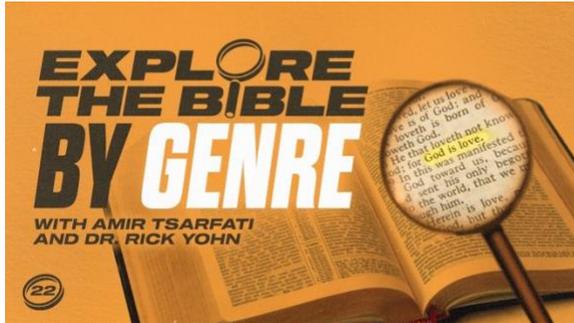




Amir Tsarfati

**Explore the Bible with Dr. Rick Yohn
Examining Literary Style**

<https://youtu.be/kTfeNijQbLQ?si=gVK0-l0q9X5v3kEz>



AMIR: Hey, Shalom everyone. I'm Amir Tsarfati.

And welcome back to *Explore the Bible* where Dr.

Rick Yohn and I are looking into the best ways to

cause you to sit, open the Bible and study it in the

best way possible. This program aims basically to

make it easy for every person to read, study, understand, enjoy and glean from the Word of God.

And together with us today, Pastor Dr. Rick Yohn. Shalom Rick, how are you, my friend?

RICK: Shalom, Amir, I am doing very, very well.

AMIR: Yeah, it's good to see you, my friend. You know, throughout these podcasts, you've

provided us amazing insights on the Bible and so many different things. And the last thing we did

was actually looking into basically studying the Bible by using biographies. And we both looked

at the life of John Mark in the New Testament and of Ezra, describing the Old Testament, Ezra the

priest. Are we continuing today with biographies or do you have something new for us?

RICK: Well, in a sense, I wish we were continuing in biographies because there are so many

biographies in the Bible. But I want to switch and get into another approach, a very interesting

approach that I myself have not used for many, many years. And the more I got into Scripture, I

thought, well, why don't I really focus on the various kinds of literature that we have in the

Scriptures? I mean, we have prophecy, we have narrative, we have historical information, we have

apocalyptic writings. And it's just really interesting, the more you see these different literary types,

the more exciting it is to see what the writer is trying to communicate to us. And so that's what we're going to do today.

AMIR: Wonderful. Well, before we do that, can I ask you to pray so we can...

RICK: ... I would love to.

AMIR: ... we can actually dive into this program with the blessing of the Almighty.

RICK: Lord God, what a privilege we have of getting into Your Word on a day to day basis to understand what it is You want us to know about Yourself, and about our lives and about the world around us, the commands that You have given us to preach the gospel, to teach the Word of God, to allow the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to Your truth, to Your heart, and Your mind, and Your plans for us and for the nation of Israel and for the nations throughout the world. So, we thank You for the Scriptures and we ask that You would enlighten us once again as we return to You, Holy Spirit, to instruct us. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

AMIR: Amen, amen, amen. So, as I said, we explore the Bible through biographies. And today, we, as from what I understand, we're going to explore it through different what we call literary types. Am I correct? Genres.

RICK: Correct.

AMIR: Yeah, and so as we do that... Yeah?

RICK: But as I was going to say, we are going to focus on the Epistles today because that is the easiest for us to understand. Most believers spend a lot of their time in the Epistles, and they don't realize the specific truths that we can get out of it as we look at this as a literary style.

AMIR: I see. And as we studied in the past programs, as we looked into Scriptures, we looked at the narrative materials in the Gospels, and we asked the same questions. We asked: "What's the story all about? What do I need to know about this story? And the third one is, what's the story

behind the story? And what kind of questions do we ask ourselves when we look at the Epistles? Because obviously, these are the Gospel questions we asked. But are there any new and different questions that we ask when we deal with the Epistles?

RICK: Well, the first thing we should do is to just make some observations in the Scriptures. And then we will go to those who, what, where, when, and why. But I would like to encourage our viewers to get out pen and paper again and start writing down some of these things to look for. And if you are the type of person who likes to color code, and I love to color code... In fact, I even



got some new... [Gesture: holding up a package of colored pens]

AMIR: ...Of course your Bible. Oh, there you go.

