

Validity and Reliability of Scripture

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[0 : 00] In your Bibles to 2 Peter 1. We're going to return to 2 Peter today.! There's my wife.

She's going to do an alternative one. And now I've got 2 Peter 1. And again, Peter's got a good message there, but I'm going, how do I convey something of value to you from it?

So I'm going to do the best I can. We'll see what happens. By God's grace, you'll get something out of it. If nothing else, you're going to read the Scriptures. And that's good stuff.

Alright, so. He's going to continue doing what he's been doing. In essence, really, 2 Peter is just a continuation of much of the stuff that he did in the first period.

But in this particular part, he's going to continue on. He's going to talk more about his testimony of Christ and the reliability of Scripture. Those are the two things that he's really going to emphasize today.

[1 : 21] He's going to urge us as Christians to stand steady in our faith, steadfast before the Lord. He wants to strengthen our faith.

And he's going to do that, he says, one of the ways you can strengthen your faith is to know Scripture. Which, by the way, if you follow Barna, he does a lot of the statistical studies on the church.

The average Christian, the majority of Christians, never read their Bible during the week. They don't open them. Something like 79% of Christians who claim Christ do not get into the Bible during the week.

Now, some of you are going, what? Really? And others are going, And then there are those who only get the verse of the day. One verse.

And I've been taught, no, you've been exposed to one verse. It is in a context which gives it meaning.

[2 : 28] And one verse is nice, but you need to do what I do. As I put those things on Facebook, or if you're going to read the one verse, click on read the chapter, and go to the chapter, and read before, and read after, and find out what is he really talking about.

Because more heresy has come out of the one verse a day than has come out of anything else in the church. Alright, so Scripture. He's going to tell us that we can trust the testimony of the apostles and the disciples in particular who wrote the Gospels.

Because they were the eyewitnesses of the Gospels, what happened. And in doing that, he's going to call us as a community of faith to believe it and to act on that truth that's in those Gospels.

So let's read the passage. And you can tell my voice is not good today again, so I need a volunteer to read 12 through 21. And we can break it in half if someone wants to do that.

So if somebody would read 1 12 through 21. Therefore, I intend to remind you constantly of these things, even though you know that as well, and are well established in the truth that you now have.

[3 : 41] Indeed, as long as I am in this tabernacle, I consider it right to stir you up by way of reminding you, since I know that my tabernacle will soon be removed, because our Lord Jesus Christ revealed this to me.

Indeed, I will also make every effort that through my departure you have a testimony of these things. For we did not follow cleverly and uncocted favors whom we made known to you with power and return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

No, you were eyewitnesses of his grantee. For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when that voice was conveyed to him by the majestic glory.

This is my dear Son, in whom I am delighted. When this voice was conveyed from heaven, we ourselves heard it, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

Moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to this, as you would to a light shining in a murky place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[4 : 57] Above all you do well, you recognize this. No prophecy of Scripture ever comes about by the prophets own imagination. Did you say 20 or 21?

21. No, for prophecy was ever born of human impulse. Rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Alright. Clear as mud, right? Some of it. Yeah, I understand. I had the same problem. Alright. But I can identify with Peter in part of this, and I'm sure Matt can too, and that is when he said, I intend to remind you constantly of these things even though you know them and are well established in the truth that you now have.

In other words, he's saying, look, I understand people, Christians, people in the churches, you have a foundation of truth and you believe it and you've got it. You've got a good grip on it.

He says, but I'm going to keep reminding you. If you were a husband talking, if Peter was the husband talking to his wife, she'd say, quit nagging me. Because he says, I'm going to keep reminding you.

[6 : 04] I'm going to keep reminding you. Well, guess what Matt and I feel like we do sometimes? We keep reminding you of the same truths. It comes in a different form in some ways. We're talking about different pieces of Scripture, but the truth is the truth and it all comes and points to Jesus Christ and what he's accomplished for us.

So, you know, I think that's a lot of a pastor teacher. That's what our job is, I guess. And even those that preach that aren't necessarily pastors or whatever, you're doing the same thing.

