

II Peter 1:19-21 - The Prophetic Confirmation of the Apostolic Word

Saturday, April 27, 2013

11:42 AM

Introduction

A. From big to little: how does our passage today fit into the whole of II Peter

1. The Big Picture: Premise of II Peter
 - a. Dangers will not only come from outside the church but also inside the church. Therefore we should guard against these by knowing the true gospel. The true gospel is marked by godliness and is found in Scripture. A gospel that denies godliness or disregards the promises of God or twists Scripture must be rejected. God will judge such things and will protect His church. Since the judgment of God is imminent, we must be diligent now to make our calling and election sure by pursuing righteousness and godliness.
2. II Peter 1: The Gospel is Marked by Godliness
 - a. Making your calling and election sure - godliness and the gospel go together (1:3-11)
 - b. Be reminded of these things - godliness is defined in Scripture (3:12-21)
3. II Peter 1:3-11: Godliness and the gospel go together
 - a. In verses 3-4, Peter argues that godliness and the gospel always go together because God has provided power for godliness in the gospel
 - b. In verses 5-7, Peter gives eight qualities that display godliness.
 - c. In verses 8-11, Peter exhorts us that these qualities are absolutely necessary to the believer.
4. II Peter 1:12-21: Godliness is defined in Scripture
 - a. In verses 12-18, Peter shows us that the apostolic witness exhorts us to grow in godliness
 - b. In verses 19-21, Peter shows us that the prophetic witness exhorts us to grow in godliness

B. Read II Peter 1:19-21

C. Peter's theme for II Peter 1:19-21 is that the prophetic witness, the Old Testament, agrees with and confirms the apostolic witness, the New Testament

1. Proposition: We should judge both teachers of the church and ourselves based on their and our handling and response to the Old Testament.
2. Outline:
 - a. Significance of the Prophetic Word
 - b. Purpose of the Prophetic Word
 - c. Authority of the Prophetic Word
 - d. Application of the Prophetic Word

I. Significance of the Prophetic Word (19a)

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word ...

A. Peter calls the prophetic word 'more sure'

1. The Greek literally says, "we have more sure the prophetic word"
2. Some translations translate this to mean that the prophetic word has become more sure - that is, that the prophetic word is now more sure than it used to be (*we have the prophetic word made more sure*)
 - a. But, the plain sense of the Greek has no verb or time reference that would make this the correct reading
 - b. It would need to have a verb like become or made for this reading to be clear
 - c. It is a forced reading because the statement makes us uncomfortable
 - d. Our common understanding is that the New Testament - the apostolic word - is a more sure testimony of Christ than the Old Testament
3. But, the straightforward reading is that the prophetic word is more sure than the apostolic word.
 - a. The old commentators are in agreement on the translation of the text (Henry, Gill, Calvin, GSB).
 - b. The old translations are in agreement (Geneva Bible, Wycliffe Bible, King James Version, Young's Literal Translation)
 - c. Several newer translations also agree (ESV 2001, 2007, NIV)
4. So, as we come to this verse, I think to be honest to the text, we have to understand Peter as saying the Old Testament is, somehow, more sure than the New Testament. *We have something more sure, the prophetic word...*

