

Men Spoke from God  
2 Peter 1:16-21

## Intro

Would you be surprised to hear that Christianity is actually thriving in America and in fact throughout the world? What about the stats most of us have seen about the rise of spiritual “nones”, declining church attendance, young people leaving the church as they head out on their own?

Glenn Stanton - The Myth of the Dying Church - the reason for this perception:

The answer is that traditional mainline denominational churches, in the main, are declining and in many cases doing so rapidly. “In contrast, the Indiana/Harvard Research showed that mainline Protestants have declined precipitously from 35 percent of the American population in 1972 to 12 percent of the population in 2016. ...The decline of the mainline churches began in the 1960s and early 1970s as they started to question and even change their positions on historic Christian basics like the existence of miracles, the reality of sin, and the actual atoning death of Christ and His resurrection, as well jettisoning Biblical convictions about sex, gender issues, and abortion. People ran for the doors of these churches in mass with every new compromise, and this exodus continues today. Compromising Biblical truths was and is a devastating church-growth strategy. It could hardly be worse if these pastors asked their parishioners to leave and never come back. “So, is Christianity shrinking? Not if you are talking about Biblically faithful congregations that call their people to genuine Christian discipleship.” (Glenn Stanton quoted in Kairos article)

Encouraging to hear that Christians are insisting on biblical faithfulness in a world of loud voices seeking to undermine God’s Word. Mr. Stanton provides an example of this phenomenon East Lake Church in Seattle:

EastLake Church began as your average hipster evangelical church appealing to and connecting with young people. The founding pastor Ryan Meeks watched his church explode in the early years, seeing more than one hundred new people come week after week. The church continued to grow in terms of people in the seats, volunteers, services, staff, finances and additional campuses throughout Seattle.

But a few years ago, Meeks made a major theological shift. With great fanfare, he announced one weekend that EastLake would become fully supportive of homosexuality. No, they would not just be kind and gracious to people who identify as same-sex attracted who come through their doors. They were already doing that. All churches should do that. He decided that his church would now affirm, even embrace, homosexuality itself. In the course of one weekend, they became a pro-LGBT church, with Meeks making stunning statements like, ‘I don’t care if the Bible says, “Gay people suck. I have lots of things I disagree with about the Bible.” He disparaged the Scriptures in other ways, telling his congregation, “If we need to consult an

ancient book to know what to do when a human is standing in front of us, I think we are screwed already.” That from a pastor trying to make his church more relevant and welcoming to the people in his city. They changed nothing else but this position and had their pastor’s radical statements on the record.

So, what happened at EastLake Church after this shift? The church imploded. They lost members by the hundreds. Their budget tanked by millions of dollars. They had to lay off much of their staff and close campuses. All because their pastor said, “I don’t care what the Bible says!” and began making theological decisions that proved it.

The letter of 2 Peter is all about addressing and opposing false teachers who are undermining and disparaging the truthfulness and reliability of Scripture. They are disagreeing with the Bible and Peter presents his case for them and us to have confidence in the Scriptures given to us by God

He wants to build confidence in us this morning. The reliability and truthfulness of God’s Word so that we build our lives on this truth and live-in light of the promises throughout Scripture that Christ is coming again

Two points - his eyewitness testimony - the witness of the prophetic word

#### I. His Eyewitness Testimony (16-18)

- A. Throughout chapter 1, Peter has been exhorting us, he’s been exhorting us to believe the gospel, to live holy lives in light of Christ’s coming return - he’s reminding established believers in all of these things because Peter is a wise pastor, he knows how even established believers can drift away from the truth and to sincere faithfulness to God
  - 1. v. 15 His effort in writing this letter is so that all who read this letter are better equipped to recall all of these things he has been pointing us to - the grace and power of God, the high and holy calling on our lives to glorify God, the coming of the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- B. As we come to our text we are coming into the body of this letter and for the remainder of this letter he has crafted a defense of the faith and the lifestyle that all believers are called to - a rebuke against false teachers who were present in their midst. We don’t know the full content of this false teaching but it included a denial of Christ’s return and judgement and in light of that denial they were living immoral and ungodly lives

[3] knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. [4] They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the

fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” (2 Peter 3:3-4)

- C. He presents an argument - he informs them that the coming power and glory of Christ's return - well he's already experienced a taste of it as an eyewitness of the majesty and power of the glorious Christ

[1] And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. [2] And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. [3] And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. [4] And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." [5] He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." [6] When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. [7] But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." (Matthew 17:1-7)

- D. Not a cleverly devised myth - we - those present at the transfiguration - eyewitness of his power and majesty - we saw how JESUS CHRIST WAS honored and glorified by God the Father as God himself - the Majestic Glory - spoke from heaven - "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased - as we fell down in his presence upon that holy mountain of transfiguration - an eyewitness and an earwitness - I was there - I saw and heard - he is no clever myth writer - HE HAS THE RECEIPTS
- E. Question - why does he refer to the transfiguration as a means to prove the imminent and glorious and powerful return of Christ? Why not his resurrection or his ascension for instance? Does it seem a strange way to make the argument?

