

2 Peter Chapter 1 v 16 - Chapter 2 v 3

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[0 : 01] So 2 Peter, that's page 1222, 1222, 2 Peter chapter 1.

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature. Having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge. And to knowledge self-control. And to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness.

[1 : 14] And to godliness mutual affection. To mutual affection love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But whoever does not have them is short-sighted and blind, forgetting that they've been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election.

For if you do these things, you will never stumble. And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

So I will always remind you of these things. Even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory.

As long as I live in the tent of this body. Because I know that I will soon put it aside as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure, you will always be able to remember these things.

[2 : 24] For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying, This is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable.

And you will do well to pay attention to it. As to a light shining in a dark place. Until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will. But prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

[3 : 29] But there are also false prophets among the people. Just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies. Even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them.

Bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct. And will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.

Their condemnation has long been hanging over them. And their destruction has not been sleeping. 16 and following. I'm going to think particularly about this matter of God's word.

Alexander Duff was a missionary to India in the middle half of the 19th century. But before he arrived there, he was twice shipwrecked on the way.

He was sailing from his home. He was Scottish to India on a ship called the Lady Holland. Only a few miles away from the port in India itself, there was an awful storm and the ship was completely wrecked upon the shore.

[4 : 43] What was particularly galling for Alexander, he survived and nearly all the, I think all the passengers and crew did as well. What was so upsetting was that he had taken with him a library of 800 books.

He was a very, very clever man, a scholar. He'd won many awards. He was going really to set up Christian schools in India to teach. And he was reliant, as it were, upon those 800 books that he'd taken with him.

But he lost them all. Every one of them went down with the ship. And so, somewhat disappointed and discouraged, the next day he sat on the shore, looking out to sea, hoping perhaps that there may be some wreckage or something that might be washed up from the ship.

Suddenly jumped up. He saw something small on the water. He thought, well, is it worth even looking to investigate? But as he got closer, he found that as it washed onto the beach, it was his own Bible.

Out of all those 800 books, there was only one book that was saved, his Bible. And it struck him very clearly how he recognized this was God's doing.

[6 : 02] That this one book was far more important than all the 799 books he had lost. And that to study this word and to teach this book was his life's mission.

How has the Bible come to us today? How did God send us his book, his word, as we know it in what we call the Bible?

Many people today will tell you that the Bible is untrustworthy, that they shouldn't pay much attention to it, that it's made up of all sorts of fairy tales and myths and legends, but very little in the way of historic fact.

Are they right to come to that conclusion? In fact, the majority of people who say that are not necessarily theologians or people who've studied history, but they've picked up, as it were, from TV and media, this sort of idea that the Bible is not reliable.

Well, if there was a court case to judge whether something was true or false, then you would have witnesses brought forward to confirm or to deny a testimony given by the accused or someone else.

[7 : 18] And here in 2 Peter chapter 1, Peter mentions three key witnesses who confirm the truthfulness of the Bible. Together they give us a very clear, faithful testimony that this book, God's word, can be trusted.

And so we're going to call these witnesses to the bench, as it were, to give their testimony. The first witness that is called is the eyewitness, there in verse 16.

For we, that's Peter speaking of himself and the other apostles, did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and his power.

In other words, the very life of Jesus. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He's clearly having a dig at some of the false teachers of his day.

That's the reason I read through into chapter 2, verse 3. They were false teachers who he warns his readers about. Verse 3 of chapter 2. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with made-up stories, fabricated stories, untrue, but probably very exciting stories.

[8 : 38] He's having a dig at them. We haven't come with cleverly devised stories. We haven't come with things that we've made up. We've come to tell you things that we saw.

Paul uses a very similar language when he writes to Timothy, warning against those godless myths and old wives' tales.

That's where we get that phrase from the writings of the Bible. There were people who did that. But Peter says, no, he's not like that.

He's not somebody who's brought you a story, but he was an eyewitness. In other words, what Peter is teaching the people here is straight from the horse's mouth. In fact, the very reason he's written his letter, he explains this, so that they will have a truth that they can depend upon when he's dead.

Look there in verses 12 and following. I always want to remind you of these things. And then verse 13, I think it's right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of the body.

[9 : 41] The Bible uses that phrase or that illustration of our bodies being like a tent. It's temporary. It's not forever. It's only for this life. And he says in verse 15, I'll make every effort to see that after my departure, you'll always be able to remember these things.

So he's working hard to put down in paper. In fact, we believe that Peter was almost certainly the source of the gospel of Mark, that he was the one who passed on to Mark the things concerning the life of Jesus and wrote them down as an eyewitness.

This isn't something that he's just heard about over the garden fence or down the pub. It's not some story that he's picked up from the newspaper, whatever newspaper that may be, even perhaps the telegraph.

No, he saw Jesus with his own eyes. He was an eyewitness. What he's telling us, he's a faithful witness of. What's he talking about particularly?

Well, it seems he's talking about one special episode, an event in the life of the Lord Jesus, which is often referred to as the transfiguration. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this amazing event.

[10 : 54] Jesus took three of his disciples, Peter, John, and James, to a mountain. And when they got to the top of the mountain, an amazing thing happened. Jesus was transformed into incredibly bright, shining light.

And Moses and Elijah, two of the Old Testament prophets, appeared and spoke with him. It was one of those occasions you just could not forget.

And Jesus took not one witness, not two witnesses, but three witnesses, to make sure that people couldn't just say, it was some cheese that Peter had eaten the night before.

A large part of the Bible is made up of first-hand eyewitness accounts. John, in his gospel, speaks about this himself, in John 19, at the death and crucifixion of Jesus.

He writes this, The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

[11 : 59] Later on, Paul, as he writes to the Christian believers, reminds them of the resurrection, Jesus being again. Not simply a story that a few women made up when they were there at the tomb, or even the twelve disciples, disciples, but he tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, after that, Jesus appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living.

In other words, you want to go and check it out? You want to go and see whether Jesus is really alive? I can point you to people who have seen him. Not just a few. Not just a handful. These people weren't all hallucinating.

They weren't all high. They were people who were sensible, reliable witnesses. That's not just only the case in the New Testament. But when we go back to the Old Testament, to the record of God's dealings with his people in the past, again, these are historical facts, historical events that have come down to us as a true record over thousands of years, because they were written down and recorded.

In 2 Kings, in chapter 12, concerning one of the kings, his name was Joash. We're told this in verse 19. As for the other events of the reign of Joash and all he did, aren't they written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

We might think that we were a people of bureaucracy, having everything in triplicate, but it's always been that way through history. Everything was recorded and written down. And so it is the Bible.

[13 : 38] Again, in the next chapter, 2 Kings 13, As for the other events of the reign of Jehoahaz, all he did, all his achievements, aren't they written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

There are records written down. People who were there wrote down what they saw. So that's the first witness. An eyewitness account.

That's often the case, isn't it? When a matter is brought to court, are there any eyewitnesses? Police will ask for witnesses to an accident or to something that happened. And people will come forward and say, yes, I saw the car do this, or I saw this horse run across the road, or whatever it may be.

Secondly, Peter mentions the earwitness. The eyewitness and then the earwitness. Verse 18. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

He calls it a sacred mountain. It's only sacred in the sense that Jesus was on it. It's not a special mountain which is holy itself. Something special happened there. When Jesus was transformed on the mountain, Peter and his friends James and Don didn't just see, didn't just see Jesus being changed and transformed and glorified, sort of a peek into who he really is.

[15 : 03] That's what it was. Showing him as the glorious God he is. But they actually heard words spoken audibly that they understood.

Verse 17. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, another way of describing heaven, saying, this is my son whom I love, with him I am well pleased.

They heard the very voice of God, of God the Father speaking. And notice again, Peter says in verse 18, we ourselves heard. It doesn't just say I heard.

