

II PETER 1:16-21
THE SURE WORD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Peter chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of Peter's letter to the churches that had been scattered for their faith into areas of Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.

As we have seen, Peter is taking a lot of time admonishing these believers to stand strong in the faith, to grow in the faith. And Peter has taught them these things before, and he is going to teach them again because we tend to forget.

Peter knows that his time is short as he was in prison awaiting to be put to death for his faith.

Not only that, but Peter is going to speak on the danger and the destruction that false teachers, with their false doctrine, bring into the church and we will see that as we get into the next chapter of this letter.

But before he deals with that, Peter wants them to grow in the faith, be solid in the faith, as we saw last time. This morning the focus is on the Word of God and how we can trust it more than anything else in this world!

Like in Peter's day, we have that same issue today with false teachers and false doctrine, and the only way to expose the lies of these false teachers is with the truth of God's Word.

So what does the enemy do?

The enemy tries to take the truth away from us, confuse the truth, they don't want us to have the truth which will expose these lies! They don't want us to be free, but in bondage to what they are teaching!

I do understand that many reject the Bible, they don't believe that it is accurate, that it was just written by men and thus, when it speaks about sin, they laugh at that and say it is just an archaic teaching!

Now let's think about that for a minute. If you reject the Bible as truth, what truth are you believing in?

I am sure that they would say that man determines truth and thus, what they say we follow.

Let me ask you this if you believe that way. ***“Has man's truth changed over the years?”***

I am sure that they would say, ***“Of course it has because we learn more and thus, we have to change to the times we are living in!”***

That is a bad answer because what you just said is that man does not have truth apart from God and thus, your truth is unstable and it needs to change and it has changed many, many times over the years and it will continue to change as man accepts all kinds of sinful behavior!

Let me show you what I mean.

The American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality in the DSM-I in 1952 as a ***“sociopathic personality disturbance,”*** and then in DSM-II, published in 1968, homosexuality was reclassified as a ***“sexual deviation.”***

Then the truth changed again because in 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) discontinued classifying homosexuality as a mental illness, removing it from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of mental disorders!

That is just one issue, and we could spend a lifetime looking at all the things that they had regarding the truth they believe, and in the end, well, it had to be changed, and changed again, and again!

Let me be clear on this. God's Word does not change because God does not change. Paul said in Hebrews 13:8, "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**"

Jesus Christ is called the "**Word**" in John 1:1 and thus, as Jesus said in John 17:17, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**"

So Almighty God is telling us that God's Word is truth, it is unchanging, and it will help us live a life that will benefit us, it will keep us on the right path!

Now why do we see so many changes with man's so-called truth?

Because as we move farther and farther from God our sin gets more wicked and thus, we have to change what we believe to accommodate our sin!

That is not truth, it is a lie! Truth does not change and God's truth does not change because it is truth!

This morning I am going to share with you about the truth of God's Word so when you leave here you will be convinced that we can trust what God is saying and not only trust in what God has said, but walk accordingly because there are those false teachers that will try to trip us up!

I have called our study this morning – ***THE SURE WORD!***

And I have broken down the verses we will be looking at into the following main points.

They are,

EYEWITNESSES OF THE TRUTH – II PETER 1:16

THE GLORY OF THE WORD – II PETER 1:17-18

THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTH – II PETER 1:19

THE HOLY SPIRIT SPOKE THE TRUTH – II PETER 1:20-21

Before we get to our text this morning, let me share with you what Peter said in II Peter 1:15 as it will lead us to what we will be looking at this morning. Peter wrote, “**Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease [departure].**”

And we do! We have I Peter and II Peter to guide us in the days we are living in. The reason that this is so important, as I have said, is that in II Peter chapter 2 Peter will be dealing with false teachers with their false doctrine and thus, he wants them and us to know the truth!