RICK: Yeah, these are nice colored pencils that I got. And you can use these to color in your Bible,

or you can—The other thing I do is I will take off of my computer the passage of Scripture and then print it, and then I can color code on my paper rather than in the Bible. But either way, there are things that we should look for whenever we open the Scriptures, and especially in the Epistles. For instance, look for words that are repeated. And the passage we're going to look at today, you'll find a number of words that are repeated. Also, there are some phrases that are repeated that are very, very important for us to look at. And so I think we should turn to our passage of Scripture and start looking at some things.

AMIR: All right, which passage do you want us to start today? I know that next time we're going to do a different one, but today we're looking at 2 Peter chapter 1.

RICK: 2 Peter chapter 1.

AMIR: All right.

RICK: Now the first thing you look at when you open the Bible is the context of that passage of Scripture. However, since we are 2 Peter chapter 1, there's not really much context to look at, because nothing comes before verse 1 in 2 Peter chapter 1.

AMIR: Yeah.

RICK: Right.

AMIR: All right, well, I guess let's dive into the beginning of the second epistle that Peter wrote. Allow me to read the first 11 verses.

RICK: Eleven verses, and then I'll read the others.

AMIR: All right, and I'm reading it from the New King James. Is that okay with you?

RICK: I allow that. [Laughter]

AMIR: Do you prefer that we read today from a different translation?

RICK: No, no, New King James is fine because that's what I'm going to speak from.

AMIR: There you go. All right, okay, so, [2 Peter 1:1–21] Greeting the Faithful, “¹ **Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. ⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor**

unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

RICK: “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; 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.” Wow.

AMIR: Amazing.

RICK: What a precious passage of Scripture.

AMIR: I often quote these last verses. I often quote them in my messages.

RICK: Yes, and I've heard those messages numerous times where you are quoting from that. But as we look at this first chapter, we now are going to see that wonderful passage of Scripture within its context. And as we look at epistles, one of the things you want to look for are some doctrinal truths, or some theological truths and in the Epistles, we have a lot of them, and we'll see them as we go along. But first of all, again, for our viewers, you may want to mark with colored crayons or pens or something like that, or you may just want to use your pencil and circle or underline something you're going to find. First of all, words that are repeated. There's one word that is repeated numerous times. I think our viewers should see that pretty quickly. And Amir, maybe there are some words that you see there that are found several times in this passage.

AMIR: Well, I mean, I see a lot of it... I mean, I see when he talks about knowledge, there's a word that I see repeated quite a few times.

RICK: Yeah, that's used like five different times. And it's not just knowledge. It's knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

AMIR: I see godliness...

RICK: Pardon?

AMIR: Godliness is another word I see often, repeated.

RICK: Oh, yeah. And when you think of the knowledge that we have of the Lord Jesus Christ, what a privilege that believers have concerning how God sees the world. And as we look at the world today, if we can look at the world through the eyes of our Lord, we see something much different than the world sees, because we have the *knowledge* of Him. And then we are told to add to our faith. And a lot of people think, well, faith, isn't that enough? No. Peter's saying, add to your faith. And he adds all these other virtues. And then he lets us know why we should add these other virtues. And when you look at...

AMIR: ...It's interesting because he's telling us that without them, we're short-sighted.

RICK: Definitely. We are short-sighted. And he says, if these things are yours and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful.

AMIR: Again, in the knowledge of our Lord.

RICK: Right. So you have a lot of believers today who have faith, but they haven't added to that faith over the years. They can only say, "I believe in Jesus Christ."

AMIR: Can you elaborate on that? You mean they heard, they believed, and that's it.

RICK: But they're not growing. They're like the seed that was sown, and it was sown among the thorns. And as that seed goes up, the thorns begin to choke that seed, the Word of God. And so they may continue to go to church Sunday after Sunday, but at the same time, they are not growing because they're not adding these other virtues to their own lives.