We heard. Three witnesses who heard the voice of God. Not imagination. Not just dreaming. Not just Chinese whispers.

But they heard audibly the voice of God. And again, throughout the Bible, that's what we find in many different places, particularly in the prophets. We find that God spoke audibly to his servants, to the writers of the scriptures, to the writers of the scriptures, the words that they wrote down.

[16 : 15] Jeremiah, one of the major prophets, writes this in Jeremiah 30, verse 2. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says, write in a book all the words I've spoken to you.

So it wasn't like many, many years ago later that they thought, well, I better put down what I heard all that time ago. There, at that moment, as God spoke to them, they wrote it down and then they delivered it to the people.

Sometimes God spoke directly, as he would to us, audibly. Other times, he'd send an angel to speak on his behalf. Zechariah, in chapter 1, verse 9, the angel who was talking with me answered, I will show you what they are.

He was asked him a question. So again, the Bible is not a bunch of ideas and thoughts made up or interpretations.

They have written down accurately the word of God as they heard it, as God spoke to them in a voice they understood. So we've got the eyewitness and the ear witness and then there's another witness, the Holy Spirit witness.

[17 : 30] And that's really what verses 20 and 21 are talking about. We have confidence that the New Testament, especially the truth concerning the Lord Jesus, was the fulfilment of what God promised would happen.

That's what he means in verse 19. We have the prophetic message as something completely reliable. In other words, what he's saying is the prophets, those who prophesy and look to the future, we've got the evidence of what they promised in the person of Jesus.

We've got it reliable. We've got it certain. Over and over again, God revealed to his people in the past, in the Old Testament, what would happen in the future, especially concerning the coming of the Messiah, the promised Savior of the world.

And so over Christmas, we've been thinking about some of those promises, about how he would be conceived and where he would be born. Isaiah in chapter 7, the virgin will be with child and give birth to a son and you will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Micah the prophet, chapter 5, verse 2, but you, Bethlehem, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old.

[19 : 00] That's why, if you remember, when the wise men were seeking out the king, the new king who was born, because the star had told them, they went to Herod and they said, where is this king to be born?

And he consulted with the religious authorities and they said, well, Bethlehem, because the prophet said this. And that was, of course, where Jesus was born. Parents were from Nazareth.

How was God going to fulfill his promise? Well, you read the story for yourself. It's a wonderful way in which God brings his truth, his promises, to be. But so it is as well with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to Psalm 22, written well over a thousand years before the death of Jesus. But listen to how it closely resembles what happened when Jesus was crucified.

Psalm 22. Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me. They pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display.

[20 : 07] People stare and gloat at me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garments. Go and read the episode, The Crucifixion of Jesus. You'll find that around him were all the people who hated him.

The religious leaders and others surrounded him like a pack of dogs. They pierced him by putting nails through his wrists and through his feet. He was naked upon the cross because that's how they crucified their victims.

So all people could stare and gloat over him and all his bones were on display. And the Roman soldiers gambled and cast lots to see who would win his clothing rather than tear his garment.

How could David say all of that in such detail? And how is it indeed possible for those people to know it? Roman soldiers, would they know that?

Of course not. They weren't told to do those things. They did them because God had promised that's what would happen. It wasn't guesswork. No way anybody could guess the events.

[21 : 11] And even the very burial of Jesus when he died. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph who was a very wealthy man and a very important man in a tomb that no one had been placed in before.

And that's exactly again Isaiah in chapter 53 verse 9. He was assigned a grave with the wicked. Remember he was crucified between two robbers, criminals and with the rich man in his death.

How did they know all these things? It wasn't as if they were like the horoscopes that people trust in today which are very vague and say tomorrow you'll meet a tall dark stranger or something like that.

They're bound to get it right aren't they? In some way or other. Things are going to take a turn in your life tomorrow or whatever it may be.

No, we find that the prophecies that God spoke through his servants many hundreds if not thousands of years beforehand are detailed and exact and they come into being just as they're predicted.

