

Series: Grow in Grace	Reference: 2 Peter 1:16-21	Title: Trustworthy	Date: 09.11.2022
Website Writeup:			
The Scriptures are trustworthy because of the eyewitness testimony of the apostles to the historical event of Christ's death & resurrection, but also because of the trustworthiness of the Law & Prophets found in the Old Testament. Believers can read the Bible knowing what is written within its pages has been tested & is true.			

COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

Last week Peter spoke to us about living virtuously, pursuing holiness, love & Truth. Becoming aware & able to identify those who actually speak Truth - constantly growing in Christ-likeness. Meaning we must know God through the knowledge of His Word in fellowship with Him. This week, he'll tell us about the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Rosalind Picard is founder & director of the *Affective Computing Research Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology*. She describes having previously thought religious people were ignorant, only to then encounter God in reading the Bible. She says, "Have you ever tried to assemble something mechanical, and it only kind of works? Maybe the wheels spin, but not smoothly. Then you realize you were missing a piece. When you finally put it together correctly, it works beautifully. This is how it felt when I handed my life over to God: I thought it had worked fine before, but after it was fixed, it worked exponentially better...in all things, good & bad, I could count on God's guidance, comfort & protection. I once thought I was too smart to believe in God. Now I know I was an arrogant fool who snubbed the greatest Mind in the cosmos - the Author of all science, mathematics, art & everything else there is to know. Today I walk humbly, having received the most undeserved grace. I walk with joy, alongside the most amazing Companion anyone could ask for, filled with desire to keep learning & exploring."¹ The best thing we can do is to get someone to read the Bible.

There's a video on Youtube of a little boy about to hit a baseball off of a T-Ball stand. When he does, it ricochets off a wall & lands perfectly on top of the T-Ball stand where it had started. If it weren't filmed, no one would believe it! On a more serious note, sometimes cameras prove guilt or innocence. USC student, Armaan Premjee, was found innocent of rape when video was released showing the woman as the aggressor in a bar. **The camera rules - probably one of the most influential inventions to date.**

As stated last week, our spiritual growth doesn't happen by osmosis, but by intentional pursuit of Jesus through His Word in relationship with Him. **If you live to 70 you'll spend 20 years & 3 months asleep, 5 years & 9 months in transportation, 7 years & 6 months eating & drinking, 10 years & 5 months watching video.** That's a lot of video, most of which leads away from Jesus. Hollywood is known for its moral turpitude, not its holiness. Ironically, someone shared with me a short video on the idolatry rampant in Christians as it pertains to the entertainment industry. Sobering to say the least.

¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/april/rosalind-picard-mit-professor-meets-author-knowledge.html>

If you added up your time spent Bible reading, fellowship & prayer, what would it add up to? Let's say you spend 1.5 hours in church, 3 hours a week in Sonship meetings & private study, and 30 minutes a day 6 days a week in quiet time & prayer that would be 4.5 hrs/wk - rounded to 5, which is generous, that'd be 2.1 years over 70 years! How much attention do we actually give Jesus & His redeeming Truth?

The Scriptures are trustworthy because of the eyewitness testimony of the apostles to Christ's death & resurrection. And, the trustworthiness of the OT Law & Prophets. Christians should read the Bible knowing it's time-tested God-breathed Truth. The Apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned the Scriptures; they're like the camera lens with which we view Jesus. Inspiration means, inhaling, or breathing into. God breathed into the original writers His message - a book for us. Do we trust & value it as Truth? Measuring everything against it as the only objective trustworthy thing we have from our Creator? How much time do we spend in it?

Turn with me to p830 of your pew Bibles & follow along as I read 2 Peter 1:16-21...*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power & coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were **eyewitnesses** of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor & glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns & the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

The only prophecy we fully trust is in the Bible, time tested, backed by eyewitnesses! And, like we said in the past, science is always confirming it. We hold all other prophecy from humans with healthy suspicion, confirming it against the Word, in community with mature believers, even then still saying, "We'll see."

In verses 16-21, Peter reminds us, the faith we believe & follow is no myth & we can be assured of this because "Peter himself witnessed the majesty of Christ at the Transfiguration & the prophetic word of the Old Testament foretold Christ's coming."² V19 speaks specifically about Old Testament prophecy & its trustworthiness. The OT prophecies speaking about Christ *as a lamp shining in a dark place* inform the readers that "the truths in the Bible will continue to point to the source of all Truth, Christ, until He returns in glory."³

We've always had people who've twisted God's Word. Marcion, a 2nd century theologian, preached that God had sent Jesus Christ as an entirely new alien god,

² Earl D. Radmacher, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999], 1695

³ *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999], 1695

distinct from the vengeful God of Israel who'd created the world; a doctrine called Marcionism. Early Church Fathers denounced him as a heretic & excommunicated him around 144ad. His is a heresy many Christians unwittingly believe today because they haven't done their homework - they see 2 different Gods between old & new testaments. But Jesus is the climax of the OT. If you strip the NT of the OT you have nothing. The NT challenged how Jews read the OT too, and we continually must learn to read it well.

Amazingly, Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church, recently announced, in an effort to capitulate to those who've left the church, that Christians need to "unhitch" the Old Testament from their understanding of the faith. He calls people to only focus on the resurrection of Jesus. We don't excommunicate people any longer, but if we did, Andy would be front of the line for such a statement! It isn't enough just to know Jesus rose from the dead. That doesn't answer the question of why did Jesus die, and why did he need to rise again? For that you need to know the OT!⁴ Among other things, the OT tells us why we need salvation, and the NT reveals how it comes. **Jason DeRouchie gives ten reasons why the Old Testament is important for Christians. I thought his list helpful to gain insight on the consistency of God's message to us.**⁵

1. The OT was Jesus's only Scripture: The OT matters, God gave us his Word in a book. His first special revelation, 76% of the Bible, the foundation for the fulfillment of Jesus in the NT. The OT was the only Bible Jesus & the early Church had & is a major part of our complete canon (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:44; Acts 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:15)

2. The OT influences our understanding of key biblical teachings: By the end of the Law (Genesis-Deuteronomy), the Bible has already described or alluded to all five of the major covenants⁶ which guide Scripture's plot. The rest of the OT then builds on this in detail. It builds anticipation for a better king, a blessed people & a broader land. It identifies humanities problem & gives promises the NT fulfills - which means, we need it to understand Christ & God's work in history.

Some doctrines are best understood only from the OT. For example, the worldview-shaping passage Genesis 1:1-2:3, or understanding sacred space & the temple, or the explicit declaration of YHWH's incomparability in Isaiah 40, or the substitutionary atonement in Isaiah 53, or what Paul means by "psalms, hymns & spiritual songs" in Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16. The NT worldview & teachings are built on the framework of the OT with hundreds of OT quotations, allusions & echoes, none of which we'll fully grasp apart from saturating ourselves in the whole Bible.

3. We meet the same God in both Testaments: The book of Hebrews says...*"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times in various ways,*

⁴ <https://answersingenesis.org/christianity/andy-stanley-says-we-need-to-unhitch-the-old-testament-from-our-faith/>

⁵ *The Gospel Coalition*, November 7, 2018, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/articles/old-testament-important/>

⁶ Adamic-Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New

²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). The very God who spoke through the OT prophets speaks through Jesus. But some ask the Marcion-like question, “But isn’t the OT God one of wrath & burden, whereas the NT God is about grace & freedom?”

