

Why You Can Trust the Bible, Pt. 1

2 Peter 1:19-21 (06/29/14)

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¹⁹So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

We're going to be talking about your Bible in the next two weeks here in 2 Peter 1:19-21 and next week in 2 Timothy 3. In fact, how about reading 2 Timothy 3 every day this week. It will take you about five minutes per day. We need to pay careful attention to our Bibles.

Last week Eric took us up on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John to catch a preview of Christ's second coming in power and dazzling glory! This really happened. Peter saw Jesus' face shine like the sun, His clothing even glistening with divine glory! Not only that, these three guys literally heard God's voice, the *vox dei*, from the heavens, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" What an experience of a life time. You won't match it, guaranteed. No, that wasn't Jesus you saw out the airplane window or at the foot of your bed or in that out-of-body experience you had on the operating table.

How many people have thought, "If only God would show Himself to me or let me hear His voice." Peter has something powerful to say to us here. True, you didn't have his experience, but you've got something even better. You've got the Word of God in your hands. Do you want to hear God speak? Open your Bible! You've got God's Word written down! It's still there. It hasn't changed. God's hard drive hasn't crashed. Peter saw a preview of what is coming, but in your Bible you've got all you need to know and love God. It assures you that not only did Christ come the first time, but along with Peter's preview, that Christ is coming again in blazing fire, in majestic glory! So get ready. Live godly lives! And above all in this life, pay attention to the Word. You can trust it with your eternal soul! Here are three reasons from our passage this morning why you can trust your Bible.

Your Bible is God's reliable light to show you the way through this dark world – v. 19

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

Now Peter wrote this thirty years after his experience on that mountain. It was great, but now what does he have? He calls us together and says, "We have the prophetic Word, and you can fully rely on it." That's why God's Word trumps experiences. You can't replay that experience, but you can go to your Bible and read all about Christ's coming glory and power and judgment. You can go to Isaiah or Daniel or Zechariah and be blown away by what it says about your future. Jesus is coming back to rule this world! Are you ready for that? And Peter's preview just adds to the reality of it all. We will see Christ in his dazzling glory to rule His people and judge His enemies!

I've heard Dave Ramsey tell people who are dealing with financial situations, "Don't just take their word for it. Get them to put it in writing!" That's exactly what we have here. You can't call up that spoken Word, but you can produce the written word, right here, telling you all about what's coming! You're not going to hear God speak like Peter did, regardless of those voices in your head. They are not God's voice, ok?

Peter says we have this prophetic Word which is absolutely sure and reliable. Remember J. Vernon McGee's theme song, "How firm a foundation you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith

in His excellent Word! (Excellent Word, that's good.). What more can He say than to you He has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?" Open your Bible and listen to God, feed your soul. Peter is pushing us to the Word! Jesus said you cannot live on egg white sandwiches alone, but on every Word that comes from God! Peter is thinking here about all the promises from God about Jesus' future coming. And there are lots of them. They say for every one prophecy about Christ's first coming there are eight about his second coming.

So what do you do with this revealed Word? Peter says you do well to pay attention to it! You point your heart and soul and mind toward it. The word "pay attention" means to point something in the right direction. If you've ever been to the Ohio River lock and dam, you'll recognize that it takes skill to point those barges into the locks. We were there one time when the pilot missed. You hear a loud "boom!" every once in a while in Newburgh. He missed the lock by a little.

Point your mind to the Word. Listen up! Pay attention. You are doing well if you pay attention to the prophetic word, and don't let anyone grab the steering wheel of your life and cause you to swerve away, or fall asleep at the wheel! Study it! Hide it in your heart. Apply it and feed on it and make it your daily food! Spend as much time in your Bible as in your emails every day! Before you watch any TV, read your Bible. You're sitting there ready to watch 24, when, "Oh no, I forgot to read the Word!" I know, you DVR it. Imagine if you read the book of Colossians every day this week? It's not a difficult thing; not a monumental task. Those four chapters on three pages could be life changing.

