

# Why I Choose to Believe the Bible

*The Ever Loving Truth*

By Voddie Baucham

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**Bible Text:** 2 Peter 1:16-20

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Hello and welcome to “For Faith and Family with Dr. Richard Land.” I am Charles Harper and today we want to welcome back to the program Voddie Baucham. Voddie has become one of the most sought after Bible teachers in America and his energy and passion always inspires his audiences. So I know you are not going to want to miss today’s broadcast. He is going to share with us the importance of evangelism. Not only that, he is going to help us become more effective at sharing our faith.

Voddie was led to the Lord by a college friend and at the time he knew nothing about Jesus or the Bible. So I guess you could say he has some first hand experience.

Let’s listen in as he speaks to the Southern Baptists of Texas Evangelism Conference.

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You heard earlier that I came to Christ my freshman year in College. That was actually the first time that I had ever heard the gospel because my mother who raised me as a single teenage mother in Los Angeles, California was a practicing Buddhist and so Buddhism was the only faith that I knew growing up. And it wasn’t until I got to college that I was actually introduced to Christianity. And so because of that I have a different perspective than most on the Christian faith.

I want to share with you tonight what it is that brought me to that place where I was able to see and to hear and to understand and place my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how it is that he opened my eyes, brought me from darkness into his marvelous light. And it just happened to be very intellectual. That is the way I was wired. That is the way I was put together and I am grateful that God put a man into my life who when he started his presentation, you know, he had one of these presentations he had been taught. I believe it was EE, Evangelism Explosion back then. He started this presentation and came to realize that, you know, he was trying to help me connect the dots as it relates to the gospel, but I didn’t really have enough dots for him to help me connect.

So he backed up from his planned presentation and he said, “This is the Bible.” And that is where we started. And he came back every day for about three and a half weeks, every

day answering questions, questions that I had that he could answer he would answer on the spot. If he couldn't answer them on the spot, he would go get information and come back later. But after about the first week he had taught me how to go and find answers myself to these questions because, folks, it is not a crime to investigate Christianity.

And we have got to stop treating people who want to investigate Christianity like somehow they are less than... God never called us to a blind faith. If that was the case he would not have gone through the trouble of providing and preserving and protecting for us his self revelation in the Bible.

And so I just want to answer that question for you. Open your Bibles with me to the book of 2 Peter chapter one. And I just want to tell you why I choose to believe the Bible. Certainly not because I was raised that way and I wasn't. And, by the way, would you please promise me that if somebody asks you why you choose to believe the Bible you will never ever in your life give that as your answer.

Why do you believe the Bible?

Well, as I was raised...

Don't do that. Please, just please, don't do that. I mean, if you feel like that just kind of hold it under your breath. Don't announce it to other people, amen. Can we at least go that far?

Or there is another. Because we live in this age where experience is king, because we have sort of been kind of inundated with Postmodernism. We believe that experience is king so the most powerful thing that we can say to people about why it is that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and why we believe what the Bible says about Jesus is because we have tried it and it works for us. And so with boldness we stick our chest.

And they say, "You are telling me about this Jesus and you get that information from your Bible, but why is it that you believe the Bible?"

And we stick our chest out and we say, "Because I tried it and it works for me."

Hold on. Is that your final answer? Because if it is, you have got a small problem. Actually it is a large problem, because if that is your answer, what you just did was you opened a logical hole big enough to drive a Mack truck through. Because if you choose to believe the Bible because you tried it and it works for you, then what do you say to the individual who went to a 12 step program. They told him, I believe, on his third step, that he had to have a higher power. Couldn't think of anything so he looks outside his window. There is a squirrel who visits faithfully every day. He decides that that squirrel outside of his window will be his higher power. He hasn't had a drink in the last five years. He tried it and it worked for him.

Or how about the Mormon that lives better than most of the members of our churches?

If you can't say amen, you ought to say ouch.

They tried the book of Mormon and it worked for them. Is that our answer?

Now, I am not saying that that is unimportant. It is very important. But the Bible is not true because it works for us. It works for us because it is true.