Let’s consider some texts from the OT, then from the New...the most foundational OT statement of God’s character & action is Exodus 34:6...*“The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate & gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love & faithfulness.”*

It reasserts this numerous times to clarify why it is that God continued to pardon & preserve a wayward people as 2 Kings 13:23 says...*But the Lord was gracious to them & had compassion & showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.* Then in 2 Chron. 30:9 it says...*If you return to the Lord, then your fellow Israelites & your children will be shown compassion by their captors & will return to this land, for the Lord your God is gracious & compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him.*

Then Neh. 9:30-31 tells us...*For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you warned them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you gave them into the hands of the neighboring peoples. ³¹But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious & merciful God.*

God’s grace fills the OT as it does the New. In the NT Jesus speaks about hell more than anyone else. He declares, *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul & body in hell.”* (Matt. 10:28). Then...*“If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck & to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”* (18:6)

Paul, citing Deuteronomy 32:35, says...*“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”* (Rom. 12:19). And the author of Hebrews writes...*“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷but only a fearful expectation of judgment & of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”* (Heb. 10:26-27). God is just as wrathful in the NT as the Old.

In Acts 10:42-43 Peter asserts...*“He commanded us to preach to the people & to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living & the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”* Peter, a NT apostle, proclaims Jesus as judge, whereas he says the OT prophets proclaimed Jesus as the means of forgiveness.

Certainly there are numerous expressions of God’s righteous anger in the OT, just as there are many manifestations of mercy in the NT. What’s important is to recognize, *we meet the same God in the OT as we do in the New.* In the whole Bible we meet a God

who is faithful to his promises to both bless & curse, taking sin & repentance seriously, as should we.

4. The OT announces the ‘gospel’ we enjoy: The gospel’s good news that through Jesus - the divine, crucified & resurrected Messiah - God reigns over all, saving & satisfying believing sinners. Paul states that *“Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”* (Gal. 3:8). Abraham was aware of the message of global salvation we now enjoy. In Romans, Paul stresses the Lord *“promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures”* the powerful *“gospel of God ...concerning the Son”* that he preached & which we now enjoy (Rom. 1:1-3, 16).

Foremost was Isaiah, who anticipated the day when God’s Messiah & those identified with him would herald good news to the poor & broken - news that the saving God reigns through his anointed deliverer (Isa. 61:1; cf. 40:9-11; 52:7-10; Luke 4:16-21). Reading the OT is one of God’s given ways for us to delight in the gospel (Heb. 4:2).

5. Both old & new covenants call for love we learn about in the OT: Within the old covenant, love was *what* the Lord called Israel to do (Deut. 6:5; 10:19); all the other commandments clarified *how to do it*. This was partly Jesus’s point in saying all the OT hangs on the call to love God & neighbor... *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind.”*³⁸ *This is the first & greatest commandment.*³⁹ *And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*⁴⁰ *All the Law & the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* (Matt. 22:37-40).

Christ said... *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law & the Prophets.”* (7:12). Paul noted... *“For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*” (Gal. 5:14; cf. Rom. 13:8, 10). As with Israel, the Lord calls Christians to love, yet now all members of the new covenant are empowered to live this command. Moses prophesied to this future reality saying... *“The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts & the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart & with all your soul, and live.”* (Deut. 30:6). Moses also said those enjoying this in the future would... *“...obey the Lord & follow all his commands I am giving you today.”* (30:8). His old covenant law called for life-encompassing love. Now, looking through the lens of Christ, we gain clarity from the OT on the wide-ranging effect of love.

6. Jesus came not to destroy the Law & Prophets but to fulfill them: In process he stressed the lasting relevance of the OT’s teaching for Christians... *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven & earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices & teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. 5:17-19).

While the age of the old covenant has ended (Rom. 6:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:20-21; Gal. 5:18; cf. Luke 16:16), the OT itself maintains lasting relevance for us in displaying the character of God (Rom. 7:12), pointing to the excellencies of Christ & portraying the scope of love (Matt. 22:37-40). Moses stated, in the day of heart circumcision (Deut. 30:6), which we enjoy in Christ (Rom. 2:29), all his teachings in Deuteronomy would still matter. He said... *“The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts & the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart & with all your soul, and live.”* (Deut. 30:8).