AMIR: Yeah. And definitely, I was looking at all those virtues over there. I could use extra dose of some of those myself. You know, I mean, if I'm honest, I could do better in some. It's not like, I think all of us could do better in a way. But definitely what you're saying is when you're a baby, when you come to faith, it's not where it stops. You need to continue, you need to grow, and to grow in the knowledge of the Messiah. And in order to grow, you need to add all these virtues. Now, how do we add those virtues?

RICK: Well, that's the work of the Holy Spirit as we are available to the Holy Spirit. He is the one who does that transforming in our lives. Now, we have the responsibility of getting into the Word. In fact, the Bible says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but continually be transformed by the renewing of your mind." So the more we are in the Scriptures, that gives us in our minds new perspective of who we are, and who He is, and what our responsibilities are.

AMIR: But I think the key thing is what you said is the work of the Holy Spirit. It's not like, today I will be a nicer person, and it will add some brownie points.

RICK: Exactly, and Amir, I am amazed how the Holy Spirit in the last couple of years has given me so much, brought so much transformation in my life. I mean, ...

AMIR: And how old are you?

RICK: ...Well, in another two months, I'll be 89 and I can't even believe that myself.

AMIR: So, you're turning soon 89 and yet you still see—I think it's very encouraging to hear that—you still see how the work of the Holy Spirit is evident in your life by ways of you still growing. It's not like you reach a point at a certain age where you're no longer growing. It's not like our body that gets to its peak at 20 something and then the free fall starts. In faith, it's always, obviously, if you are in the Word, if you are allowing the Spirit of God to work in you, even at the age of 89, you will continue to not only grow, but see and feel and live that growth. And it's evident to you, not only to the people around you.

RICK: Well, one of the things that the Lord has been doing in my life is give me such a desire of just being with people, connecting with people. And I just love doing that, sitting down and talking with people and just sharing what God has been doing in my life. I run two Bible studies each week and I am amazed as I am studying the Scriptures, how much more He is revealing to me, far more today than even when I was a pastor. So that's why Peter is saying, just keep on adding, adding these virtues, allowing the Holy Spirit to make those changes in your life. And that's exactly what He's doing in my life.

AMIR: What you just said it's very profound. You're basically saying the fact that I was a pastor doesn't mean that I reached the peak of my growth. It's in fact, I'm growing even more, and I see more things in the Word today than when I was—That's what you're saying, basically.

RICK: That’s exactly what I’m saying. I’m a different person today than when I was dean at the university, when I was developing some videos and things. I just love what God is doing in my life today. And He is adding these virtues. I’m not saying, “I’m going to try to be this or I’m going to try to...” No, I just keep on getting into the Word. He continues to transform my thinking, my understanding of Scripture, and I end up doing things that I’ve never done before.

AMIR: I understand.

RICK: It’s all the grace of God.

AMIR: Yeah. So when we look at this portion that we just read, both of us, you talked about repeated words, but are we also looking at the what, when, where, and why?

RICK: Yeah, very definitely. We can start now with the who. Who’s writing this?

AMIR: Okay.

RICK: Now, it sounds very easy.

AMIR: That’s true, of course.

RICK: Well, of course, Peter is writing this. But notice how Peter introduces himself.

AMIR: Yeah, bondservant.

RICK: A bondservant.

AMIR: And an apostle.

RICK: And an apostle. Now, as you look at those words, this is something else we should do. There are words that we just gloss over to get to the good stuff. But often, the things that we gloss over are the good stuff. Because when you look at the word, the term “bondservant”, there are two different words in the Greek. And you can do this on Blue Letter Bible or BibleHub.com, or even in the commentary, find out what are these words in the original language. And when you think of a bondservant, you got two Greek words, *doulos* and *diakonos*. [AMIR: Yeah.] Now, the *doulos*

is a servant who is totally committed to his master. He just turns over everything to his master. And the master is the one who is in charge of this *doulos*. And so, the *doulos* is looking to the master to provide for his needs. And whatever the master tells him to do, he willingly does it. On the other hand, the *diakonos*, we get our word deacon from that term. This *diakonos* serves the Lord because he wants to. But he still has control of his life. So Peter is saying, “I am so totally committed to my Lord Jesus Christ. I don’t own anything. I have turned my will over to Him. I am His slave. Willingly, I am His slave.” So his relationship with the Lord is a *doulos*. But his relationship with those to whom he is writing, he is an apostle. And apostles were those who have either been with Jesus and had a special relationship...

