

Feed My Sheep: 1 & 2 Peter Prophecy and Scripture

Lesson #10 for June 3, 2017

Scriptures: Isaiah 53:1-12; Daniel 7:13-14; 2 Peter 1:16-20; Matthew 17:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

1. It is clear from this letter to his friends that Peter recognized that he was about to be crucified upside down. He wanted to leave them the best possible evidence that what he had taught them was certain and reliable. In his mind, that certainty was based on two facts: 1) Peter himself was an eyewitness to many of the events of the life of Jesus Christ; (2 Peter 1:8) 2) But, recognizing that his readers would not have had the eyewitness experiences that he had, he pointed to a more sure way of knowing that Jesus is the true Messiah, the evidence of prophecy. (2 Peter 1:19) What is the evidence of prophecy?
2. When speaking with Jews, the early disciples repeatedly used the prophecies of the Old Testament as a leading argument in favor of Christianity. In doing so, they were probably following the example of Jesus, including Jesus's conversation on the road to Emmaus. (Matthew 26:54; Luke 24:13-34; John 5:39-40)
3. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12; compare Ephesians 3:7-10. While facing death himself, Peter pointed his readers to two very important truths about Jesus: 1) The Old Testament prophesied about the sufferings of Jesus. But, it also prophesied that He would one day reign in glory. Psalm 22:1,17 give us the very words that Jesus spoke on the cross, telling us that His bones would not be broken and that they would gamble for His clothes. Isaiah 53:4-6 point out that He would bear our sins. But, despite that, we would think that His suffering was punishment sent by God—even though it was not. Zechariah 12:10 specifically mentions that He would be stabbed. 2) Jeremiah 33:14-15 tell us that, despite all of that, a descendent of King David would one day rule in righteousness. Daniel 7:13-14 tell us that He will rule all nations, races, and languages and that His kingdom will last forever and ever. (Compare Daniel 2:44.) Despite a death, there would be a resurrection.
4. Peter also assured his readers that they lived in a very special time in salvation history. Much of what was prophesied in the Old Testament had already been fulfilled. They had been taught about great truths that even the angels wanted to understand better. (1 Peter 1:12) But, even Peter's latest readers—those of us living today—would still have to wait for the glory which is to come. (1 Peter 1:11)
5. We live in an even more auspicious time in history. The only prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled are those directly connected with the second and third comings of Christ.
6. Read Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22; and John 12:27-33. How many of the people standing there understood what was happening? In these verses the Gospel writers recounted miraculous events that Peter himself had witnessed. Try to imagine how many miracles Peter actually saw Jesus perform in His three and one-half years of ministry! Peter himself had been commissioned by Jesus to perform miracles. (Matthew 10:8) And he had seen that Jesus rose from the grave after being crucified and buried, and He appeared to a large group of people in Galilee just as He had prophesied. (John 21:15)
7. In actual fact, the very first miracle directly connected to the life of Jesus on this earth was the appearance of Gabriel to Mary, predicting His birth. (Luke 1:26-38) The first miracle connected to His ministry was the miraculous appearance of the Father and the Holy Spirit

at the time of His baptism. (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22) The first physical miracle that we know about that Jesus performed was changing the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. (John 2:1-12)

8. Read 2 Peter 1:17-18. After Jesus appeared on the top of the mountain transfigured in dazzling white light, (Matthew 17:2; Luke 9:29) Jesus told His three closest followers—Peter, James, and John—not to tell anyone until all was fulfilled. They were to wait until Jesus had been raised from the dead. Later, Peter was free to tell everyone about that personal and private revelation on the mount of transfiguration. No doubt, that event stood out in Peter’s mind. He could not help but recognize that Jesus had a very special relationship with God, the Father. There were three times recorded in the Bible when God the Father spoke audibly to Jesus: 1) At the baptism (John 1:32-34); 2) On the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9); 3) In the temple courtyard (John 12:27-32).
9. Read 2 Peter 1:19. Compare Genesis 1:4; John 1:5; Isaiah 5:20; and Ephesians 5:8. Peter wanted us to recognize that the truths about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ shine a clear light on the truths about God, His character, and His government in contrast to the terrible darkness that had spread over the world because of the lies and misrepresentations of the Devil. We live in a darkened world ruled by the prince of evil. But, a glorious light has shown on those of us who are able to read, understand, and comprehend the truths of the Bible.
10. When Peter talked about the day dawning, do you think he was talking about the second coming of Jesus? Was he also talking about the glorious light shed into individual souls of people who come to understand and appreciate what Jesus has done for them? For those of us who did not have the privilege of being eyewitnesses of the events of the life of Jesus, Peter wanted to establish a very clear link between those events, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the certainties of our beliefs.
11. Read Matthew 24:14. What should we do when these stupendous truths flood into our minds?

