

God's Word

2 Peter 1:16-21

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ 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.
(2 Peter 1:16-21 (ESV))

For the past few weeks, we have been on a side-trip from this passage to take time to consider our role and our responsibilities as "disciples" of the Lord Jesus. We ventured down that path because it is obvious as we read these words of 1st and 2nd Peter that the Apostle Peter is doing exactly that with these to whom He has written these letters, He is "discipling" them. He is obeying the commands that the Lord Jesus gave to him to "feed His sheep", and to "go ye into all the world and make disciples".

We see here in this chapter that Peter began first by assuring these new believers that, yes, they do have basic saving faith, faith as real as his own faith, but faith that needed to move on forward, faith that needed to "know" more about Christ who saved them, and about how to "be" the "true disciples" they now had become; and also, about all that would now be required of them as they lived out their Christian faith within the struggles of daily life, both among their neighbors and before the watching secular world, "making their calling and election sure" within a broken and corrupt world.

And as we read and study these words, we know that God has also given them to you and me, timeless truths that assure us that we too can be fully confident that once we have received Christ as our Savior and Lord, His "Divine power" will also give our hearts everything we need for "life and godliness".

This is real folks! Empowered by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, you and I are now able to actually participate in the "divine nature" of the Lord Jesus and escape all the corruption that controls the present darkness that swirls all around us in this crooked and perverse world.

But as the Apostle Peter reminds us here, all is not just handed to us. We do have responsibilities. We need to be diligent to begin our discipleship training right away and to begin adding to our basic faith the Godly attributes and qualities of virtue and knowledge and self-control and patience and godliness and brotherly kindness and love. And we are to do that in an ever-increasing measure. And as we do that, we will not only be wonderfully blessed within our own souls, we will also bless everyone around us. But best of all, we will bless the Lord Jesus. To Him be all praise, honor and glory. Amen!

In the message today, may we focus our attention on the words, beginning here in verse 16! Read along with me again!

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Living most of our lives in this "Southern Bible Belt", reading the bible and accepting that it is "God's Word" has been part of our heritage and common conversation. But for much of the rest of the world, that is not the case. Yes, most people in the "Western World" give at least a "nod" to the possibility, but relatively few will go to the level of affirming a real belief in every word given within these pages.

And yes, we do also know that there are many even within our professing evangelical churches that struggle to have real belief that every word is absolutely inerrant and infallible.

But be all that as it may, here in these words we are presented with a particular biblical method of "proof" that is accepted within the "law of God", that of proving truth by the "mouth of two or more witnesses", affirmation both about "who Jesus is" and of the "source and the authority" of these scriptures.

May I pause a moment and ask the simple question, “Why should that be necessary?” And the simple answer is, “If we are going to base all our years of this natural life and then all our years of eternity to come on “someone” or “something”, it had better be real and credible and worthwhile!” And here in these words, Jesus Christ is that “someone” and these “words of God” are that “something”.

Here, Peter gives a two-fold witness and affirmation of who Jesus is. He first gives an “eye-witness” account. The “we” that he speaks of here is himself, and also James and John. He tells us,

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Is an eye-witness testimony credible and believable? Yes, it is. Eye-witness testimony will stand up in our courts of law. And daily, our friends and family give eye-witness accounts of things that have taken place with them, and we readily believe them. Also, eye-witness accounts are the basis for untold numbers of history books that have been written, and we believe the words of those books. So why should we not also believe Peter’s eye-witness account as he tells us,

¹⁶ . . . we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:16-18 (ESV))

And then we read here in beginning in verse 19 a second witness being spoken about, the “Prophetic Word”, the scriptures, especially all of the Books of the Old Testament. And in them are many, many witness, telling forth all the many things that Jesus did and will do. Verse 19,

¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19 (ESV))

All throughout the Old Testament, we have dozens of specific prophecies about the coming “Messiah”, the Lord Jesus. He is spoken about in Genesis as being the “Seed of the woman” and of coming through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also in the Psalms over and over again, especially in Psalm 22 where His sufferings on

the cross are given so vividly, and then in several places in the Book of Isaiah where details about His life and ministry are given, the most notable scriptures being those about His birth in Isaiah 9, and His death described in detail in Isaiah 53. And those are only a few. Jesus was spoken about hundreds of times throughout the Old Testament scriptures.

And then, as Peter is indicating here, the gospels in the New Testament describe the ways that those Old Testament prophecies actually took place, proving the validity of all those prophecies.

And note the wording that God has given to us here in verse 19, telling that we
¹⁹ . . . will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. (2 Peter 1:19 (ESV))

You and I live each day, caught in between the days these scriptures were written and the days of Jesus and all the future days when time will then be called to a close. And it is often a precarious existence, subject daily to doubts and fears and questions. And these words are intended to give us comfort from all those anxieties. And we have the comforting indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who makes these words of Jesus shine as a true light within our hearts. Jesus is the “Morning Star”, the “True Light” the is rising within our hearts. And as these words tell us, we will do well to spend more and more time pouring these scriptures into our hearts and souls, and we will do well to pay attention to them as a light shining in this dark world,

¹⁹ . . . until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.
(2 Peter 1:19 (ESV))

Folks, please listen! These scriptures of the Old and New Testament are all that we have to guide and direct our minds and hearts and souls each day. Yes, the Holy Spirit lives within us, but for the most part, He uses the words that are in these scriptures to speak to us and to guide and to comfort us. And that is why we should be “writing them upon the pages of our heart and mind” every day, studying and meditating upon them continually.

And to give us confidence in them, their truth and their inerrant, infallible nature, God gives us these words here in verses 20 and 21. Listen!

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹ 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.
(2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV))

May I stop and ask you personally? Do you believe this? Do you believe that every word, every word, and let me say it again, “every word” in this bible is the absolute truth of God, with no man’s interpretation added in, not the writers of these scriptures, such as Isaiah, or David, or Peter, or John, or Paul, no one, no man’s ideas, or opinions, or interpretations are added in, only God’s? Do you believe that? May I read it again for us?

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹ 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.
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You and I must believe these words, absolutely and completely. Why would that be necessary. It is as simple as it seems. If we are able to disbelieve even one word, then all of the other words within these pages are also suspect. And then we can’t believe any of them.

And then in 2 Timothy 3, we read,

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV))

These are very special words that you and I will do well to study more carefully and understand and believe. The words “breathed out by God” are a very special truth. Other versions of scripture translate these words as “inspired of God”. They literally mean that God “breathed out” these words, spoke them into the minds of the writers and the writers wrote them down in these scriptures exactly as God spoke them.

May I emphasize something strongly. It was the words themselves that were “inspired”, not the writers. The writers were not “inspired”, only the words. The writers were as 2 Peter 1 tells us, “led along by the Holy Spirit” to write down what God had “breathed” into their minds.

This is a vitally important understanding that you and I must get and keep very clearly within our minds. Only the words were breathed out by God. If we allow ourselves the misunderstanding that the writers themselves were somehow inspired and then wrote what they thought God wanted them to write, then corruption of God’s word can be rampant.

Again it is imperative that you and I read and study and believe these words, exactly as they are written! We’ll close with these same words. Listen!

2 Peter 1,

²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ 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.

(2 Peter 1:16-21 (ESV))

2 Timothy 3,

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV))