

Letters From A Fisherman
Week 23
2 Peter 1:16-21
“Validation”

Introduction

Don't think that I came to abolish The Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from The Law until all things are accomplished. **Matthew 5:17-18**

There are many so-called scholars who dispute the authorship of **1 and 2 Peter**. There is never a shortage of people who will go to great lengths to attack the authenticity of The Scriptures. So we shouldn't really be surprised. The arguments that have been offered to dispute the writing of these two particular books are easily defeated. Simply put, the writing style between the two letters is significantly different from one another. The first epistle was written down in elegant and flawless Greek, whereas the second epistle is far more unpolished and simple. Therefore, scholars have raised suspicions as to how Peter, an uneducated fisherman from Galilee could have possibly written the first book, and if he did, why is the style of the second one so much different?

The answer to this so-called puzzle is actually quite simple and can be sorted out from the texts themselves. In his first letter to the church, Peter actually claims to have used the assistance of an amanuensis (a ghost writer, if you will), namely Silvanus (or Silas).

Though Silvanus, a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God.

1 Peter 5:12

Now, the only logical reason to have someone else to write a message on your behalf is that they are a far better writer than yourself. Peter had requested that Silas, a faithful companion of The Apostle Paul, convey his words to the church in a more elegant manner of speaking than the old fisherman was capable of doing on his own. Perhaps it had something to do with the incredible writings of Paul, who was far more learned, and therefore, an excellent communicator. It is quite possible that Peter felt woefully inadequate in comparison. In fact, he mentions the complicated nature of Paul's correspondence in his second epistle.

Also, regard the patience of our LORD as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given him. He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of The Scriptures. **2 Peter 3:15-16**

Peter's second epistle to the church is far more plain and much less elegant than the first, leading me to believe that it was penned by the old fisherman himself, as one last message to the church that he so dearly loved. His death being imminent, I am sure that he was far less worried about his inability to write in dramatic fashion, and far more concerned that his message be both received and understood. This makes me appreciate the writing of this letter all the more. For I believe that in his own words, we can get a glimpse into the heart of a man who, in spite of his shortcomings, was deeply in love with The LORD Jesus Christ. It serves as a reminder that God can use anyone, that is, anyone who is willing to bring Him glory and honor!

In the section of this wonderful epistle that we are examining today, Peter declared his case for Christ. He offers us his *bonafides*, as it were, to lay out his case for why his own witness is credible. He wanted all Believers to take his words and warnings seriously. Therefore, there are three things that he offers in order to demonstrate the credibility of his message: *The Witnesses*, *The Word*, and *The Wellspring* of all truth. Please allow me to explain.

The Witnesses (vs. 16-18)

For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our LORD Jesus Christ; instead we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received honor and glory from God The Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well-pleased." We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with Him on the holy mountain. **2 Peter 1:16-18**

The first element of credibility in regards to Peter's message was his witness to Christ's glory with his own eyes. There were many things that Peter saw Jesus do. He was an eyewitness to miracle upon miracle; to everything from healing the sick, blind, and lame to raising the dead. And in addition, he personally experienced the death burial and resurrection of Christ Himself. Even Paul, as influential as he was, could not claim to have had near the experiences with Jesus as Peter.

But what did The Holy Spirit lead Peter to choose when he spoke of the things that he had witnessed? The events recorded in the *Seventeenth Chapter of Matthew's gospel*. Peter, James, and John had personally witnessed Jesus transformation from His earthly body to His glorified presence. It was an event that they would never forget. By the time of this particular writing, James had already been martyred for his faith (**Acts 12:2**), leaving only two remaining witnesses to this incredible transfiguration. Peter speaks of it as if it had happened just the day before, so strong was the image still imprinted in his mind!

Jesus had promised some of His disciples that they would not taste death until they saw Him in His glory (**Matthew 16:28**). Six days later (**Matthew 17:1**), He led Peter, James, and John (His closest followers) up to the top of Mount Tabor and was transfigured in their presence. He stood there in His glory with Moses and Elijah, who represented *The Law* and *The Prophets*. Jesus was the fulfillment of both these men's ministries here upon the earth. And together they spoke about His coming "departure" (*Exodus* in The Greek) that would begin upon Calvary's cross.

Peter was so overwhelmed by the sight that he spoke when he ought to have remained silent (as was often his custom), offering to put up three shelters for Christ, Moses, and Elijah! That was when he heard the audible voice of God The Father saying: **"This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well-pleased. Listen to Him!" Matthew 17:6.** I cannot begin to imagine the immense power that voice possessed, but one thing is for certain, Peter never forgot the sound of it, nor its message. We would do well to heed the words as well... and intently listen to Christ, for He has the words of everlasting life! (**John 6:68**).

So, we have Peter's own eyewitness testimony, a truth for which he was willing to lay down his life. There are many people who spread falsehoods in this world. For example, pretty much every politician who has ever lived (I'm sure there has been the occasional exception), but who do you know that would be willing to die for something they know to be a lie? Answer: NO ONE. Peter's willingness to lay down his very life would suggest that he was most certainly assured of what he believed. And he was assured, because he had seen it with his very own eyes! He knew for sure that Christ will indeed return for those who place their faith in Him. And he knew it, because he had seen what He would look like when He returned. The lamb of God returning in glory as The Lion of Judah! It wasn't some myth or story made up by fiction writers, it was and still is... The Gospel of The LORD Jesus Christ. And it can be relied upon, because we know it is true. There are credible eyewitness to the fact.

For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the Name of the one and only Son of God. **John 3:16-18**

So believe the witnesses!