So we don't start with our experience here. There is something far beyond that. Experience can lie to you and can deceive you. And so I would... I just want to pose another answer to you. It is an answer that I derived from this passage of Scripture and I will show you how it is that I derived it from this passage of Scripture. But I just want to give it to you first as we get started, all right, because it is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eye witnesses. They report to us supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claim to be divine rather than human in origin.

Let's look at the text.

2 Peter chapter one beginning at verse 16.

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.<sup>1</sup>

It seems like he is answering a question, doesn't it? Like someone had some kind of objection to what it is they were proclaiming and he is responding as to the nature of the authority of their proclamation, that he is defending the accuracy, the authority and the historicity of the teaching of the apostles that we now know as the New Testament which has its root and foundation in the Old Testament Scriptures. He is defending a belief in the Bible.

So what is his argument?

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 1:16-21.

I am glad you asked.

First of all, that it is a reliable collection of historical documents. Look at what he says.

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

When we told you about Jesus we did not share with you myths or fairy tales or legends. This was not the *Gilgamesh Epic* that we were sharing with you. We were sharing factual information with you.

Not only that, it is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eye witnesses. Look at what he says next.

“But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”<sup>3</sup>

We saw it. We were there.

By the way, turn with me to the right, if you will, the book of 1 John, that’s close enough.

Look at what we see in 1 John, those few verses. I am not sure. I think there is a point of emphasis here. Maybe you can help me figure it out.

Verse one.

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—”<sup>4</sup>

I don’t know. Maybe he is getting at something, maybe not. Maybe verse two will help us.

“And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—”<sup>5</sup>

It is building. Maybe verse three will shed the ultimate light.

“What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also.”<sup>6</sup>

We were eye witnesses.

Man, there is something about eye witness accounts.

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter 1:16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 1:1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 1:2.

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 1:3.

You know, I brought my son with me and I can remember my son and trying to train my son when he was smaller and trying to teach him to do what he is told and also trying to teach him to tell the truth. Boy, getting little kids to tell the truth. Most people who believe, you know, that we are, you know, basically good, they don't have kids.

I remember one day with my son. Son, I am trying to teach him not to touch the outlets, you know. Don't touch those things. You tell him no. You strike that little hand and all I get is stuffing. You know, just no. And then ok. And he gets that. He doesn't like that when you spank his hand.

He is sitting over there one day. I have told him no. I have spanked his hand. We have gone through this twice now.

Sin rolls up in the boy. He looked at me, looked at the plug, looked at me, looked at the plug.

Son, did you touch that plug?

No, sir.

Ok, son, we are going to try that again. And you have got a choice. Daddy can get you for touching the plug or he can get you for touching the plug and lying about it. But before you speak, let me inform you I saw what you did.

Son, did you touch the plug?

True story.

I love you.

He couldn't lie any more because it was... there was a witness.

That is what Peter says, a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses and, catch it, during the lifetime of other eye witnesses.

I love 1 Corinthians 15. Paul is making his argument for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After he was resurrected, he appeared to Peter and then he appeared to his disciples and then he appeared to 500 brethren at once and I love this line, most of whom remain until now, although some have fallen asleep. That means the majority of the 500 plus eye witnesses of the resurrection were around when 1 Corinthians was written.

Oh, I know. You have been to school. You are [?] and you have heard all this. Well, actually the Bible has been translated so many times and what they have done during those translations is they have actually sort of, you know, done a lot of redaction in order

to make the things line up. And so what we have, actually, is not what really happened, but we have what was written by the later community.

I love that, the later community, these nameless, faceless people. There's these over zealous monks that have gone around and they have changed things so they look like they line up, but it wasn't really written that early. It was written much later, really.

They are messing and around and let me go to school, too. Guess what I know? I know that if some overzealous monks were going to change the Bible they would have had problems, three problems in particular. First they would have had a manuscript problem because when we just talk about the New Testament they would have had to locate some 6000 manuscripts or portions of manuscripts and change all of them, the exact same way, not allowed their ink work to show and then get them back where they stole them from before anybody saw them.