[22 : 28] Now how is that possible? Well here's the explanation that Peter gives us and it's the same explanation through the whole of the Bible. Above all verse 20 you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

In other words it wasn't man made. They didn't invent it. They didn't work it out for themselves. For prophecy never had its origins in the human will but prophets though human spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

That's what Paul says elsewhere in 2 Timothy and chapter 3 verse 16. All scripture is God breathed. God breathed. Here's how one of the a great preacher explained it when he speaks about here being carried along.

These men were born along in their writing to produce the words that God intended to be recorded. They wrote as men but men moved by the Holy Spirit.

The result was the revelation of God. In other words they weren't robots with automatic writing. They weren't sort of human typewriters that God punched the keys on.

[23 : 44] God used their personalities and their gifts to reveal his truth. To speak his word. They weren't even always aware of exactly what God exactly that it was God who was speaking through them.

But God did use them in that way. So we've had these three witnesses the eye witness the ear witness the Holy Spirit witness that Peter presents to show that we can trust the Bible that it's reliable that we can believe upon it as God's word.

But that's not enough is it? To simply believe that the Bible is God's word is not enough. We thought about that something this morning. Peter has to encourage his readers to do this.

Verse 19. You will do well to pay attention to it. To pay attention to it. Thought this morning didn't we? Of listening.

Of acting and obeying. Don't know about you but when I was at school I was a daydreamer. Often in class I would be caught daydreaming through a lesson.

[24 : 54] Gazing out the window dreaming about being somewhere else apart from in that classroom. Suddenly the teacher would ask a question of the class.

Seeing me spaced out as it were from time to time he would shout Robinson! And I'd sort of eventually sort of wake up from my dream and he'd ask the question and of course I couldn't answer it.

So what would he say? Weren't you paying attention? And clearly I wasn't. But Peter says here when it comes to the Bible when it comes to Scripture when it comes to God's Word you will do well to pay attention.

Can't be careless about the Bible. And notice we will do well it will do us good to pay attention to the Bible. It will help us to pay attention to the Bible.

It will be a blessing to us to pay attention to the Bible. How should we pay attention to it? Well Peter tells us as to a light shining in a dark place.

[26 : 06] We're to pay attention to the Bible as if it is our light. Not just the light but our personal light. We are journeying through a world which is spiritually dark.

Dark about the things of God. Dark about the truth of who God is and who we are. And it's essential we have a light to guide us. We aren't all that far into January.

We still have the year ahead of us which none of us knows what it will hold. How you are light that will guide you and help you through that year to come.

We wouldn't think of driving our cars in the pitch dark without the lights on would we? We wouldn't think of walking through a country lane without a torch. We wouldn't even walk around our house in the pitch black because we know we're asking for an accident.

Fall over the stool or the table. Bang our heads on the stairs. So why on earth should we consider walking through life, walking through this world without a light to guide us?

[27 : 14] In the Psalms, Psalm 19 which is the longest of the Psalms, over 150 verses, is all about how good God's word is and how helpful it is to us and what blessing it is to us.

And so in Psalm 119 verse 105, Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. So, we're to pay attention to it because it is a light.

And what sort of light is it? Well, we're to pay attention to it as our teacher, our instructor, the one that imparts to us understanding and knowledge.

Yes, it reveals to us things that are hidden and in the dark, but ultimately to pay attention means to act upon the light that we receive, what it shows us and teaches us.

James, in his very practical letter in chapter 1, writes this, Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

[28 : 22] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

We're to act upon the light, what the light shows us. Again, simply, you're driving the car, the lights light up a fox in your way, you break and slow down.

The lights light up a corner, you turn the wheel. You don't just ignore what the light displays. So the light shows us certain things about ourselves, God's word teaches us about our state, our need, and about the God who is there for us.

God's word may show us a sin in our lives, highlight things that aren't right about our worship, our attitude, our service, our lifestyle, whatever it may be.

