



**2 Peter 1:12-16**  
**The Word Confirmed**

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

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

17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

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

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Some of you may have noticed an item in the news about the recent discovery of the biblical Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem. I heard a prof. at Westminster who has gone on digs throughout Israel comment once that you can hardly put a spade down anywhere without digging up an artifact. That is precisely what happened here. Workers were repairing a busted sewer pipe in the old city of Jerusalem, and because it is such a historically significant area they are required to have archaeologists along with them. They started digging and suddenly a series of ancient steps became visible. The archaeologist on the project, Ronny Reich recognized them as steps going down to a bathing pool and from the start actually guessed that it was the pool of Siloam because of the location. Later they went over the steps with a metal detector and from coins they found imbedded in the plaster (*yes people have been losing their change for millennia*) they were able to date the pool with absolute accuracy.

The earliest coins under the first set of steps were all from the time about 50 years before the reign of Herod the Great in 37 B.C. and the last coins were ones issued by the Jews during the Jewish rebellion which lasted from 66-70 A.D. So they knew that this was the pool of Siloam which was mentioned both by secular records of that period, and is mentioned twice in John 9 as the place where Jesus sent the man born blind to go and wash after he had anointed his eyes with clay. The pool itself was fed by spring water from Hezekiah's tunnel and was an important place in the city used both for bathing and ritual cleansing. Imagine it, they uncovered steps that Jesus and his disciples at some point stood on, a place covered over almost since the time when Jesus used it in the healing of a man born blind.

I was very interested to read the article on it in the Biblical archeology review, but what intrigued me more and indirectly led to this sermon, was a comment in a newspaper article on it. A newswire reporter had phoned a professor from Princeton theological seminary asking for a comment on the discovery. Here is what he said:

***“Scholars have said that there wasn't a Pool of Siloam and that John was using a religious conceit” to illustrate a point, said New Testament scholar James H. Charlesworth of the Princeton Theological Seminary. “Now we have found the Pool of Siloam . . . exactly where John said it was.”  
A Gospel that was thought to be “pure theology is now shown to be grounded in history,” he said.***

Now it's not a bad statement as it goes, and it does indeed point out that those who want to pretend that the gospel of John was a fabrication have yet another black eye. In essence, he says this discovery proves John's gospel is grounded in history. But brothers and sisters, discoveries like this should interest us, but not surprise us at all, because you see, John's gospel isn't merely grounded in history, and in need of point by point verification as we dig up more and more of Israel. John's gospel is an absolutely trustworthy history. In fact, to use Peter's word, it is an eyewitness account.

I want to build on that point and explain its critical importance, and then try to tie in the connection with archeology and science.

In order to do that we need to understand what Peter is saying in that passage we read from 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. Go ahead and look at that again will you.

Peter has been discussing the gospel message. Now he knows the readers of his letter already know about the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus, and that they are firmly grounded in this truth. Mark that word, truth. And he goes on to say that as long as he is alive and walking around, because that is what he means by "in this tent" he wants to keep reminding the believers of it, that they might be stirred up. For we were not given the gospel in order to simply believe it but to put it into action. So once we know these things we go out and tell others we are stirred up to love and good works.

Now Peter knows that he is going to die soon, so what does want to do, he wants to make sure that believers have a sure record of the gospel that will be around after he dies, he wants them to have a gospel account that will do what he cannot do on earth after he dies, continue to teach the truth about Jesus Christ.

Now Verse 16 is critical, ***"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty."***

Peter is saying, what I have told you, this gospel message, is not "Once upon a time" it is not a skillfully constructed fable. It is not even a mixture of truth and legend, actual events and exaggerations. No Peter says, we by which he means he and his fellow apostles were eyewitnesses of the majesty of Christ. And then he reports what he himself, saw on the mount of transfiguration, when for a moment the veil of Christ's human nature was lifted for a moment and there on that mountain he saw Jesus, the Son of God, in His glory. And not only did he himself see the second person of the Godhead, God the Son, he heard the voice of God the father coming from that glory cloud that descended on the mountain. The voice that CONFIRMED what his eyes were telling him, that Jesus is the beloved Son of God who came to do the will of his Father.

But then he goes on to say this in verse 19, what we saw on that mountain and learned for certain about Jesus confirmed the truth of all those prophecies, by which he means the Old Testament – the prophetic word. What the Old Testament foretold, what it said would happen, happened it was confirmed. And then he tells them, so what should you do, heed the testimony of that word. Listen to the testimony of scripture because all of it, is the Word of God. Those prophets wrote what they did as they were moved, inspired, by the Holy Spirit and sure enough their testimonies were confirmed time and again. Not one of them has failed or will ever fail. The word is trustworthy, believe me, says Peter, because I saw them confirmed.

