

Holy man of God spoke

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Preacher: Rev Hugh M.Ferrier

[0 : 0 0] turn now to 2nd Peter chapter 1 and for guiding our thoughts we take the last verse verse 21 for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man and it's this last clause but holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost the God of the Bible is the God who is to be feared this is what we discover when we read the Bible he is our creator and we are told in the scriptures that we all must appear before this God sooner or later at his judgment seat when death takes us we will immediately stand before the presence of

Almighty God to be judged for the things done in the body whether these things be good or whether these things be evil you know how it tells us in the book of Revelation that the song of the saints in heaven is this that God is great and marvelous this is what they sing in heaven great and marvelous are thy works Lord God Almighty just and true are thy ways thou king of saints who shall not fear thee O Lord and glorify thy name now the question that urges itself upon our attention must inevitably be who is this God that is spoken of who is this God who is to be feared like this and how can we come to know this God and how can we come to understand him and to be reconciled to him and to be reconciled to him we ask ourselves has this God that you've been speaking about revealed himself has he made himself to be understood by his rational creatures now it's impossible for us in and of ourselves to know God

God you see God is infinite that is to say he's not limited in any way you can't define God and place him in a certain way and say there that's God and he's contained in this way no you see God is infinite and not only is God infinite but he is incomprehensible as far as we are concerned you see we are concerned you see we are only finite our knowledge is not incomprehensible when we turn back to the book of job we recall what so far the Nehemiah site had to say about God and when he said this to job he was right although in many things Zophar was wrong but in this he was right and this is what he says to job canst thou by searching find out God canst thou find out the almighty unto perfection he says to job is it possible for you to find out God is it possible for you with your tiny finite mind to come to come to an understanding of the almighty and then Zophar goes on to say to job as far as God is concerned he's as high as heaven and what canst thou do deeper than hell and what canst thou know the measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea he says to job God is too big for you he's absolutely beyond you and you are not and you can't find him out and that being so and that being so it means doesn't it that if we are going to understand God at all as rational creatures then God must make himself known to us and that being so it means doesn't it that if we are going to understand God at all as rational creatures then God must make himself known to us

God must reveal himself and this is what God has done in the Bible this is what the Bible is about it's a revelation to us of God it's a revelation to us of God it's a revelation to us of what God is saying and of what God wants us to know it's a revelation to us of God it's a revelation of God to sinful man and we're running us right here and walk to worship out Crystal to us of what God is saying and of what God wants us to know. It's a revelation of God to sinful man.

Now here in the words of our text, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is placed before us, and the Holy Scriptures remind us of the authority of God and what God is saying to us and how we can interpret what God is saying to us. I want us to think of these things together this evening.

[5 : 3 3] Holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Let's consider the manner in which the Scriptures have come to us. We ask ourselves, how has this Bible come to us?

The word Bible has come to us through Latin from the Greek word Biblia. Now when the Greeks were in their homes, they spoke about the Ta Biblia. That means they spoke about the books. You know how in Gaelic homes and in the old Highland homes this is what they used to say, we're going

to take the books, or to use the Gaelic word, the Lorigen. And this is what the Greeks used to say, the Ta Biblia, the books. So that the Bible consists of the books of Scripture. And the Scriptures are the record of God's revelation of his mind and of his will to his rational creatures. That's what the Bible is. It's a revelation to us of the mind of God to his rational creatures. You want to know the mind of God? You want to know the thoughts of God? You want to know what God is saying to you? Then here it is in the Ta Biblia, in the Scriptures, in the books, in the Bible. How then did God communicate this revelation?

Well, Peter says that the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man. It wasn't the will of man that brought the Bible into existence. He says, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

That is to say, certain holy men were carried along under the influence of God's Spirit, and they have recorded for us. The mind of God as it is set forth here in Holy Writ. This is how the writer to the Hebrews puts it. God, he says, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. Now, let's ask ourselves, how did God speak in the past?

God, who at sundry times, at different times, in divers manners, in different ways, he has spoken unto us.

[8 : 45] Well, the ways in which God has spoken in the past are many and they are varied. First of all, we might say this, that God has spoken through dreams.

