by God. **1:21**

The Word of God did not originate from the will of men but by the mind and the will of God. The Holy Spirit moved men to write the Scriptures.

The word “moved” (φερω) means that the Holy Spirit moved these men and carried them along as they wrote the prophetic Scriptures (*Ibid.*, p. 467). Of course, one of the great proofs that the Bible is the inspired Word of God is prophecy that has been already been fulfilled. Peter mentions that here.

The Bible is an inspired book of God. What is interesting is that when both Paul and Peter knew they were going to die, they both emphasized the importance of the inspired Word of God. Paul said, “All Scripture is God-breathed” (II Timothy 3:16) and Peter says the same thing here. The darker this world gets, the more we need the written, inspired Scriptures.