

## 2 Peter 1:16-21

### A More Sure Word

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In 2 Peter 1:16-21, Peter testifies to the believers concerning the reliability of the gospel message and of all the scripture. We cannot rely on personal experience for spiritual growth. We must replace experience driven, emotionally based views of Christian growth with reliance on the truth of God's Word.

#### I. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Peter (2 Peter 1:16)

- Peter knew that message of the Gospel was not a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Peter was as qualified as anyone to testify to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel. (1 Cor. 15:3-5)
- Peter did not use his firsthand knowledge of Christ to puff himself up. Rather, it motivated him to \_\_\_\_\_ the message of the gospel to everyone. (Acts 2:32,36)

#### II. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ (2 Peter 1:17-18)

- At the end of verses sixteen, Peter said he was an eye witness of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. Peter was referring to the transfiguration of Christ. (Matthew 17:1-6; Mark 9:5-6)
- Peter was one of only three people to share that experience with Jesus. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ experience.

#### III. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture (2 Peter 1:19-21)

- The scriptures are even more certain and \_\_\_\_\_ than personal experience and eye witness testimony.
- Everything else, including our impressions and feelings, however spiritual they may seem to us, are fallible and should be held in \_\_\_\_\_.
- The only sure place you can go to know what God says is the \_\_\_\_\_, preserved Word of God. (Psalms 119:105)
- The Bible was not the product of man's \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible was the product of inspiration. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- The doctrine of inspiration is the truth that the Holy Spirit moved the writers of scripture so that the words that they wrote down were the very \_\_\_\_\_ of God. (Acts 27:17)
- God did not inspire \_\_\_\_\_. God inspired words. (Psalms 12:6)
- Because the scripture did not come through man's imagination, its meaning cannot be determined by man's imagination or \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- We need to reject self reliance and embrace \_\_\_\_\_ reliance.

#### Conclusion

We must have a reliable source of truth if we are going to grow spiritually. We cannot rely on our experiences because they are subject to faulty emotions and memories. We cannot rely on our imaginations or even our intellect. If we are going to grow, we must rely on the scriptures as the only reliable source of \_\_\_\_\_.

## *2 Peter 1:16-21*

### **A More Sure Word**

If we are going to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” then it is of the utmost importance that we have a source of information that is reliable. Knowing many things that are not true doesn’t do anyone much good, and it certainly does not help us add Christ-like character to our lives.

In 2 Peter 1:16-21, Peter testifies to the believers concerning the reliability of the gospel message and of all the scripture. Some people say that the Bible is not much more than a collection of fairytales. They may concede that it is a very good and a very moral book, but they do not see it as absolutely true and reliable. Peter knew otherwise, in part because he had been an eyewitness to the glory of Christ. But even more sure than his personal experience on the mount of transfiguration are the written words of God that have been preserved by God and handed down to every generation.

We cannot rely on personal experience for spiritual growth. Personal experience is subjective and often affected by our emotions. Your personal experience is unverifiable, meaning that others have to simply take your word for it. Therefore, it is an unreliable guide to spiritual growth because we are not perfect and can make mistakes. The Bible, on the other hand, is perfect. It says what it says and that doesn’t change. You can repeatedly verify its statements and come to an objective conclusion about what the Bible says. We must replace experience driven, emotionally based views of Christian growth with reliance on the truth of God’s Word.

#### **I. The Testimony of Peter**

*2 Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

There is a famous collection of stories that date back to hundreds of years before Christ known as Aesop’s fables. These short parables are used to illustrate moral principles. Among the more famous stories of the collection are The Boy Who Cried Wolf, The Goose That Laid The Golden Egg, and The Tortoise and the Hare. They are entertaining stories and often teach good morals in a memorable way. But they are just fictitious stories, and should not be considered true in an absolute sense.

Some people view the Bible the same way they view Aesop’s fables. They believe its stories may teach good life lessons, but it is actually true. While they may have a lot of respect for the Bible, they do not believe it to be God’s word to man.

Peter knew that message of the Gospel was not a fable. He was intent on impressing the truth of the gospel on the hearts of believers, not because he thought it was simply a great story to tell, but because He knew that it was a true message directly from God. He knew, because he was an eye witness of the “power of coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” and “his majesty.”

Peter walked and talked with Jesus. He saw Jesus perform the miracles. He was there when Jesus was crucified. He went into the empty tomb the morning that Jesus rose from the grave. He spoke with Jesus after the resurrection. He saw Jesus ascend back to heaven. He heard the angels say that Jesus would come again. Peter was as qualified as anyone to testify to the truth of the gospel. The Apostle Paul even mentioned to the testimony of Peter when affirming the truth of the resurrection.

*1 Corinthians 15:3-5 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: [5] And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:*

But Peter did not use his firsthand knowledge of Christ to puff himself up. Rather, it motivated him to earnestly proclaim the message of the gospel to everyone. He knew it was true and he wanted others to know too.

*Acts 2:32,36 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. [36] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

As we grow in grace and in knowledge, we must not neglect our responsibility to share that knowledge with others, not to boast about how much we know, but to share the wonderful truths of the gospel so that others might be saved too.