Joseph had dreams. He dreamt of his greatness. God was speaking to him through these dreams. The same with Pharaoh. He wasn't a godly man. He was an ungodly man. But God had a message for him, and it was a message of judgment, and he spoke to him through a dream. And it terrified Pharaoh.

And another man who was quite a wicked man, and indeed an utterly godless man, was Nebuchadnezzar. And there came a time when God was going to bring judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he gave him that disturbing dream, which prevented him from enjoying sleep.

And he couldn't rest until at last Daniel interpreted to him what the dream meant. Now, by means of dreams like that, God was communicating his purpose and his truth.

[10 : 25] But another method that God used, he spoke in visions, and visions are different from dreams. And this was the method that God used when he wanted to communicate to Isaiah what was going to happen to the nation Israel.

And so God came to Isaiah, and he gave him a vision. It was as if Isaiah was taken up by God himself, and removed from this dimension, and brought into another dimension, and there God showed to him what he was going to do to Israel.

It was the same with Jeremiah. He had visions. But God not only spoke through dreams and through visions, but he also spoke by voices, or in voices.

This is how God communicated to Moses, his mind and will on Mount Sinai. God spoke to him. It was the same with Samuel.

God spoke to Samuel. It was the same with Samuel. It was the same with Samuel. Until Samuel at last said to God, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

[11 : 55] It was the same on the Mount of Transfiguration, when God came to the two apostles, Peter and John, and said to them, This is my beloved son. Hear him.

Don't listen to anyone else, but listen to my son. He's speaking. And another way through which God communicated his truth, and his mind, and his will, was through angels.

This is noticeable in connection with the angels' visit to Abraham on the plains of Mamre. When these angels came to Abraham and pronounced that Sodom was doomed, and Gomorrah was doomed.

It was angels who came to Elizabeth, and to Mary, to announce to them that the one was to be the mother of the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist.

The other was to be the mother of the Lord of glory himself. You see, God used these means to communicate what he was going to do, what his mind was, what his purpose was.

[13 : 14] And God also spoke through the prophets. And these prophets were fully aware of this.

And that is why when you read through the prophets, you find that utterances are authoritative, and they always preface their utterances with this declaration, Thus saith the Lord.

When Isaiah speaks, he doesn't say, Thus saith Isaiah, or thus saith Jeremiah, or thus saith Hosea. No, these men say, Thus saith the Lord.

It's the Lord who is speaking. Or again, they preface their word by saying, The word of the Lord came unto me. And God also made himself and his plan and his will known to us through theophonic appearances.

We call them theophonic appearances. And what does that mean? It means that the Lord himself appeared in human form before ever he appeared in his humanity when he was born into this world. [14:33] You remember the angels who came to Abraham on the plains of Mamre. We go back to that account. And there was one specific angel. And he does the talking.

And immediately Abraham recognizes him as Lord, and he addresses him as Lord, and he falls down before him. Now no angel allows any man to worship him.

Who then was this special being that appeared to Abraham? Wasn't it the Lord? No wonder Jesus said, Abraham rejoiced to see my day.

He saw it and was glad. Oh yes, Abraham saw the Lord afar off, but at that particular time he saw the Lord as it were face to face.

Or then think of Joshua. And there comes the captain of the Lord of Hosts. And Joshua wonders who is this strange being who has come before him as he is about to seek the capture of Jericho.

[15:51] And this is the problem on Joshua's mind. And this is the problem on Joshua's mind. How can he subdue Jericho? And the captain of the Lord of Hosts comes to him. And Joshua says to him, who art thou?

What are you doing here? And this captain of the Lord of Hosts says to Joshua, that's not the question you should be addressing to me. Take off your shoes from off your feet.

The place that you are standing on is holy ground. And immediately Joshua realises that this is the Lord himself and he falls before him. You see, the Lord had appeared to Joshua in a theophonic appearance.

And now the Lord says to Joshua, I'll tell you how Jericho is going to fall. It's not going to fall because you and your might are going to subdue it.

It's going to fall because you will be obedient to my word and you will do what I am telling you to do. And so Jericho had to fall.

[17:02] And of course, the revelation of God came to its completion and to its fulfillment when Jesus himself arrived on earth.