Well, 6000 manuscripts. That's no big deal, right? How about Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*? We got 10 manuscripts. How about Aristotle's *Poetics*? We have got five. How about Herodotus? We have got less than 10.

New Testament? 6000.

Well, how about when they were written? They say these things were written so late.

Well, we have got manuscripts or portions of manuscripts that can take us back as early as AD 120 to 150.

Oh, that's a long time after the originals.

Oh, really?

With Julius Caesar it is about 900 years with *Gallic Wars*. Aristotle's *Poetics* we have got it about 1300 or 1400 years. That is the earliest thing we can put our hands on. With Homer about 2100 years the earliest thing we can put our hands on.

The New Testament, within the lifetime of eye witnesses.

So far we have just got a good history book.

It gets good now. They report to us supernatural events. Look at what he says here. He says:

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—and we ourselves heard this

utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.<sup>7</sup>

Now we got supernatural stuff happening. Not super human stuff, supernatural. We are not talking about things that, you know, are just out of the ordinary. We are talking about a withered hand growing back. We are talking about a man who was blind. It has got nothing in head to see with, able to see. We are talking about a paralytic who has never walked in his life being told to raise up and take his cot and walk. We are talking about one of my favorites, Jesus saying, “Go to the other side of the lake and I will meet you.”

Later on on the ship I see something like this.

Hey, did Jesus say how he was coming?

No, why?

Because he is coming.

Or, my favorite, Friday dead, Sunday risen. Not just super human, but supernatural events.

So we have got a reliable collection of historical document written down by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eye witnesses. They report super natural vents, by the way. These events took place in fulfillment of specific prophecy.

Now, I know you know this, but I just want to do it anyway, because I just love to do it. Turn with me in your Bibles to the left to Psalm number 22. Now realize if I was asking you to turn to Psalm number 22 and we were living, oh, some random time like the first century, AD 30, just to pick something out of the air. And let’s say AD 30 and we are around Jerusalem since we are just being random here. We are around AD 30, we are around Jerusalem and let’s say we are a people who like to talk about the Old Testament and, I don’t know, just pick a language, Aramaic, ok.

If I wanted you to turn to Psalm number 22 and we are living somewhere around AD 30 and we are living in Jerusalem and we refer to the Old Testament in Aramaic I can’t tell you to open to Psalm number 22 because there were no chapters and verses until a few hundred years ago. I would have to tell you to open to the title of Psalm number 22. So I would have to tell you to open your soul to **אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לַמָּוֶת עֲזַבְתָּנִי** (Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani). “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”<sup>8</sup>

That ought to sound familiar. It is precisely what Jesus said when he was being crucified. Why on earth do you make reference to Psalm number 22 when you are being crucified?

I know you know the answer, but just bear with me because I like this.

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Peter 1:17-18.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 22:1.

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”<sup>9</sup>

Look at verse six.

But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."<sup>10</sup>

Sound familiar? That is what is being said while Jesus is being crucified.

Look at verse 12.

Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint.<sup>11</sup>

Why? Because you are being crucified.

“My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.”<sup>12</sup>

Interesting. Pierce him in the side, thrusting upwardly with a spear, blood and water rush out as you pierce the pericardium.

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws.”<sup>13</sup>

“I thirst.”<sup>14</sup>

“For dogs have surrounded me.”<sup>15</sup>

Gentiles. Could those be Roman soldiers?

“A band of evildoers has encompassed me.”<sup>16</sup>

One on the right and one on the left.

“The pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 22:6-8.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 22:12-14.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 22:14.

<sup>13</sup> Psalm 22:15.

<sup>14</sup> John 19:28.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 22:16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 22:16-17.

Why? Because your legs didn't have to be broken to hasten your death.

“They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.”<sup>18</sup>

That was written 1000 years before Jesus was born by a man who never once saw a crucifixion in his life because crucifixion had not yet been invented.

And now the juicy part. They claim that their writings are divine rather than human in origin. Look at what he says.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.<sup>19</sup>

That is where people have problems. Men wrote the Bible. I just love that.

You are saying that that is the Word of God, but men wrote the Bible.

But the men who wrote it claimed that they were writing the Word of God.

