

13. The Word of God

2 Peter 1:16-21

Read Luke 9:28-36

In Luke 9, Peter, James and John saw Christ in a glorious state. Now, if you'd have been there, do you think it would have strengthened your faith? Well, it didn't actually change them at all, at the time. They were half asleep. They still didn't understand Christ had to die, and that He would rise from the dead. And Peter was still to deny Him three times.

After the resurrection, everything changed. The apostles saw and talked with Him in His resurrection body. They had now become altogether different people. In Peter's second letter, he writes about the importance of what he saw that day when he saw His glory:

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.

[16] 我们从前，将我们主耶稣基督的大能，和他降临的事，告诉你们，并不是随从乖巧捏造的虚言，乃是亲眼见过他的威荣。

Peter was an actual eyewitness of Christ's majesty. He now knew for sure that Jesus Christ has all power, and that He's coming again, next time in glory. And Peter says that he's not just making all this up. It was only a personal experience. Why should anyone else believe what he had to say anyway? We can give our testimony to an unbeliever, but we should be aware that they're probably going to want more, otherwise they might think it's just a "*cunningly devised fable*." If our life has completely changed, and they've seen the difference, that's going to be the best witness we could ever be.

17 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.

[17] 他从父神得尊贵荣耀的时候，从极大荣光之中，有声音出来向他说，这是我的爱子，我所喜悦的。

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

[18] 我们同他在圣山的时候，亲自听见这声音从天上出来。

Peter testifies that when he was on the mountain he heard the voice of God Himself. Maybe we've had some tremendous experience of God in the past. And that's great. Let's recall it, and that can help to strengthen our faith. But, in difficult times, we can begin to doubt even these real experiences of God that we were once so sure of in the past. In the Lord's goodness, He's given us something far better and far more reliable than our own unprovable experiences of Him to strengthen our faith and to convince others of the truth. At the end of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, Christ said:

Luke 16:31

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

[31] 若不听从摩西和先知的的话，就是有一个从死里复活的，他们也是不听从。

The heart of man is so dark, even if he saw for himself someone rising from the dead, it won't necessarily convince him of anything. Even if he receives all the physical proof he demands, it still may not be enough to convince an unbeliever. Something far more is needed. The Lord has given us today a far greater witness in this world, even than any experience. He's given us "*Moses and the prophets.*" If we don't hear what they have to say, we won't be convinced by lesser proofs of God, like someone rising from the dead.

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:

[19] 我们并有先知更确的预言，如同灯照在暗处。你们在这预言上留意，直等到天发亮晨星在你们心里出现的时候，才是好的。

The only way we can know God for ourselves is if He chooses to reveal Himself to us. There are three ways God has done this: God has revealed Himself to all men in creation:

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

[20] 自从造天地以来，神的永能和神性是明明可知的，虽是眼不能见，但借着所造之物，就可以晓得，叫人无可推诿。

But Creation only reveals an all-powerful creator God exists, i.e. His "*eternal power and godhead.*" That's enough to render all men without excuse for their sin, because they know they're responsible to this God. But for us to know anything else about God, His love, His justice, His mercy, His plan of salvation, we need Him to reveal more.

The second way He has revealed Himself is in Jesus Christ. God became a man:

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

[14] 道成了肉身住在我们中间，充充满满的有恩典有真理。我们也见过他的荣光，正是父独生子的荣光。

But Christ only came into the world for a short time. Most of us never actually physically saw Him. So the Lord has revealed Himself in a third way, by provided a completely reliable witness to Him accessible to everybody in every age. And that's what we've got in the Scriptures. "*Moses and the prophets.*" This is what we need. We do well to take heed to this book. It is like a light that shines in a dark place. It's all we've got. All other writings

in the world are purely the ideas of men. But this is altogether different. It's the Word of God Himself. It's a reliable history book. It's an accurate record of what we need to know about the life, death and resurrection of Christ. It's a reliable guide as to what God requires of us. It's a reliable manual of Christian living. It's everything we need.

2 Timothy 3:16,17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

[16] 圣经都是神所默示的，于教训，督责，使人归正，教导人学义，都是有益的。[17] 叫属神的人得以完全，预备行各样的善事。

The Scriptures weren't written by a single man. If that was the case, it would just be somebody's opinion. Mohammed wrote the whole of the Koran. Joseph Smith wrote the whole of the Book of Mormon. The words of one man can't be a witness to anybody:

2 Corinthians 13:1

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

[1] 凭两三个人的口作见证，句句都要定准。

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written over about 1600 years, by many different authors, who all bear testimony to the same one true living God.

But, you may say, aren't there contradictions in the Bible? There are several accounts of the same event, with seemingly different information. Let's suppose we read a novel or watch a film. It's fine first time around. But read or watch it a second time, and a third time, and we'll soon discover mistakes or continuity errors. And that's what it's like with every work of man. They all contain mistakes. But with the Bible, the opposite is the case. When you first read it, you might think there are lots of contradictions in it, but the more you read it, the more these apparent contradictions are resolved. And that's because, although many human authors wrote the Scriptures, they're not the words of men:

20-21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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.