And so what we are saying is this, that the revelation of God has been given to us in these different ways and it has been recorded in the books of scriptures by the different writers such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, James and John and Paul.

And these writers, you will notice if you study the Bible, were allowed to use their own common sense in the use that they made of language.

They were allowed to speak according to their standard of education, according to their cultural background. And that is why you notice the difference in the different books of the Bible.

For instance, if you read here this epistle of Peter and the first epistle of Peter and compare it with the epistles of Paul, there's a vast difference. The two men are different. They've had a different standard of education.

[18:17] They've come from a different cultural background. And so they write in a different stream. It's the same when you read through the book of the prophecy of Isaiah, the book of the prophecy of Jeremiah.

They're two different men. And God took these men with their limitations, with their cultural background, with their standard of education, and he used them by his spirit to record his mind and will in these books of the Bible.

But let's go on to notice the authority of the scriptures. You see, it may be argued that if these scriptures are the work of men, then these documents, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, James, John, whatever, these documents must be fallible because the writers were only fallible men.

But we've got to remember that the writers of the scriptures were not the authors of the scriptures. They were only the writers. They were not the authors.

The author of the scriptures, as Peter reminds us here, was the Holy Ghost. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

[19 : 59] In other words, these men that we've been mentioning, like Peter and James and John and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Hosea and Daniel and Moses, they only wrote. But behind them was the Holy Spirit of God guiding them in what they wrote and in how they wrote.

As the Hebrew writer puts it, it was God who spoke to the fathers by the prophets who has spoken in these last times to us.

It's God who is speaking through the Holy Ghost. Indeed, we might say that the scriptures are the production of the triune God. It's God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit who is the author of the scriptures.

And as the scriptures are a divine product, they must be infallible. We speak about the infallibility of the Bible. You often hear me say, after having read a passage of the Bible, may the Lord add his blessing to the reading from his own infallible word.

What do we mean? We mean from his own word which is incapable of error. That's what infallibility means, incapable of error. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul puts it like this, all scripture, he says, is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

[21 : 36] Now just mark that. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. What does inspiration mean? Inspiration means God breathed.

And just as my breath conveys to you the thoughts of my mind, and that's what my breath is doing at this present moment, I'm using my breath to form words.

And my breath, which is forming words, is conveying to you the thoughts that are going on in my mind. So in the same way, the thoughts of God are conveyed to us, as it were, by the breath of God.

And these scriptures are the very breath of God. And when you and I stand before the Bible and when we read it, it's as if God was standing there speaking to us and we are feeling his breath on our face.

That's what inspiration means. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

[22 : 58] All scripture is God breathed. All scripture is the very breath of God coming, as it were, from the mouth of God. God breathed. And so, the Bible is authoritative and infallible.

Now, the question may be raised, how are we to regard the text which we have? This is the text I'm talking about. Here is the text, this text, this Bible, this book that's in front of me here.

This is the text. How are we to regard this text? This is the authorized version, this text that I have in front of me. This is the King James version, the authorized version.

Is it the inspired and the infallible text? Well, let's remember what the Confession of Faith has to say about the inspired text.

It says that the inspired text is the original text given to us in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

[24 : 19] What we have is a translation. we no longer have any of the original autographs.

We only possess copies of copies. Remember that. if you were to say to me tonight, show me the actual text, the actual document that Peter wrote, I can't.

I can't take you to any museum, I can't take you to any place and say, there, do you see behind this glass box? That's the original. We don't have it.

We don't have the original text of Isaiah nor do we have the original text of Moses. They've all vanished, all disappeared. What we have today are copies of copies.

But we have a great number of copies of copies and by comparison we can determine fairly accurately what the original text must have been.

[25 : 30] This is how Professor Edward J. Young of Westminster, well he's now dead and gone, Professor Young. He died some years ago. But he wrote a very interesting book.

It's a very valuable book too. It's called Thy Word is Truth. And this is his argument. And he's talking as an American. He says, here is a teacher and this teacher receives a letter from the President of the United States.

And of course the teacher is thrilled. A letter from the President of the United States. What does she do? She goes along to her classroom and she says to the boys and the girls in the classroom look, she said, I've got a letter that came to me from the President of the United States.

