

This past week the Episcopal Church took official steps in further removing itself from the ranks of Christian Churches – those confessing the once delivered unto the saints. As I mentioned last week their presiding Bishop said that one does not need to personally trust in Christ as Savior, and in the past she has said that Jesus is not the only way of salvation. I said it before and I say it again – this is heresy.

In addition the Episcopal Church passed a resolution that any baptized person can be ordained to the ministry – thus removing any obstacles to those of a different sexual orientation to be ordained. In addition they are also debating liturgies for same-sex relationships.

This is just the result of a steady slide away from the authority of the Scriptures – the Bible, the Word of God. Once you cease to accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God and our sole rule of faith and practice you can believe and do anything you want. This is what has happened in many churches that now accept false teaching and doctrine as the norm.

It is not a question of interpretation, such as the difference between those that practice infant baptism and those who do not. It is really a matter of completely denying what the Scriptures teach – ignoring the facts as revealed in the Bible.

But then again, this is nothing new. As I said in the introduction to our study in 2nd Peter, false teachers were already arising in the church, and that is one of the purposes of Peter writing to the pilgrims of the dispersion.

Now, I will grant you that they did not have the completed canon of Scripture that we do – however, they did have the whole Old Testament, essentially the same that we have, and they had the writings of the Apostles and those eyewitnesses to the life and work of Jesus Christ. In addition we know that the Lord Jesus commissioned those first Apostles to go and make disciples – that is followers of the Lord Jesus – and he sent the Holy Spirit on each of them, to confirm the truth of the gospel.

This is exactly what Peter then tells those whom he is writing to. I would refer you to past sermons to see what Peter has already told them – but for now, I ask you to turn with me to 2 Peter 1:16-21 (READ).

Again, remember that when Peter is writing, it is the first generation following the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ – it hadn't been even 40 years. It was those first generation Christians that had been witnesses to the person and work of Jesus – and had been personally commissioned by him to tell others.

Consider what Peter first tells them: 2 Peter 1:16: *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”*

What Peter is telling his readers is: “hey, we didn't make this stuff up ... we didn't dream it up in our own minds ... it is not just some figment of our imagination – NO, on the contrary we *were eyewitnesses of His majesty*.”

In other words, they had seen the Lord Jesus Christ, in person – in the flesh, as it were – and they saw all that he did and heard all that he said.

And then we think about Peter – it was he who denied Christ on the night of his betrayal three times – and yet after the resurrection we also know that it was Peter who then proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was Peter, who tradition tells us, was crucified upside down, because he did not consider himself worthy to be crucified the same way as his Savior. This happened shortly after he wrote his second letter.

The whole point of this, is that Peter went to his death because of what he believed and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. That which he believed and taught was given to him by the Lord Jesus himself – *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”*

Again, what we have here is the Scriptures fulfilled – we know that the Old Testament Scriptures prophesied the conception, the birth, the life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that happened to our Savior in his life, was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the life of our Savior. These were historically verifiable facts. The Scriptures were fulfilled in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember what the Apostle Paul told them about the witnesses to the resurrection – the hinge on which Christianity rises or falls. Paul said this in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”*

In other words there was indisputable evidence as the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

This is what Peter told others about – *“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”*

Peter was an eyewitness to it all. Even to point of being there at the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what he tells his readers: 2 Peter 1:17-18: *“For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”*

Peter was there personally as a witness with James and John to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ from God the Father Himself. He was there on that *“holy mountain”* – when the God the Father confirmed that Jesus indeed was the Messiah ... that he was God in the flesh coming to earth after years of prophecies. And that is exactly why Peter is saying: I didn't make this stuff up – you can believe what I am telling you. The facts are true.

That is exactly what Peter tells them as he goes on – 2 Peter 1:19: *“And so we have the prophetic word*

confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...” The things that he tells us about the Lord Jesus Christ is that which had been prophesied in the Old Testament. In the life of Christ *we have the prophetic word confirmed.*

This prophetic word was a light to those in darkness. Again, another fulfillment of prophecy from Isaiah 9:2: *“The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.”*

Jesus is the light of the world. He reveals the darkness of sin and provides light so that we may see our sin. Again, these are the plain facts as revealed in the Scriptures.

As Peter continues he then gives us the reason for his confidence in the prophetic word – 2 Peter 1:20-21: *“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”*

The inspired Scriptures did not come about because someone had a dream, or thought he had a vision – NO, the facts came to the prophets through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God used His Holy Spirit to move the prophets to write what that did.

Again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we again quote one of the foundational verses on the inspiration of the Word of God – 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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Inspiration literally means “God-breathed” – as God inspired the writers of the Holy Scriptures and they wrote exactly what He wanted them to. Think about it – there was some 40 human writers of the Scriptures, writing over a period of 1500 years – and yet there are no contradictions and one theme from the beginning to the end – the redemption of the world through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the scriptures were not just an exercise – no, it was to provide the people of God with all they needed for “life and godliness” – as Peter said earlier in his letter – that is how to live in the world that God has placed them in and how to get to the world to come... How to get the guaranteed inheritance that have waiting for them in heaven.

One of the reasons that we are reading the Bible all the way through is to see what God has really said. Again, it is our standard ... our foundation. And you have to accept it all. You cannot pick and choose what you want to believe and hold to. It is either all or nothing.

By accepting false doctrine, or by saying that God didn’t mean what he said ... or that it doesn’t apply to us today, is essentially calling God a liar. And if that is case, why follow Him at all.

But we, as church, believe the whole of God’s Word. As I have said before, God did not give us His Word for our opinion, but for our obedience. And so, let us remember that we have all the facts that we need.