

2 Peter 1:16

by John Gill

The apostle Peter emphasizes the importance of knowing the truth about Christ's power and coming, based on eyewitness testimony and not on cunningly devised fables.

Scripture: Matthew 14:3, Matthew 16:27, John 1:14, Romans 1:4, 1 Timothy 1:4, Titus 1:14, Hebrews 2:3-4, 1 Peter 1:7, 2 Peter 1:16, Revelation 1:7

Topics: "Eyewitness Testimony", "The Certainty of Christ's Return"

Description

John Gill emphasizes that the apostles did not follow cleverly devised fables but instead proclaimed the truth of Christ's power and coming based on their firsthand experiences and prophetic evidence. He contrasts the false teachings and myths prevalent in their time with the authentic witness of Christ's transfiguration, which affirmed His divine glory and future return. Gill highlights the significance of the apostles' eyewitness accounts as a foundation for their ministry, reinforcing the certainty of Christ's promises and the reality of His second coming.

Transcript

Ver. 16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,.... Such as Jewish fables, cautioned against Tit 1:14 which their traditionary and oral law, their Talmud, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the sumptuous feast, and carnal pleasures and entertainments, of that state, with many other things; some of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or Gentile fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endless genealogies in 1Ti 1:4, and especially reference may be had to the metamorphoses of their gods, and their fables relating to them, devised by Ovid, and others, since the apostle is about to speak of the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of Christ; and also other fables with which their poets and histories abound; and likewise the prophecies of the Sibyls, and the oracles at Delphos, and elsewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of Simon Magus concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the several Aeones; or the more artful composures of the false teachers, set off with all the cunning, sophistry, wit, and eloquence they were masters of. Now in order to set forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the apostle taught, especially that part of it which respected the coming of Christ; and to show that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he observes, that he and his fellow apostles did not proceed in their account of it on such a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and also on a word of prophecy surer than that:

when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; not his first coming, though that, and the benefits arising from it, were the subject of their ministry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Christ itself, which was owing to the power of the Highest; and was seen in his doctrine and ministry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God, his Father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finished; in doing which he made an end of sin, and saved his people from it, redeemed them from the curse of the law, overcame the world, destroyed Satan, and abolished death; and especially in his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power: but notwithstanding his first coming was in great humility, in much meanness and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompassed with infirmities, and at last was crucified through weakness. This therefore was to be understood of an after coming of his, which the apostle had wrote of, and made known in his former epistle, 1Pe 1:7 and which he puts them in mind of in this, 2Pe 3:1, nor is the word parousia, used of any other coming of Christ, and this will be with power; and it designs his more near coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and persecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; see Mt 14:3, or more remote, namely, at the last day, when there will be a great display of power in raising the dead, gathering all nations before him, separating them one from another, passing the final sentence on each, and executing the same in the utter destruction of the wicked, and the complete glorification of the saints.

But were eyewitnesses of his majesty; meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their understanding, while others only considered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a display of his glory and majesty, of all which the apostles were eyewitnesses; but of that glory and greatness which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the sun, and such a glory on his whole body, that it darted through his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as snow, and so as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time also Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof that notwithstanding his meanness in his incarnate state, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a confirmation of it to the apostles, and might be to others: see Mt 16:27.

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