

2 Peter 1:16-21 Christianity 101

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

A few years ago a survey was given where a question was asked: "Is there such a thing as absolute truth?"

A) Only 28 percent of the people in this survey, said, "Yes, there is such a thing as absolute truth."

B) Now to be honest that doesn't surprise me that much – it is the mindset of our world today. –

1) We live in a culture where people argue - "How can anyone lay claim to having a corner on the market when it comes to truth?"

Bb) After all, we all have our own values, we all have our own life experiences

1) So that only 28% said yes - didn't surprise me.

C) But this is what did surprise me – in this same survey Only 23 percent of Christians or those who claim to be believers,

1) only 23 percent said there is such a thing as absolute truth.

What that means is that over 77 percent of Christ followers or those who purport to be Christ followers are saying---

A) There is no absolute truth - They're saying that nothing can be known for certain.

B) To someone who falls into that category – Christian or not – I would ask – what do you do with the claims of Christ

1) John 14:6 I am the way the truth and life me?

C) That is an Absolute... – not a way but the way.

1) But people don't want to hear that – because that is part of the prevailing culture today.

We are living at a time when the truth is under attack – The Church is under attack

A) Deconstructing - Hurts – wrongs – hypocrisy

B) Don't throw the baby out with the bath water

C) Others are deconstructing because – The Bible doesn't line up with their moral beliefs

1) on certain things – Premarital sex

Cc) Or Homosexuality

1) I know this gay couple – super nice – love each other – committed to each other – married

D) How can that be wrong? – I get that – I know couples like that as well – tough

E) Or someone believes in another religion – how can that be wrong – "A guy I disciplined – years ago – how can my mother be in hell?"

This is what we must understand – The Christian faith is based on undeniable truths –

A) That is what Peter deals with here in the passage before us

B) This paragraph is really a set up for where he is going in Chapter 2- false teachers

C) Allow me to remind you the setting of this letter: persecution was at an all-time high,

1) Christians were losing their jobs, they were being arrested, they were being killed.

D) And so Peter writes here toward the end of his life to a group of believers who are in that kind of a situation

1) and he tells them that there are certain things they should know.

E) In fact, that word "know" or "knowledge" is one of the key words of Second Peter.

1) It appears sixteen times in the letter

In the next chapter---but Peter will address false prophets, false teachers that come into the church.

A)And there were several different kinds, but one kind were called the Gnostics. –

B)you've heard the term, these were people in the know.

C)They claimed to know what others didn't know.

1)They claimed to be initiated in special knowledge.

And these Gnostics, denied the Deity of Christ - claims of Christ and denied the coming of Christ,

A)and so Peter speaks about that.

B)Peter counteracts those false teachings by pointing to two undeniable tenets of the Christian faith:

1)Two TENETS that we can point to as evidences for the Validity of the Christian faith

C)Eyewitness Testimony and the Prophetic word

Eyewitness Testimony

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,

A)The word "fables" could be translated "myths."

B)That's the word that is used in Greek, muthos. Muthos or myths was always used in the NT in a negative or derogatory sense.

1)And it usually referred to pagan mythology, Greek mythology

C)You know if you have Ever studied – can be Bizarre

For example, the story of Prometheus who gave fire as a gift to mankind.

A)Zeus found out about it, was so jealous he had Prometheus chained to a rock in the Adriatic Sea and had vultures peck out his liver.

B)Or the story of Pandora who opened up her little vile, and all the evils in the world jumped out.

C)Or the story of Medusa who originally had golden hair and fell in love with Poseidon,

1)and so Athena cursed her and in where the hair once grew that was golden, snakes came out---

D)all these crazy, non-historical fables or myths.

Peter says: We didn't bring to you myths or fables –made up stories -from someone bizarre imagination

A)But what we taught you was the byproduct of an Eyewitness testimony **V.16 again**

¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, **but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.** ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

B)One of the foundations of the Christian faith is that it is built upon eyewitness testimony

1)Peter says, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty." "I saw this with my own eyes,"

C)The event that Peter is referencing here is what happened on the MT of transfiguration

D)It was one of the highlights in Peter's life. Jesus was transformed before his very eyes.

In that experience Peter saw the face of Jesus glowing like the sun and his garments in dazzling white

A)And then two men from the past showed up, Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus.

B)And Peter was overwhelmed by what he saw.

1)And whenever Peter got overwhelmed, it wasn't good, He would start talking -

Bb) Ever do that? – Say something stupid)

C)And Peter said this; now listen to how profound this is. He says---this miraculous thing happens and he goes, **"It's good that we are here."**

1)You wonder why Jesus didn't say, "Duh."

