2 Peter 1:12-21

Key Verse 1:19

*We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*

Introduction: In today’s passage, the apostle Peter assured believers regarding the origin and effectiveness of the recorded gospels and scriptures. The messages of the Bible do not come from man, but from God. The gospel writers were eyewitnesses of the glory and majesty of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Some of them even heard the Father’s testimony about Jesus first hand. The Old Testament prophets spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. The message of the recorded gospels and scriptures work like a light in this dark world. The believers should pay attention to them, not to the messages of this world. They should pay attention to them until the light of God and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dawn in their hearts.

1. Read verses 12-15. What things had Peter reminded the believers? (12, 5-7) Why did Peter think that it was right to make every effort to remind them of these things? (13-15)

*So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have.* ***13*** *I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,* ***14*** *because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.* ***15*** *And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.*

1. Peter had reminded the believers to add to their faith seven other qualities for their spiritual growth and stability.
2. Peter thought that it was right to make every effort to remind them of these things because he knew his time in the body was limited. Here, we can learn the importance of what Peter shared with them in a couple of points. One, Peter thought it right to remind the believers of these things even though they already knew them and were already firmly established in the truth. Why remind someone of something they already know? Why should we teach them the truth that they are already firmly established in? It seems, the only reason would be to emphasize the great value and importance of what is being taught. Peter reminded them of these things again even at the risk of bothering, nagging or pushing them. These things were that important for them to remember. Two, Peter knew that he would soon depart from this life and wanted them to always be able to remember these things. This is something like a father lovingly giving his children his last words of advice from his death bed. These were the truths that they should be able to remember not only after Peter’s departure, but always. Again, they were that important.

One of the biggest obstacles to running a victorious race of faith from first to last could be forgetting. As believers, we are still sinners and we still tend to get caught up in the things of this world and forget about the things of God. In the history of Israel, the Israelites repeatedly forgot and did not remember the LORD their God (Jdg 3:7, 3:21, 8:34, Jer 3:21, Hos 8:14). Sinners easily forget God’s grace and lose sight of the life of faith. As Peter said previously, they may become nearsighted and blind and even forget that they had been cleansed of past sins (1:9). Peter wanted to remind them, even though they already knew, so that they would always be able to remember.

1. Read verses 16-18. What were the stories about Jesus based upon? (16) What did God the Father testify about Jesus? (17-18) What specific event was Peter referring to here? (Mat. 17:5, Mk. 9:7) In what respect did Jesus receive honor and glory from God the Father?

***16*** *For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.* ***17*** *He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* ***18*** *We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.*

1. The stories about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ were based on eyewitness testimonies. Peter and the other disciples/apostles witnessed Jesus’ power and majesty first hand. They did not follow cleverly devised stories, but followed the truth they personally saw and heard and touched. These were the same stories Peter had told to the believers. Moreover, other gospel writers also emphasized the same point Peter was making here (Lk 1:1-4, 1Jn 1:1-4). Some unbelievers or false teachers say that the stories about Jesus are all made-up myths, fantasies of fairy tales. Even many Age of Reason philosophers claimed that these stories held only moral but not supernatural value. And, many others even try to claim that the person Jesus Christ never really existed. However, the historical evidence of Jesus and his divine power and majesty are evident through the stories in the stories of the gospel writers and apostles' letters. Here, Even in Peter’s time, among First Century believers, there must have been doubters and false teachers making claims that disputed these stories. This is why Peter reminded the believers that he was an eyewitness. Eyewitness sources provide a reliable burden of truth. This is the same burden of truth accepted in a court of law. The standard used from the Bible is two or more witnesses (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6, 19:15; Matt 18:16; Jn 8:17; 2Cor 13:1; Heb 10:28). The testimony of two or more witnesses is enough to convict of murder and carryout capital punishment for the crime. There were many more than two witnesses of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and many of their testimonies are recorded in writing.
2. God the Father testified about Jesus, saying *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* God’s voice came down from heaven to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. The Father’s testimony affirmed Jesus as the Son of God. In this way, Jesus received honor, glory and majesty from God the Father. Here, the Father’s testimony revealed the knowing and loving relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son. There is a knowing relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father said, *“This is my Son …”* The Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father. It is through this knowing relationship that we can also know God (Matt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 1:18, 8:19, 14:7). There is also a loving relationship between the Father and the Son. The Father said, *“... whom I love …”* The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. Through love, Jesus also obeyed the Father, and pleased the Father. For this reason, the Father said, “... with him I am well pleased.” It is through this loving relationship between the Father and Son that we can also love and please God (Jn 3:35, 5:20, 8:42, 10:17, 14:21-23, 15:9-10, 16:27, 17:24). We can have a knowing and loving relationship with God only through Jesus. We can love and please God only through Jesus.