Peter gives us a good reason to pay attention. We are living in this horribly dark world. The word "dark" here means squalid, dirty, miserable. This world is like being deep in a cave with the only light being your Bible! You will not see your way without it. And it's not just for you. You couples are reproducing, bringing children into this world, wonderful! You're obeying God – be fruitful and multiply, plus you're doing the traditional male female marriage thing - excellent. But remember, you are bringing children into a dark world. And you, as dad, as mom, need to shine the light of God's word into their lives. Pay attention. Do all you can in grace and love and humility to bring God's Word to them.

Shine the light of God's Word to them, train them, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! Be sure they know Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God created them. God gave them eyes, a nose, mouth, ears, feet, hands. Assure them God made them male and female, marriage is a man and woman. They are flying into a storm of oppressive darkness down the road. How will they stand?

Dazzle your teens with your amazement in God! Tedd Tripp has an article called *Dazzle Your Teens*. They need to be dazzled by God! And the only way they will be dazzled by God is to understand who God really is. And the only way to know God is to know His Word! Pay attention.

The Bible is a light shining in a dark place - what a picture. Without the Bible people are miserably ignorant and deceived! And that's where people are! They don't know where we came from, why we're here, where we're going. They don't know or don't want to know, they are either willfully ignorant and squeeze their eyes and hearts shut, or they are sadly ignorant, like those poor people I saw on a documentary of Bangkok! The country of Thailand, a country a bit smaller than Texas, has 33,000 Buddhist temples. What darkness.

Man in his own natural thoughts doesn't see himself as an image bearer, as a sinner, a sinner under condemnation, a sinner with a mind blinded by sin and a spirit dead to God. Only the Bible tells us this. No, instead man will turn light to darkness and call evil good. The gospel is that light that can pierce the darkness and give life and light to poor lost sinners.

Are we seeing the fruit of no Bible in our culture? Take the Ten Commandments out of the public square. Deny the Bible and the mention of God the Creator in our schools. Folks, the chickens are coming home to roost and it's going to get ugly! No Bible truth, no discernment, no salvation,

total deception. Evolution and gender twisting and gay marriage and abortion and broken homes, these are all the rotten fruit of darkness. All kinds of human advances and the glittering lights of the city assure us we are sophisticated and enlightened. Technology is speeding on faster and faster. We know so much, but men's hearts are sinking deeper and deeper into this dark abyss. You can have every slick and cool device imaginable, be in instant communication with anyone around the world with Skype, and yet be God's enemy with no work of grace in your heart, and die in your sins and finally stand before Christ at the great white throne judgment. Your name will be absent from the book of life and you will plunge into the lake of fire forever, with no mercy and no rescue! Poor lost sinners need the shining beams of the Bible to shine the way to the cross!

How about you? Are you paying attention to the light? Peter says we'll need this light until what he saw as a preview actually happens in reality, when the coming day of Christ's return dawns and our hearts are flooded with His light, when we see Him face to face, the One who saved us by His grace! It will happen! What a glorious day that will be. But until then our hearts will go on singing, following this lamp to our feet and light to our path!

Your Bible is not a collection of the writings of mere human opinions – v. 20

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation...

We don't need to take much time here, except to notice two great truths. There is nothing more important for you than to understand the doctrine of your Bible. Know this first of all; here is something of paramount importance. There are a lot of voices and books and systems and religions and movements and cults and all kinds of bizarre things out there in the darkness. Here is something you need to stop and understand – the doctrine of Scripture.

Here's the big question. Where did the Bible originate? The word "is" isn't a matter of what "is" is. It means "originated." Where did this book come from? Peter emphatically denies that your Bible is the product of mere human opinions. There are various interpretations here.

The Roman Catholic Church says, "See, you can't interpret the Bible on your own. You need the church." They said that was Luther's problem. He thought he could sit down with the Bible and interpret it himself. That's why Rome didn't want the people to have the Bible. They kept the people in darkness. Today they encourage people to read the Bible, but insist that interpretation be left to the church.