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in II Peter chapter 1, beginning in verse 16 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***THE SURE WORD!***

II PETER 1

VERSE 16

When Peter speaks of “**cunningly devised fables**” what he is saying and what this literally means, is “*sophisticated lies*” or “*well-crafted deceitful fabrications.*” Out of this Greek word we get the word “*myths*” from!

And what Peter wrote about in his day continues on today. They see the Bible, the Word of God as nothing more than a bunch of myths or even worse, if you can imagine, deceitful fabrications!

That is what I believed before I was saved and I am sure many of you felt the same way about the Bible, it just could not be true and thus, it was just a bunch of myths that were written by man and not the truth!

Peter us going to hit this issue very hard because he wants us to understand that the Word of God, the Bible is not just a bunch of myths but, as we will see, He saw these things that took place, he was an – ***EYEWITNESS TO THE TRUTH!***

Some of you are familiar with C. S. Lewis and his faith, but he did not start out that way. He believed the Bible was nothing more than myths, it was not true, not at all!

Listen to what we are told about where he was at to what he came to believe because of a witness of a Christian.

We are told,

Some people believe that Christianity is just a myth, a legend, a nice story made up by some well-meaning religious folks.

This was one of the major objections that C. S. Lewis had when he was an atheist. He saw Christianity as ***“one myth amongst many.”***

In his biography ***Surprised by Joy***, Lewis wrote that one factor that contributed to his atheism was the similarity between Christianity and pagan mythology.

In his secondary education it was assumed that pagan myths were false and Christianity true. He wondered on what basis Christianity could be exempt from the same critical judgment that was passed on myths.

In 1916 (at age 18), Lewis wrote to his friend Arthur Greeves and said, ***“You ask me my religious views: you know, I think I believe in no religion. There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the best. All religions, that is, all mythologies to give them their proper name, are merely man’s invention.”***

He continued, *“Often too, great men we regarded as gods after their death - such as Hercules or Odin: thus after the death of a Hebrew philosopher Yeshua (whose name we have corrupted into Jesus) he became regarded as a god, a cult sprang up, which was afterward connected with the ancient Hebrew Yahweh worship, and so Christianity came into being - one mythology among many, but one that we happened to be brought up in.”*

It was in such a state of mind - regarding Christianity as one myth among many - that Lewis went to teach at Oxford University . . . where he met R. R. Tolkien (1892 – 1973) at a faculty meeting on May 11, 1926.

Through their friendship, Tolkien was able to influence Lewis in showing him that there is at least some truth in all myths - like splintered fragments of the true light of God's reality.

Tolkien believed that one of the common elements to a good story is a *“good catastrophe.”*

This is a tragedy in the midst of the story that ends up being a good thing, leading to the *“happily ever after”* at the end.

For example, in Snow White, the heroine’s eating from the poisoned apple and seeming to die only provides the opportunity for the kiss from her Prince Charming. They then live happily ever after in their castle in the clouds.

Without the catastrophe there is no happy ending . . .

Tolkien went on to argue that people sense that such stories point to some underlying Reality. As we read or watch them, we are being told that the world *IS* certainly filled with danger, sorrow and tragedy but that nonetheless there *IS* a meaning to things, there *IS* a difference between good and evil, and above all, there *WILL* be a final defeat of evil and even an *“escape from death”* – which Tolkien said was the quintessential happy ending.

Tolkien argued that the gospel story of Jesus is **NOT** simply one more great story, pointing to the underlying Reality. Rather, the gospel story of Jesus **IS** the underlying Reality to which **ALL** stories point. It gives us more than a passing inspiration because it is **THE** true story [of what] happened.

When Lewis examined the Gospel narratives, having already become an expert in mythology, he was surprised that his literary judgment told him that they were *more* than myths.

He said, *“I was by now too experienced in literary criticism to regard the Gospels as myths. They had not the mythical taste. And yet the very matter they set down in their artless, historical fashion . . . was precisely the matter of the great myths. If ever a myth had become fact, had been incarnated, it would be just like this . . . Here and here only in all time the myth must have come fact: the Word, flesh; God, man.”*

Not long after this, Lewis came to believe that Christ was the Son of God.

