

1Peter 10-11-19a

This is Friday, the 19th of November, 2010. We continue our study in the book of First Peter, chapter one. We resume at verse six.

We'll take a moment at the outset, as is our usual custom, to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, how thankful we are for this opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word. We thank you for all of your many blessings and provisions.

Thank you that we live in a country where freedom prevails, despite attempts to make inroads and erosions of it. We thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit and the presence and power of your word to sustain us, to guide us, to motivate us and encourage us and equip us for every good work. We thank you for each one here, each one listening to the sound of my voice.

We pray tonight as we investigate these profound truths communicated to us over the centuries by the Apostle Peter, that each of us will find in them the necessary and helpful principles and promises and doctrines that will enable us to fulfill your plan for us, not only in the large scale and the great scheme of things, but in the small details and in the daily decisions and tasks of the time that remains to us in this life. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, we, as I said, continue tonight in 1 Peter. We ended on a wonderful high note here, and I think I said we begin at verse 6. We're actually going to begin at verse 8 because we have covered verse 6 and 7, talking about the genuineness of our faith as it is demonstrated under testing. And you may remember the illustration that I gave that sticks in my mind of steel that is tested before it is put into use for various purposes.

If they're going to build an aircraft, if they're going to build a ship or an automobile, you would like to think that they have tested the materials under the anticipated stresses of that application and are confident that given variations in temperature or in the atmosphere, an airplane is not going to lose its wings or its tail or its landing gear, that your seat is not going to come unbolted from the deck if they hit some turbulence, that the overhead compartments are not going to open and dump their contents on you, that the mechanisms by which the doors are secured are not going to give, that if the ship encounters high seas or the errant iceberg, it isn't going to sink because those components have been tested. I think about the relatively small amount of metal measured in fractions of an inch that secure the tires mounted on their wheels to my car. There are, on my little getabout car, four or five lug nuts securing each wheel.

I fly down the highway at an extremely high rate of speed and for any given wheel, there's probably less than an inch of actual metal holding my wheels onto this hurtling missile in which I ride. And I am happy to know that those nuts and those bolts are made of a steel sufficiently strong to maintain their integrity when I stress them at that level. And I have confidence, I have faith that the wonderful Japanese engineers at Miata knew how to make a car whose wheels

would not fly off when I drive it in my own happy fashion.

In the same way, our faith, our understanding of God's plan is not just an academic concept. It's not just sort of a spiritual idea. We need a tested level of confidence in God.

We need to develop it. We need to have it because when we go into the eternal future, God is not going to be looking over our shoulder every minute. We tend to think, well, but I'm going to heaven.

I'm just going to be wandering around the streets of gold, visiting various mansions, and looking for the free handouts of hidden manna, and standing in line to talk to various apostles and Old Testament prophets and saints and other figures of note from Scripture. It's going to be sort of a cloudy, glorified, golden Disneyland. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The eternal future is not a heavenly theme park. It's not just amusements and rides and entertainments for us. Look at God's history.

Has God ever run an entertainment park? Even when Adam and Eve were in the garden, there was work for Adam to do. He tended the garden. He named the animals.

He learned the plan and purpose of God. He attended Bible class with his wife. And by the way, there was a lot more going on in the Garden of Eden.

It is suggested, but not explicitly detailed in the first few chapters of Genesis. But there was a lot going on. Adam differentiated the trees.

He differentiated the animals. He observed. He was something of a biologist and a zoologist and a plant guy, gardener.

He tended the garden. And this brings me to a point, and I am going to digress. Everybody, I think, got my email.

I am on mission. I am on track. This is a part of the class.

I don't think I've fallen off the wagon six minutes in. This is part of what we are talking about as I now launch into this seeming yet not a digression. There is widespread misunderstanding of the relationship of science and the Bible.