Now Brothers and Sisters, I cannot stress how important a point this is and how misunderstood it is today. So many times I hear people, both believers and unbelievers speaking of faith in the gospel as an illogical leap in the dark. That we put of common sense and reason and trust what the bible tells us, but its all on the basis of feeling and utterly without foundation. In that way of course, the secular world can pour their derision on the very concept of faith. For instance, it is popular, especially in the media to contrast the "faith based community" with the "reality based community." So that they scornfully say, we have science, and brute fact on our side, all you have are emotions and blind belief. They basically say to Christians, ***you believe a fairy tale***, a cunningly devised fable if you will. And because it is, after all, just a fairy tale, they have no problems deriding it and excluding entirely from the public square.

I mean, we wouldn't make *Little Red Riding Hood* the basis for making public policy decisions, so why should we give *the Ten Commandments* any role in our jurisprudence?

Ah but friends never buy into that falsehood. The Christian faith is not faith founded on fairy tales, it is faith founded on fact, conveyed to us by eyewitnesses of the events, and written down in a bible which is the result not of private writers giving their opinions, but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Faith in the gospel is neither unreasonable nor blind. R.C. Sproul puts it this way:

***At its root, the term faith means "trust." To trust God is not an act of unreasonable belief. God demonstrates Himself to be eminently trustworthy. He gives ample reason for us to trust Him. He proves that He Himself is faithful and worthy of our trust. There is a huge difference between faith and credulity. To be credulous is to believe something for no sound reason. It is the stuff of which superstition is made and thrives on. Faith is established upon coherent and consistent reasoning and upon sound empirical evidence. Peter writes, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Peter 1:16). Christianity does not rest upon myths and fables but on the testimony of those who saw with their eyes and heard with their ears. The truth of the gospel is based on historical events. If the account of those events is not trustworthy, then indeed our faith would be in vain. But God does not ask us to believe anything on the basis of myth.***

So how does that connect with digging up the Pool of Siloam. Well it shouldn't surprise you that this happened at all. Jesus really did heal that man and send him to the Pool of Siloam. You knew that before they dug up the pool, because an eyewitness and apostle of Jesus by the name of John recorded it for you in words inspired by God the Holy Ghost. We were not sitting around waiting to find out whether or not that healing took place, we know it did. Just as we are not sitting around waiting for them to uncover Golgotha before we can have confidence that Jesus was crucified, or find the empty tomb to know that Jesus rose again.

Now, atheistic critics will say well there is no way you can be sure of that without actually having the visible evidence before you. Unless you do find Siloam by uncovering it, you can't trust John's account.

Interestingly enough, they don't actually live according to that standard themselves. They read in the newspaper that there was a car crash at such and such a corner and they don't say, I won't believe that unless I go to that location and find shards of glass and other evidence of the crash. Or they take it for granted that there was a Battle of Waterloo without traveling to Belgium and digging up the supposed site of the battlefield. You'll find it's just the things they *don't want to believe in the first place* that they demand that standard of proof for. Everything else they accept on faith, including entirely improvable and even impossible things like Darwinian evolution and the big-bang.

The thing is, Peter points out that the Bible offers a higher standard of proof of these events than say the Battle of Waterloo. You see, no history of Waterloo begins thousands of years before the battle, and includes testimonies from ancient writers that Napoleon would be born on the Island of Corsica or include details as to what his life would be like and then in exquisite detail plot out the events of the battle and then include eyewitness testimonies showing that the battle unfolded just as the ancient writers said it would.

Any historian would say, but to require that standard in order to believe the Battle of Waterloo occurred would be to require the impossible, only God almighty could provide that level of proof. But then Peter tells you, that is exactly what God Himself did regarding the gospel.

So let me leave you with a few personal applications:

- 1) Brothers and Sisters, know and believe that that this book, this bible, is exactly what it claims to be, a sure testimony, inspired in all its parts, and that in it your faith has a sure and unshakable foundation.

Don't let anyone tell you that parts of it are true and others are false, as Peter himself put it "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" and Paul's words "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Christ himself confirmed this as he again and again quoted from scripture as an authoritative account and said things like: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." (a tittle being the smallest stroke of any of the Hebrew letters). I tell you this, if I thought that any part of this word were fallible and man-made I couldn't trust any of it. Because then all of those testimonies as to its accuracy would be false.

In history again and again, the authenticity of portions of the bible has been questioned, some critics for instance called John's gospel "very late" and dated it in the 300s, and then we dug up the Chester Beattie Papyri. Dead Sea Scrolls. Etc. The more we discover, the worse the case against the bible becomes.

- 2) What then of evolution and all of that? Darwinian evolution is failing. Etc. ID is gradually gaining ground as more and more scientists are forced to accept the irreducible complexity of life. That DNA cannot be manufactured.

Scientific Fads come and go, don't embrace them!

- 3) Jesus loves me this I know... How do I know that. Kids as you are growing up - People will try to sell you a bill of goods that the bible is false.

That they would believe if someone proved it to them with "evidence"

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,  
 28 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'  
 29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'  
 30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'  
 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

Unless the Holy Spirit works in their hearts they will by no means believe. But you...

DABNEY QUOTE!

This is the testimony that alone saves. And experience has taught me.