[20] 第一要紧的，该知道经上所有的预言，没有可随私意解说的。[21] 因为预言从来没有出于人意的，乃是人被圣灵感动说出神的话来

The Holy Spirit moved the writers to write the words God wanted. And so we need the Holy Spirit to understand the words properly. There are many people who know the Bible well, but they're wrong because they don't have the Holy Spirit. And there are many who say they've got the Holy Spirit, but ignore the Bible altogether. We need both. Christians know there's something different about this book. It moves us whenever we read it:

Luke 24:32

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

[32] 他们彼此说，在路上，他和我们说话，给我们讲解圣经的时候，我们的心岂不是火热的吗？

Jeremiah 20:9

Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

[9] 我若说，我不再提耶和華，也不再奉他的名讲论，我便心里觉得似乎有烧着的火闭塞在我骨中，我就含忍不住，不能自禁。

The Word of God is alive. It is living and powerful:

Hebrews 4:12-13

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

[12] 神的道是活泼的，是有功效的，比一切两刃的剑更快，甚至魂与灵，骨节与骨髓，都能刺入剖开，连心中的思念和主意，都能辨明。[13] 并且被造的，没有一样在他面前不显然的。原来万物，在那与我们有关系的主眼前，都是赤露敞开的。

The Bible is living and powerful. It's got power to convert the soul, to change hearts, to convince of the truth. And it has power to help the believer grow in the faith:

Psalms 19:7,8

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

[7] 耶和華的律法全備，能苏醒人心。耶和華的法度确定，能使愚人有智慧。耶和華的训词正直，能快活人的心。[8] 耶和華的命令清洁，能明亮人的眼目。

The Bible is exciting to the believer. It burns within his bones. But there are many others who are totally unmoved by it. Terry Waite was the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy during the war in Lebanon in the 1980s. He was captured by Muslims and imprisoned in a cellar for five years on his own. Years later he spoke at a Christian convention. He said that after four years of imprisonment, his captors gave him a Bible. What a wonderful provision from God! But he said "I read through it several times (he had nothing else to do), and I found no comfort in it whatsoever." I know we're not supposed to judge people, but, at that time, He can't possibly have known the Lord - because the Bible meant nothing to him. Maybe he's become a Christian since. Contrast that with a man I met once. When he was young, he was walking with some friends, and they came across an empty church. The door was open and there was

nobody around, so they went inside. And, just fooling around, they pretended to play church. His mates all sat in the pews, and he got into the pulpit and pretended to be the preacher. He opened the Bible randomly, and started reading from it, and as he was reading the words, suddenly in his heart he realised that it was all true. None of his other friends had any reaction at all to the words that were read, but his heart had been changed forever. Suddenly, what we've always thought was just a boring stuffy book, comes alive. We realise that it's all true. Then it becomes so precious to us. Because it's living and powerful. It's got a life of it's own. It's God's Word, not man's.

Many, like Roman Catholics, want the church to be a higher authority than the Scriptures. So they tell us that the Bible is a product of the church - the church decided in about the fourth century which books would go in the Bible. But that's not true. This verse proves that. *"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* Scripture became Scripture as soon as it came off the pen of the writer, whether church councils recognised it as Scripture or not. The fact it took nearly 400 years for a church council to decide what Scripture was, just proves how long it takes church councils to agree on anything.

And they got it wrong. They got the 27 books of the New Testament right, but they decided that a Greek translation known as the Septuagint was the inspired Word of God. But it was a translation from the original Hebrew, and it contained 14 extra books, which we know today as the Apocrypha. That's why Roman Catholic Bibles contain these extra books. The original Hebrew is the inspired Word of God:

Romans 3:1,2

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

[1] 这样说来，犹太人有什么长处？割礼有什么益处呢？ [2] 凡事大有好处。第一是神的圣言交托他们。

How do I know that the Apocrypha is not the Word of God? It's got mistakes in it, the oracles of God were committed to the Jews not Greeks, and it doesn't burn in my bones when I read it. Let's go back to verse 19:

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.

你们在这预言上留意，直等到天发亮晨星在你们心里出现的时候，才是好的。

This book is more sure than our own experience. It's a light that shines in a dark place. It's the only light we've got. But we've only got it for a short time. *"until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."* One day, we'll get to glory, and no longer need it.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

[12] 我们如今仿佛对着镜子观看，模糊不清。到那时，就要面对面了。我如今所知道的有限。到那时就全知道，如同主知道我一样。

While we're here in this world, we need direction. We need guidance. We need the Lord to show us the way. Here, we still only see the things of God through a glass darkly. People disagree on many different Scriptures and their interpretation. And that's always going to be the case. But that doesn't stop the Scriptures being a light shining in a dark place. But the Lord will make sure that we've got enough light to see our way through this world, and bring us safely to our home in the next world. Do you want to know what heaven's like? There are glimpses of it in this book. Do you want to know what Christ was like? Do you want to know why He came into the world? He came into the world to save sinners. Let's read this book and find out all we can about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He can change our lives forever through this book. And this book can keep us from sin:

Psalm 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

[11] 我将你的话藏在心里，免得我得罪你。

Psalm 119:105

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

[105] 你的话是我脚前的灯，是我路上的光。

Christ said:

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

[17] 求你用真理使他们成圣。你的道就是真理。

This book is a far more sure than any experience we can ever have. To the extent that the truth from this book is preached, propagated and lived out in our lives, that's the extent to which the Lord can use us to bring people to Himself.