The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God’s truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples. And it is from those who have received the light that it is to shine forth. The day-star has risen upon us, and we are to flash its light upon the pathway of those in darkness.—Ellen G. White, *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White** 220.1.

12. Have we clearly established in our own minds that the entire Bible is about Jesus Christ? Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. (1 Corinthians 1:1-4) It is God’s letter to us, His children. When properly understood in the larger context of the great controversy, every chapter and every verse is a revelation of the truth about God.
13. Read 2 Peter 1:19-21. To what prophecies do you think Peter was referring? And why did he go on to say that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation? Peter wanted us to understand that in contrast to the many “cunningly devised fables” that were believed by the pagans in his day and by many critics and even nominal Christians in our day, we have a faith that is based on eyewitness reports (2 Peter 1:16-18) and prophecies of Scripture. (2 Peter 1:19-21)
14. This certainly could not mean that we should not study the Bible for ourselves. Peter repeatedly emphasized the necessity of our learning the Scripture for ourselves. (1 Peter 1:10,13) Peter wanted us to understand that every Christian is supposed to be a part of a larger body of fellow Christians. (1 Corinthians 12:12-14) We are not supposed to be

imagining or dreaming up new ideas that set us apart from our fellow believers. We need to counsel together because we know that many false prophets, even false messiahs, are coming. Peter suggested that there were some of them present already in his day. (2 Peter 2:1) Thousands, and probably millions, of supposed Christians have wandered into fanaticism and error because they wanted to believe some new idea or new revelation separate from the larger body of Christians.

15. However, we must remember that the larger Christian church has repeatedly gone wrong in the past by ignoring the fairly obvious teachings of Scripture. Each of us is only safe as we study our Bibles for ourselves and carefully test every belief against the Scripture and then discuss those understandings of Scripture with our fellow believers. (Acts 17:11)
16. Read 2 Peter 1:19-21 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17. The Bible is not just a collection of stories made up by a group of people to entertain their friends. The writers were holy men of God moved by the Holy Spirit Himself. The only tested and proven foundation and guide is the Word of God. If we carefully follow its guidance, we have nothing to fear for the future.

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as Leader. **We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.** We are now a strong people, if we will put our trust in the Lord; for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for.—Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*,* January 29, 1893, par. 5; *Life Sketches** 196.2; *Testimonies to Ministers** 31.1; 3SM* 162.3. [Bold type is added.]

17. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul gave a brief outline of why he thought the Bible was so important. He mentioned three main points:
 - 1) The doctrines or teachings of the church which are Bible-based teach us the truth about God.
 - 2) Biblical guidance comes when we accept reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness. (See 2 Timothy 3:16; compare 2 Peter 1:19.) Those who carefully follow the guidance of Scripture and, thus, avoid evil, will follow the truth and will be protected by this revealed will of God.
 - 3) This wisdom will lead to salvation. (2 Timothy 3:15) All of Scripture is to teach us about God not only on a theoretical basis but also in watching God deal with His rebellious children through thousands of years. Is it any wonder that Peter regarded these marvelous truths as a bright light shining in a dark place? (2 Peter 1:19) Consider this from Ellen White:

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the

language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared: "Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God." Mark 12:24. **The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.** Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 598.2-599.0.

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 5, 331.2. [Bold type is added.]

18. This is why some of us use the *Good News Bible* which is written in words that ordinary people can understand.
19. Biblical scholars like Martin Luther have said repeatedly in various ways that the Scripture is supposed to explain itself. The Bible has an underlying unity in it that is our safeguard.

When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe His Spirit into your heart and impress your mind with the light of His word. The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects, you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book whose perusal strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennobles the mind, as does the perusal of this Book of books. Its study imparts new vigor to the mind, which is thus brought in contact with subjects requiring earnest thought, and is drawn out in prayer to God for power to comprehend the truths revealed. If the mind is left to deal with commonplace subjects, instead of deep and difficult problems, it will become narrowed down to the standard of the matter which it contemplates and will finally lose its power of expansion.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 4, 499.1.

20. A book-by-book study of the Bible has been an enormous benefit to those who have undertaken it with a serious intent. The very glory of God is revealed in its pages. We have produced and made available study guides for every book of the Bible on our Website at www.theox.org. See the "Study Guides" and the "Teacher's Guides."
21. Are there any doctrines or teachings which you believe or fear might be "cunningly devised fables"? Have you tried to investigate each Seventh-day Adventist doctrine in light of Scripture?
22. Why are so many people attracted to personal interpretations of Scripture? Why are they reluctant to submit their ideas to the evaluation and consideration of their fellow Christians? Subjective experiences which may be very impressive to us as individuals must never be our ultimate basis for truth. It is too easy for us to be deceived. Peter wrote about his own

sensory experiences; but, then he went on to talk about the more important fulfillment of prophecy.