He later wrote, *“. . . the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened.”*

In even pagan myths, sometimes the **“gods”** die and rise again . . . yet Christ is the only one of these who is historical.

- <https://bit.ly/4a7YXXH>

When you look at the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is beyond dispute, even though some try. And many times, when some come to study and check it out, even to prove it as false, they come to saving faith!

The sad thing to me is that many people and churches have bought into these lies of the Bible being just a bunch of myths that may sound nice but are not true or you have to decide what they mean!

I don't know about you, but many of these stories are not that nice because they show the reality of what human beings are all about. But that is another story.

How did this happen?

Listen to how Hayden V. White describes the Enlightenment or Skepticism that began in 1725, and it continues on today.

This is what he wrote,

The Enlightenment attitude of mind was complex and internally varied, but it can be characterized roughly as a dedication of human reason, science, and education as the best means of building a stable society for free men on earth.

This meant that the Enlightenment was inherently suspicious of religion, hostile to tradition, and resentful of any authority based on custom or faith alone.

Ultimately the Enlightenment was nothing if not secular in its orientation; it offered the first program in the history of mankind for the construction of a human community out of natural materials alone.

- Robert Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition*, p. ix

And many in the church have continued to use that kind of reasoning, worldly reasoning in what they do and what they teach in these churches!

Also, David Hume of Scotland had one of the greatest adverse effects regarding Biblical authority.

Listen to what his views are and compare them to what we hear today from many people and churches and leaders who deny that Jesus said a majority of what is written in the Gospels, they deny His deity, His resurrection and many follow their flawed and dangerous thinking.

There was a group known as the Jesus Seminar, this is from over twenty years ago, which was nothing more than a group of men who voted on what Jesus said and what He didn't say. And we see this same kind of thinking in the Emergent Church movement, and it will continue on as other movements come on the scene to move us away from God and His Word!

That is what David Hume believed.

He rejected the claim that Scripture is inspired or that the Bible is an authoritative revelation of God to humanity. He also denied the deity of Christ and rejected miracles as he sought to make theology the subject of empirical testing.

- Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 140

Now please understand that the Bible has been the most studied and scrutinized book in the world, and it still stands as strong as it did almost 2,000 years ago!

Also, look at the Reformation and those who died trying to get the Bible out to the common people. Those who were martyred because they believed the Scriptures and not the doctrines of man!

Bush and Nettles tell us,

The Reformers believed Scripture to be God's Word written. It was trusted, not doubted. It was studied, not ignored. It was taken as the final authority with regard to those matters on which it spoke or made affirmations. God had not revealed everything. The Bible did not expressly contain all the truth that could be known. But what the Bible did teach was believed to be completely trustworthy. Truth in any other area would not contradict biblical truth. Starting from Scripture, one could find the true knowledge of reality.

- L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, p. 175

Now let's think about this for a minute. How do we know that a certain event happened?

By eyewitness accounts, people who saw the event and then testified about it or left a record behind of what they saw.

That is what Peter is saying here, that they – ***WERE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY!***

Now some may laugh at that. But how do we know any historical event actually happened if we were not there?

By eyewitness accounts, people saw what took place and it was written about it.

How many of you were around when President Abraham Lincoln was murdered?

None of you, right?

Absolutely!

Then how do you know it actually happened?

Again, eyewitness accounts of the story that were written down and now part of our history!

How do we know what the Bible says is true?

There are many reasons, but Peter is going to focus on this one right now, that they -

WERE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY!

What is Peter speaking of?

What did Peter see?

That is our next point – ***THE GLORY OF THE WORD!***

VERSES 17-18

Keep in mind that Peter witnessed many, many things that Jesus had done in His earthly ministry.

But Peter is speaking of one event that truly stuck in his mind and that was the power and majesty of Jesus when He appeared in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, which probably took place on Mount Hermon.