One or two of you have the ability to follow my perambulations and contributions to a discussion board online. I don't recommend the rest of you get up there and wallow and wade through some of that unless you are just really a glutton for punishment. But there is one place where I encounter and cross swords with people with widely divergent viewpoints including Christians who are just, you know, the rear rotor transmission has failed and I don't know how they are staying in the air.

But in those discussions I attempt to represent an uncommonly presented view which is the intelligent scientifically informed Christian. Most atheists, most secular humanists take it for granted that Christians are low IQ bumbling idiots who really are just in the dark. If they had a shred of education, if they had any knowledge at all they would come out of their benighted mythology and awaken to the wonderful dawn of secular humanist materialism.

Well, I beg to differ and I enjoy demonstrating that the most intelligent position you can hold, the most educated and well informed and comprehensive view that you can hold is to believe in God, to believe in the scriptures and to embrace all of the data and the facts that science can bring to us. There is no conflict of any substance between science and the Bible. And I say that knowing what I'm saying and knowing the shock and dismay that it would create in many circles.

What you mean, the miracles and... Oh, please. The notion that believers are utterly incompetent in the area of science is only true when you're talking to believers who are utterly incompetent in science and they are in abundance and they seem to be the most vocal part of the body of Christ. They seem to all be located right around the mouth of the body for some reason.

But do not... My encouragement is don't shy away from science. Read nature. Read scientific journals.

Keep yourself up to speed on the latest in DNA research. I'm telling you the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows forth His handiwork. All of these things that they discover are golden opportunities to observe the majesty and the power, the intricacy of the lacework of God's handiwork in the universe.

It's glorious. I have no fear. I have no... I don't find any threatening information in science, in archaeology, in paleontology, in astronomy, in physics.

To me, it is just super abundant testimony to the glory of God. It's wondrous to behold. Most of the rest of science is exactly like when you turn on one of the Discovery Channel or National Geographic Channel specials and you see the intricacies of nature and animal behavior and plant life and undersea life.

Have you ever watched those things in beautiful 52-inch high definition? I'm telling you, you'll be down on your knees thanking God for who He is and what a tremendously over-awing presence He is. It's just touching the hem of His garment. It's just seeing the glory departing from the back side like Moses to see these things.

It doesn't begin to represent or encompass or demonstrate how great God is but you get just a taste just a glimpse of that glory. It's stupendous. I love the pictures from Hubble.

I love everything science can find out. I say all that to say this. When it says here blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3 who according to His abundant mercy has

begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for a prepared deliverance to be revealed in the last time.

This is our God. Everything you see everything science discovers is a revelation of God and it is a horrible travesty that they find it and discover it and marvel at it and are stumped by it and stymied by it and can't even begin to figure it out and they say what's even more surprising is this all came about totally by accident and I think it is no different staring at the testimony to God and His vast incomprehensibly great intelligence and claiming that it's all a happy accident it's no different than when the Pharisees stood and heard the Lord Jesus Christ exposit the Old Testament scriptures beautifully perfectly cogently incomparably and dismissed Him as some strange freak of nature from Galilee that couldn't be given any credit you have to willfully shut your eyes you have to willfully turn away you have to do the Romans one thing and willfully suppress the truth in unrighteousness and scientists find that difficult little known fact one of the most and those that have read my contributions this past week on talk chess already know this the most comprehensive survey of God belief if you will among scientists that's ever been done was done by professor Elaine Howard Eklund a few years ago 2006 2007 along in there published it in a book called or an article called science versus religion she surveyed over 1700 scientists at this nation's most elite research universities these are the scientists that are at the forefront the cutting edge of technology in all of their different fields natural sciences and so on physicists chemists and she went on to interview 275 of these scientists in extensive detail the results of her survey are in keeping with other surveys that have been done in recent years by Gallup by a fellow named Larson and several others that indicate that in the scientific community in this country those who believe in God or a higher power are at least one in three at least 33% it varies depending on how they word the question you know a lot of scientists prefer to be vague well I don't believe in the God of the Bible but I believe there has got to be some sort of God some sort of intelligence behind what we see in the universe now we're not talking about you know creation research society members here we're talking about members of the NAAA the National Academy of American Astronauts I don't remember what it stands for it's the premier science organization in this country we're talking about members of the NCSE the National Council for Science Education we're talking about guys that are at all of the best and bright universities research that you want to name a third of them openly avow God belief another 20% of them and the and the total of the 33 34% plus the 20% who say well I don't want to say God capital G but there's there is some higher power out there is over 50% the only ones who will come out and say I am an atheist I do not believe in anything beyond the material universe I avow nothing beyond what physics can demonstrate is down in the low 30% range and a lot of them say well you know I just don't know and I really don't think there's a way of finding out but I will not dismiss the possibility that there is something out there I just don't I prefer not to say I don't want to draw a conclusion and I think a lot of these guys are professionally embarrassed to say what their speculations or their beliefs might be because it's anathema you know there's such