23. We live in a time and place where incredible trust is placed on scientific experimentation. Observation through testing is supposed to lead to ultimate truth. But, even the very best experiments are tested by statistics which recognize that there is the possibility that results of that testing are not true and are just a coincidence!

We live in a very scientific age; yet cynicism abounds regarding the possibility for determining truth by objective methods. The means by which truth was supposed to be determined in the modern period was the empirical method—eliminating uncontrolled variables, such as the supernatural—so that all aspects of a matter could be accounted for under strict testing conditions with many observers over time in order to produce an assured result. In many areas, including religion, no consensus was produced over an extended period of time, so cynicism developed regarding the possibility of any assured result from this method. Consequently, postmodernism came in, denying any absolute truth or any metanarratives that fully explained something. Personal experience became the basis for truth, with all truth being subjective and relative to one's experience. How does Peter's message address this tension?—*Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 133.

24. How do you feel about Peter's claims based on his experiences on the mount of transfiguration? Should we dismiss those claims as the wild tales of a dreamer? Which is a more powerful evidence in your mind: 1) Scientific evidence? or, 2) Biblical evidence? Science can never really prove anything; it can only disprove something. And there is always at least a small chance that results of any scientific experiment just happened by chance.
25. What constitutes real experience?

Experience is said to be the best teacher. Genuine experience is indeed superior to mere theoretical knowledge, but many have an erroneous idea as to what constitutes experience. Real experience is gained by a variety of careful experiments, made with the mind free from prejudice, uncontrolled by previously established opinions and habits. The results are marked with careful solicitude....

That which many term experience is not experience at all.... There has not been a fair trial by actual experiment and thorough investigation, with a knowledge of the principles involved in the action....

Here is where we have met the greatest difficulties in religious matters. The plainest facts may be presented, the clearest truths, sustained by the word of God, may be brought before the mind; but the ear and the heart are closed, and the all-convincing argument is, "my experience." Some will say, "The Lord has blessed me in believing and doing as I have; therefore I cannot be in error." "My experience" is clung to, and the most elevating, sanctifying truths of the Bible are rejected....

Many examples might be given to show how people have been deceived by relying upon what they supposed to be their experience.—Ellen G. White, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene** 109-110 (1890 - Originally written in 1865 in a series "How to Live"); *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 3, 71; *RH*,*

July 27, 1886; *The Health Reformer*,* June 1, 1872; *Australasian Signs of the Times*,* December 19, 1904; *The Watchman*,* September 1, 1908.

26. Peter recognized that skeptics would question his accounts. And that, of course, is just exactly what has happened. Some skeptics want to claim that all the evidence that Peter laid down to prove his testimony is just more proof that this letter was not written by Peter himself but rather was written by someone else trying to prove he was Peter! Such people do not want to recognize that they were prophesied by Peter himself in 2 Peter 3:3.
27. We have been warned repeatedly in Scripture not to be misled by any evidence presented just through our senses. (Matthew 7:15; 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; and Revelation 13:13-14)
28. In our day, we recognize that not only are there people who can use “sleight of hand” to deceive but also the art of deceiving the senses has become a major goal of the movie industry. Think of all that Hollywood has done to deceive the eyes!
29. We are hastening toward the day of the second coming of Jesus Christ. And nothing, absolutely nothing should be allowed to distract our attention from this most important truth. Jesus Christ Himself is the “Day Star.” (2 Peter 1:19) Astronomers identify the planet Venus as the morning star because it shines brighter than any other object in the heavens. In the same way, Jesus is to shine brighter than anything else in our lives.
30. Peter wanted us to understand that nothing else is as important to us every day as reading, understanding, and developing a full confidence in the prophetic Word of God. It is impossible for any human being or group of human beings to have made up these prophecies and caused them to come true hundreds of years later.
31. But, we must also recognize that the Bible was not written just for scholars.

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,* book 1, 21.1.

32. She added this clarification:

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.— *Ibid.** 21.2.

33. Do you have any questions about the reliability of Scripture? Do you fully value every part of Scripture? When was the last time you read through the Old Testament?
34. We may say that we believe in the Bible. Remember that the devils also believe the Bible. (James 2:14-17) But, do we trust its teachings and make them the guiding light of our lives? Are we committed to the truth? That is the question! Has it transformed you?

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*Electronic version.

Info@theox.org

Last Modified: April 23, 2017

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