Also, not all of the apostles were there when this happened. In fact, there were only three of them, Peter, James and John!

This event is recorded for us in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9 and Luke 9:28-36.

Let me just share out of Matthew and that will help us to understand the point that Peter is making here, at least start to.

We are told in Matthew chapter 17, beginning in verse 1, **“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. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”** Matthew 17:1-8.

The glory that Jesus possessed before the Incarnation, according to Philippians 2:6-8, He emptied Himself and thus, Jesus did not walk around with a halo over His head. In fact, He looked like a common person because that glory was veiled in a body of flesh!

But here, Peter, James and John get a glimpse of that glory as we are told, **“He was transfigured before them.”**

Let me share with you what was going on here.

Luke 9:32 tells us that after they climbed Mount Hermon, which could have taken them a good part of the day, Peter, James and John got tired and fell asleep. Jesus brought them up there to pray, to share with them the glory of the Kingdom, and they wanted to sleep!

But the Lord woke them up in a powerful way!

And here on this mountain Jesus is transfigured before them, this word means ***“to be changed into another form.”***

Thus, what was veiled in His flesh is now revealed, they saw Jesus in His glory! Jesus, the Word, was seen in all of His glory or – ***THE GLORY OF THE WORD!***

This was not just some costume or disguise Jesus was wearing, He was changed, He was ***TRANSFIGURED!***

As one writer put it, ***“For a brief moment that veil of his humanity was lifted, and his true essence was allowed to shine through. The glory which was always in the depths of his being rose to the surface for that one time in his earthly life. Or put another way, he slipped back into eternity, to his pre-human glory. It was a glance back and a look forward into his future glory!”*** (R. Kent Hughes, Mark Volume 2, p. 15)

Exactly!

And I love Mark’s little note when he is speaking of the transfiguration. He tells us that the clothes of Jesus became whiter than any laundromat could get them! Even Mr. Clean couldn’t get them any whiter! Keep in mind that Mark did not witness any of these things, he was very young, but now Peter shared with him, and he wrote these things down and we have The Gospel of Mark!

Peter James and John are observing all of this. And you have to love Peter here.

First of all, we need to understand that it is not just Jesus that appears before these men. We see that with Jesus was Moses and Elijah who appeared before them.

The problem for Peter, and maybe he didn’t know what to say, but his comment puts Jesus on the same level with Moses and Elijah.

Yes, Moses represented the Law, Elijah the prophets, two of the heavy hitters of the Jewish faith, and yes, they appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And in this conversation that they have with Jesus, before the boys woke up, they affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah, the One that Moses and the prophets spoke of coming.

Keep in mind that Moses had passed from this world 1,400 years before and Elijah had passed some 900 years before.

And here they are, with Jesus, and I think the point here is that God will raise the dead in glory. Not only will Jesus be put to death and be raised, but so will His followers, it was hope in the resurrection life!

They also were discussing the death of Jesus, His departure, as Luke 9:30-31 tells us.

Now this discussion went on for a period of time, and as the disciples woke up, after listening for a while, Peter became uncomfortable and breaks the silence.

And what does he say?

He says, **“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.”**

What is interesting is that God does not even acknowledge what Peter said, and we see that God the Father speak and He said, **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”**

You see, it was not about Moses or Elijah, it is always about Jesus!

It is not that Jesus is on the same level as the Law and the Prophets, which Moses and Elijah represented. He is even better because He is the beloved Son, and we are to listen to Him.

You see, it is like comparing apples and oranges, they don't compare.

What is the point?

The point is simple – ***JESUS IS ALMIGHTY GOD!***

And Peter is just recounting what transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration and what a memory it was. It is at this point that Jesus is alone because it truly is all about Jesus, Moses and Elijah are gone.

We tend to read these stories, and we don't think much about what they were going through.

Can you imagine seeing the glory of God right before you, shining like the sun in brightness and that would have to impact you somehow, someway!