You're stirring up the heart to remind people of the truth that they have already received. Now, I also don't want you to miss the therefore because this whole passage started with the therefore and the therefore always points back to something that came before.

And Peter's moving on from where he had been speaking and had written already. He's trying to ensure that the believers never stumble. That they live out the faith that they already have.

He's saying, you already got enough truth to be established in your life as a Christian. Now, live it out. Don't just hold it. And that's another problem Christians often have.

[7 : 23] They have a lot of head knowledge, but it never gets to their hands. And it never gets to their hearts. You can ask them a question and they got an opinion founded on what they understand as Scriptures.

But when you observe them, you'll never see that opinion worked out in their relationship with other people or in their decision making. It just isn't. There's a disconnect.

And I think that's part of the problem in our whole society. We divide, we Americans in particular divide the world into secular and spiritual. And we say, my secular life is how I live every day, day to day, Monday through Saturday, how I do my job, how I do my work, how I spend my money, how I spend my time, about my relationships with my friends, what we do, don't do, my hobbies, whatever.

That's all secular. Spiritual. Well, I have, if you're lucky, you have a few minutes in the morning that you'd have a quiet time and then you'd go to church on Sunday and if you're really spiritual you go to Sunday school and occasionally something else, special event.

But you don't let the two of them ever come together. That's a particularly American problem. The problem is, do you know that every one of you have, off my topic, do you know that every one of you has a calling?

[8 : 50] Did you know that we use the word vocation? What does that mean? I have a vocation, my vocation is. I was a soldier for many years. That was my vocation. It's your job.

You know what vocation means? Calling. Who gives you the calling in your life? God. Who calls you to do the work you do? God.

Oh, Paul says, do everything you do as if unto the Lord. That means even the tedious little things you do in work.

The wrench turning you do. The reading of plans you do. The TI stuff you do.

The accounting you do. The teaching you do. Those are all things God's calling you to do for Him and the consequences that other people are blessed by. For a Christian, there is no secular spiritual divide.

[9 : 49] You are no longer a secular person. That part doesn't exist anymore. It died in the grave. You are now a new person born again spiritual. And that means that everything you do should be impacted by your relationship with Christ.

Okay. And that's what Peter is saying. No, I don't need that. I want help. New vocal cords that help. Thank you. He's told them that everything they need, this is in the first part of chapter 1, everything they need for life and godliness has been given to them.

Everything they need for life and godliness has been given to them. And that was given to them based on their faith, on the testimony and witnesses the apostles and the disciples who wrote the New Testament in particular.

They just needed to continue in what they'd already received. And they needed to grow in character and in depth of love for one another. You know that Jesus said, if you love me, you obey my commandments.

Remember that? Do you know what comes after that? what was this commandment? He only gave one commandment or two and didn't want to divide it in half.

[11 : 16] What was this commandment? Love your brothers as well as I love you. Yeah. And love the Lord your God with all your heart. So if you want to know what it is to be obedient to Christ, to know His love, love one another and love others and then love God.

That's it. If you do everything in love, first for the Lord and second for everybody else, you're going to be pretty well set on walking in the Lord's path for you.

Now that doesn't mean you can't make some mistakes, yeah? But it means at least you, we talked about Abimelech, he says I have a clear conscience and clean hands. If you're loving others and you're acting in love, in the kind of love, not the human, mushy, cushy little love.

Oh, I love you, you're my friend. No, no, the love of God, the kind of love that God puts in us. If you're acting and living in that kind of love, then you're acting in it with a clear conscience and clean hands.

If your conscience is not clear, then you need to go back and say, Lord, what am I doing wrong? And let Him redirect you. Alright. He also tells them, don't forget the forgiveness of your sins.

[12 : 37] And I thought about that. When am I most conscious about the forgiveness of my sins? When I've sinned. Because I'm quick to say, oh, I need to get that forgiven.

I need to confess that. But day to day when I'm not conscious of sin, do you think I think about it? Probably not. And we probably need to not forget that our sins have been forgiven and what it costs for that to happen.

That should change our perspective on our day to day activities and our relationships and everything we do. The other thing is don't forget the promise of entering into the eternal kingdom of God.

