

Absolute Truth: Eyewitnesses of His Majesty

Wylie United Methodist Church
Pastor Jeff Hatcher – April 10, 2011

2 Peter 1:16-2:3

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For 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." 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. 19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, 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. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2:1 But there were 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. 2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3 In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

How do we know that the Bible can be trusted?

Basic history of New Testament:

- The 1st century church relied significantly on oral testimony from the apostles and those close to them.
- It was between 50 - 70 AD that the NT began to be put down in writing. Mark was the first gospel account written approximately 60 AD. Mark was a disciple of Peter and most likely wrote his gospel account under the supervision of Peter.
- Early Church leaders quoted from Matthew, John and Paul's epistles, referring to them as scripture.
- All other disputed "gospels" were written centuries later.
- The Nicean Council in 325 AD (convened by Constantine) recognized the books that make up the New Testament (The Canon),

- But the 4 Gospels and other New Testament books had been written and recognized as authentic hundreds of years earlier.

For a letter to make the New Testament Cannon it had to be...

1. APOSTOLIC

2 Peter 1:16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories ...but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For a letter to make the New Testament Cannon it had to be...

2. AUTHENTICATED

2 Tim 4:3-5 (Paul warns his disciple Timothy...)

3 For the time will come when men 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. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

For a letter to make the New Testament Cannon it had to be...

3. DIVINELY INSPIRED

John 16:12-13

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."

2 Timothy 3:15-17

... the holy Scriptures, ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed ...

For a letter to make the New Testament Cannon it had to be...

4. CONSISTENT

Matthew 5:17

"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."

Luke 24:44

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Why should we believe in the authenticity of the New Testament?

1. The gospels are rooted in multiple eyewitness testimony.

2. The gospels were written too close to the actual events to be untrue.
3. The NT contains embarrassing and hard to explain material that the authors would have deleted if they weren't true.
4. Archaeology and ancient writings outside the Bible tend to corroborate the New Testament Gospels.
5. Most of the NT authors were martyred for their beliefs. Would they have died for a lie?
6. It CHANGED MY LIFE !!
The purpose of God's Word is not so much to INFORM as to TRANSFORM!!

Rom 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.