

12/27/20 - "2 Peter 1:16-21" - Pay Attention To The Evidence

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Preacher: Bruce Chimani

[0 : 00] Good morning. How are you guys doing? Great. It's great to be here to open God's Word with you. I appreciate the opportunity from Pastor Brent and the leadership here to share God's Word with us. So let's jump right into it. So 2 Peter chapter 1, 16 to 21. Allow me to pray as we begin and then we will proceed. Let's bow our heads and pray together.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather around your Word. Father, we know that your Word is true. Father, we know that your Word is a lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path.

Lord, as we wake up and live life in this dark world, we know that your Word is the only source of light, source of guidance that we need. And so, Father, we humble ourselves as we come to your Word. I pray for my brothers and sisters that you'd soften their hearts to receive from you.

And I pray, Father, that you'd give me utterance that comes from you. We thank you. We love you. We praise you. We praise you through your Son's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. I want to begin this morning by asking a very serious question. And the serious question is, who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

Oh, yeah. I heard some of the responses there. SpongeBob SquarePants. SpongeBob SquarePants is the character crafted in the mind of a man named Stephen Hillenburg. What about the regional branch manager of Dunder Mifflin Paper Company, Michael Scott? Some of us know him from the office.

[2 : 01] Vibranium is not a real person either. He is a fictional character and a fictional company in a fictional world. And I'm not from Wakanda, right? Wakanda is not an actual place in Africa. In fact, vibranium is not a real metal. All this is made up. Now, all these are allusions from stories that we've watched, we've read, we've heard about, that we like, that we enjoy. But they are just that, right? They are just well-crafted stories that are appealing to us, that we enjoy. They are products of people's imaginations.

They are meats. In contemporary times, in a similar way, the story of our Lord Jesus Christ, his birth, his life, his death, his subsequent resurrection and ascension is seen by many to be also mythical.

A lot of people, smart people in universities and colleges all across the world, think about Christianity as mythical. They probably put Jesus in the same realm as Michael Scott, as SpongeBob SquarePants, or whatever other mythical character we could think about. They view this as a scam. Perhaps you are here this morning and you yourself are not convinced.

And I want you to stick with me as we look together at this text. Because what Peter is going to show us from this text is that this thing is not mythical. This is not a myth. That this Jesus, who is not only the central character of the Bible, but the central theme of the Scriptures, is real.

But even more than that, Peter wants to point his readers to the prophetic words of the Old Testament. And he wants to remind them and show them that in Jesus, these words from the Old Testament are fully confirmed and fully fulfilled. Now, in a court of law, you know, when you go into a court, you know, you are a prosecutor wanting to prosecute someone for something that they did. Two of the primary ways in which you do that is through eyewitness testimony, but also it's through evidentiary documents, right? Like you have a document, well, he actually did this, here is the document. Or, I actually saw him.

[4 : 48] This is what I saw, right? Those are two primary ways. And Peter is going to employ the same method in presenting us with evidence. We'll see that Peter is calling and reminding his friends to pay attention to the evidence, to pay attention to the words of the prophets and the

apostles as they live their lives and await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first thing that we see in this text is that the apostles' testimony was not a myth. Look at verses 16 and 18 with me. It reads, We ourselves heard this very voice.

Now, when Peter says we in this text, who is he talking about? He's talking about the apostles. Primarily, Peter himself was with James and John when they were on this mountain. But generally speaking, he's talking about all the disciples of Jesus as they walked and saw him.

And Peter is saying, we saw this. And he says, We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you.

[6 : 42] What did he make known to them? The power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that instance, Peter provides us with an idea of what the content of his message was, right?

The content of his message was the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what is that? What is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ?

What is this thing about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul gives us an idea. Romans 1, 16. Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel.

And he qualifies that statement by saying, For it is the power of God unto salvation to him who believes. So the power of Jesus Christ culminates itself in the message of the gospel.

Through which people, men and women of all races, tribes, tongues, are able to be saved from their sin. And Peter is saying, We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we told you about this power.

[7 : 51] Peter himself experienced this power. This is the man who denies the Lord Jesus Christ three times. But in Acts chapter 2, he is the very same man who stands up and begins to declare the gospel.

And many, many people get saved. So he saw this power at work. The power of God. And Peter is saying, We are not talking about SpongeBob SquarePants.

We are not talking about a mythical story here. We saw this power. But he also says and talks about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostles taught the people that were in their audience that this same Jesus who came, who lived a perfect life, who died on the cross, would eventually come back to redeem his people. But the prophets also spoke about this day. The prophets spoke about the great and dreadful day of the Lord's judgment.

[9 : 04] It's a day that was going to come. In fact, Peter, in this particular letter, he spends a good amount of time talking about the kinds of things and people that would come.