That song, I love it, there's a couple of them, but one, this world is not my home. This world is not my home. I'm here as an ambassador temporarily. That's one of the things that Peter says.

My tabernacle is going to be taken away. What does that mean? It means his body is going to die. Do you know how Peter died? He was crucified in Rome about the same time Paul was beheaded.

[13 : 47] He was crucified upside down. Do you know why? He said when they went to crucify him, what? He said I'm not worthy to die like my Lord.

I am not worthy to die like my Lord. So he asked them, crucify me of sin. He knew that was coming, by the way.

Do you know how he knew? Well, the Scripture says what? Jesus told him. And there's some question about when that happened.

But if you go back to the end of John's Gospel in John chapter 21, you can read a story when Peter was restored. Remember? They had gone fishing. The Lord had been resurrected.

They had gone fishing. And Peter looked over on the shore and he saw what he was convinced was Jesus. And he told the disciples, the Lord is over there.

[14 : 46] Now I think if I read it correctly, I remember correctly, he put something on to jump into the water. So he was fishing less than dressed.

And he swam to the shore and he sat down with Jesus and Jesus was fixing breakfast. And that's when Jesus asked him three times, do you love me? And then the guy did a discussion of what was going to happen.

And Jesus was talking to him and Peter asked about John. The disciple John. He says, what about him? He says, if I let him live, if he lives for a long time, what is that to you basically?

And John did live a long life. Even though they didn't try to kill him a couple of times. He lived a long life. He says, but for you, the day is coming when you're old that you're going to be taken where you don't want to go, and you're going to be bound in chains that you don't want to wear, and you're going to be stretched out when you don't want to indicate the way he died.

So Peter knew then that he was going to be crucified when he was an older man. Now it's possible that the Lord had confirmed to him, just like the Lord had confirmed, remember, Paul was writing to the Philippians and he says, I don't know if I should live or die, which is better, but I'm convinced in the Lord that I'll live.

[16:09] What does he know? You're going to survive this imprisonment. It could be that Peter was told by the Lord, this is it. You're in prison, this time you're going to die.

One way or the other, he knew his time was short, and so he decided that he needed to stir up the believers. We're getting echoing now. He's going to write to them the things that he wants them to remember, to reinforce the truth of the gospel, providing a testimony of the important things of the faith.

he wants them firmly established in the truth. After he's gone, they'll have something to look to, to understand what he was teaching when he was alive.

And today, okay, so he tells us, he goes down into this, for this, for we did not follow clever, cleverly concocted faith was when we made known to you the power and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, that's one of those crystal clear statements, right? What is he talking about? The power and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? What he's talking about that the Lord came in power and that he's coming back again.

[17:31] He is going to return. This is a statement about the second coming of Christ. And what he's going to do is he's going to tie that and say, look, you can believe this because I'm telling you, we were witnesses of this.

We saw his glory and his power and his might with our own two eyes. And we wrote it down. It is not a myth, a tale, or a finally wrought fictional story.

It is the truth, the record of the truth, as it actually happened. He also goes on to say that the truth that's in the Gospels in particular because they didn't have anything else.

Now he's aware that he's writing scripture. Do you know that? He's aware he's writing scripture. He knows what he's writing is inspired. He also knows the writings of Paul because he says this later in the letter, he says, our brother Paul sometimes says things that are hard to understand.

But, he's saying Paul is writing scripture. You need to take it and believe it. It is trustworthy. You know where he saw the power of Christ?

[18:52] One was the resurrection. And I would have thought that that's what he would refer to here because to me that is the biggest demonstration of power of God's power to raise Jesus from the dead.

But he's not talking about that. He's talking about the transfiguration. If you go to because he talks about let me see if I can find it real quick.

He says for he received 17 for he received honor and glory from the father God the father when that voice conveyed to him by majestic glory.

This is my dear son in whom I am delighted. When did that happen? Well I can think of twice that happened. One was when he was baptized. The other was the Mount of Transfiguration.

And so he's talking about the Mount of Transfiguration and Matthew recorded it like this. I'm going to read it to you. This is Matthew 17 verses 1 through 6. And six days later Jesus took with him.

