

THE SURE WORD OF GOD

2 Peter 1:19-21

INTRODUCTION

- Many people today are putting their trust in people or things that will eventually prove untrustworthy
- When a person rejects God and rejects trust in him, then his trust is placed in man
- Those who wield power and authority in this world encourage their subjects to put their trust in them
- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern declared in March 2020: *“We will continue to be your single source of truth... Unless you hear it from us it is not the truth.”*
- Many people will end up in hell because they put their trust in the wrong thing
- They “trust in vanity” (Isaiah 59:4)
- The Bible pronounces a curse upon those who trust in man (Jeremiah 17:5)
- But there is blessing upon those who trust in the LORD (Jeremiah 17:7)
- We trust in God by believing and relying upon the truth that he has revealed to us in the Scriptures
- The apostle Peter knew he was about to die (v.14), and so he wrote this letter in order that the saints would have a continual remembrance of these vital truths after his departure
- 2 Peter is a letter of encouragement and it is a letter of warning – warning the saints of the “false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies” (2:1)

- But before exposing the diabolical character and works of the apostates in chapter 2, Peter establishes what true religion looks like and what true religion is based upon
 - ✓ It is salvation by grace, being justified by faith in Christ and his righteousness (1:1-2)
 - ✓ It is being called to glory and virtue, relying on God's grace to supply we need for our sanctification (1:3)
 - ✓ It is trusting in God's promises, partaking of the divine nature, escaping the world's corruption (1:4)
 - ✓ It is adding to our faith the seven virtues (1:5-7)
 - ✓ It is being fruitful in the knowledge of Christ (1:8)
 - ✓ It is making our calling and election sure (1:10)
 - ✓ It is remembering the truth and being established in the truth (1:12)
- At the end of this first chapter, he shows us how we can be certain that the doctrine he preached really is the truth:
 - ✓ Because it is attested by eye witness apostolic testimony (vv.16-18)
 - ✓ Because it is attested by the Scriptures (vv.19-21)

I. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORDS OF CERTAINTY (19)

A. We possess the words of God

1. "We have" (*echomen*) is to "hold" and "possess", and its present tense indicates the continual, abiding possession of the church

2. In contrast to the audible words of vv.17-18 which persist for a moment, then are gone, the written words of God abide forever
3. God's intention is that all people, but particularly those who belong to him, have access to the word of God
4. Contrast this with Romanism that for over 1000 years prohibited the reading or distribution of Bibles and killed countless Christians who disobeyed

B. The word of God is “a more sure word”

1. One view is that this means that Peter's witness of the transfiguration confirmed the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament
2. The preferable interpretation is that the Scriptures are “more sure” than what the apostles saw and heard at the transfiguration
3. “More sure” (*bebaios*) is “steadfast, firm, stable, fixed, certain” and was used in the business world for a legal guarantee
4. So reliable and certain is the written word of God that it surpasses even hearing the audible voice of God
5. In times past God did speak to men through voices and visions and dreams
6. In the future, in the “day of the LORD” and the Second Coming of Christ, God will again give revelation through dreams and visions (Joel 2:28)
7. But in this present dispensation, since the canon of Scripture has been completed – “that which is perfect is come” (1 Corinthians 13:10) – God speaks to man now through his “more sure word”
8. Visions and voices are unreliable, they can be counterfeited by the devil to deceive (Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14; 1 John 4:1)

9. God's word is sufficient – we should not seek for signs or visions (Luke 16:31)
10. The word of God is more sure in every way
 - a. It is more sure in its perfection (Psalm 19:7; Proverbs 30:5)
 - b. It is more sure in its power (1 Peter 1:23)
 - c. It is more sure in its promises (2 Peter 1:4)
 - d. it is more sure in its precepts

II. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORDS OF DIVINITY (20-21)

A. "Knowing this first"

1. What Peter is about to say is of first priority importance
2. If a person can truly grasp the foundational truth that the Bible is not from the mind of man, but by the breath of God, then he is equipped with all he needs to establish his life in truth and godliness
 - a. That is why when evangelising the lost, we seek to establish with them from the beginning that the Bible is God's word
 - b. That is why our Statement of Faith begins with what we believe about the Scriptures

B. Scripture is not of private interpretation

1. "Prophecy" includes *foretelling* and *forth-telling*
2. "Scripture" for Peter's readers encompasses the whole of the Old Testament, and for us the entire Bible
3. Some understand the "private interpretation" to be referring to the readers' interpretation of the Scripture

