

"The Prophetic Word" - 2 Peter 1:12-21

Second Peter was written to warn us about attacks that come from within the Church. Not everyone who professes to be a Christian actually is a Christian. Not everyone who professes to be a Christian teacher or preacher is expounding the truth of the Bible.

For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. (Mark 13:22-23)

Jesus told us to "take heed", to be careful. And John writes:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

Paul tells us:

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:13)

You cannot say you haven't been warned! We most certainly need to pay attention to these Biblical warnings.

As Peter composed this letter, he was taking on these false prophets, but before he took them on directly, he first exhorts us to work on our own system of faith. We are to exert effort to add to our faith. Peter lists virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and agape love, and the reason we need to work on our faith, the reason we need to add to our faith is so we can make our call and election sure. We can know for sure that we are saved. We can know for sure we are on the right track, but it will take effort. We must not be passive in this.

Let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling. You need to be serious about your prayer life. You need to be serious about Bible study. You need to be serious about assembling together with your brothers and sisters in Christ because deceivers are here and their message is a siren song that can be incredibly compelling.

Don't be deceived! God has given you everything you need to recognize falsehood. God has given you everything you need to combat heresy. God the Holy Spirit has arranged for it to be written down for you and this Prophetic Word is confirmed to be God's gospel truth.

So we continue with Peter's letter, starting this morning with verse 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. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. (2 Peter 1:12-15)

As Peter wrote this, he knew he would soon be martyred for the cause of Christ. When he says "shortly I must put off my tent", he is talking about his death. Now, I'm quite sure that Peter was not afraid to die. Peter knew, as did Paul, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, which is far better. I don't think he was looking forward to being crucified. That sort of death is excruciating. But Peter had his mind focused on eternity and that's where we should be looking too.

Even though he was not afraid to die, Peter was concerned about those he was leaving behind. That's not a bad thing. I've had the privilege of being at the bedside of saints who

knew they were soon going home. Without exception, they expressed joy at being able to be with Jesus, but at the same time, there was concern about their family members and friends they were leaving behind.

So it was with Peter. As long as he was still drawing breath, he wanted to keep reminding his Christian brothers and sisters about the truth of the Bible. We need reminders, because we are so easily distracted and in verse 15, Peter says he's going to make sure that there would be a reminder for us even after he died. What was he talking about? I'm convinced he was talking about the Gospel of Mark. John Mark was a close associate of Peter's and most scholars believe that Mark recorded Peter's account of Jesus' life.

The Apostles had a critically important ministry. Their job was to bear witness to the stunning events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Their job was to make sure the gospel was preserved and it is preserved in our New Testament. We have the testimony of the Apostles! We can hold it in our hands! We can read it in our own language!

Peter knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that what he and the other Apostles spoke of was true.

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. (2 Peter 1:16)

Peter is saying "Hey guys, we didn't make this stuff up. You couldn't make this stuff up! This is no work of fiction; this is no fable. We saw it with our own eyes!"

It's exactly like what John said:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— (1 John 1:1)

They were eye witnesses. They saw the Lord with their own eyes. They heard Him speak and they actually had the privilege of touching Him, embracing Him, traveling with Him, eating with Him. These guys knew what they were talking about!

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." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (2 Peter 1:17-18)

Do you know what Peter is talking about here? Hold your place in 2 Peter and turn back to Matthew, Chapter 17. Now, Jesus had told the disciples, as recorded at the end of Chapter 16:

Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matthew 16:28)

That is the context, and six days later, that prediction would come true.

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear

Him!" And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. (Matthew 17:1-6)

God gave Peter, along with James and John, a preview of the glorified Jesus Christ. When we get to heaven, that is the Jesus we will see, His face, shining as bright as the sun, His clothes as bright as the light. We will see Him in His glory, so amazing that human language fails in its ability to describe Him.

Not only did Peter witness the Lord's glory, but he heard the terrifying, awesome voice of God the Father:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

There is no excuse for unbelief, you know. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. You need to listen to Him. You must listen to Him.

How could Peter not be convinced? God gave him a demonstration that nobody could misinterpret. Jesus Christ is God the Son. He came to Earth to live a perfect, sinless life. He sacrificed that life on the cross to save sinners, sinners just like me. He was raised from the dead on the third day. He ascended to glory. He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for all who believe.

Can you believe? Will you believe?

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; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

This Bible is God's Holy Word. The whole thing points to Jesus. The Old Testament looks forward to the cross. The New Testament looks back on the cross. The experience and testimony of the Apostles confirm that it is God's truth and you do well to heed it because this is not a work of fiction. Although it was written down by human authors, it didn't come from human imagination. No, holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Oh, friends, you have to heed it! You have to believe it, and you have to allow its message to inform your life. Your eternity is at stake.

This prophetic word reveals a God who is pristinely holy. Cherubim and Seraphim, the most powerful, holy angels are completely humbled in His presence.

And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. (Isaiah 6:3-4)

The prophet Habakkuk writes;

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. (Habakkuk 1:13)

That's bad news, because as a human being, you are inherently wicked. You are totally depraved. *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23) God is so

holy, so righteous, so perfectly just that the tiniest infraction of his command is punishable by death and this is a death that never ends, an eternity of suffering in the throes of death. Dying you will die. Your worm will not perish; your fire will not be quenched. Hell is horrible! Hell is forever! Hell is the wage you have earned!

But God is gracious!

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

That's the good news. Despite your cosmic treason, God still loves you. He loves you so much that He is willing to pay your death penalty Himself.

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

All He asks in return is that you just believe it. Take it by faith ... and He will even provide the faith.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

You're guilty of sin; there is no question about it, but God offers the greatest plea agreement ever! Here's what you have to do: Admit that you are guilty, that is, confess to God that you are a sinner deserving of death. Then accept the free gift of salvation made possible through Jesus Christ.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Claim Jesus as your Lord. Believe God raised Him from the dead.

... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

That, my friends, is the prophetic word we have preserved in our Bibles. It is what this Book is all about. It has been confirmed by the testimony of the Apostles and they sealed their testimony by their blood. All of them, with the possible exception of John, were killed for their testimony. They could have saved their lives by simply recanting, but they could not do so because they knew it was God's holy truth.

What about you? Do you know this is God's holy truth? Do you understand that this is a priceless gift given by the breath of God Himself? If you do, then you need to become absolutely saturated by its Message. Seek the Lord's guidance through fervent prayer. Immerse yourself in Bible study. (It's not too late to sign up for Contenders!) And be sure to assemble with the saints; don't cut yourself off from the family of God because we have the prophetic word confirmed!