[19:54] Guess who he took? The first one was Peter. James and John the brother of James and led them up privately up a high mountain and he was transfigured before them.

His face shone like the sun. His clothes became white as light. So Peter said to Jesus, excuse me, then Moses and Elijah also appeared before them in talking with him.

So Peter said to Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here. If you want I'll make three shelters. One for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. And while he was still speaking a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said this is my one dear son in whom I take great delight and listen to him.

And when the disciples heard this they were overwhelmed with fear and threw themselves down with their faces to the ground. They saw Jesus and his power and his glory and his might. Where else do you see a picture like that? John in Revelation several places. One is in the first chapter talks about seeing Jesus walking amongst the candlesticks. Again, radiant and white, wool, hair white as wool.

[21 : 08] It just describes him as this mighty, glorious being, person. So when Peter says, we saw this, we saw, guess what the transfiguration is?

We saw him and his glory and his power. This is the preview to his return. When Jesus returns, how is he going to come back? As a normal, everyday man like he did the first time?

A king in power and might and glory. And he's going to bring his angels with him. This transfiguration, because remember Jesus said, some of you will not die before you see the sun coming into his kingdom.

three of them saw him as he would be in his kingdom. At the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, John, and James.

Now the resurrection, I think, is also a valid point. Because again, they saw him resurrected alive and changed. He was similar, but he wasn't the same.

[22 : 18] I mean, he could do things he couldn't do before like, well, I guess he could have been wanting to, but he didn't. He would go through doors. He just appeared. Disappeared. He could do things that you and I can't do in our human bodies.

And all the disciples saw him. All the apostles, in the eleven anyway, the one was dead, and about five hundred others saw him in his glory after the resurrection.

so what Peter's telling us is that he and the other writers of the New Testament books are faithfully recording and telling what the Spirit has given them to write.

He says in verse nineteen, moreover, we possess the prophetic word as an altogether reliable thing. You do well if you pay attention to it as you would, and he talks about a light in the murky darkness.

Well, what is a prophetic word? The problem again is that we have the wrong idea of what prophecy is. If I ask you what prophecy is, you would say it's what?

[23 : 33] Future. Future. It's telling the future. Ninety-nine percent of prophecy doesn't have anything to do with the future per se. It has everything to do with God's telling you right now.

Go read the prophets. Now, hounding those kings and those leaders and those religious leaders. You're doing this, you're doing this, if you keep doing that, this is going to happen.

That's sort of future, but it's just a judgment. God's judgment's coming on you because. Even Isaiah, he talks about the future, and we love to go in 55 or 60, all that stuff up there.

He's talking about what's going to happen, but he's saying this is, it isn't sort of, it isn't designed to be a future thing, it's designed to be a thing of hope, to say, the Lord has got a purpose, and he's going to fulfill his purpose, and his purpose is starting now, and he's going to keep on going until the day he comes back.

You read Daniel, very little of it is future stuff. There is a section, it's not in chapter 12, it's very future, talks of the son of man coming back. But the rest of it is, this is what's going on right now.

[24 : 41] God's working to return your people to the promised land type thing. So, when Peter says, we possess the prophetic word, he means the word of God.

We have the words that come directly from God. That's the prophet. A prophet speaks the word of God, speaks for the word that God gives them for the people at that time.

Technically speaking, a preacher is a prophet. Because they're supposed to be taking the word of God and presenting it to you. This is what God has to say for you today.

Okay? And so Peter's saying, we have the prophetic word, and we wrote it down. And that word is reliable, you can trust it, just like you can a light in a dark place.

And you think about that. Have you ever been in a dark room and someone lit a light, turned on a light? What do you immediately do? You look at it. That's right. Where's the light?

[25 : 47] Oh, I see now. Now, a smart person automatically does that. Do you do that with the word of God? When you read it, do you automatically, when you hear it, do you automatically get drawn to it to see where it is pointing to?