## II. The Transfiguration of Christ

*2 Peter 1:17-18 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. [18] And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

At the end of verses sixteen, Peter said he was an eye witness of the majesty of Christ. That was not a general reference to Christ, but a specific reference to a specific event. Peter was referring to the transfiguration of Christ, the time when Jesus went on top of a mountain with Peter, James ,and John, and He was miraculously changed before their eyes.

*Matthew 17:1-6 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, [2] And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. [3] And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. [4] Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. [5] While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. [6] And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.*

Peter was there on that mountain with Jesus. He saw a hint of Jesus' glory and majesty when Jesus His face began to shine and His clothes turn bright white. He saw Moses and Elijah and heard them talking to Jesus. Peter was so overcome with the situation that he didn't know what to say. So, in true Peter-like fashion, he said something anyway.

*Mark 9:5-6 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. [6] For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.*

It was then that Peter heard the voice of God from heaven declaring "This is my beloved son, in Whom I am well pleased." At that point, Peter was so overcome that he fell on the ground in fear.

Peter was one of only three people to share that experience with Jesus. It was a multi-sensory experience. They saw, they heard, and they felt the magnitude of the situation. Peter shares this story once again with the believers to remind them what he was witness of. But he also wanted to bolster the point that he was about to make about the supremacy of the Bible.

## III. The Transcendence of Scripture

*2 Peter 1:19-21 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: [20] Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. [21] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Even though Peter experienced the transfiguration firsthand, he did not rely on that personal experience. He knew that there was something even “more sure” than hearing with his ears the voice of God from heaven and seeing with his eyes a glimpse of God’s glory. That something is the Bible. The scriptures are even more certain and reliable than personal experience and eye witness testimony.

I’ve heard people say things like, “I know what the Bible says, but let me tell you what I have seen” as if their personal experience was more important than the words of God. Our experiences do not determine what is true, our perceptions do not determine reality, and our emotions certainly do not decide what is right or wrong. Also, our memories fade. What we remember about our experiences can change over time. God’s word is the only fixed standard of truth. Everything else, including our impressions and feelings, however spiritual they may seem to us, are fallible and should be held in suspicion. Our attitude should be like Peter’s: “I know what I saw and heard, but let me tell you what the Bible says!”

Sadly, many Christians today are influenced by mystical philosophies of religion. To them, being “spiritual” means feeling God’s presence and hearing God’s voice in your head. Their Christian life is not rooted in the actual words of the Bible and the truth of scripture, but in their vague impressions, notions, and emotions. Does God guide us personally through the influencing power of the Holy Spirit. He absolutely does. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13) But that does not mean that every idea I have is God special revelation to me. The only sure place you can go to know what God says is the inspired, preserved Word of God. We would do well, then, to pay attention to the scripture instead of our impressions, because it alone is a light that guides us while we are living in a world darkened by sin.

*Psalms 119:105 NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Peter says of scripture that it is not “subject to private interpretation.” The Bible was not the product of man’s imagination. The Bible was the product of inspiration.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

The doctrine of inspiration is the truth that the Holy Spirit moved the writers of scripture so that the words that they wrote down were the very words of God. Peter says that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The word translated “moved” is also found in Acts 27:17

*Acts 27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.*

Just as the wind moved the ship before it, the Holy Spirit moved the men who wrote down the words of Scripture. He did not replace their personality or erase their individuality, but He superseded their own thoughts and produced through their pens words that were God’s own words.

Men did not write words and God then chose to bless them. The Holy Spirit directed the writings so that the result was the very Words of God. This is what we call the verbal plenary inspiration of God’s word. Verbal meaning the very words themselves and plenary meaning the whole of scripture is inspired. Every word and all the words of the Bible were inspired by God.

Because of the truth of inspiration, we know that the Bible is also inerrant and infallible. Inerrant means without error. Infallible means incapable of having error. Because it is God's Word, it carries all of the attributes of God with it. That's why we have attached the name "Holy" to our Bibles. It is perfect or without error.

God did not inspire ideas or concepts. Biblical it is not like natural inspiration, as when an artist may see a beautiful waterfall and get the idea to recreate his own version of it on canvas. It is a supernatural inspiration of the very words of scripture so that the Bible can rightly be said to be the Word of God. God did not inspire thoughts. God inspired words.

*Psalms 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times*

Gradually over the centuries, God directed His men to write His words so that all those who came after could have access to them. God inspired the words of scripture and God has preserved the words of scripture.

Because the scripture did not come through man's imagination, its meaning cannot be determined by man's imagination or intellect. We are dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide us into the truth as we study and "rightly divide the word of truth."

*2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

This ties in directly to Peter's main point. We cannot rely on our own experiences or our own thinking to determine the truth. Only God's word, inspired by God, preserved by God and defined by God is sufficient to give us the knowledge we need for spiritual growth. We need to reject self reliance and embrace scripture reliance.

## **Conclusion**

We must have a reliable source of truth if we are going to grow spiritually. We cannot rely on our experiences because they are subject to faulty emotions and memories. We cannot rely on our imaginations or even our intellect. If we are going to grow, we must rely on the scriptures as the only reliable source of truth.