The Word (vs. 19)

We also have the prophetic Word strongly confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **2 Peter 1:19**

The next “proof” that Peter lists is The Infallible Word of God. To Peter’s way of thinking, this was an even more reliable proof than his own eyewitness testimony. God’s Word through the ages, written by men that God had chosen, had foretold a wealth of information in regards to the promised Messiah. They spoke of His virgin birth (**Isaiah 7:14**), the place of His birth (**Micah 5:2**), His rejection and atoning death (**Isaiah 53:1-10**), and even His resurrection (**Isaiah 53:10-11**). In fact, there are more than three hundred *Old Testament* prophecies concerning The Christ that were completely fulfilled in Jesus.

Just imagine that for a moment. I will draw upon an analogy for this type of phenomena written many years ago by the late J. Vernon McGee. Just suppose I were to predict that it would rain tomorrow. I would say that I have somewhat of a fifty/fifty chance of getting that right, especially with as much rain as we have had lately. Now, suppose I declared that not only would it rain, but we will receive 5.2 inches of rain, beginning at precisely 2:31 in the afternoon and stopping at exactly at 4:37. Followed by a double rainbow to the west and prevailing winds of 5.6 mph. How many of you would think that the more that I attempted to predict this weather pattern, more likely are my chances for utter and abject failure?

Now, think about all those prophecies and the odds that one would come along in the future and perfectly fulfill each of them?! My friends, only God could ever hope to pull that one off! That is why The Word of God is as Peter said, “*strongly confirmed*”! He is, in essence, saying, “If you don’t believe me, then you had better believe The Word.

He draws from the imagery written long ago by King David in *Psalms 119*. I find it quite interesting that *Psalms 119* lies in the center of your *Bible*, it is the longest chapter in *The Bible*, and it is all about *The Bible*! In this wonderful Psalm, David writes:

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. **Psalms 119:105** KJV

As we mentioned in our last lesson, I have met many a Believer who has had doubts, but none of them were firmly grounded in The Word of God and remained closely connected to Christ. The Word of God is essential for our faith. It keeps us from straying from the right path that God has provided for us. It is, when accompanied by The Holy Spirit, a guide to lead us until such time when Christ Himself, The Morning Star as Peter calls Him here, returns and leads us to our promised land!

In the meantime, we must cherish The Word of God, committing ourselves to its study, and as Peter says, “*We would do well to pay attention to its teachings!*” So, how’s your faith this morning? If you wish to see it growing ever stronger, you must believe the witnesses and believe The Word!

The Wellspring of All Truth (vs. 20-21)

Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by The Holy Spirit. **2 Peter 1:20-21**

Webster’s Dictionary defines a *wellspring* as: *An original bountiful source of something.* Simon Peter wanted everyone to know that the wellspring of Scripture is none other than The Holy Spirit Himself. He emphatically states that no prophecy ever came from “the prophets own interpretation”. Many have mistranslated this passage in order to say something that it does not.

The Roman Catholic’s have long preferred the passage to be rendered as it is in the KJV which states, “...*no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation.*” This has been misused over the centuries to state that only a Catholic priest has the ability to interpret Scripture. Therefore, no lay person

should even attempt to do so. This would explain why the early Catholic Church was so adamantly opposed to having the Scriptures translated into English in the first place. They did not want the common man to have the Scriptures for himself. Therefore, he was utterly dependent upon his local priesthood in order to be in right standing with God. In fact, many who attempted to translate the Scriptures for the masses were put to death by the church. This is an outrageous attempt to circumvent Christ as our only High Priest. It undermines all Scripture as to the “priesthood of the Believer” (**1 Peter 2:5**), and reasserts a class of priest to rule over the laity. I, for one, want to go on record to say that I condemn this in the strongest manner possible. Christ died so that *He* could be your personal High Priest, and He ever lives to intercede on your behalf (**Hebrews 7:25**), and not only is any other mediary un-necessary, but is also blasphemy, as it would serve to come between Christ and His bride, the Church! Peter was most certainly NOT advocating for this to say the least.

Others have attempted to translate this as a question of hermeneutics, the proper study of Biblical texts. These people believe that Peter is saying that no single Scripture passage is meant to stand alone without all other Scripture taken in context. In other words, you can't just take any old verse and interpret it to say whatever you want it to say. There are plenty of false teachers who do this very thing. However, ironically, in order to interpret this verse thusly, you must take it out of context!

All that Peter is really saying here is that no Scripture came to be, at the whim of the prophet who wrote it. The following verse actually puts this thought in its proper context.

...because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as the were carried along by The Holy Spirit. **2 Peter 1:21**

Leave it to Peter, the old fisherman, to put in a seafaring word in here. The word he used that is translated “carried along” is actually *phero* in the Greek. And it is a word used to describe how the wind drives a boat by filling its sail. What a great picture of God's Spirit at work as he used the prophets to record His Word! He took them as they were, allowing them to use their own personalities and writing styles, but He Himself was the wind that filled their sails, as it were, and carried them and their message where He wanted it to go. I find it truly fascinating that the word for Spirit in the *Old Testament* Hebrew, as well as the *New Testament* Greek means literally “wind or breath” (*Ruach* Hebrew, and *Pneuma* Greek).

Simply put, we can trust in The Scriptures, because The Holy Spirit of The Living God is their source, their *wellspring*, if you will. Just as Peter and the other apostles didn't devise their witness from cleverly designed myths, neither did the prophets who spoke so eloquently of Christ long before He came. So we have The Witness, The Word and The Wellspring as our absolutely reliable sources for our truth. Therefore, we can have this hope in Christ with confidence.

There is a reason that Peter uses the word “knowledge” in this short letter at least thirteen separate times. For he knew that the more we truly know, the stronger we will come to believe. And he wanted us to be reminded again and again, so our faith would fail not! Jesus is The Christ, The Son of The Living God! And this, my fellow Believers, is the absolute...

TRUTH!!!! Just check the sources, and you will see.