a hostile environment and by the way professor Eklund documented this in her study and published it in her results that there is a chilling effect in the scientific community for anybody who openly avows any sort of religious or God belief why is that important don't think that your faith is somehow antithetical to science don't let the world make this false equation that well you either can believe in science and technology and the latest advances in DNA research and genetics and astronomy and the Hubble and the and all of this, you can either be in that or you can be religious, but you can't be both because religion is just the opposite of everything scientific. Religion is a pox and a scourge and a discouragement and a damper on scientific advancement.

Balderdash, poppycock, not the case. The foundations of science were laid by God-fearing Christians in every field. Name your field and I will show you that the founding fathers of that field were God-fearing, Bible-thumping believers.

A lot of them were Calvinists. Why did science get founded by those men? Because unlike the Romans, unlike the Greeks, unlike ancient peoples, unlike the animists in a lot of other countries, they did not believe in a pantheon of capricious and unstable deities who were basically humans on steroids. Bible-believing, God-fearing Christian scientists believed that God was the God of the Bible, unchanging, eternal, consistent, and that the universe he created was all of those things and that you could make predictions.

You could discern the rules and make predictions based on it. That's the scientific method. We can observe and it will be consistent.

It's not going to change because it is rooted in the character of God himself. Now, I say all of that to say this. We have a living hope through the resurrection of Christ to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in heaven.

Can't see heaven, can't put it in a scale, can't measure it, can't detect it. You know, this whole thing about, well, it's behind the Oort cloud. It's off beyond the Crab Nebula, the throne of God has finally been found.

I've seen these wild-eyed, wacko Christians. Hubble is finally, look, it's God out there in the great beyond, several million light years away. No, God is outside the physical universe.

He's not subject to its limitations or its physics. He is not going to be detected in any way, shape, or form by those means unless he chooses to be, unless he comes down and incarnates himself, unless he comes down to have a meal with Abraham or to live among us for 33 years and die on the cross, God will appear when and where and how he chooses. He can speak from Sinai.

He can make himself visible in the Shekinah. He can leave the evidence of his presence behind in the fabric of the universe without himself being personally detectable. No man can see God and live.

We see manifestations. We see revelations. We see incarnations of various kinds.

That's God's design. Well, now what about this inheritance? If you can't see it, you can't detect it. I can't, you know, check online my heavenly bank account and find out what my reserve is of gold, silver, and precious stones.

I'm not real sure I can do that with my actual bank accounts. How do we know it's there? By faith, by faith, by faith. Well, this is the false argument made in the world that, well, you see, you've got a system of faith.

We who look to science and are involved in the secular materialistic humanistic world, we don't have to use faith. Nonsense. It is every bit as much a system of faith.

Every bit as much, if not more so. And think about it. I'm not gonna spend too much time on this.

I've talked about it before, but scientists are the priests. Did you see the experiment? Did you see the data come back from the Hubble? Did you watch them dig up the rock? Did you watch them do the carbon dating? No, you take it all on faith. They tell you what they observed and we believe it.