In chapter 2, he talks about the false prophets who would come, and they would bring in destructive heresies that would mislead people. In chapter 3, he talks about scoffers who would come.

In chapter 3, verse 3, he talks about scoffers who would come amongst God's people, and they would be laughing. They would be laughing at God's people. Like, you're still waiting for Jesus to come back?

Really? Where is he? You're always talking about his coming. So scoffers would come. But in chapter 3, in verse 10, he talks about the day of the Lord that would come.

What Peter is saying, brothers and sisters, is when they spoke about the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were not talking about a myth.

[10 : 12] They were not bringing about a fictional story to their audience. Their words are credible. Now, what is the basis of their words?

How do we know that they are credible? Look at verse 16 there. It says, For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

So they saw what they were talking about. Eyewitness testimony is powerful. Peter and the rest of the disciples, they saw the Lord Jesus wake up.

They saw him leave. They saw him heal people. They saw him preach the gospel. They saw him die. They saw him being betrayed by one of them.

They saw him resurrect. They saw him ascend into heaven. Peter is saying, we saw his majesty. We saw it. He talks about the transfiguration.

[11 : 24] Look at Mark 9, 2 to 8 with me. Mark 9, verse 2 to 8 reads, And after six days, And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them.

And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses. And they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

I want us to see what's going on here, right?

So, they see Moses. Moses is representing the law. And they see Elijah, who's representing the prophets.

[12:44] And when they see this, verse 6 says, For Peter did not know what to say. Peter is in a haze. It's like, you know, if you have woken up in a dream.

I remember when I was a kid, I was sleeping on the couch. And suddenly, I was dreaming and thinking I'm late for school. I just jumped off the couch. And I'm like, Mom, I'm late. I'm late. I'm late to school. And my mom is like, what are you talking about? It's 3 p.m. on a Tuesday. You've been to school. I'm in a daze. In a similar way, Peter is in a daze here.

He begins to say, yeah, why don't we make a tent for you and for Elijah and for Moses? The type of majesty he beholds overwhelms his mental faculties.

He's terrified. But also, a voice comes from heaven and it speaks to them. They saw this.

[13:45] They saw this with their eyes. The way that he's terrified does not take away from the reality that they saw this with their eyes. The transfiguration is described by theologians as Jesus in his human form opening up to show how divine he was.

It says he was radiating and it was as white as no one could bleach it. But if you're a skeptic and you're well-versed in psychology, you might say to me, well, eyewitness testimonies are great.

But sometimes eyewitnesses suffer from a reconstructive memory, right? Have you ever witnessed something and when you retell it, you know, your mind starts reconstructing things that you have never seen.

It happens to the best of us. So it's possible that eyewitness testimony could be untrue. It's very possible. In fact, eyewitness false identification is one of the top causes of wrongful conviction in the United States.

But I want you to notice a couple of things here. Peter says, we. He says, we saw him. The eyewitness testimony of Peter is strong because it's plural.

[15:13] Well, it's not just Peter who sees this. It's a group of them. They all couldn't have been in a trance. They saw him. He's not the only eyewitness.

Peter, James, and John saw what happens in the Mount of Transfiguration. In fact, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 says, when the Lord Jesus Christ resurrected, he appeared to Peter and then to the 12th, and then he was seen by 500 other people.

Brothers and sisters, this could not be a hallucination. This could not be a case of reconstructive memory.

A lot of these guys died. They chose to be killed for their testimony in witnessing the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and his power. How could people die for a hallucination?

So this is not weak eyewitness testimony, my friends. They saw the majesty of Christ with their own eyes. And in a similar way, you and I, as we listen to the words of Peter, we can behold the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ and believe them.

[16:32] But they did not only see, right? They heard. Can you see that in verse 18 there? We ourselves heard this very voice. They heard.

They heard the voice of God on the Mount of Transfiguration, confirming the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is my beloved son.

God the Father speaking to them. They heard. But they did not only hear, right? Listen to what he ends verse 18 by saying. He says, We ourselves heard this very voice, born from heaven, for we were with him.

There is power in presence, right? Have you ever, you know, been at a place and retell the story? It's different from watching it on TV, right?

Yeah, I watched the Super Bowl last year. It was great, but I watched it on TV. Cool. But to be at the Super Bowl and come back and tell your friends that you were at the game is completely different.

[17:46] So Peter does not only see, he does not only hear, but he's there. He's right there. And Peter is saying, You need to pay attention to what we are saying about this man.

Because our evidence is credible. But Peter then moves to present documentary written evidence. In case some people doubt him. He continues to build his case. And that's the second point from this text. That the words of the Old Testament are fulfilled or confirmed by Jesus.

Look at verse 19a and verses 20 and 21 with me. It says, And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. That's verse 19a.

