

Text: 2 Pt 1.16-21

My ambition tonight is to complete 2 Pt 1, covering five verses. That will bring us to chapter two which is an overwhelming task to contemplate, but we will leave that for next week.

We took a break last week to think again about the list of virtues, comparing it to similar lists (and “opposite George” counter lists) in the New Testament.

Part of my reason for that was to highlight once again the importance Peter places on this list. It is the chief feature of chapter 1. Having completed it, he assures us of its benefits, then tells us he intends to keep reminding us of this list, even after he is gone.

I take that to be a direct reference to this epistle, which serves us now as a 2000 year old reminder of how Peter wants us to pursue the Christian life.

- Possibly also refers to the Gospel of Mark

That brings us to the last section of the chapter. As we get started, I’d like to point out a couple of “marker” words that we should always investigate when we come to them in the Bible: “for,” “so,” and “but” (we could also include “therefore” but it isn’t in this passage).

- V. 16: “For we did not follow...”
- V. 17: “For when He received...”
- V. 19: “So we have the prophetic word...”
- V. 20: “But know this first of all...”
- V. 21: “For no prophecy...”

Somewhere in my reading a commentator said that “for” either gives a reason or an explanation.

Let’s read the passage, but think about those words as we go:

Read 2 Pt 1.16-21

The assertion of v. 15: “I will also be diligent that ... you will be able to call these things to mind” is the foundation of the last paragraph.

“For we did not follow...” (16) gives a reason: I am an eyewitness.

“For when He received...” (17-18) explains what Peter saw.

“So we have the prophetic word...” (19) calls attention to something more sure than Peter’s eyewitness testimony [Note: “so” actually “and” in Gk]

“But know this first of all...” (20) clarifies why prophesy is more sure [note: “but” not in Gk]

“for no prophecy...” (21) explains the nature of prophecy

All of this gives us two main points for our study tonight:

1. I am authorized by my experience to teach these things
2. I also have a more sure authority: the miraculous word of God

Proposition: The sanctification lists are not “optional lifestyles for the truly zealous;” they are authorized obligations for all believers.

I. The sanctification list rests on apostolic authority (16-18)

A. The apostles stand in their position by a unique experience with Jesus Christ: they were eyewitnesses

Mt 10.1 ¶ Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Jn 15.16 “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

Ac 3.15 but put to death the Prince of life, *the one* whom God raised from the dead, *a fact* to which we are witnesses.

Ac 5.32 “And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Ac 10.39 “We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

B. The event mentioned here is the transfiguration

1. Eyewitnesses of majesty
2. Saw his glory
3. Heard the Father’s voice
4. When with him on the holy mountain

These details let us know the event he references

Only reference to the Transfiguration outside the Gospels

C. When Peter speaks, he has the authority to speak

1. His reminder (v. 15) is by his authority as an appointed apostle
2. The exhortation: “giving all diligence supply in your faith” carries the weight of apostolic command

D. Sanctification finds its motivation in what Peter declared

1. The power and coming = “the powerful coming”

I.e., the return of Jesus Christ

2. False teachers denied it (3.4); Peter affirms it *on the basis of the transfiguration* — the Transfiguration a down payment on the Return

II. The sanctification list rests also on the overarching authority of the Word of God (19-21)

A. The broader level of authority, however, is the word of God

1. This is more sure even than the apostolic experience
2. Lit. “we are having firmly the prophetic word”
 - a. More firm / more sure = “something that can be relied on not to cause disappointment, *reliable*”¹
 - b. “standing firm on the feet,” “steadfast,” “maintaining firmness or solidity,”² “often with reference to λόγος [word]”
3. The prophetic word is more sure: why?
 - a. Peter experienced the miracle of the transfiguration
 - b. We experience the miracle of inspiration
 - c. Inspiration confirms Peter’s experience

¹ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

² Heinrich Schlier, “Βέβαιος, Βεβαίω, Βεβαίωσις,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 600.

“the meaning is that we have another source of assurance that is even more reliable than the testimony of the apostles, namely, ‘the prophetic Word.’ It is a fuller and more explicit testimony of the messianic glory.”³

B. This more sure word is something we should pay attention to: “you do well”

1. The word is a lamp shining in the darkness
2. The word is our beacon until Jesus comes “the day dawns”

“Peter’s call to pay heed to the word is the main point of the text, for the entire letter up to this point has been pointing to this command.”⁴

C. The rationale of Scriptural authority: the doctrine of inspiration (20-21)

1. Not private interpretation, *i.e.*, not something someone just made up
2. Prophecy comes about by the Spirit moving in the hearts of men of God, called to the task

Conclusion:

Proposition: The sanctification lists are not “optional lifestyles for the truly zealous;” they are authorized obligations for all believers.

We will also find that the way we live matters. The false teachers lead men to claim religion but indulge their flesh. The Bible calls men to follow Christ and deny self.

³ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expositional Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 77.

⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 321.