B. What does Peter mean when he calls the prophetic word more sure?

1. GSB notes - *The truth of the gospel is by this revealed, in that it agrees wholly with the foretellings of the prophets.*
 - a. If someone was to doubt the apostolic word - perhaps they thought it sounded like wild myths - they could look back at the Old Testament prophecies and see that this was true.
 - b. The apostolic word is confirmed by the prophetic word. The apostolic word is made more sure because the prophetic word is more sure.
2. Peter is telling his readers if they needed a better proof than simply his testimony they could look at what had gone before. In fact, he's encouraging them to be like the Bereans
 - a. Acts 17:11 - *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*
 - b. The Bereans tested the apostolic word by the prophetic word. They knew the prophetic word was true, and when it confirmed the apostolic word they knew Paul was telling the truth.
3. Peter says this because the Old Testament is a strong witness to Christ
 - a. Christ in John 5:39 - *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me*
 - b. Christ in Luke 24:27 - *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - c. Paul in II Timothy 3:14-15 - *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*
4. So, in one way, Peter is holding the Old Testament higher than the New Testament, but in another way he is not.
 - a. He is holding the Old Testament up as more sure because it has been confirmed as God's Word for hundreds or thousands of years. So, when the apostolic word appears, the Old Testament is a sure confirmation of it.
 - i. The Old Testament points to Christ
 - ii. The Old Testament aligns with the New Testament perfectly in pointing to Christ
 - iii. The Old Testament confirms the New Testament - it makes Peter's witness more sure

- b. But he is not holding the Old Testament up as more sure because it is more clear or a better testimony of Christ. The experience of the church and the explicit statements of Scripture make this sense impossible.
 - i. Hebrews 1:1-3 - *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
 - ii. John 1:14-18 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*
 - iii. Matthew 11:27 - *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*
 - iv. Hebrews 2:2-4 - *For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*
- c. So, I'm not saying that the Old Testament is more sure in that it gives us a clearer revelation of Christ, but that the historical revelation of Christ in the Old Testament is a sure foundation for the revelation of Christ to build on.

C. What should this communicate to us? The Old Testament is just as useful to the believer as the New Testament

1. The Old Testament is a perfect complement to the New Testament.
 - a. The Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament because the prophetic word confirms the apostolic word
 - b. The prophetic word prepares us to understand the apostolic word correctly.
2. Therefore, the Old Testament is just as worthy of our study and devotion as the New Testament
 - a. In fact, this is where Peter goes with it, and we'll come back to this at the end of the message
3. Therefore, a sound teacher will teach out of the Old Testament correctly
 - a. There are two common pitfalls that a false teacher may fall into
 - b. A false teacher may ignore the Old Testament and preach only out of the New Testament
 - i. This is actually the basis an historical heresy - Marcionism
 - ii. Marcion taught that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were different Gods with the Old Testament God being unworthy of worship
 - iii. This is an extreme case, but ignoring the Old Testament in favor of the New is a dangerous sign of a false teacher
 - iv. It denies what Peter is communicating to us right here, that the Old Testament is just as important to the believer as the New Testament
- c. A false teacher may teach out of the Old Testament in a way that does not confirm the apostolic word
 - i. This is the opposite of the last pitfall
 - ii. A false teacher may fall in love with the Old Testament, but use it to point to all sorts of things other than Christ
 - iii. The Jews, especially of the 1st century, are good examples of this - they loved the Old Testament, but they did not see that it pointed to Christ
 - iv. Again, the Jews are an extreme case, but ignoring how the Old Testament points to Christ is a dangerous sign of a false teacher
 - v. It again denies what Peter is communicating to us - that the prophetic word makes the apostolic word more sure

II. Purpose of the Prophetic Word (19c)

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts ...

A. The purpose of the prophetic word is to be a guide

1. *As...a lamp shining in a dark place*
 - a. Peter calls the prophetic word a lamp, which is a common term the Old Testament uses about itself
 - i. Psalm 119:105 - *Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.*
 - ii. Proverbs 6:23 - *For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,*
 - b. The implication of a lamp shining in a dark place is that it is something that illuminates the path and guides us on our way
2. So, Peter says that the purpose of the prophetic word, the Old Testament, is to be a guide to us along hard or dangerous paths