Look at verse 20. Peter is pointing to the documentary evidence in the Old Testament.

[19 : 06] I know you guys have been going through a series where you have been tracing the genealogy of Jesus. Jesus. To see how he's concealed in the Old Testament.

The pages of the Old Testament are full of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the same point that Peter is making here. He's saying, In case you don't believe what I'm saying, I want you to look back at the prophetic words of the Old Testament.

And brothers and sisters, The Old Testament is about the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the greater Adam who does not blame his bride, but takes upon her sin on the cross.

He's the greater Moses who delivers his people from their Pharaoh, which is sin, and saves them, and will one day bring them to the promised land.

He's the greater David, the better king. He's the greater Solomon, the greater Abraham, the greater Job, the true suffering servant, greater Elijah and Elisha.

[20 : 23] The Old Testament is about him. The prophecy of Scripture about Jesus, Peter says, is not sourced from any man, and it's also not interpreted by any man.

It's very important as you read the Bible. The last couple of years, I've tried to spend some of my Bible reading in the Old Testament, because, I mean, frankly, it's probably harder to read.

For some of us, it's probably intimidating. But the beauty that arises out of it, as you look at how the prophets, and Moses, and all the books, including the books of wisdom, are all pointing at him.

As you behold that, man, it makes the credibility of the Bible overwhelming. One of the reasons that, or when I've doubted over the years, when I've been in dark times in my faith, where I'm struggling with my faith, I've gone back to the credibility of the Bible.

When you think about how coherent the Scriptures are, man, there's no smart people that can figure this out and present it the way that the Scriptures are presented.

[21 : 45] They are just not there. You couldn't be that smart. You couldn't be that smart to have a type of Jesus in all these characters in the Old Testament.

In case you are a skeptic, look at Luke chapter 25, when Jesus himself talks about this. Luke 25, verse 25 reads, Jesus is on the road to Emmaus.

He says, He said to them, how foolish you are. He's talking to these two men. And how slow to believe that all the prophets have spoken.

Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And listen to verse 27. And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

What was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. The Scriptures concern him. And Peter is saying here, the source of that and the interpretation of that is from God.

[22 : 54] It's all pointing to the Messiah. It's all coming from God and it's all interpreted by God. 2 Timothy 3, 16. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

Or listen to the words of Hebrews 1, verse 1. Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. If it's from God, it has to be true.

It is true. It is true. The prophets of old prophesied in Isaiah that the Messiah will be born of a virgin. It was fulfilled. The prophets of old prophesied that he will be born in Bethlehem. It was fulfilled. The prophets of old prophesied that he will be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.

It was fulfilled. You'll be wounded for our sins. It was fulfilled. You'll be killed for others. It was fulfilled. You'll be raised from the dead. It was fulfilled. Brothers and sisters, Peter is saying this is sourced from God.

[24 : 14] It is true. But it's also interpreted from God. God. Meaning, when we look at the scriptures, they interpret themselves.

Right? We don't just open the Bible and say, well, I know, you know, sometimes in a Bible study, we're trying to figure out a text. Sometimes we say, yeah, you know, I think it's saying this. I mean, that's fair and fine in a study.

But to be honest with you, and I don't mean to be harsh, it's not about what we think. I understand we use that because we're wrestling with the text and it's good.

We're trying to figure it out together. But the scriptures interpret themselves. The interpretation, Peter says, is not by the will of man. But man spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

And that's an important thing, right? That God spoke through man by his spirit. Not only is the Bible composed of 40 writers that are unique with their personalities, but they are also on multiple continents, spends over 1,500 years.

[25 : 27] That's hard to be coherent if it's made up. That's hard to be coherent if it's made up. But also, all the major characters are portrayed to have major moral failings.

All the heroes of the Bible are flawed. Abraham, when things get hard, he wants to give off his wife to a king. If this was false, they will probably hide that.

Like, let's not show that. If this was false, David would not have been shown to be walking about. All the other men are at war.

He sees someone else's wife and he commits adultery and he kills her husband. Peter is saying, this is from God and it's interpreted by God.

But lastly, we see in verse 19, the application in this text. Peter says, pay attention. Pay attention to this.

[26 : 43] Verse 19 reads, and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention to as a lamp in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

So he has made his case in two ways. He says, we saw him. We heard the voice of confirmation. We were there. But you also have a prophetic word.

You have the Old Testament scriptures that have been fulfilled through Jesus Christ that are not from man, that are not interpreted by man.

And it causes readers to pay attention to them. And I want us to note, I don't know if you noticed this, when Peter quotes what was said in the Mount of Transfiguration, in verse 17, he doesn't say everything that was said.

He says, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. But that's not all that God says, right? If you remember in Mark, after saying that, God says, listen to him. In all the accounts in Mark, Luke, and Matthew, he says, this is my beloved son, listen to him.