Now this is not even on the same level as what Peter, James and John witnessed, but we all go through things in life that impact us.

I remember as a kid that several members of the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team were coming to Golf Mill, a local shopping mall that was maybe a half a mile away from my house.

Also, keep in mind that I am old enough to have these athletes come before they started charging you for pictures and autographs.

And there before me was Stan Miketa, Pat Stapleton, and my favorite goalie of all time, Tony Esposito! Yes, he was Italian!

I was in awe, and I just remember them signing a picture that they brought and then, when they gave it to me, "***I was in heaven!***" Not really, but you know what I mean.

And here Peter is telling us what he saw, and it must have blown his sandals off his feet!

It could not get any better than that, right?

Well, we will see that there is something that is even more important than what they saw with their eyes and the same is true of me as I recounted that story that took place some almost 60 years ago!

And here is the problem for many Christians today. They run to and fro after signs and wonders because they believe that is where the power is at, that is where they will grow.

They are into the experience and yet this experience that Peter saw did not transform his life! It was a passing experience even though he still remembers the glory of the Lord as He shined that day.

Miracles do not save people!

I know, that is shocking, but it is true.

In Luke 19:17-19 we are told, **“Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!’ So when He saw them, He said to them, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’ And He said to him, ‘Arise, go your way. *Your faith has made you well.*”**

Think about what took place here. Until the time of Jesus, the only lepers that were healed were Gentile’s, besides Miriam in the Old Testament.

Here comes Jesus and He heals these leper’s, which was an amazing miracle. In fact, they were to go to the priests and do the cleansing that Leviticus spoke of regarding a healed leper. And I am sure that these priests had to get the scrolls out to figure out what needed to be done since this was not something that they ever did!

As these ten men were told that they were cleansed of this leprosy, then Jesus tells them to go, and they do. And as they leave, they are healed!

You would think that every one of them would have come back to Jesus to praise Him, worship Him, thank Him for what He did in their lives.

But they did not. In fact, only one came back and the one who came back was a Samaritan, which the Jews despised.

Now, did the miracle heal this man?

Yes and no!

Yes, his physical body was healed but he was still going to die.

But what about his spiritual condition?

Jesus told this man, “**Your faith has made you well.**”

You see, it is always by faith.

Miracles may point us to the Savior, but they do not save us!

The transfiguration was awesome, but it was a passing experience until they were born again.

But wait, they saw the glory of the Lord before them, what more did they need?

What is more important than what they saw?

Yes, Peter, James and John were – ***EYEWITNESSES TO THE TRUTH!***

We have seen Jesus transfigured before Peter, James and John in all of His glory and thus – ***THE GLORY OF THE WORD!***

And we will look at next what is even more important – ***THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTH!***

VERSE 19

This is very powerful to me and if we understand it, then we will understand the importance of God's Word and the prophetic Word!

This verse can literally mean, "***We have more sure the prophetic word.***"

Listen to how The Living Bible puts II Peter 1:19, "**So we have seen and proved that what the prophets said came true. You will do well to pay close attention to everything they have written, for, like lights shining into dark corners, their words help us to understand many things that otherwise would be dark and difficult. But when you consider the wonderful truth of the prophets' words, then the light will dawn in your souls and Christ the Morning Star will shine in your hearts.**"

In other words, God told us things before they came to pass to validate the Bible as His Word and Jesus as His Son.

Remember how we spoke of the transfiguration and how Jesus transfigured in all of His glory before Peter, as well as James and John. Peter saw this with his own eyes!

Now, here's the thing. For those that doubt God's Word, Peter says that what he saw with his own eyes, Jesus in all of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, was wonderful but it does not compare to the Word of God!

How can that be?

How can God's Word be more sure, how can it be trusted more than what Peter saw with his own eyes on Mount Hermon in Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration?

Again, experiences will come and go but God's Word will last forever.

Experiences may pump us up for a time, but God's Word will transform our lives!