Yeah, but it was written by men. And you can't rely on things that are written by men.

Here is what I want you to do, then, if you believe that. If you know a college student who is studying mathematics and they have been taught the Pythagorean Theorem and they got it wrong on a test, I want you to tell them to look at their professor and say, “You can't mark me off on that because that information came out of a book that was written by men.”

As a matter of fact, if that is your problem with the Bible, I want you to get rid of every book that you have because every one you have was penned by men. If your argument is that information is inherently unreliable because men take pen to paper you can never trust anything else that you ever read in life. You have got to do better than that.

Well, they may try to do better than that. And they say, “Well, ok. But I believe that stuff if you can prove it to me scientifically.”

At this point I need to confess something to you. There is a man who lives inside of me. His name is bad Voddie. I try to only let him out at night late once a week when nobody is around. But sometimes he escapes. And one of the times he tries to escape is when people say this about the Bible.

I believe that if you can prove it to me scientifically...

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<sup>18</sup> Psalm 22:17-18.

<sup>19</sup> 2 Peter 1:20-21.

When that happens, I clench my fists and try to grab real tight before bad Voddie just goes off and does his thing. However, usually I fail. I have to confess that. Please pray for me, because he doesn't do things the way that I would like to do things. He doesn't do things, doc, the way you taught me to do them. Bad Voddie doesn't operate like that. Bad Voddie would have flunked in Dr. Fischer's class. I just have to admit that, because he hears that and just goes off.

He says, "Wait a minute." Did you just say to me that you will believe the Bible if I can prove it to you scientifically?"

We have serious problems here. The first problem is you stating that indicates to me that you don't even deserve to be in this conversation. However, I am going to allow you to stay in this conversation because I am going to enjoy this, because you saying that indicates two things to me. Number one, you have no clue about the authority or historicity of the Bible and, number two, you don't even know anything about the scientific method. If you did you would realize that in order to perform the scientific method, something has to be observable, measurable and repeatable.

News flash. Historical event aren't observable, measurable and repeatable. You can't use the scientific method to prove that George Washington was our first president. So if you actually had a problem with the Bible because you can't apply the scientific method, you have got a problem with history itself.

Now that we have settled the fact that you don't deserve to be in this conversation, let's go back to the real issue at hand which is this. If something is written, the only way you can question it is if you don't have corroboration or there is internal inconsistency.

We can't find any internal inconsistency and we have got multiple corroboration. We have got three languages, Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. We have got three continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. We have over 40 authors most of whom never met one another because they wrote over a period of some 1600 hundred years. Look in your dictionary. That would be the very definition of corroboration. So unless you have anything that would negate what we find in the Bible, you have to accept the fact, based on the evidentiary method, not the scientific method, that the Bible is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses during the lifetime of other eye witnesses. They report to us supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecy and claim that their writings are divine rather than human in origin. And I know that I missed verse 19 because that is what the gravy comes from because the gravy is, oh, by the way, I tried it and it worked for me.

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This is "For Faith and Family" with Dr. Richard Land. I am Charles Harper and today we have been listening to a message delivered by Voddie Baucham at a recent evangelism conference sponsored by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

I know that Voddie's message has encouraged us all to be ready to give a defense for the hope that is within us. You can find some additional information about Voddie and his ministry as well as the ministry of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention when you visit our website at Faith and Family dot com.

When you are there be sure to check out our online bookstore and pick up a copy of Voddie's book *The Ever Loving Truth*. All you have to do is log on to our website at Faith and Family dot com.

For Faith and Family radio is produced in Nashville, Tennessee by the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. For more information about our guests and past programs, just visit our website at Faith and Family dot com. Once you are there you can also find out more about Dr. Land's commentaries, your favorite broadcasts, as well as a number of exciting resources for you and your family.

We would also love to hear what you think about today's program, so please be sure to drop us a note when you visit our website at Faith and Family dot com.

Our producer's for today's broadcast are Amber Chester and Matt Hawkins. I am Harold Harper and I hope you will join us again next time for "For Faith and Family with Dr. Richard Lamb."