[27 : 59] But Peter doesn't say that right there because he's going to bring them to verse 19 where he tells them, pay attention to these words.

Pay attention to their words as apostles, but pay attention to the prophet's words. The apostles' words are credible because they heard they saw they were there.

This is the language that John uses in 1 John, right? That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have heard, that we have touched concerning the word of life.

And he says, pay attention to these words. Attention is what we give to something or someone that we think is important.

We typically don't give attention to things that we don't think are important or to people that we don't think are important. Like our phones, right?

[29 : 08] Right? Right? Oh, you're uncomfortable right now, right? I'm preaching to myself too. Don't be, we're in this together, okay? Don't be uncomfortable.

But like our phones, think about this with a minute. This struck me as I was getting ready. But the average adult in the U.S.

spends about three hours, 45 minutes on their phone in a day doing whatever, right? Like, could be texting or whatever. We pay a lot of attention to our phones, including myself.

now, if you add the numbers, this adds up to about 50 full days in a year. 50 days in a year we are paying attention on our phones, right?

Now, according to preachingtoday.com, the average U.S. adult spends about nine minutes in a day in some form of religious or spiritual activity.

[30 : 13] nine minutes in a day compared to three hours, 45 minutes on our phones. And if you add the numbers, that amounts to about two days in a year that the average adult spends in some spiritual activity.

Now, this is where our culture is. 50 days in a year spent on Facebook and Twitter and all that, but two days in some spiritual or religious activity.

that is tragic. That is tragic. Peter is saying, pay attention to this.

Devour it. Jeremiah says, thy words were found and I did eat them and they were unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart. I pray that we don't go with the flow of the culture.

Do you want me to tell you the stats for cable TV? Do you want to know how much we spend on that in a day compared to how much we spend in God's word?

[31 : 25] And I'm not, again, I'm not saying this to make you feel bad or to condemn you. I'm exactly right there. I spend way too much time than I should on my phone. And Peter is saying, pay attention to these words.

Give them your attention. Read the Bible. I saw something up there that, you know, there's a Bible reading plan in 2021. Do that. Get involved in that.

How would our lives look if, say, next year you just tried every day, you know, a small start. Every day I'm going to spend 30 minutes reading a chapter or so in the Bible.

What could that look like? I pray that we resolve this day to pay attention to the words of Scripture. Because do you know what they show us when we look and pay attention to these words?

Peter has already told us. They show us the majesty of Jesus Christ. That's what they are about.

We're not surprised or our attention is not taken away from this majesty because it's greater than any majesty we could ever think about.

[32 : 43] I like to use the example concerning our appetites and paying attention. If you were to be invited to a three-course meal at Windsor house in England where the queen of England resides, I'm sure on that day you would not really care about ordering pizza from, I don't know where you like to order pizza from.

On that day your attention is towards something great. I'm having lunch or dinner with the queen. This is probably some of the best food you're going to eat in the world.

The same way as we behold and pay attention to the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, everything else in comparison looks like cheap pizza.

And I know this is an Italian area, I'm probably stepping on some toes and offending. I'm from Zimbabwe, we eat some weird stuff there, so I guess I have the license to say that.

Pay attention to these words. Listen to how he qualifies this. To which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.

[34 : 12] As to a lamp shining in a dark place. Brothers and sisters, we live in a fallen world. And one of the most natural things that we do when we walk into a dark room is we want to turn the light on.

We want the light. The psalmist says, with an understanding of the darkness in the world, thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Now, if it's true that we live in a dark world, and we pay and we use the light two days in a year, are we really convinced of the darkness of the world?

If it's true that this is a dark world and all our attention on what the pandits and the politicians and the people we follow on Facebook are saying, are we really convinced that we're in a dark world?

Because if we are, Peter says we pay attention to this lamp. This lamp is shining in a dark place. But till when do we pay attention to this?

[35 : 20] Because sometimes we say, yeah, I read the Bible last year, yeah, I think I'm done. But Peter says there's an ending time for this. He says, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

He's talking about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Until the day Christ comes back, here is where our attention is. And as we behold this, we behold the majesty of Jesus, who's greater than any human being, although we think there are human beings that are great, that we see on TV, that we read about in books, I can promise you he's greater.

He's more captivating. Peter says pay attention to him. I said before that Peter warns his readers about the coming of false teachers that would deny the master who brought them.

He warns about the scoffers who will come and laugh at them for waiting so long for the return of Jesus. All this will cause even more darkness around us.

And brothers and sisters, I pray that you would read, that you meditate, that you would pray from this book, and that in it you will see the majesty, the beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Peter saw,

that the prophets spoke about, and as we do so, we'll tune our lives to its truth.
[37 : 00] Let us pray. Amen.