D)And then Peter said, **"Let's build three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."**

1) And as those words were still hanging in his mouth, God the Father interrupted him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, listen to him."

It was quite-quite a wonderful experience?

A) But Peter was an eyewitness, and in a court of law eyewitnesses are crucial.

B) They're asked this question: "What did you see?" And they're cross-examined:

1) "How do you know that's exactly what you saw?" Peter said, "I was there. I saw this."

C) But not just me – bring James and John they were there too! –

1) The more eyewitness testimony that you have the stronger the case is going to be.

D) Listen to John's testimony

We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. ² This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy. 1 John 1:1-4 NLT

This is interesting to me – they saw Jesus walk on water, heal all kinds of diseases –

A) blind men, lepers – calmed the sea – raised the dead.

B) Why does Peter point to the Transfiguration as his evidence?

1) well some of these false teachers were denying the deity of Jesus – God in human flesh

C) Peter points to this one moment when the glory that resided in Jesus was manifested on the outside –

D) Notice again what Peter says - we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we were eyewitnesses of his majesty

E) They saw him in His majesty on that Mount – His glory!

Note That word "coming" is important.

A) It's the Greek word *parousia*. It is almost always used to refer to second coming of Christ.

B) It means literally the arrival or the actual presence

1) Peter is saying: What we saw that day was a preview of coming attractions – When Jesus is going to come at his 2nd coming

C) First coming – Glory was concealed – 2nd coming his glory will be revealed

D) First coming – most had no idea this is God in human flesh

1) At his 2nd coming everyone will know

Revelation 21 John is describing the New Jerusalem

A) He says in that day there will be no need for the sun – Jesus the lamb illuminates it – his very presence is enough

B) Paul caught a glimpse – blinded by a light shining brighter than the sun at new Day!

C) So the first undeniable truth that Peter points to is his eyewitness testimony!

Note this: The greatest evidence for the Christian faith is the Resurrection

A) That too is built on eyewitness testimony – Jesus appeared several times to the 11 disciples

B) Touch my hands and side – ate with them - not a ghost

C) Appeared to Mary Magdalene

Well couldn't these guys have made this up – I mean they did get popular and wealthy right?

A) These men's lives were uprooted – changed forever – outcast for proclaiming that Jesus rose again – He was king

B) Here is the record of the disciples

1) James was the first Martyr – Beheaded
JERUSALEM

- Peter crucified upside down
- **Bartholomew – crucified upside down in Albania**
- Andrew the brother of Peter – Crucified
- Simon the Zealot and Thaddeus – crucified
- Phillip - shot full of Arrows
- Matthew – Skinned alive in Iran
- James the less – stoned and then clubbed to death
- Thomas – pierced through with spears
- John – boiled in oil – banished to Patmos

C) On top of that you have James and Jude – half-brothers of Jesus – who didn't believe at first they wanted to have him committed

1) Later – saved and referred to themselves as Servants of Jesus – what happened – they encountered a risen Jesus

I mentioned Paul – Saul of Tarsus – a great persecutor of the church –

A) Apostle – what happened – encounter with the risen Lord

B) 500 people who saw him at once – risen

1) Mass hallucination – Scientifically impossible –

C) If a group sees the same thing and hears the same thing, that's no longer classified as a hallucination.

1) There's something happening that needs to be accounted for.

D) Jesus in John 14:6 made an absolute statement I am the way.... Me

1) Then he proved it through his death – provided the way

E) And his resurrection – Came to life to give life!

So the first undeniable tenet of the Christian faith that Peter points to is the Eyewitness Testimony

A) The 2nd tenet he points to is the Prophetic Word V.19

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

B) Peter says – Our faith is not just built on Eyewitness testimony – but also the prophetic word confirmed

1) I love the King James, the old King James: **"We have a more sure word of prophecy."**

C) One of the things that is very unique about the Bible is it is a book of prophecy – 1/3 of the Bible is made of prophecy

1) Why study Bible prophecy? Kind of the norm if you are really going to study the Bible

Note this when Peter says - knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

A) That word interpretation is not the best translation – should be "origin"

B) That's why the New Living Translation puts it this way: "No prophecy ever came from the prophets themselves."

1) It's speaking about the origin of the text.

C) It not like, David or Paul was sitting around one day going, "You know, I kind of want to write about that," or, "I have an idea"

1) It's not like it originated from them, though God used them.

Peter here gives us insight into Biblical inspiration?