And when Peter speaks of the “**prophetic word**” he is not only speaking of prophecy or foretelling future events.

Yes, the Bible is over 25% prophetic in nature and some of these prophecies have already come to pass.

No other religious book has prophecies, as does the Bible with 100% accuracy!

There are over 300 prophecies of Christ’s First Coming that have been fulfilled down to the tiniest detail. The chance of that coming to pass in any one man is beyond any mathematical possibility. In other words, it is impossible and yet they were *ALL* fulfilled in Christ!

Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies of Jesus is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power).

Imagine if you spread silver dollars out over the state of Texas. Did you know that this number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep!

Then mark one, blindfold yourself and find that silver dollar on the first try. Those are the odds.

Stoner says that if you consider 48 of the prophecies, the odds become one in 10 to the 157th power.

And there are over 500 prophecies related to His Second Coming – I think we can be assured – He is coming back – it is a done deal!

I realize that those numbers are huge and probably difficult to figure out. Let me put it into perspective to show you how impossible this could happen by random chance.

Did you know that ten to the 9th power is billions of years, but we only need 5 billion for the history of the solar system and the Earth, according to evolutionists!

So the chance happening of these prophetic words about Jesus are older than the our solar system, if you believe it is millions of years old. I don't!

But there is not enough time for this to happen and thus, it has been giving to us by an all-knowing God who knows the beginning from the end!

But Peter's point goes even farther, he is also speaking of forthtelling the things of God and thus, he is speaking of the entire Old Testament at this point.

He is saying that the Old Testament is the inspired, infallible Word of God, it is even more sure than what he has seen with his own eyes! And we can continue that through the New Testament as well!

Peter even speaks of Paul's writing being part of the Word of God in II Peter 3:15-16, and we will deal with this more when we get to that section of II Peter, but just listen to what Peter wrote. He wrote, **“and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation - as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”**

So Peter considered Paul's writing, part of the New Testament, as being inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus, we can trust it!

Now think about this for a minute.

When you read the Old Testament, you can see that for almost four-thousand years the Jewish prophets had been foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

Not only that but we can read of the hundreds of details that were given about everything from His birth, life, death and resurrection.

Not only that, but the prophet Daniel even predicted the exact day Jesus would present Himself to Israel as their Messiah!

Not random chance happenings but these are the Words that have been spoken by God and written down for us and they are more sure than what we see with our own eyes!

And I love that Peter speaks of God's Word being a light that is in this dark world. He wrote, "**you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place.**"

We are told in Psalm 119:130, "**The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.**"

Notice, not the highly educated, but to the simple, which speaks to all of us that the Word of God is a light to help us understand how we are to live out our faith.

Also, In Psalm 119:105 we are told, "**Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.**"

How do we walk in this dark world?

But letting God's Word light our way!

Also, in Proverbs 6:23 we are told, "**For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.**"

God's Word corrects us when we have gone off the path that He wants us on and how important that light is so we don't go astray!

In John chapter 1 John tells us, "**In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it . . . He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**" John 1:4-5, 8-9.

The true light is Jesus and if we are willing to receive it, we will be able to understand it and allow it to guide us!

And if you still don't get it, then listen to what we are told in John 8:12, "**Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'**"

It is important for us to understand that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all!

Not only is God spoken of as light but so too is His Word spoken of as light as it speaks of spiritual truth!

And then Peter compares that with the darkness of this world, which Satan is the ruler that brings about death and destruction to our lives!

The phrase "**dark place**" in the Greek is a reference to "*the murky blackness of the fallen world.*"

Make no mistake about it, it is a darkness of spiritual deception that can only be penetrated by the light of God's truth. And it is getting darker and darker out there, more deception than ever before.

Thus, with all the garbage that is out in this world, with all the darkness that seems to permeate this world, God's Word is a light that shines in our hearts first and then through us to touch the lives of others, to bring light to this dark world.

That means we need to cling to God's Word, hold onto it, apply it to our lives until Jesus returns and He will!