B. The purpose of the prophetic word is a guide to bring us to Christ

1. *As...a lamp shining in a dark place until...the morning star rises in your hearts*
 - a. The second half of the reference here - the morning star rises in your hearts - likely refers to bring brought to the knowledge of Christ
 - b. The morning star rising in our hearts is God opening our eyes to the glories of Christ
 - c. So, Peter tells us that the first purpose of the prophetic word is to open our eyes to the necessity and glory of Christ
2. We see this purpose of the Old Testament given across all the Bible
 - a. Galatians 3:24-26 - *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*
 - b. Luke 24:27 - *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
 - c. Psalm 119:123 - *My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteous promise.*
 - d. Psalm 119:154 - *Plead my cause and redeem me; give me life according to your promise!*
3. The prophetic word is powerful to teach us about our need for Christ and this is its purpose
4. As we study the prophetic word, we ought to be driven to find our hope in Christ
 - a. We can see this throughout the whole Old Testament
 - b. But we can see this most clearly in the interplay between God's wrath and judgment on sinful people in the Old Testament and His gracious promises in His covenants with Israel
 - c. The interplay between wrath and grace in the Old Testament drives us to Christ and the only solution to the righteousness of God
 - d. So, we can say with Paul in Romans 3:21-22 - *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it--- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.*

C. The purpose of the prophetic word is to be bringing us to Christ

1. But, the purpose of the prophetic word doesn't end once we have found Christ - the Old Testament doesn't become useless to a believer
2. In fact, Peter's first purpose lists a much more distant reference - *until the day dawns*
 - a. The day dawning is likely a reference to the second coming of Christ. In fact, both the day dawning and the morning star rising would probably refer to the second coming of Christ, except that the second is 'in our hearts'.
 - b. The purpose of the Old Testament is to be a guide to us until Christ returns - not just until we first come to Christ
3. Paul also confirms this - the apostle who said that the law was our guardian until we come to Christ also sees the Old Testament as continuing to guide us in Christ after we have come to Him
 - a. II Timothy 3:14-17 - *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*
4. So, the purpose of the prophetic word is to be a guide to us in the Christian life until Christ returns
 - a. In fact, the purpose of the prophetic word is the same as the purpose of the apostolic word
 - b. The purpose of the apostolic word is to encourage us to grow in godliness - to keep us until Christ's return
 - c. The purpose of the prophetic word is to keep us until Christ's return - to grow us in godliness
 - i. II Timothy 3:17 - *and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work*
 - ii. Psalm 119:9 - *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*
 - iii. Psalm 119:11 - *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*
 - iv. Psalm 119:133 - *Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me.*
5. As we study the prophetic word, we ought to be driven to find our hope in Christ, but we also ought to be encouraged to grow in godliness.
 - a. So, when we see the covenants that are described in the Old Testament, we will not only see the gracious nature of God in the covenants, but also the great importance of obedience to those under the covenants.
 - b. When we read the prophets of the Old Testament, we will not only see how they are looking forward to the greater fulfillments of the promises in Christ but also how they condemn those who are disobedient to the covenant.
 - c. When we see the laws and rules of the Old Testament, we will not only see how far we are from righteousness, but we will meditate on them to understand the character of God.

D. So, we should handled the prophetic word looking for these purposes

1. When we come to the Old Testament, we shouldn't be baffled by its content - although I agree it is often much harder to understand. But, if we ask the right questions while we read we will glean much more from the Old Testament.
 - a. When we come to the Old Testament, we should be asking how this passage is preparing the way for Christ to come. How is this calling us to Christ as our Savior?
 - b. When we come to the Old Testament, we should be asking how this passage is teaching us to grow in Christ. How is this calling us to growth in godliness?
 - c. When we ask these questions, when we look for the purpose of the Old Testament, then we will understand it better and be able to apply its teaching to our lives more fruitfully. Then the Old Testament will become to us a more sure testimony to Christ.
2. And, again, we can judge a teacher to how they handled the purpose of the Old Testament
 - a. Sound teachers will use the Old Testament to call people to Christ
 - b. Sound teachers will use the Old Testament to encourage growth in godliness
 - c. Teachers who ignore the call to Christ or the call to godliness in the Old Testament are denying Peter's teaching here and are following the path of the false teachers.