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

A) Doctrine – what is right

Reproof – what is not right

Correction – how to get right

Instruction – how to stay right

B) Purpose to help us become complete in the Lord

Peter gives us insight into how inspiration happens

A) "Holy men of God spoke as they were" – what? – **"moved by the Holy Spirit."**

B) The word moved is a nautical term/ a sailing term describing how a sailboat is moved by the wind!

1)the ship being carried along by the wind but a person is steering it in a direction

C)Biblical inspiration is the same way – the Holy Spirit is moving the idea that is being put forth –

1)But it is being put forth through a human instrument – reflect his personality and writing style.

So these men who were moved by the Holy Spirit wrote about things in the future

A)Things that they didn't understand – but things that came true – **which highlights the uniqueness of the Bible**

B)The Bible is full of prophecy – **You are holding a book in your hand with 1,000's of predictions that have come true.**

C)Example God predicted in Genesis that his people would be in slavery in Egypt for 400 years, 1)and then it happened;

D)And in the same book it's predicted that these people will eventually be held captive in Babylon for 70 years, and it happened:

The Prophet Isaiah predicted in Ch. 45 that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed a hundred years before the actual event.

A)In the same chapter, Isaiah 45, it is predicted that a king named Cyrus would rebuild the temple/ 160 years **before Cyrus was ever born.**

B)Cyrus wasn't even a twinkle in his daddy's eye.

C)He wouldn't come on the scene for another 160 years, Isaiah prophesied of him by name 1)How incredible is that!

D)The greatest degree of prophecies in the Bible relate to Jesus

1)O.T. Prophets – Prophesied 300 prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus / Life / death / Resurrection

E)And all 300 prophecies have been fulfilled to the T.

Micah prophesied the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Micah 5:2

A)Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth – God gave Caesar the idea do a census... place of their birth – Mary 9 months pregnant

B)Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem on Donkey Zechariah 9:9 – **not a Stallion**

1)Over 500 yrs before it happened

C)Daniel prophesied the very day that would take place. Daniel 9

1)Over 500 yrs before it actually happened

D)Zechariah prophesied over 500 yrs before that the Messiah would be betrayed for exactly 30 pieces of silver – Zechariah 11:12, 13

E)David in Psalm 22:18 described how the Messiah would die by crucifixion before crucifixion was even invented as a way to kill people.

Isaiah declared that the Messiah would not make a defense for himself when brought to trial – Isaiah 53:7

A)Isaiah also prophesied that although the Messiah was to be buried with the wicked, **He would end up being buried in the tomb of a Rich man- Isaiah 53:9**

B)Now I just ran through 8 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled to the T

C)Using the Law of Compound Probability

1)what would be the Chances of 1 man fulfilling – 8 prophecies over 1,000 yrs

Peter Stoner – Science speaks - 1 in ten to the 17th power –

A)How much is that? A 1 with 17 zero's after it -

B)Stoner illustrates this by "**supposing that we take one in ten to the seventeenth power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas.**

C)If we did that - it would be so many silver dollars that it would cover the whole state 2 feet deep in silver dollars !

1)Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state.

D)Then Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say this is the right one.

1)What chance would he have of getting the right one? **1 in ten to the 17th power!**

That is the statistical probability of one man fulfilling 8 prophecies

A)But there were 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled – 300 fulfilled to the T / thru life / death / Resurrection

B)The Prophetic word is an undeniable TENET to the Christian faith

C)And get this – The Fact that Jesus fulfilled 300 prophecies to the T concerning his first coming

1)Lets us know that we can be assured that HE WILL ALSO FULFILL – the prophecies concerning his 2nd coming too!

Peter alludes to this idea in this statement V.19 -

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts

Until the day Dawns – what day – code phrase – for the day when Jesus returns – 2nd coming

A)The Reference to the Morning star – speaks of Jesus at His 2nd coming

B)One of the things that made the early Church so powerful and on fire is they believed in the immanent return of Jesus –

C)They were anticipating the rapture and the 2nd coming

D)So confident was Peter of the reliability and authority of the Scriptures

1)that he counsels us to use the Scriptures as our guide until the Second Coming of Christ.

Lessons:

A)The Christian faith is built on a solid foundation of two undeniable facts

B)Men die but the Word of God endures forever!
1)Last week Peter was looking toward his impending death

C)We all are going to die – The word of God lives

The world is getting darker – but the Word of God is shining brighter.

A)The world is getting darker – getting murky grey –but the Word shines brighter

B)Because of so many things we see happening in world – right now is exactly what the Bible says would be happening

C)We don't have to be in the dark – we don't have to be wondering – what on earth is happening

D)We know – the world isn't falling apart – It is falling into place

E)We know this: Jesus wins – Jesus is coming back

1)Be Ready and Busy – occupied with the right things – His heart, Will, way