That is how Peter finishes up this verse, "**until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.**"

When Jesus finally returns and establishes His Kingdom on the earth, not only will the light of God's truth shine throughout the world, but it will also arise in believers' hearts who have finally been transformed completely into His image (at the Rapture) and no longer have a fallen nature to corrupt their love and service for the Lord.

Before we move on, listen to what one writer wrote as he sums this up for us. He wrote, We are living in the dark. We were born into it and it was born in us. We were children of darkness at one time but when we received the gospel, we became children of light.

At that point the darkness inside us was replaced with light but we found ourselves still living in the moral and spiritual darkness of this world which is all around us.

We are living at the close of an age that is dominated by the prince and powers of darkness - a world where men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

But the night is far spent, the day of Christ's return is at hand-and yet it's always blackest before the dawn.

The darkness has never been more pervasive and persuasive in my lifetime than it is today in our nation. Not only do we live in the dark as Christians – we've gotten used to the dark.

We have all had the experience of walking into a very dark room where all we could see was blackness - but after a few seconds our eyes adjusted, and we got used to the dark.

This has happened to many Christians spiritually and morally. We are all experiencing a slow, subtle and sinister brainwashing process that is gradually desensitizing us to the darkness.

Little by little sin is being made to look less and less sinful until the light that is in us is darkness, and as Jesus said, ***"If the light that is in you is darkness-how great is that darkness."***

The result is we no longer hate evil. We don't abhor it – we've gotten used to the dark.

- Vance Haven

How true that us. Thus, may we walk in the light as He is in the light because we have –

THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTH!

And remember, that God is speaking to us today through Jesus, the Word as we have the written Words of God for us as Paul tells us in Hebrews 1:1-2, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.*”**

As we read on, we will focus on – ***THE HOLY SPIRIT SPOKE THE TRUTH!***

VERSES 20-21

Peter starts out by speaking of the **“prophetic word”** and when we hear that or read that our minds focus on predicting the future of foretelling what is going to happen, as I have said.

That is true, that is what this word means, and it was partly what the Old Testament prophets did when God sent them to speak on His behalf.

In fact, many times they did not even fully understand what they wrote because it was for a future time.

But we need to remember that these Old Testament prophets not only predicted the future, (foretell) but they also forthtold or just spoke forth the Word of God!

I think Peter is speaking of both and thus, He is speaking of Genesis through, ultimately, the book of Revelation!

And this is primarily what the prophets did, just speaking forth the Words of God!

In other words, most of their ministry consisted not in ***“foretelling”*** but in ***“forthtelling.”***

Just speaking forth the Word of God.

Now in the days we are living in I do realize that people, even Christians put down the Word of God. But that tells me that they are just plain foolish. Sorry, but true.

Listen to what David said in Psalm 138:2 about the Word of God and how God sees it.

We are told, **“I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all your name.”**

In other words, the name of God is everything that He is.

What that means is this. If we can't trust the Word of God, then we can't trust God!

Do you see how important this is for us! If His Word is not trustworthy, then neither is He! I hope you understand how important this is.

Now, the classic evangelical position with regard to the Scriptures is described with the phrase, ***“verbal plenary inspiration.”***

What does this phrase mean?

Let me show you.

First of all, ***Verbal*** inspiration means that ***every word*** of Scripture is God-given.

The idea is that every single word in the Bible is there because God wanted it there, there are no exceptions.

Now keep in mind that this only applies to the original manuscripts not to subsequent copies and later translations. Not that we can't trust them, we can because God has preserved them for us and we can check out the accuracy of them from the thousands of copies we have of them.

And the word ***Plenary*** means that ***all parts*** of the Bible are divinely inspired and authoritative.

That is what we believe here at Calvary Chapel, and I believe that is exactly what the Scriptures are saying!

Now it is true that people can take the Scriptures and twist them to say what they want.

