

Facts, not Fables!

For: Voice of the Church

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The Psalmist says to God in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (ESV). But how can we be sure that the Bible is reliable, grounded in reality, and factual? This is the very thing that the Apostle Peter wanted to assure his readers of when writing his second letter.

Peter writes about false prophets coming (2 Pt. 2:1). Peter writes about scoffers coming who will claim that the gospel promise of Christ’s Second Coming in glory at the end of this world’s history is a fable (2 Pt. 3:3,4). But Peter tells us to focus on the Word of God and its predictions (2 Pt. 3:1,2). Peter says that it’s all true!

There is no reason to scoff and declare that the gospel is a myth. There were eye-witnesses of Christ’s majesty! Peter writes: “For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty” (2 Pt. 1:16).

Who are the “we” Peter is referring to? This refers first of all to Peter, James and John, who were with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessed Christ receiving honour and glory. And by extension, it refers to all the apostles who preached the apostolic message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen; they had been eye-witnesses of so much!

Here is what had happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ had taken those three disciples – Peter, James, and John – up the mountain to show them that the way of suffering would be the way to glory. This was because they could not accept that Christ had to suffer and die (Mt. 16:21,22). Christ was going to have it confirmed for them on the mountain!

When they were on the mountain, Christ’s appearance changed! As it says in Matthew 17:2, “...he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.” Here was something of the glory the Son had with the Father before the world began, and here was something of the glory Christ would have after his suffering and death. The point was: suffering would be the way to glory!

Then Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke of Christ’s “departure,” which Christ was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Lk. 9:31; Mt. 17:3). It says very literally in Luke 9:31 that they discussed Christ’s “exodus.” This underlined what Christ had said about the necessity of his suffering and death at Jerusalem (Mt. 16:21). The *law* as represented by Moses and the *prophets* as represented by Elijah pointed to Christ’s suffering and death as the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation by which he would lead his people out of the slavery of sin and death. Moses and Elijah appeared in glory too (Lk. 9:31), which indicates that glory awaits those who put their hope and trust in Christ!

To top it off, the voice of God the Father sounded out of the cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration. As Peter writes in 2 Peter 1:18, the three disciples heard it: “...we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven...” They heard the Father saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Mt. 17:5; 2 Pt. 1:17).

With those words, God the Father was alluding to several passages from the Old Testament (Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1). Those passages were prophecies about the coming Christ, and they make clear that the way of suffering would be the way to glory. That's why Peter writes in 2 Peter 1:19, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed...." God the Father *confirmed* the Old Testament Scriptures on the Mount of Transfiguration!

In other words, what Scripture says about Jesus Christ is not a myth or a fable; it's a fact! Scripture is about facts, not fables! Scripture is grounded in reality and is reliable. It's as real as the heavenly glory the disciples *saw* on the Mount of Transfiguration was real. It's as real as the voice the disciples *heard* from heaven was real. God gave those disciples as our eyes and ears to bear witness to us so that we might believe the Bible; they saw and heard the Word being confirmed on the Mount of Transfiguration!

In 2 Peter 1:16, Peter speaks about "...the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..." – the power and coming which would be mocked by scoffers (2 Pt. 3:3,4). This "coming" refers to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of this world's history. Christ will return to judge the living and the dead (2 Pt. 3:7-13). The church calls people to be ready for the return of Christ in glory. On the mountain, the disciples saw something of the honour and glory of Christ which will be fully revealed at his Second Coming. Peter tells us that the return of Christ is a fact not a fable because they saw something of Christ's majesty (2 Pt. 1:16).

Are you ready for Christ's return?

What the disciples saw and heard on the mountain reinforces that we must pay attention to the Word of God because the Father confirmed the Word from heaven. Peter says in 2 Peter 1:19, "And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention...." There is an urgency about this because we must be ready for the Second Coming of Christ! Are you paying attention to the Word? Are you reading and studying it? Are you attending church faithfully to hear the preaching of the Word? Do you believe the Bible?

We are called to believe the gospel. It is preached from week to week so that we may believe and share in Christ's saving merits and the promise of eternal life. We have eye-witness testimony! Would we really doubt and question that? Would we really discredit and disbelieve that? If you cannot believe that eye-witness testimony, what would you believe? We generally believe the eye-witness testimony we hear on the news today. And the Bible is filled with so much eye-witness testimony! That is what the church preaches!

Peter characterizes the Word in 2 Peter 1:19 as "...a lamp shining in a dark place...." This world is a dark place without the light of God's Word. What lasting hope and comfort is there apart from the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ? Yes, our very hearts are in a state of darkness without the light of God's Word. We stumble around in darkness without the light of God's Word. Don't we see it in the lives of so many in this world? Maybe we see it in the lives of loved ones who are straying from God's Word. Maybe we see it in our own lives as our lives spiral into ever greater darkness because we aren't listening to God's Word. But by God's grace, we receive light on our path from his Word and through the working of his Holy Spirit.

Peter tells us to focus on the Word of God until Christ returns when Peter continues in 2 Peter 1:19 by telling us to pay attention to the Word "...until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts..." The morning star is a light-bearer, and this is a reference to Christ (Rev. 22:16). When Christ returns in glory, then all remaining vestiges of darkness in the hearts of God's people will be done away with. Now there is still so much in the hearts of God's people which belongs to the night of darkness, but day will dawn when Christ returns. Then everything will be light! Then our hearts will see and know clearly! Then we will be completely focused on Christ!

The Bible is about facts, not fables. Pay attention to it. To make the point once more, Peter writes in 2 Peter 1:20,21 that "...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The Bible isn't myths or fables, a fabrication by people, but divine revelation! The Bible isn't man's word, but God's Word!

Do you confess the Bible to be God's Word?