I want you to take down a copy of it. So they all get out their books and she dictates and they all write down this letter that came to her from the President.

But Young goes on to say, unfortunately the woman loses, the teacher loses the copy. She can't find it. So she comes back to the classroom and she says to her class, look, I want you to hand in your books because I've lost the original and I want to know what the real text was, what it said. [27 : 00] And as she sits down she compares all the books and she finds perhaps that Johnny has missed out a word here but Mary and Margaret have it in theirs.

A word has been misspelled by one but it's corrected by another. And Young goes on to say, by a careful assessment this teacher is able to produce the letter as it originally came from the hands of the President of the United States.

And so Young goes on to argue that is how it is with the Bible. We don't have the original texts. We have copies of copies but by an assessment of them we are able to determine what was the original as it came from the hands of Peter.

What was the original as it came from the hands of John as it came from the hands of Paul as it came from the hands of Isaiah and Jeremiah. And let's remember that there are discoveries being made today and these discoveries are confirming the text as it has been in the church for these many years.

I'm talking about the Dead Sea Scrolls. You know the story of the Dead Sea Scrolls? In the late 1940s a shepherd boy was there tending his flocks down by the Dead Sea.

[28 : 40] He happened to be throwing stones up into the caves and he heard a crashing in one of the caves. He was rather afraid to venture in to see what had happened. And he asked one of the boys to go with him and when they went into this cave here were jars.

This one had been shattered by the stone that he had thrown and out of this jar he produced a parchment. He didn't know what it was but he went to an antique dealer in Jerusalem. He sold it to him for a paltry sum. When the antique dealer looked at it he realised that this must be very valuable. He took it along to the university in Jerusalem and they realised that it was an ancient document.

And then they set about discovering what was in the cave or the caves at Qumran and they discovered a whole library. And this library was a library of the sacred scriptures. and they are still deciphering them. Still studying them to this day. They've discovered the whole text of Isaiah.

[30 : 01] They've discovered that there's no difference in that text from the text that we have here in our Bibles. Now you might say what does all that mean?

Well it means this and this is really what happened by the way or at least this is what they think happened. When the Vandals and the Goths were pushing south after the Roman Empire had collapsed this community at Qumran realised that their precious library would be burned by these men.

So they hid them in jars placed them in the caves at the Dead Sea. They hoped that one day they would be able to return to their community and bring their valuable library back again but they never returned and the library stayed there until the shepherd boy discovered them through throwing the stone.

And the most interesting thing about this is that the texts that were discovered were more ancient than the texts that they originally had.

It's a very technical argument. I can't go into it in any further detail but it's one of the most interesting discoveries made in the middle of our century. And we still haven't yet benefited fully from all the results of that discovery.

[31 : 36] We will as time goes on. There's no question at all about that. But what we are saying and that is this. We needn't be afraid that we don't have the original text.

To all intents and purposes we have. And here we have what God is saying to us. And the wonderful thing is that here even in this English translation that I have, the King James version, I have to all intents and purposes the infallible, unerring word of God.

But let's notice too the content of the scriptures. What is God saying to us? holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

What is God saying to us in the scriptures? He is telling us who he is. He is telling us what he has done, what he is doing at the present time and what he is yet going to do.

That's what the scriptures are telling us about. And it's extremely important for us to know these things. We must know who our creator is.

[32 : 59] We must know what is our relationship to him. We must know how our relationship to him can be bettered. And this is what the Bible is talking about.

In this Bible there is unfolded for us God's plan of salvation. and what a wonderful plan it is. How God has selected from among the lost a chosen people for himself.

How God has predestinated them according to the good pleasure of his will. How God is just and yet he is the justifier of the ungodly by giving his own son in the room and place of these people. How he has substituted his son for them. And this book, the Bible, is a book that tells us about the atonement of Christ.

When we speak about the atonement of Christ we are really speaking about the recovery of man from sin. And this Bible speaks to us about the way of holiness, about the way of new obedience, about the eternal state of all things.

[34 : 20] And this Bible is a revelation to us of the great and precious promises of God. So that when we turn to the Bible, what is it?