III. Authority of the Prophetic Word (20-21)

... knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

A. Scripture is authoritative because it is not subject to merely human interpretation (it is objective truth)

1. Peter says in verse 20 that, "*no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.*"
 - a. Peter is trying to answer the question, why should we pay attention to the Old Testament?
 - b. Peter implies, by this, that we would do well to pay attention to Scripture because Scripture is not subject to mere human thoughts. Instead, Scripture must be subject to something greater than human interpretations
2. One of the big arguments about this verse is, then, what is Scripture subject to? How do we interpret Scripture?
 - a. Peter clearly says that Scripture is not subject to individuals' interpretations - but what does this mean? Does that mean individuals can't read and understand Scripture?
 - b. The Catholic Church would answer, yes! Therefore, it is given to the magisterial church alone to give the correct meaning of Scripture. Scripture is subject to the magisterial church. In Catholic thought, this is what prevents Scripture from being subject to individual interpretations.
 - c. But, is this a true interpretation of what Peter's saying here? Where does Peter go with this thought? He says that Scriptures are subject to individual interpretations because they were produced by God Himself (verse 21).
 - d. So, Scripture isn't subject to individual interpretations, it is subject to God's interpretation. Since Scripture is subject only to God's interpretation, this gives the correct use of Scripture great authority.
3. What does it mean, though, that Scripture isn't subject to individual interpretations?
 - a. Does this mean that we can't read and understand Scripture, like the Catholics would argue?
 - b. No, it doesn't mean that you can't read and understand, but when you read and understand you must be careful to interpret correctly.
 - c. It is not that you can't interpret Scripture. It is that Scripture is not subject to your interpretation.
 - d. So we read and we interpret Scripture - we try to determine what it means. But, just because we decide we know what Scripture means doesn't make it mean that. This calls for earnest care when we are trying to understand and interpret Scripture because there is a right answer that is not subject to our thoughts and feelings. Scripture is only subject to God's interpretation because they are God's words.

B. Scripture is authoritative because it is not merely the product of men (it is not fallible)

1. Continuing in verse 21, Peter says, "*For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man,*"
 - a. Again, why should we pay attention to the Old Testament?
 - b. We should pay attention to the Old Testament because, not only is it not subject to human interpretations, it was not even produced by fallible humans.
2. Although I doubt this is a major problem in our church, this is the answer to much of liberal Christianity. Liberal Christianity usually regards Scripture as simply the work of men, therefore you can add or subtract as necessary and interpret however you want.
3. But, Peter strongly disagrees with such things. Scripture was not produced by men. The writing of Scripture was not subject to fallible human beings who are sure to make mistakes.
4. This is why it has authority. It is unlike any other writing or teaching possible because all other writings and all other teachings are from men - they are full of mistakes and errors. But the prophetic word is not.