7. Jesus said the OT points to him: Philip, after meeting Jesus, said to Nathaniel... *“We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote”* (John 1:45). Jesus said we find Him in the OT... *“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me”* (John 5:39; cf. 5:46-47). *“And beginning with Moses & all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”* (Luke 24:27). After his resurrection Jesus opened the minds of his disciples... *“...so they could understand the Scriptures. 46He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer & rise from the dead on the third day, 47and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* (Luke 24:45-47).

In the OT we hear a message of the Messiah & the mission he generates. Paul taught... *“nothing beyond what the prophets & Moses said would happen - 23that the Messiah would suffer &, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people & to the Gentiles.”* (Acts 26:22-23). As an OT preacher, Paul declared... *“I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ & him crucified.”* (1 Cor. 2:2). To know Jesus more we read the OT!

8. Failing to declare ‘the whole counsel of God’ puts us in danger with the Lord: Paul was a herald of the good news of God’s kingdom in Christ (e.g., Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:30-31), which he preached from the Law of Moses & the Prophets (28:23; cf. 26:22-23). In Acts 20:26-27 he testified to the Ephesian elders... *“I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”* Had he failed to preach the whole will of God, he would’ve stood accountable for any future doctrinal/moral errors of the Ephesian church (cf. Ezek. 33:1-6; Acts 18:6).

With the NT, Scripture’s complete. As Jude v3 states, we have in whole... *“the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.”* This faith is only understood rightly within the framework of the whole counsel of God.

9. The NT authors stressed God gave the OT for Christians: Peter said... *“It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you”* (1 Pet. 1:12). OT authors wrote for a future audience. Paul was convinced they wrote for those who live on this side of Christ’s death & resurrection, saying... *“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the*

Scriptures & the encouragement they provide we might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4; cf. 4:23-24). “These things happened to them (the Israelites) as examples & were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.” (1 Cor. 10:11).

He said to Timothy, raised on the OT by a Jewish mother & grandmother (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5), that the “*Holy Scriptures*” of his upbringing “*are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*” (2 Tim. 3:15). We can find salvation from wrath & sin by reading the OT through the lens of Christ - that’s where both Rosalind Picard & myself started actually. While I started in Ecclesiastes, she started in Proverbs. Expecting to find nothing of value, to her surprise it was full of wisdom. She said, “I felt this strange sense of being spoken to. It was disturbing yet oddly attractive. I began wondering whether there really might be a God.”⁷

Paul says... “*All Scripture is God-breathed & is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting & training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” (3:16-17). Believers can correct, reprove & encourage each other *from the OT* when read in light of Christ. NT authors regularly used the OT as the basis for Christian exhortation (1 Cor. 9:8-12; Eph. 6:2-3; 1 Tim. 5:18; 1 Peter 1:14-16). Natural questions which arise regarding how Christians should relate to OT instruction, but the point stands, it’s written *for us*.

10. Paul commands church leaders to preach the OT: Paul referred to the OT when he spoke of the Scriptures which are able to make a person “wise for salvation” & “breathed out by God & profitable” (2 Tim. 3:15-16). Knowing this informs our understanding of his charge to Timothy when he said... *Preach the word; be prepared in season & out of season; correct, rebuke & encourage - with great patience & careful instruction. ³For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth & turn aside to myths.* (2 Tim. 4:2-4)

For Paul, leaders need to preach the OT to guard the Church from apostasy. While we now have the NT, we can & must, appropriate the OT as Jesus & his apostles did for the good of the Church. Paul stresses those who unhitch themselves from the OT put themselves in danger of falling away from God. **The Bible is the final authority as God’s infallible & inerrant word, time-tested, eyewitness-accounted & trustworthy, holding revelation & instruction for everyone. Explore & apply it!**

Include open prayer time with mic’s

⁷ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/april/rosalind-picard-mit-professor-meets-author-knowledge.html>