

## The Gospel of the Saints

2 Peter 1: 16-21

Having spent several weeks in this opening chapter of Peter's second epistle, we have discovered his love and devotion for the church. He sought to strengthen their faith, encourage their spiritual maturity, provide guidance for their daily lives, and challenge them to continue in the faith. Peter desired the truths he had taught them to remain long after his decease.

Peter opened this letter by striving to instill biblical principles in their lives. Basically, but not insignificantly, Peter taught them the Word of God, and in particular the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Really, when we pause to consider the entirety of Scripture, the Bible's ultimate purpose is to expose the reader to the Gospel, leading to salvation, and then a life of adherence to the Gospel. Having been transformed by the Gospel in salvation, the believer's life ought to be continually shaped by the Gospel.

As we discuss the [aspects](#) of Peter's instruction, I want to consider: [The Gospel of the Saints](#).

**I. The Foundation of the Gospel** (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](#). Our text today begins with Peter's defense of the foundation of the Gospel. Consider:

**A. The Truth Revealed** (16a) – [For we have not followed cunningly devised fables](#). Peter adamantly rejected the modern teachings and philosophies of that day. Realizing the church was surrounded by Gnostics, those who embraced a variety of religious practices and deities, mixed with human philosophy, he declared he had not preached mere fables. The Gospel and teachings of Christianity were not fairy tales or human legend. The Gospel was founded upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. The Gospel was not a story born of man's desire to deceive and mislead the masses. He shared the truth of Christ – His death, burial, and resurrection for the salvation of humanity to restore our relationship to God. He wanted the church to know and believe the Gospel was absolute truth and could be trusted to endure!

**B. The Testimony Conveyed** (16b) – [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](#). Peter had faithfully preached and proclaimed the power of the Lord and the promise of His return for those who believe upon Him unto salvation. Everyone would not believe the message Peter preached, but he had no doubt about the truth of the Gospel. In fact, he had been

an eyewitness to the power of the Lord and the work He accomplished upon the earth. Peter had witnessed the miracles and heard the authority with which Jesus spoke. He had entered the borrowed tomb and found Him no longer there, having resurrected just as He promised. He had shared a meal with the resurrected Christ, seeing Him alive and well. He was among those who received the Great Commission and watched speechless as Jesus ascended into heaven. He had received the power and anointing of the Spirit at Pentecost. Peter was an eyewitness to the majesty and power of Christ! (I have never experienced the Lord in a physical form, but I too have experienced the presence of His power through the Spirit. I am an eyewitness to His majesty!)

**II. The Confirmation of the Gospel** (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. <sup>[18]</sup> And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Peter sought to reveal the solid foundation of the Gospel, and that was further affirmed through a divine confirmation of the person and work of Christ. Consider:

**A. The Source** – Peter shared another eyewitness encounter he had with the Lord and the heavenly Father as he was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus. While they were there, a voice came out of heaven from God the Father. He declared that Christ was in fact His beloved Son, and He was well pleased with Him. The majority of mankind may have rejected Jesus as the Christ, but Peter witnessed confirmation from God regarding Him.

- The believers in Peter's day dealt with doubters and scoffers. Those remain today, and they will continue until the end. All will not believe, but we can rest assured in the promises and Word of God regarding the person and work of Christ. He was, and is, the only begotten of the Father. He finished the work of redemption as He died on the cross for our sin. He rose again triumphant, securing justification and eternal life for all who believe. We may never hear God speak in an audible voice, but we know that Jesus is the Christ and the Gospel is true!

**B. The Substance** – Peter also revealed that God the Father offered honor and glory unto Christ the Son. The Father was pleased with the obedient submission of Jesus in fulfilling the work of redemption. He has been given a name which is above every name, elevated to a preeminent position. Following His resurrection, Jesus ascended back to heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of God. He will one day return to earth to rule and reign in power and glory. All who have ever lived will stand before Him as the sovereign Judge. Phil.2:9-11 – Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>[10]</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>[11]</sup> And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**III. The Transformation through the Gospel (19)** – *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.* Peter then reminded the church of the transformation that comes about through a personal encounter with the Gospel by faith. Consider:

**A. The Certainty (19a)** – *We have also a more sure word of prophecy.* Peter referred to the prophecies given in the Old Testament regarding the coming of Christ. He spoke of the instruction it gave regarding a right relationship with God. The prophets of old prophesied of the coming of Christ. Jesus fulfilled every one of those completely as He lived upon the earth, died for our sin, and rose again in triumphant life. The varied pictures revealed by different prophets, all came together in the life and work of Christ. The Law governed man and revealed how he was to live. This was given to reveal the depravity of mankind and our need for a Savior. Christ didn't abolish the Law; He fulfilled it. Peter declared man is not to strive for perfection through adhering to the Law, but seek salvation through a personal relationship with Christ.

**B. The Responsibility (19b)** – *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.* Christ fulfilled the plan of God for redemption. He alone secured salvation for humanity. The entirety of Scripture points to the work and fulfillment of Christ. That is the central message of the Bible. Peter admonished the reader to take heed to the Word, seeing Jesus as the Christ and responding by faith unto salvation. They were to search the Scriptures, seeking Christ with a pure heart, until the Light of Christ illuminated their hearts and the day Star arose in their lives!

▪ That is a beautiful and poetic description of salvation. I am thankful for this sure Word of prophecy that illuminated by dark and sinful heart. I rejoice for the day that I realized my need and responded to Christ in repentance and faith. At that moment the day Star arose in my heart and He has continued to shine since that time! *2 Cor.4:6 – For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

**IV. The Inspiration of the Gospel (20-21)** – Finally Peter spoke of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the Gospel message. Again, he had not followed cunningly devised fables, but a certain Word from the Lord. Consider:

**A. The Purity (20)** – *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.* Peter declared the Scriptures could be trusted and considered reliable and true. The words

recorded were not mere opinions or ideas of men. These had not written what they thought was truth, or what they desired in a relationship with God. The Bible had not come from the wisdom of men. It had been divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit.

- Peter also revealed that the word he shared was consistent with the teachings of the Bible. There was no contradiction in his writings and those previously written. He was not sharing a fable or false doctrine, but the truth of God.
- The best commentary for Scripture is Scripture itself. If your interpretation of a passage contradicts the teaching of another passage, you need to reevaluate your interpretation. There are no contradictions in the Word. The message of the Gospel is pure and substantiated by the rest of Scripture!

**B. The Authority** (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.* Peter affirmed the prophecies of old were not the opinions of men, nor were they written to advance man's agenda. These men penned the words that the Holy Spirit inspired them to write. *2 Tim.3:16 – All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* Since the Scriptures were not the opinions or thoughts of men, but given of God through the Spirit, it was completely reliable and should serve as the sole authority for all of faith and practice in life. These had been given the Word, and they were obligated to abide by the Word.

- The whole of Scripture and the Gospel message can be trusted. Through the Word we see the provision of Christ for our salvation. We find the utter depravity of mankind and our need for redemption. Through the witness to the Gospel in the Word of God, we are convicted of sin and led by the Spirit unto repentance and faith, leading to salvation. Following our salvation, we find much instruction for sanctified living, seeking to conform to the image of Christ and live in a way that honors Him. We find assurance of life and hope for future! God's Word is truth and serves as the authority and guide for our lives!

**Conclusion:** I am thankful for the Gospel and the eternal truth it reveals. Jesus alone secured salvation for humanity, and He alone is the way of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. The world continues to doubt and deny the Truth, but we can rest in its certainty. Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? Have you responded in repentance and faith unto salvation? If so, are you seeking wisdom and instruction from the Word? If there are needs today, come to Christ!