Here, the Father testified to knowing and loving Jesus, and to being pleased with Jesus. However, Jesus also demonstrated his knowing and loving relationship through his obedience. Jesus pleased God through his obedience--especially his obedience to die on the cross. Through this, Jesus revealed the knowledge and love of God to the world the most.

1. Here, Peter was most likely referring to the transfiguration. When Jesus was transfigured a voice came down from heaven. Matthew 17:5 says, *“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”* and Mark 9:7, *“Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”*  At that time, Jesus was glorified in the presence of some of his disciples. They witnessed it, and also witnessed the voice that came down from heaven to testify about Jesus. It was, so to speak, a complete audio-visual display of Jesus’ glory.
2. Jesus received glory from God, coming down from heaven, through his transfiguration and from the testimony of God the Father. The glory Jesus received was His glory as the Son of God. This glory confirmed Jesus’ standing before God as the One worthy of glory and honor and power, and wisdom and strength and praise, as stated repeatedly in the Book of Revelation (Rev 4:11, 5:12-13, 7:12).

1. Read verses 19-21. Why did Peter say that the prophetic message of the scriptures is completely reliable? (19a, 20-21) How should the believers respond to this reliable message? (19b) In what respect is it like a light shining in a dark place? What would happen to their heart when they pay attention to this message?

***19*** *We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.* ***20*** *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things.* ***21*** *For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

1. Peter said that the prophetic message of the scriptures is completely reliable because it came from God. It did not come from the prophet’s own interpretation or human will. Rather, the prophets spoke from God by the Holy Spirit. The origin of the Scriptures is fundamentally important. From Peter’s point of view, there wasn’t even a question that the scriptures had come from God and not from man. Here, Peter used the words “... spoke from God… ” and “... carried along by the Holy Spirit.” The scriptures came from God. God speaks through the scriptures. Men spoke God’s words through the scriptures. However, it did not happen in an ordinary human way, but through the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. The believers should respond to the completely reliable message of the Scriptures by paying attention to it. Peter said that they would “... do well to pay attention to it …” This also implies that they would not do well if they did not pay attention to it. What we pay attention to is important. This world gives us so many conflicting messages--through our schools, workplaces, friends, family and acquaintances. These messages inter into our thought world and demand our attention. Many of these messages are in direct opposition to the Scriptures. Ultimately, those messages don’t come from God, but from “... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6:12) Here, Peter is saying that rather than paying attention to those messages, we need to pay attention to the message of the scriptures--the message of God’s word. In order to *pay* attention, we need to *pay*. In a sense, there is a lot of personal cost involved. In other words, paying attention to the scriptures requires a lot of work, struggle and effort. We need to read, study, meditate and memorize scriptures. We need to take time to pray on, write testimony on, and to teach the scriptures. In this way, we need to struggle with God’s word in our thought world. As the apostle Paul said in 2 Cor 10:5, *“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (10:5). In this way, we will do well to pay attention to the Scriptures, and not do well not to.
3. The scriptures are like a light shining in a dark place in that they were sent by God into this dark word. The scriptures reveal the light of Jesus Christ. This world is full of darkness and despair because of being under the power of sin and death. But, God sent His word through the scriptures and then His living Word through Jesus Christ as a light to the world. According to Psalm 119, God’s word is a light and his words give light (Psm 119:105, 130). The light of God’s word gives insight, meaning and life direction.
4. When they pay attention to the message of the scriptures eventually the day would dawn and the morning star would rise in their hearts. It means that God’s word would make a spiritual breakthrough in their hearts and open their spiritual eyes. It would enlighten their heart and give life, purpose and direction. Though paying attention to God’s word they could meet and come to know Jesus as the light of the world and Son of God.

One word: Men spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.