Well, of course it's peer reviewed and other peers are gonna be checking. Well, so if I can get three or four pastors to agree, if I can get 17 or 18 priests to agree, then that also constitutes evidence for religious truth, biblical truth. If I can get textual scholars to agree is to get a quorum.

That's all science is. It's a quorum of opinion on stuff they observe. They pick up rocks, they look up in the sky, they measure things, they observe things and they try to put two and two together to derive conclusions.

And when they come up with some consensus, that's an established fact. People take science on faith. And by the way, science is often wrong.

There was a period of, I don't know, six years where they thought Hesperopithecus was another ancient man. And somebody got to look and said, you know what? This tooth you found came from a pig, not a man. But there was a period of years in the 1920s where Hesperopithecus was right there in the chart, from the chimpanzee knuckle dragon apes and up here's the naked man.

There's Hesperopithecus right in the middle. Oops, I guess he isn't really a missing link after all. Well, science is often wrong.

And they say, well, yeah, but that's not a problem. That's a feature because we're self-correcting. See, we've found our mistakes, but they don't want to grant that same thing to Christianity or to biblical understanding that, well, maybe people wrongly interpreted the scriptures that the earth was only 6,000 years old.

But now in the light of science, we can revise that understanding and say, you know, actually, when you look at it, that isn't what the Bible said at all. And we're revising that understanding. Oh, no, we want to make all of you young earth creationists and we want to disparage you and caricature you as unscientific, you know, darkened in the understanding nabobs because there are a few people who still cling to a 6,000 year old earth.

By the way, the earth is not 6,000 years old. Don't go down that road. It's not.

And the Bible never said it was. It was a conclusion. Turns out that it wasn't right, understandable, but wrong.

Okay, fine. So we've grown beyond that. Science claims that as a feature.

Well, guess what? We can do the same as believers. We can look at the scripture in the light of other testimony that God has given us in the universe. What does the Bible say? The heavens declare the glory of God.

The firmament shows forth his handiwork. If you study the firmament, you can draw conclusions that illuminate and inform your understanding of scripture and vice versa. So there's nothing wrong with abandoning the 15th century idea that the earth is 6,000 years old in the light of clear evidence that God has left us in the universe, in the rocks, in the crust of the earth, that it's older than that.

Doesn't erode or impinge on the veracity of the Bible in any way. In fact, if you abandon that bad idea, the Bible holds up much better because actually scripture is entirely reconcilable with all of the latest scientific knowledge that we have. There is nothing.

No other book, by the way, can make this claim. You can't go to Zoroastrianism. You can't go to the Vedic hymns.

You can't go to the Quran. You can't go anywhere else and find a religious book that is internally consistent with all of the latest science. The Bible is.

The Bible doesn't say that the earth is balanced on the back of a turtle. The Bible doesn't say that it's held up on the shoulders of Atlas. The Bible doesn't say that there's a pantheon of gods up there procreating, copulating, creating demigods and Icarus and Zeus and all the rest.

No, it is the most consistent account. Everything the Bible says about the creation of the earth and the universe follows the order and the revelations of the formation of this planet and the universe itself to the letter. There is no conflict if you can free your mind and study it intelligently, it's consistent.

Well, the reason that's important is when the Bible says you have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, reserved in heaven, if you are one of those who is kept by the

power of God, looking for that ready deliverance that's gonna be revealed at the last time, you should greatly rejoice. This is not an uninformed, blind, sort of false joy. When you get to verse six through verse eight, look at it, look at six through eight, let's read it.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you're aggrieved by various trials so that the genuineness of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. This is our new material tonight. Though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory.

Not seeing you believe and believing you rejoice. What's the first phrase of verse six? In this you greatly rejoice. What is the last phrase in verse eight? Joy, inexpressible and full of glory.