It does us good to pay attention, it does us no good at all to ignore it. We're also to pay attention to God's word, to the scriptures, to the Bible, as our God.

[29 : 33] It's not just our teacher, it's something to guard us, it will do us well if we pay attention to it. Living the life of a Christian is likened not only to journeying through a dark world but sailing across the sea.

The Apostle Paul warned in his letter that there were those Christians who had been shipwrecked of their faith. They'd gone so far in the Christian life but then they'd hit rocks, they'd fallen into sin and they had destroyed them.

We're to pay attention to God's word as any sailor would to a light of a lighthouse or the lights at the end of the harbour. If you ever walk down the breakwater of the harbour and the pier you'll see lights at the end to show the sailors to guide them in, away from, danger.

The whole purpose of those lights, the whole purpose of the lighthouse is to guard us, protect us, there's real danger in living the Christian life.

There's real danger without God's word to guard and to guide us. We don't know the way to live. We don't know where the danger spots are. When I was a young lad growing up on Guernsey, we had a boat and my dad insisted that I went and took navigation classes before I took the boat out and so I had to go and we'd study charts and showing where the rocks were, where the hazards were, what line you had to make and there was various places if you were to go safely through the channel you had to line up a rock with a marker there and you had to line up with one behind and you'd be safe.

[31 : 19] Do you know where the danger is? Do you know where you're going to fall into sin? Do you know where the devil is waiting to trip you up?

Reading God's word, paying attention to God's word, understanding God's word. One last thing, we're to pay attention to God's word as long as it is dark.

You only need light when it's dark, don't you? The young boy was walking with his father along a road at night. They were carrying a hand torch. He says to his father, Dad, I'm afraid the torch only shows six feet in front of us.

How on earth are we going to be able to find our way all the way home? It's another mile or so. And his father assured him, if we walk straight on, we'll find that the light will reach all the way to the end of our journey.

So it is with God's word. There's going to come a day when you don't need your Bible. There's going to come a day when we don't need to study God's word or pay attention to the scriptures. Peter talks about it here in this lovely way.

[32 : 33] We will do well to pay attention to it as a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns. You don't need your torch in the daytime. You don't need light because the day has dawned.

He's talking about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He likens him to a morning star that rises. Jesus is coming back again.

When he comes back again, we won't need God's word. We won't need to follow the scriptures because when Christ comes, he will make everything plain, everything clear.

He talks much about the coming of the Lord Jesus later on in his letter in 2 Peter. We only see in part now, dear friends, even with the light of God's word.

We don't see everything. We don't understand everything. We don't know everything. That's why we need to depend upon what God has given us in the light of his word. We need to study. We need to apply.

[33 : 39] We need to take hold of. We only see darkly, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians, as in a mirror. Remember, when he's talking about a mirror, he's not talking about a mirror that we have today with glass and silver backing.

He means a bronze mirror or a brass mirror or a copper mirror. If you really polished it and made it as flat as you could, it gave something of a reflection, but it wasn't all that great.

He says, now we know in part. Now we see it only darkly as in a reflection, a mirror, but then we shall see face to face. Then we shall know fully, even as we are fully known.

When Jesus comes, we shall enter into the perfect light and the perfect knowledge and the perfect understanding. There's many things that puzzle us as Christians. Why, Lord, has this happened?

Why, Lord, do these things take place? And we haven't got all the answers. And God hasn't provided all the answers for a reason, so that we might walk by faith, trusting in his word, trusting in his promises, trusting in his faithfulness, but that day will come when we shall be with him and we shall know and understand and all those questions will be answered.

[34 : 59] Let me urge you again, dear friends, read your Bible every day. Get to know God's word. Ask him to teach you from it. You may say, well, I find it hard.

Well, there's so many aids to help. Little daily readings or something else to get you started. There's many other books as well. But start reading your Bible if you're not.

And ask God to teach you from it that it might be a light that does you good. You know it's trustworthy. You know that it can be relied upon because it is God's word.

Well, let's close our time this evening. Amen. Amen.