- a. That is to say, “Scripture is not to be your own personal interpretation”
 - b. Romanism uses this verse to defend their priesthood to which the people must go to in order to understand the Bible
 - c. However, it is correct that we are not at liberty to concoct our own interpretations of the Bible based on our own opinions, but rather must carefully study and rightly divide the word using the proper means of hermeneutics, such as grammar, context, comparing with Scripture, etc.
 - d. For any given Scripture passage, there is *one interpretation* but *many applications*
4. The “private interpretation” here is rather referring to the prophets who wrote the Scriptures under inspiration, not the readers, as v.21 shows
 5. The word for “is” (*ginetai*) is not the usual word (*estin*) and means “comes”, “springs”, “created”
 6. “Interpretation” (*epilusis*) means “unloose”, “release”, “liberate”, and refers to a solution or disclosure of something
 7. Hence, the Scriptures do not originate from any man’s own personal thoughts or reasonings
- C. The method of inspiration
1. Prophecy in old time – referring to the Old Testament Scriptures
 2. Not by the will of man – not by man’s prompting or suggesting
 3. They were moved by the Holy Ghost
 4. The word for “moved” (*phero*) is “borne” or “carried” as a ship is borne by the wind

5. The passive voice of this verb concurs with the fact that it was not their own will or power controlling them but the Holy Ghost
6. This doctrine is often described as the “plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures”
 - a. “Plenary” means “complete” – all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - b. “Verbal” means “words” – the words themselves are inspired, not just the ideas (Deuteronomy 18:18; Psalm 19:160; Zechariah 7:12; Matthew 4:4)
7. In a miraculous mystery, these holy men wrote using their own styles, expressing their own thoughts, knowing what they meant, yet at the same time God the Holy Ghost carried them, directing and controlling their writing so that every word was given by him
 - a. The prophets who penned God’s words were by no means sinless (e.g. Moses, David), yet by God’s grace they were justified by faith, and made “holy men of God”
 - b. It is a demonstration of the condescension of God to deliver his words through men

III. THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE WORDS OF LUMINOSITY (19)

- A. Ye do well that ye take heed
 1. The way of wellness, blessedness and prosperity is only by taking heed to God’s word (Joshua 1:7-8; Psalm 1:1-3)
 2. “Take heed” (*prosecho*) is literally to “hold near”, and hence to “hold and fix your mind upon” something
 3. This is not a casual, cursory or occasional relationship to the word of God, but making it one’s chief rule and guide in life, to be loved read, studied, memorised, meditated, and obeyed

4. *“A nation and an individual would be truly blessed if they were governed by no other laws than those of God's blessed Book. It is so complete that nothing can be added to it or taken from it; it contains everything needful to be known or done. It contains the choicest matter, gives the best instruction, and affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that ever was revealed. It brings the best of tidings and affords the best of comfort to the inquiring and disconsolate. It reveals life and immortality and shows the way to everlasting glory. This wonderful Book is its own interpreter, and its Author is without partiality.”* (Anonymous)

B. It is a light shining in the darkness

1. “Dark” (*auchmeros*) is only used here in the NT and means “squalid, filthy, dirty”, and hence “dark, murky”
2. Mankind, by our sin, have corrupted God’s glorious, beautiful and “very good” creation into a dark and filthy place – “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19)
3. Light and darkness are used representatively in the Bible for good and evil, and there is a continual conflict between the two (John 1:5; 3:19-21)
4. There are many false lights in the world claiming to be true (Isaiah 5:20)
5. Satan, also known as Lucifer, the light-bringer, “is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14)
6. While there is some true light from God in the creation (Romans 1:20) and the conscience (Romans 2:14-15), the light required to bring salvation to dead and darkened souls is found only in the word of God (Romans 10:17)
7. The word of God is frequently described as a “light” (Psalm 119:105,130; Proverbs 6:23)
8. The chief need in this dark world, under the blindness and bondage of Satan, is the word of God (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

9. This is essentially the commission that Christ left to his church (Mark 16:15)
- C. Until the day dawn and the day star arise
1. This is a reference to the *Parousia*, the Second Coming of Christ, which was prefigured in the transfiguration (vv.16-18), and is the blessed hope of every believer (Titus 2:13)
 2. The “day star” (*phosphorus*) refers to the planet, Venus, which, because of it being closer to the sun than earth, is seen early in the evening, then “sets” during the night and “rises” to view before the dawn breaks
 3. As the morning star heralds the imminent arrival of a new day, so the Rapture, when Christ comes for his saints, will precede the Glorious Return of Christ and the beginning of his kingdom upon the earth
 4. We are to keep “in our hearts” the word of God (Psalm 119:11) as we wait for the Lord’s coming

CONCLUSION

1. Has the “day star”, Jesus Christ, arisen in your heart – have you received him by faith as your Lord and Saviour, and does he indwell you?
2. The Bible is like no other book, its words are given by God through men
3. Do you receive it as the word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13), with all readiness of mind (Acts 17:11), carefully taking heed to it as your light in this dark world?
4. And are you doing your duty to your fellow-man in spiritual darkness, by lovingly shining the light of the gospel to them, even as others did for you? (Matthew 10:8)