

STUDY ON THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER

THE LIVING WORD OF SCRIPTURE!

Read 2 Peter 1:10-21

Be Eager to Confirm God's Call on Your Life

To conclude our study last week, we see Peter in verses 10 and 11 telling his readers that “if you do these things...” which are the 7 qualities listed:

“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (vv10-11)

This shows how we can be sure that God called us, and that we are His elect. It is by doing these things spoken of in 2 Peter 1:5-7 (faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love). As we see these things in our life, we know that our lives are becoming more like the nature of Jesus. It shows that we are being conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

It is possible for an unsaved person to do many moral and religious duties. But the “these things” Peter wrote of are matters of the heart and should be evident in anyone born again. Simply said, if we are called, if we are elect, then we are born again — and if we are born again, it shows in the way that we live.

In pursuing these things, we keep from stumbling. Continual growth and progress in the Christian life is the sure way to keep from stumbling.

Introduction to “The Living Word of Scripture”.

What we know and believe has a decisive effect on our lives. Peter is not just writing a nice letter to some churches in this epistle. He is battling to keep their minds focused on truth, rather than being distracted, and ultimately ruined, by false teachers who are attempting to substitute their errors for truth. In this passage, Peter makes three main points with profound implications:

1. Peter reminds them of what he and the other apostles have already taught them. Repetition is important for stability.
2. Peter's authority, ultimately, comes from God himself speaking and authenticating Jesus' life and ministry.
3. The authority of Scripture is based on God himself speaking through the prophets.

Recalling Truth to Mind

“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.” (v12)

Peter just wrote about the promise of entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God (2 Peter 1:11). Because coming to that kingdom is so important, it is helpful and necessary for Peter to remind you always of the basics of the Christian life hence he starts this verse with “for this reason”.

Even though his readers did know the truth, in light of what was at stake — their eternal destiny — it was worth it to go over these ideas again and again hence Peter says he needs to remind them always of these things (truths)!

A sports team going for the championship will practice the same fundamentals over and over again. They do this, even though they know the techniques, but because they want victory. For this reason, Christians should never get tired hearing the basics of the Christian life. We should rejoice every time Jesus Christ and His gospel and plan for our lives is preached.

The word “Established” is the same word translated strengthen in Luke 22:32, when Jesus told Peter “when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Here, Peter fulfilled that command of Jesus. He would establish and strengthen us by reminding us of the basics of the Christian life.

The Urgency in Peter’s heart.

“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.” (vv13-14)

Because of what is at stake, Peter knew it was right to remind people constantly, especially because he knew that the days of his earthly life were soon coming to an end. Peter considered his body no more than a tent. A tent is a temporary place to live. Tents should be taken care of, but you wouldn’t invest large resources into fixing up a tent. You save your real resources for a more permanent place to live. Our more permanent place to live is heaven, and we should invest more in heaven than in our tent — our physical body.

How did Peter know that shortly “I must put off my tent”? Perhaps it was because Peter was simply getting old. Perhaps it was because the flames of persecution were getting hotter around him. Church history tells us that Peter did die a martyr, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed him (John 21:18-19). This shows that Peter believed that the prophetic words of Jesus were to be fulfilled literally. Jesus showed Peter that he would die a martyr, and he believed it — even if he might have wished it were only symbolic.

Peter Prepares for the Future.

“Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” (v15)

Peter put this reminder in a letter, so the people of God would have a constant reminder even after his departure. He seemed aware of the significance of the passing of the apostles and the need to preserve the authoritative teaching of the apostles and prophets. This, the written teaching of the apostles and their associates, is the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20) preserved by God for all generations.

The Sureness of Apostolic Testimony

“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. 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.” (vv16-18)

Peter solemnly declared that the testimony of the apostles — *testimony they endured torture and gave their lives for* — was not based on clever fables or even half-truths, but on eyewitness testimony; that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

Fables translates the ancient Greek word mythos. Some people think the Gospel and the Biblical record are just ancient myths. They may admire their power as myths, but Peter rightly insisted that his message was no myth. It was history, seen by eyewitnesses. We can reliably reconstruct historical events from the

testimony of eyewitnesses, who must be checked for truthfulness. The apostles and writers of the New Testament have been checked for centuries and have been found truthful.

When did Peter eyewitness the majesty of Jesus? There were many occasions, but one probably stuck out in his mind: the transfiguration of Jesus, recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9, and Luke 9:28-36. We know this because Peter quoted here what God the Father said to Jesus at the Transfiguration: *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* At the transfiguration, Jesus was transformed in glory before the apostles, not merely changed in outward appearance. The effect was extremely striking; Jesus became so bright in appearance that it was hard to look at Jesus. He shined like the sun (Matthew 17:2).

One may say that this shining glory was not a new miracle, but a pause in an ongoing miracle. The real miracle was that Jesus, most of the time, could keep from displaying His glory. At the transfiguration, the Father spoke from heaven to declare His approval of and joy in God the Son. As Peter wrote this, we sense the words were still ringing in his ears because at the transfiguration he made the mistake of making Jesus equal with Moses and Elijah, who appeared along with Him.

Those words from heaven were important because Jesus had just told His disciples that He would have to be crucified and His followers would also have to take up their cross to follow Him (Mark 8:31-38). His disciples needed this word of assurance to keep their confidence in Jesus and needed to hear that Jesus was still well pleasing to the Father, even though He said He would be crucified.

The words from heaven also clearly put Jesus above the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was not merely another or even a better lawgiver or prophet. Jesus was and is the beloved Son. Essentially, the voice from heaven was a rebuke to Peter (Mark 9:7). Yet what was once a rebuke became a sweet memory.

Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus because they represented those caught up to God (Jude 9 and 2 Kings 2:11). They represented the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Moses and Elijah also are connected with prophecy, having a strong connection to the witnesses of Revelation 11:3-13.

It was awesome for Peter and the disciples to see the transfigured, glorified Jesus. It was awesome for them to hear this voice ... from heaven. Yet the experience itself did not transform their lives. Only being born again by the Spirit of God did that, giving them boldness beyond measure. The transfiguration was awesome, but it was a passing experience until they were born again.

The Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecy.

“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” (v19)

Peter’s experience at the transfiguration was amazing. But the testimony of God’s word about Jesus was even more sure than Peter’s personal experience. The fulfilment of the prophetic word confirmed is a certain, reliable testimony of the truth of the Scriptures. When we consider the prophetic testimony to Jesus, we do well to heed it. There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly. The combination of this evidence together, from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming.

No wonder Peter could say that the prophetic word is confirmed, and that it is as a light that shines in a dark place, something we should cling to until the day dawns and Jesus returns.

Principles for Prophetic Assurance

“... 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.” (vv20-21)

Even in Peter's Day, enemies of Jesus twisted Old Testament prophecies, giving them personal and bizarre meanings attempting to exclude Jesus from their fulfillment. But Peter says that prophecy is not of any private interpretation; its meaning is evident and can be confirmed by others. Though Peter here spoke of prophecy of Scripture, the same principle is true for the gift of prophecy today. There must be sober confirmation of any prophetic word, and that not through another prophetic word but through the Scriptures. In the gift of prophecy, God never speaks to only one person, and always provides confirmation.

It is wrong and invalid to twist prophecy to our own personal meaning, because prophecy does not come from man but from God. It does come through holy men of God- but only as they are moved by the Holy Spirit. The ancient Greek word translated "moved" has the sense of carried along, as a ship being carried along by the wind or the current (the same word is used of a ship in Acts 27:15, 17). It is as if the writers of Scripture "raised their sails" in cooperation with God and the Holy Spirit carried them along in the direction He wished.