It's manna to the soul. It's food to the soul. What else is the Bible?

Not only is it food or manna to the soul, but it's balm to this troubled spirit that we've got. it's got a healing influence upon our spirit.

It imparts comfort to our hearts that ache. It brings light to us in this dark and troubled world. In the Bible are hidden all the treasures of knowledge, all the treasures of God.

You know, at the coronation service of Queen Elizabeth, and this happens at every coronation or it has happened at every coronation service, we pray God that it will continue to happen.

[35 : 37] There comes a part in the coronation service when the sovereign is crowned, when she is presented or he as the case may be with a Bible.

And when at that part in the coronation service the Bible is presented to the sovereign, this is what is said, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

here is wisdom, this is the royal law, these are the lively oracles of God.

Did you know that that happened to Queen Elizabeth when she was crowned? And if, we pray God that it will happen too, that this Bible will be kept as it has been all these years, if the time comes, as probably inevitably will, if Prince Charles is spared and he's crowned, this is what will be said to him.

This will be part of the service, he will be given a Bible. And the one who will give him the Bible will say, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

[37 : 06] These are exactly the words from the coronation service. here is wisdom, this is the royal law, these are the lively oracles of God.

How precious the Bible is. And how we ought to value it above everything else. Because these are the holy scriptures. They are able to make us wise to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

And Peter reminds us here, holy men of God, speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But we come to a close.

Who is the interpreter of the scriptures? You see, it will be said, isn't the Bible a difficult book to read? Isn't it a difficult book to understand?

Now that's true. true. But thank God we are not left to come to an understanding of the divine truth in and of ourselves.

[38 : 13] We said this, that the Holy Ghost is the author of the scriptures. scriptures. Well, let's remember that it's the Holy Ghost who will interpret the scriptures for us.

And it's his delight to do so. But we've got to ask him. You may say, how do we ask the Holy Spirit to interpret the Bible for us?

We do so in the words of David and we can do no better than use his words. How did David pray? He prayed like this, open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

And when we pray like that the Holy Spirit will open our eyes and will make us see wondrous things out of God's law. Let me put it to you like this.

You have a transistor or a radio as the case may be. You switch on this transistor or this radio but you get nothing but distorted noises.

[39 : 21] Now what's wrong? Just this that you haven't got the set tuned properly and you've got to sit down and tune this set until at last you begin to hear what voice is coming through the transistor and what the voice is saying.

That's how it is with the Bible. You've got to tune in. It's the same with your television set. It may be that you get distorted pictures and it's because the television set is not tuned properly and until it's tuned you won't see anything but distorted pictures.

But when it's tuned then you see. And so it is with the Bible. We've got to turn to God and by the aid of the Holy Spirit listen.

Speak Lord for thy servant heareth and then God will begin to speak to us through his word. Open thou mine eyes that I may see and suddenly God will begin to make us see what his word has for us to see.

Do you hear God speaking to you in the Bible? Are you seeing what God wants you to see from the Bible? You say no I'm not hearing I'm not seeing.

[40 : 49] Well will you not ask the Holy Spirit to come to your aid for the Holy Spirit to open your understanding for the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind and then when that begins to happen then you will begin to understand the word of God and the word will come to you in one way or another either like the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces or like the ointment that soothes and heals or like the light that opens up the dark breaks up the darkness this is what the Bible does it's a precious gift from God and for too long we've spurned it for too long we've neglected it these scriptures are the revelation of God's divine intention and it's imperative that each one of us give heed to what

God is saying let's turn back to the Bible let's begin to read it let's begin to try by the grace of God to understand it I know that you may be in a hurry in the morning trying to get out to work but maybe if you just took time to read perhaps a verse or two God would begin to speak to you and in the evening I know that you're tired with a day's work but do take time just even to read a verse or two in the evening if you can read no more and ask God to speak to you through his word it's a precious word holy men of God speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost let's thank God for the Bible and let's begin to make use of it and it will inevitably lead us to one thing and that's the very thing that we all need this word will lead us to

Christ and when we come to Christ we've come to the very heart and center of God's revealed will God's will of salvation in Christ Jesus loved God's Lord for love Jesus