But Peter says, **“that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.”**

Let me share a few ways that Bibles verses are taken out of context.

- A reason to brush your teeth every day: ***“My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am loathsome to my own brothers”*** (Job 19:17).
- A politically conservative perspective: ***“A wise man’s heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man’s heart directs him toward the left”*** (Ecclesiastes 10:2).
- The favorite verse of those who are not morning people: ***“Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing”*** (Proverbs 27:14 ESV).
- Every Monday morning on the way to work many people quote Ecclesiastes 2:17: ***“So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.”***
- For those problem neighbors: ***“I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves”*** (Galatians 5:12).

Funny, but you would be surprised how people twist the Word of God and what they make it say. We must be careful not to make the Word of God say what we want it to say because God has spoken and it is what He means, not my private interpretation!

As I have said and, in the Greek, the way it is structured, it is even stronger. Peter is speaking of the Word of God, of prophecy, that it is not from man’s doing but God speaking through man.

In fact, if verse 20 is confusing, verse 21 I believe clears things up for us.

That phrase, “**as they were moved**” in the Greek speaks of being “*continually carried*” and Luke uses this word to describe how the wind blows a sailing ship across the waters, (Acts 27:15, 17).

Thus, as these men of God raised their sails you might say, as they submitted their lives to God, the Holy Spirit carried them along in the direction He wanted.

God was the writer and man was the instrument He wrote with. He didn’t change the character or styles of the individuals but just spoke through them.

One writer put it like this in regard to this point. He wrote,

Far from *inventing* the subject of their own predictions, the ancient prophets did not even *know* the meaning of what they themselves wrote. They were *carried beyond themselves* by the influence of the *Divine Spirit*, and after ages were alone to discover the object of the prophecy; and the fulfillment was to be the absolute proof that the prediction was of God and that it was of no *private invention*.

- Clarke

Why is Peter hitting us so hard with this information?

Why is he telling us that the Word of God is more sure than what he saw with his physical eyes?

So we know what we believe, so we know our Lord and because false teachers are here and the only way to defend yourself from their lies is to know the truth. That is what Peter will be talking about next in II Peter chapter 2, the danger of false teachers and their outcome!

But discernment is important and that comes with the Word of God, knowing it, applying it to our lives. That is the only way you will be able to stand against these false teachers and we will deal with these false teachers and their destructive doctrines next time!

Let me share these words with you from Warren Wiersbe to set us up for our next study. He wrote,

The best defense against false teaching is true living. A church filled with growing Christians, vibrant in their faith, is not likely to fall prey to apostates with their counterfeit Christianity.

But this Christian living must be based on the authoritative Word of God. False teachers find it easy to seduce people who do not know their Bible but who are desirous of “experiences” with the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to build on subjective experience alone and ignore objective revelation.

Peter discussed Christian experience in the first half of 2 Peter 1, and in the last half he discussed the revelation we have in the Word of God. His purpose is to show the importance of knowing God’s Word and relying on it completely.

The Christian who knows what he believes and why he believes it will rarely be seduced by the false teachers and their devious doctrines. . . .

Men die, but the Word lives. Experiences fade, but the Word remains. The world grows darker, but the prophetic light shines brighter.

The believer who builds his life on the Word of God and who looks for the coming of the Saviour is not likely to be led astray by false teachers. He will be taught by the Spirit and grounded on the sure Word of God.

Peter's message is, "**Wake up - and remember!**" A sleeping church is the devil's playground. It is while men slept that the enemy came in and sowed the tares (Matt 13:24 ff).

"Be alert!" is the Apostle's message. "Wake up and remember!"

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, pp. 933-934, 938

And let me close with these words.

In Psalm 119:60 we are told, "**The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.**"

How much of God's Word is truth?

"The entirety of [His] word is truth."

Thus, we can trust it!

Yes, Peter says that his eye-witness testimony is not infallible, but the Word of God is!

May we trust it and walk accordingly, using it to expose the lies that are here and the many more that are coming!