What is it talking about? What am I seeing? Or are you, like Proverbs would say, a foolish person, and you turn away and say, I'd rather look at the darkness and not be blinded by the light. We have

a lot of people in this world that would rather remain blinded to it than look at the light. Don't be amongst them. and he tells us also, if you keep reading that section, you find out that he says, no prophecy was ever born by him, and the impulse for other men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So, how did the scriptures come about? How did all the Bible come about? God spoke through men who wrote down what they heard. It is reliable.

It comes from God. By the way, you cannot read scriptures well unless you do it the same way. Paul tells us that. When you read scriptures, you can understand it with your mind, your human mind, and you'll get a human understanding of it.

[27 : 08] But if you really want to know the depth of what is in that scripture and how it applies to you, you need the Spirit's help working in you to open up your heart and your mind in the word to you so that you can receive it.

that's probably, you know, the reformers, math, preaching in a Presbyterian church, they believed that you could not understand scripture unless God called you specifically and gave you the answer.

You understand? You can't get saved. you can't even think about getting saved on your own, only by the prompting of the Spirit. Well, in a sense, that's true.

I don't agree with that totally, but in a sense, it's true. You can give a person who's unsaved a Bible and say, read that. They will read it, if they read it, they'll read it and come back and say, that was a whole bunch of collection of good stories.

weird stories, for the most part, but interesting. But I don't see what that has to do with me. But if God touches them, something in there will go, oh, wait a minute, what is this?

[28 : 35] And you'll start to see there's some life, there's life in the Word, and it'll change them. All right, later, I think Glenn's going to teach, you do chapter two, right?

Yep. He's going to warn us about false prophet. I can talk about false prophets. People who take the Word and twist it, often they take it and change it in, and they reinterpret it in order to make it fit their purposes.

To politicians. They do that too, yeah. If you think about it, or they just quote the Word intentionally. Serpent in the garden, what did he do?

He twisted the Word. Did God really say? Well, no, God didn't say that, but he asked a question, and he allowed it, and then he just twisted it around.

Think about it, when Jesus was tempted, he quoted Scripture quite well. Well, he was using it for a wrong purpose. He was trying to stop the purposes of God, rather than to further the purposes of God.

[29 : 53] False prophets are like that. They cast doubt on the truth, or the validity, or the reliability of God's Word. Which brings us to something that I think Peter really wants us to understand, that we must both be knowledgeable in the Scripture, we've got to know it, and we've got to be able to handle it well.

It doesn't do you any good to know a lot of things. I know a lot of mechanics. I mean, until they changed cars, I knew how a car worked, an engine.

But did I work on cars? No. I once had a boss, he worked in the same realty, I was the office boy, and he was late one day and he called and said, I'm going to be really, really late if anyone's looking for me, I'll be there later.

When he came in, he said, I had a flat tire. I had to wait for AAA to come and change it for me. I looked at him and I go, I was 16, 17. If I have a flat tire, I change it.

He says, I don't change flat tires anymore. I make enough money that I can get somebody else to do it. I think hands dirty.

[31 : 11] Working it, dealing with it, struggling with it, wrestling with it. We should be like Jacob, who wrestled with the angel. We need to take God's word and wrestle with it until it changes us.

We don't want to change it. We want us to be changed by it, through the work of the Spirit. And how would you know that if you succeeded in your wrestling, will you come to an understanding, a piece of truth?

Just like Jacob, you may end up walking with a limp, but at least you have gotten a grasp of the truth. I've got a bunch of questions for you.

How can you explain the hope you have in Christ? That's called witnessing. I've had a young man when I was in the army ask him, I wish I had a hope like you do. Well, if someone said that to you, could you explain what your hope is?

Could you go to Scripture and say, here's the reason I believe that. Here's the reason why I hope that. How can you explain it if you don't know the Scriptures?

[32 : 22] Then explain it. Can you defend the faith? How can you defend the faith if you are weak in knowing the Scriptures?

If you don't know what the Scriptures say about our faith, why we believe why we believe? How can you find hope in Christ if you don't know Him and His promises that are revealed in the Scriptures? How can you resist the evil one if you don't know what the Scriptures really say rather than taking Satan's perverted version as true? how can we teach and exhort one another to love in love and wisdom by the way that's what Paul tells us to do if the Word of God does not dwell deeply within us?