The Bible always frees people who know it and believe it. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Peter would have given us a hearty "Amen!" for our banner of solas. He never claimed to be the proto-pope or have any special authority over the entire church. His only authority was the Word of God, to which he himself submitted and calls us to submit.

What God is saying here is this. Your Bible is not the product of the whim and wit of clever Jewish philosophers. Your Bible is not like the Koran, spun out of the brains of Mohammed who claimed he received the revelation from Gabriel over many years, and then called it Islam's holy book. Your Bible is not like the book of Mormon, spun out of the brains of a young unstable man named Joseph Smith who claimed an angel named Moroni appeared and told him where some golden plates were buried 2600 years earlier with a message for Joseph's days. He dug them up, had special spectacles to read them, and then translated the Book of Mormon from them or from looking at stones in a hat that no one else ever did see. Mere human notions.

That's what Peter's talking about. Not by mere human notions and speculations. This is of first importance. You can trust your Bible because it didn't come out of mere human minds.

Your Bible is the divine revelation by God's Spirit through human authors – v. 21

for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

God wants us to get this. Notice the word “ever.” That’s emphatic. Put three lines under it. “No” and “ever.” The Bible is not the product of mere men. You have 66 books, you have around 40 authors, you have about 1500 or more years, and it all harmonizes into one grand story. You have no contradictions while you have authors from all walks of life, from the palace to the farms, from the fishery to the university. Most people think the Bible is just a bunch of writings produced by people who decided to write some spiritual stuff.

No, the writers were driven and moved, not by their own will or decisions, but “carried” along by the Holy Spirit. The word “moved” (Greek: phero) is the source of our word ferry. When God chose someone to write His Word, the Spirit of God carried or ferried the author along, guiding his every word, making sure he didn’t write anything wrong. Note that this is different from dictation. God didn’t say, “OK, John, now write, ‘In’ ‘the’ ‘beginning’ ‘was’.” You get the idea. The Spirit carried men along in writing Scripture, using their unique history and personality and minds, so that Isaiah’s writings are different than Zechariah’s, and Paul’s are different than Peter’s!

When the prophets wrote God’s message, they often didn’t even understand what they wrote. Look at 1 Peter 1:10-11, “the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.” That’s so interesting! Zechariah wrote his stuff, and then looked at it and thought, “What did I write? I have no idea. I’ve got to study this to figure out what I wrote!”

There’s one more very important truth here. It is only the Bible that is God’s revelation written by men as they were carried by the Spirit. The Spirit isn’t doing that work anymore. But let me warn you, people use the Spirit to justify any and every thing. They’ll say the Spirit is leading them to do this and that, sometimes in direct contradiction to what the Spirit moved authors of the Bible to write. Just two weeks ago the PCUSA, the sixth largest denomination in America and not to be confused with the PCA denomination, met in Detroit. They approved a number of utterly unbiblical recommendations. One was that PCUSA pastors are free to perform “any such marriage they believe *the Holy Spirit* calls them to perform (emphasis added).” Then, to add insult to injury, they added that this decision was “the result of deep discernment to hear God’s voice and discern God’s will.” Friends, the Spirit of God did no such thing. People can claim the Spirit revealed this or that to them, but sayin’ it don’t make it so! Even the church itself can be a place of deep darkness in this world.

SO WHAT?

Know this. You can trust your Bible, people. It is God’s light for you in this growing darkness. It isn’t the product of mere human opinion. It is the product of the Spirit of God revealing the Word of God through men who wrote it down for us to read.

Pay attention! Listen up! Get your ears on! It’s a lamp to your feet, a light to your path. Read it. Get a reading plan and follow it through the good parts and the dry parts. You young guys, be dazzled with the God of this book. Pray for God to use the wisdom found here to make you a tower of strength, full of godly character, unashamed of Christ.

If you don’t know Christ, you probably think you are living in a well lit world, but you are really in darkness. Turn to Christ right now. Trust His work of paying for your guilt on that cross now. Repent of going your own way now. The Spirit moved Luke to write this promise in Acts 16:31 “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!”