C. Scripture is authoritative because it is the product of God (it is God's Word)

1. If the prophetic word was not produced by men, though, who was it produced by?
 - a. This is where Peter goes next, "*but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*"
 - b. So, Scripture has authority because it is not subject to mere human interpretations, because it was not produced by fallible humans and, now, because it was produced by God.
 - c. This is really the ultimate reason, which Peter has been building up to. The other two reasons are consequences of this.
2. God is the speaker of Scripture
 - a. Peter clearly says that, "*men spoke from God,*" and this is the clear testimony of all of Scripture
 - i. II Timothy 3:16-17 - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*
 - b. God is the one who authored all of Scripture and, as we're discussing now, particularly the Old Testament, the prophetic word
 - c. This is the ultimate source of authority. If God is the Lord then His Word has ultimate authority.
3. Men are the instrument for writing Scripture
 - a. There is oddly a lot of, what I would consider, fruitless debate about this point
 - b. There is argument about how God used men to write Scripture.
 - i. Were they merely automatons, robots who were used by God to write specific words?
 - ii. Were they men who were inspired by the Spirit but wrote their own thoughts in their own words?
 - iii. Is dictation or inspiration a better description for what happened?
 - iv. How can they be fully authoritative words of God but also be words of men?
 - c. Honestly, I don't think we need to answer all of these questions.
 - i. We can clearly see in Scripture that God was the speaker of Scripture but also that men were the writers of Scripture. We call that inspiration.
 - ii. Just like we define the Trinity as the God who is three-in-one without fully being able to explain everything about it, we define inspiration as fully God's words given through men to match what Scripture tells us.
 - iii. This suffices because it is true to Scripture and tells us everything we need to know.
 - d. Also, I think a lot of these questions fail to understand the sovereignty of God correctly.
 - i. They seem to presume that God must work as an outside force in this universe and isn't in control of every single thing at all times.
 - ii. God's sovereignty makes some of these questions which seem to require opposite answers perfectly harmonious.
 - e. So, God authored all of Scripture and men were the instruments of writing Scripture down.
4. The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired all Scripture
 - a. Peter does give us some teaching on how this happened though.
 - i. He says in verse 21, "*as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*"
 - ii. The work of the Holy Spirit in men's lives caused them to write down exactly what God wanted them to write down.
 - b. Peter even gives us an inkling of an idea how this happened.
 - i. He says they were 'carried' along
 - ii. The word carried here usually means to pick up and bring something
 - iii. So, in the interplay between the work of God and the work of man in Scripture, God clearly has the more significant work
 - iv. The men were picked up and brought along by the Holy Spirit to write Scripture
 - c. Now, this still doesn't define all of the questions we asked above, but it guards us from answering them totally wrong. God spoke Scripture. Men wrote it down. God was in charge.
5. Since God spoke Scripture and, through the Holy Spirit, was in total control of its being written by men, Scripture has full authority over us. They are the very words of God to us.

D. So, we should handled the Old Testament as the very words of God

1. We should respect the authority of the Old Testament by obeying it (it is God's Word)
 - a. All of God's authoritative words demand obedience
 - i. Deuteronomy 29:29 - *"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
 - b. This brings up the age old question about the position of the Old Testament law in the Christian's life and the difference between Covenantal and New Covenantal theology
 - c. Because our time is limited this morning and this isn't really the focus of our study this morning, I'm not going to address this debate in any significant fashion this morning
 - d. But, I do want to say one thing about the debate though - the debate is a good debate because it demonstrates, on both sides, a desire to be in submission to Scripture correctly. The alternative is not to care about how we ought to obey the Old Testament. So, don't flee the debate, instead understand the debate and try to grow in your understanding of Scripture and let the whole of Scripture speak to how we ought to obey the Old Testament.
 - e. Both Dan and I hold a New Covenantal position on how we ought to be in obedience to the Old Testament - that the Old Covenant laws are a source of excellent study, they point us to Christ, they demonstrate how a covenant works and they even teach us about the moral character of God, and in all these ways, they are binding on a Christian as seen through the lens of Christ. But these laws are not literally binding on a Christian in the same way they were binding to a member of Israel because they were part of a different covenant that had a different purpose.
 - i. Galatians 3:23-26 - *Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*
 - ii. Hebrews 8:13 - *In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*
 - f. Now, having said that, like I said, I'm not going to spend this morning rigorously defending New Covenant theology. And there is much to wrestle with as we take other passages into account.
 - i. Matthew 5:17-20 - *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*
 - g. But, the debate is a good debate because we ought to be in obedience to the Old Testament. So, make it your desire to obey the Old Testament. Don't ignore it or claim ignorance. Search out the Old Testament with the purpose of submitting yourself to God's word. Wrestle in study and prayer to understand what it says and how we should apply it to our lives.
2. We should respect the authority of the Old Testament by not adding or taking away from it (it is not man's words)
 - a. This is the express intention of God's words - that they are inviolable, we cannot add or subtract from them
 - i. Deuteronomy 4:1-2 - *"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you.*
 - b. This is respect for the authority of the Old Testament because we recognize that God's words are much more important and carry much more authority than ours
 - i. If the Old Testament is God's words then they are literally sacred
 - ii. If God's word is authoritative, then we have no authority to alter it, it has the authority to alter us