[27] For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. [28] Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (Matthew 16:27-28)

1. The transfiguration was that moment when his transcendent glory - veiled in true humanity - was laid before their eyes
2. They saw a foretaste of the Son of Man coming in his kingdom - the kingdom described in Ch. 1:11 - affirmed and confirmed that the Son of Man is going to come with his angles in the glory of his Father and will repay each person according to what he has done.

Illustration: Sneak peak - movie trailer - preview

Illustration: Last year was 75th anniversary of Hiroshima. Who can forget the terrifying footage of the mushroom cloud blossoming from the ground in Japan. "Little Boy" Estimates of around

70,000 fatalities - experienced the deadly power of that atomic bomb. That powerful bomb is basically peanuts compared to what we have currently - 75x more powerful than that bomb. The very real power of "little boy" revealed the power of the a-bomb - it is a kind of promise that if there is to be one of the more advanced bombs dropped on a city - we can only imagine how exponentially powerful it would be but we do have some idea having seen that smaller demonstration in the past

#### F. Application

1. Recounting his eyewitness testimony to build confidence and expectation for the return of Christ. HELPFUL - I would guess there are few of us who think to much or too highly of the return of Christ - throughout the NT - Peter and the rest of the biblical authors are constantly calling us to look to the return of Christ as our great and blessed hope
2. The glory that we read of Christ in the NT - rooted in the gospels that describe the life, death, resurrection of Christ - SHAPE OUR LIVES - is intended to whet our appetites to create longing in us for that day when experience the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ - we will be eyewitness - we will be with him on the holy mountain of this world redeemed in glory.

#### II. The Witness of the Prophetic Word (19-21)

##### A. v. 19 and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed - referring to OT prophecy

1. Eyewitness big deal - we have something more sure - the Scriptures - this prophetic word - the words of OT Scripture - you will do well to pay attention as a lamp shining in a dark place
  - a) Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

We are on pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God. (Michael Green)

2. God has generously, kindly, mercifully given us this lamp- the light of his Word - to govern and illuminate our pilgrimage
  3. But the brilliance of the Scriptures that lights our pilgrimage through this dark world - the day is coming when we will no longer need the Scriptures – UNTIL
- B. UNTIL the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts - beautiful way of describing the return of Jesus Christ for he is the one spoken and prophesied of in the OT

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;  
(Numbers 24:17a)

**C.** And he is the one who himself testifies to the churches

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” (Revelation 22:16)

1. When he returns - the day will dawn - that great and glorious day - THE DAY - the day of the Lord when he returns

Now the prophetic word is a light in the darkness, but when the darkness disappears with the coming of the dawn, we will know even as we are known. Then the light of Christ will be in our hearts, and we will no longer need the Scriptures. One treasures a love letter while the beloved is absent, but once he or she is present, the letter is laid aside and exchanged for the personal contact. (Peter Davids)

- D.** V. 20-21 Peter builds our confidence in the truthfulness and reliability of the Scriptures because when we turn to the Scriptures, we are not reading prophecy that comes from someone’s own interpretations - NO not produced by the will and ingenuity of the men who wrote Scripture - in one of the most important texts in the Bible for understanding the divine inspiration of the Scriptures - men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit

God prepared specific human beings, through birth, environment, etc., to communicate his word. These human beings genuinely spoke their own words. But the words they used were also just those words that God wanted them to use. (Doug Moo)

1. Whenever you take up your Bible and read - whenever scripture is read on a Sunday - you are hearing the words of men in human languages - but behind it all - it is God speaking to us

Illustration: the virtue of doubt - relevant - you want to learn how to undermine and criticize the OT - take a class at Messiah - God wants to confirm - he wants to build confidence when we approach this book - written by men - men who spoke from God himself - carried along by the Holy Spirit - genuinely spoke with own words - just the words that God wanted them to use

**E.** Application

1. Build confidence in the word of God and all that it says about the return of our Lord Jesus Christ
  - a) Not just to obtain information - intended effect of living in light of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and coming judgment as prophesied and proclaimed in Scripture - affects the way we live now - these false teachers

denied the return of Christ and lived immoral lives as the taught there was no need to fear judgment from God

- b) The gospel - judgment removed - call to unbelievers
- c) Having been saved from wrath - to be sure - discernible effect

[11] Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. [12] The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:11-14)

- d) This treasure we have - a feast for our souls

Our inner transformation, deepened continually by the Spirit as we study the Scriptures, will be completed on the great day when we shall see him as he is, and be made like him. (Michael Green)

- e) Let us not neglect this gift!

### **Close**

When churches seek to accommodate themselves to the culture rather than to faithfulness to the Scriptures through and through - lose both the culture and the church

I pray that we would always revere, treasure, and put confidence in this infinitely generous gift

I pray that we would all cultivate anticipation for the return of Christ. Let us not be so busy, so distracted that we neglect the hope and coming glory of that coming day - when the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts - until that day we rely on God and his Word - we allow His Word to govern our lives until that day when we will put it aside in his presence and we will see him and hear him ourselves - living in his love and presence forever. Preserve us

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