Same word by the way, agaleazomai, agaleazomai, from an old Greek root agalo, which became agalomai, but it's a uniquely biblical word. The biblical writers had to come up with a word to express joy that was different than standard joy, different than kara, C-H-A-R-A, one of the other standard words for joy, rejoicing. Agaleazomai, and it is not a fool's joy.

It's not a dumb, blind faith joy. It is based on knowledge. Having not seen, you love.

Though you do not see him, you believe, and you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory. The joy can only be real if the knowledge is real. How can something be real and you can't see it? You can't weigh it, you can't measure it, you can't detect it, you can't show it to a scientist and get him to do a report on it.

How can it be real? And by the way, if it's not real, then like Paul says, we are of all men most miserable and our faith is in vain. It goes back to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and it hinges on it. This is why Peter mentions that back in verse three, begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So many science pooh-poohs and guffaws at the whole notion of the resurrection. These bunch of peasants in Israel fought some guy whose body was stolen out of the grave, rose from the dead and this whole religion was based on this lie and what a bunch of morons. And Paul addresses that squarely and he says, look, this whole thing does depend on the resurrection.

If Christ is not raised, you are yet in your sins. It doesn't matter that he was a good teacher. It doesn't matter that he set a great example.

It doesn't matter that he preached the Sermon on the Mount. It doesn't matter that a lot of people thought he was a wonderful guy and that he was misunderstood and his generation rejected him and what a shame. Paul says, if the resurrection didn't happen, the deal is off.

There is no redemption. There's no solution for sin. If Christ isn't raised, nobody else is gonna be raised.

The dead are dead indeed. You are dead in sins. You're dead at the end of your life.

And our hope is ridiculous. And we are of all men, most pitiable, most miserable. This is an important thing.

And it goes to the very heart of the conflict between belief and unbelief, between those who recognize and acknowledge God and those who don't. And the worldview that is espoused by those two groups. Human race falls into two categories and only two.

Those who believe in God, the creator God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ and those who don't. Allah is not the creator God and father of the Lord Jesus Christ who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The resurrection is central to God belief.

And despite the arguments I make about scientists, the actual proportion of believers who are going to be resurrected at the return of the Lord Jesus among scientists is very small as it is in the population in general. A lot of people think that they are believers, think that they're Christians and they're not. Actual belief requires belief in God the father, God the son, and the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Literal bodily resurrection from absolute and total death. If you do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you are not saved. And that entails and requires belief in God the father who raised Christ from the dead because a dead person cannot raise himself.

Death with all that it entails means you are unable to do anything. If you can do something, you're not dead. Christ did not raise himself from the dead.

He was raised from the dead by the father through the power of the spirit. This is the clear teaching of scripture consistently throughout the New Testament. It is critically important.

You do not have an inheritance in heaven. You do not have a salvation. You have nothing to be happy about now or in the future if Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead.

And this is not something that science can either affirm or deny. Nor is the existence of God. Nor is much else of spiritual truth.

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The carnal mind, the carnal man cannot enter into them. It is stated in scripture.

Scripture acknowledges and confirms this truth. There are two different kinds of truth. There's material mundane truth that you can put in a cup and measure, put on a scale and weigh.

And there is truth that is ineffable. It is immaterial. It is discernible only to human minds in the immaterial realm.

And to set those two in opposition and say, if I can't confirm it with science, it doesn't exist, is just silly. But Christians have caved. Christians have conceded the field and conceded the argument and said, well, I really can't deal at the scientific level because I believe in God and that's just faith.

Wrong. But this is an important discussion and we'll resume it when we come back from the break. It is important to recognize that God is visible and evidenced in material creation.

But ultimately all belief systems are just that, elements of faith. They are systems of faith. Secular humanism and atheism are systems of faith.

Every other religion is a system of faith. Christianity is a system of faith and the merit of faith is in the object. We'll pick this up when we come back from our break.