- c. How do we not add or take away from the Old Testament
 - i. First, we literally do not add or take away from it.
 - i) I doubt any of you are tempted to cut out pieces of your Bible or add in extra books
 - ii) But this is the first and most obvious way of respecting the authority of the Bible
 - ii. But, also in our daily lives, in our thoughts and in our actions, we must be careful not to add or take away from the authority of the Scriptures.
 - i) Often, this can look like mixing other philosophies with the Bible and holding some secondary philosophy equal with the Bible. It could be humanitarianism, republicanism, conservatism, etc. etc. The conservative movement is not Scripture, so we must be careful not to add to Scripture by holding the precepts of the conservative political agenda with similar authority as Scripture.
 - ii) Often, this can look like ignoring parts of the Bible. I think this is especially true of the Old Testament. We can overlook and functionally subtract from the Old Testament for many reasons. Perhaps we don't like it. The Old Testament clearly calls the people of God to be separate from the world. Perhaps we don't understand it. There may be other reasons. But, we must listen to the whole of Scripture.
3. We should we should respect the authority of the Old Testament by being careful not to impose human interpretations on it (it is not subject to human interpretation)
- a. Peter tells us that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation as we discussed a few minutes ago.
 - b. If this is true, then, we ought to be careful in how we interpret the Old Testament.
 - i. We ought to bind ourselves to the true interpretation of Scripture
 - ii. The true interpretation of Scripture is always in context, in accord with the rest of Scripture, and according to the Spirit's power in our lives
 - iii. Luther said, "*That is the true method of interpretation which puts Scripture alongside of Scripture in a right and proper way, namely, a doubtful and obscure passage must be explained by a clear and certain passage.*"
 - c. In other words, we must be careful not to take sections of the Old Testament out of context
 - i. This is very easy to do. We can remember a little snippet from some story or we can even remember a whole story from one book and we can take it out from the larger context of the story or the book and use it to teach all sorts of things other than what it is intended to teach.
 - ii. Or, on the other hand, we can take something in context, but unmoor it from other Scriptures and use it to teach a variety of different things.
 - iii. But, we cannot do this. Scripture does not come from our own interpretation. We must let Scripture interpret itself.
 - iv. This calls for intense and continual study. The more we know Scripture will lead to better interpretation which will lead to better knowledge of Scripture which will lead to better interpretation.
4. Teachers can, again, be judged on their faithfulness to the authority of the Old Testament
- a. Does a teacher respect the authority of the Old Testament by not adding or taking away from it? Does he reference other things with equal authority? Does he ignore portions of the Old Testament? Or does he faithfully teach all and only the Scriptures?
 - b. Does a teacher encourage obedience to the Old Testament? Does he encourage you to wrestle through the Old Testament and determine how you ought to obey? Does he use the Old Testament to encourage you to grow in godliness?
 - c. Does a teacher submit to the Word of God by being careful to interpret the Word of God correctly? Does he look to all of Scripture when he teaches out of a passage to show how other Scriptures come to bear on the topic? Or does he ignore important passages often in order to teach what he desires? Is he careful to interpret things in context or does he often isolate sections of Scripture and use them in different ways?
 - d. These questions can be used to judge a teacher of Scripture. A sound teacher will respect and reverence the authority of God's word. A false teacher will not.

IV. Application of the Prophetic Word (19b)

And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention ...

A. So, in light of all these truths, how does Peter want us to react to the Old Testament?

1. Peter calls us to pay attention to the Old Testament
2. Peter thinks we ought to be studying the Old Testament rigorously

B. When should we pay attention to it?

1. Until Christ returns
2. In other words, the Old Testament ought always to be an object of our study until our time on earth is done or Christ comes to reign on the earth directly and finally fulfills every prophecy of the Old Testament
3. So, we ought always to be studying the Old Testament. It's tempting to focus on the New Testament, and there are some ways in which we ought to do that. But we should, by no means, neglect the Old Testament. Be studying it all the time. Let it inform you about Christ. Let it confirm the apostolic word to you.