And of course the answer is no you can't. And too many of us are ignorant of the Scriptures. What we do is we think we hear enough Scripture on Sunday morning that we're okay.

So we hear and try to remember. But the problem with 99% of us is we are faulty hearers, we only hear what we want to hear, and we remember only those things that have some value to us for some purpose that we have of our own.

[33 : 47] How much help is that going to be when you get in a bind? It ain't going to help you at all. Because if you're, especially as you get older, just ask me, how much do I remember?

And by the critical time, I'm going to go, I don't remember what it said that, but what did it say? We remember what we find useful for our own purposes and we hear what satisfies our own ears.

Paul says, they only listen to what tickles their ears. tickles their fancy. Whatever makes them feel good about themselves. You think God gave you the scripture so you can feel good about yourself? I think not. I think he gave us the scriptures to be pierced through the heart. What did Paul say? The scriptures are as sharp as a two-edged sword that's able to divide bone from marrow.

He says, I don't come to bring peace but to bring division. He's trying to use his word to change us and sometimes by radical surgery.

[35 : 04] We are supposed to read scripture and study the word together community. Everything in Christianity is a community. We are a people of faith.

individuals but that's sort of an aside where a community, a family, a body, a building, a temple, collective, together, we're supposed to be studying and reading scripture.

We need to be aware of scripture and what it means. We need to come to some understanding of it. we should challenge one another, teach one another, encourage one another using the word.

And if you correct one another as well. Do you know how to prevent heresy? Have a church full of people who are spiritually enlightened reading and studying the word.

And when someone says something that is obviously out there, then they can be lovingly corrected. the problem is that person out there usually doesn't, he sounds wiser than the preacher and so he draws people to himself and the heresy grows.

[36 : 26] We need to ask the spirit to open the word to us that we might understand it. And our understanding must never rely on our own thoughts. Peter says that. No prophet speaks his own imagination.

The church has had two millenniums of study to draw on. And a multitude of teachers to counsel with those who have studied and struggled with God's word to discern the fullness of the truth.

And we have the spirit living in us to open our eyes and our hearts and our minds as we read and engage in the struggle to understand scripture in its fullness.

Now that's one side. Guess what's on the other side? God is going to protect his word. How is it that the Bible, scripture, has come to us still fully reliable and truthful over all these years?

If you go back to the beginning when Moses wrote the first five books down, so now it's been four or five thousand years. How is it that that word has been preserved intact over all that time?

[37 : 43] Throughout all the different places that Christians and Jews have been. It's because God protects his word. He's not going to allow it to perish.

What did Isaiah say? The word of the Lord will not return void. He is going to use it and preserve it forever until it's fully fulfilled.

Jesus said that, remember? Not one word of this will pass away until it is fulfilled. Who is the fulfillment of it all? Christ.

And one day he's coming back and we will be living in his presence and we won't need this anymore because we'll have him. We'll be there with him. And the last thing I want to tell you is that we're answerable how we use and teach God's word.

Paul says that teachers are going to be held to a higher standard. But everyone's going to be held to a standard. What did you do with my word?

[38 : 49] That's one of the questions. What did you do with my word? Well, I think I've got you enough. Let's stop there. Glenn will pick up next time and tell us about the false teachers.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you are a gracious and loving God and that you've made provision for us by providing your word for your prophets or your disciples who wrote it down as you inspired them in the height of that we might have it today to be encouraged, corrected, admonished, and taught.

Help us, Lord, to trust your word knowing that many of these people were eyewitnesses of the things they wrote about. Open our eyes and our hearts.

Give us an understanding of your word. Give us a hunger for your word, a need to get into it and to devour it even as the prophet was told to eat the scroll.

Have us take your word and feed upon it and we might be strengthened and we might gain understanding and wisdom. And then, Lord, help us to put that into practice, to do what it says.

[40 : 11] James said, it doesn't do any good to know if you don't do. Help us to do your will. Help us to live out your word, to be living examples of your people, people of the word to the world around us.

We thank you for all your grace and mercy in Jesus. Amen.