C. Why should we pay attention to it?

1. Because the Old Testament is a more sure witness to Christ - it confirms the apostolic word and teaches us about Christ
2. Because the Old Testament's purpose is to be leading us to Christ until we know Him fully
3. Because the Old Testament is God's inspired and authoritative word

D. How should we pay attention to it?

1. By seeing how it confirms the apostolic word
2. By looking for it to lead us to Christ and to grow us in Christ
3. By obeying it, in accordance with the New Testament, as the word of God

E. So, as believers, we will love and listen to the Old Testament, just like the psalmist in Psalm 119

1. Psalm 119:12-16 - *Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.*
2. Psalm 119:24 - *Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.*
3. Psalm 119: 93-94 - *I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. I am yours; save me, for I have sought your precepts.*
4. Psalm 119:97 - *Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.*
5. Psalm 119:145-148 - *With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O LORD! I will keep your statutes. I call to you; save me, that I may observe your testimonies. I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise.*
6. Psalm 119:162 - *I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.*
7. Psalm 119:169-176 - *Let my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word! Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word. My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right. Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight. Let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.*

Conclusion

A. We've seen four doctrines about the Old Testament

1. The Significance of the Old Testament - the Old Testament perfectly confirms the New Testament
2. The Purpose of the Old Testament - the Old Testament leads us to Christ and calls us to grow in Christ
3. The Authority of the Old Testament - the Old Testament was written by God Himself and is subject to His interpretation and not man's
4. The Application of the Old Testament - therefore we must pay attention to the Old Testament according to its significance, its purpose, and its authority

B. This morning we're closing our study on II Peter 1 and we'll move into II Peter 2 next week - so I want to just give a brief recap of what we've seen in II Peter 1

1. The goal of chapter 1 is to give us the positive teaching we need to guard against false teachers
 - a. Peter is warning us against following after false teachers
 - b. So, the first thing he does is teach us what is true
2. Peter gives us two things that guard us against false teachers
 - a. First, growing in godliness based on rich doctrine in the power of Christ will guard us against false teachers - the first half of chapter one
 - i. Vs. 3-4 - the power of Christ gives us everything we need to grow in godliness
 - ii. Vs. 5-7 - growing in godliness is defined - faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love
 - iii. Vs. 8-11 - growing in godliness is absolutely necessary to the professing believer and will guard us against following after false teachers
 - b. Second, studying Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, according to their purpose and authority will guard us against false teachers - the second half of chapter one
 - i. The New Testament, the apostolic witness to Christ, is meant to cause us to grow in godliness and thus is indispensable to the Christian life
 - ii. The Old Testament, the prophetic witness to Christ, is meant to guide us to Christ and guide us in Christ to grow in godliness and thus is also indispensable to the Christian life
 - iii. Knowing both the Old and New Testaments will guard us against false teachers because they cause us to grow in godliness and they teach us what is true

C. As we move forward next week, Peter is going to switch gears

1. He's already given us everything we need to guard against false teachers
2. So, in chapters 2 and 3 he's going to warn us about false teachers
 - a. He's going to show how wrong false teachers are
 - b. He's going to show how ungodly false teachers are
 - c. He's going to show how destructive false teachers are
3. Chapters 2 and 3 are meant to encourage us to do the things Peter's called us to in chapter 1
4. So, don't forget about these things as we dive into chapters 2 and 3 - the positive teaching out of chapter 1 is the basis for the whole book - listen to chapters 2 and 3 in order to encourage you to grow in godliness and to drive you into studying Scripture because you don't want to be or follow a false teacher
5. As Peter wraps up his book, he returns to the ideas found in the first chapter
 - a. II Peter 3:18 - *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*