AMIR: ...And he makes sure it’s very clear that they were eyewitnesses. They were there physically.

RICK: That’s why I love the authority of the apostle Peter that we see in this passage of Scripture. Because he says he was an eyewitness. He was on that holy mountain when he saw the majestic glory of the Lord. And so as we look at this passage of Scripture, to start with, he is a servant, a bondservant to the Lord. And he is an apostle as far as the readers are concerned. He has the authority to say what he says because he has received that authority from the Lord.

AMIR: So we dealt with the who. Since we’re running almost out of time, let’s run through the what, where, and why.

RICK: Okay, the “what” deals with his purpose. What is his purpose in this passage of Scripture? And as he actually tells us, for this reason, for this reason, this is why I’m writing this to you. I don’t want you to be unproductive in your life. I want you to have a very productive life. I want you to have a successful life in the Lord. And so that phrase, for this very reason, is used twice in this passage of Scripture. So that’s the what.

AMIR: All right. And so verse 5 is “for this very reason” and then verse 12 “for this reason.” And now let’s move to the “where.”

RICK: Well, the “where” ... it doesn’t tell us in the passage of Scripture. And that’s when you have to go to commentaries and things as to where was he at this time.

AMIR: What do you do when it doesn’t tell you?

RICK: Well, you open up some commentaries to find out, or you can actually go on AI, which is another approach. But go to other resources to find out the “where” as well as the when.

AMIR: I understand that. But that where and when, if you can’t find it in that epistle, obviously you will somehow be able to find it in other Scriptures because we’re not going to AI because AI knows better than the Scripture. AI is looking for it in the Scripture. Am I right?

RICK: Yeah, but it also goes into other evangelical commentaries as to what they would say are just from historical information. What they would tell you where...

AMIR: I know but my point is that all of their commentaries are based on what they glean from Scriptures. And it’s not like there is a historian who saw—True, I agree. But in this case, it’s not like there is a historian who saw Peter personally somewhere and said, “This is where he was when he wrote it.”

RICK: Right, right. And when it comes to the where and the when [AMIR: “and the why”] and the why, you just have to go to some of these other resources. And also in your Bible, you should have some references either in the center column or on the sides. And just use those references to see if they will take you to answer those questions. But what I would like to do since we’re almost running out of time is to focus on one of the greatest evidences for the reliability of Scripture is found down here at the very end. And I think that’s what we should focus on.

AMIR: Yeah.

RICK: ...Because he says—Go ahead.

AMIR: It says, “²⁰... 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.” [2 Peter 1:20-21]

RICK: And who’s the one who’s saying it? He is the One who was up on the mountain, the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James and John were there, and they saw Jesus being transformed. And they heard the voice from heaven: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And because of that, he says, “¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed,...” [1 Peter 2:19] We saw, we were there.

AMIR: Yeah, we saw the confirmation of Scriptures that were of prophecy written in Scriptures that was obviously the Holy Spirit moving people to do that.

RICK: And it follows the same pattern that the Apostle John tells us in **1 John 1:1–2**. He says, “¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—”

AMIR: Beautiful.

RICK: The reliability of the Scripture is fantastic right in that passage of Scripture.

AMIR: Yeah, well, you know, Pastor Rick, Dr. Rick, what a fascinating time was flying so fast today. And I know we scratched the surface only. But next time, promise me that we’ll look at another portion of Scripture and look into that literary type, that genre of the Epistles and look more into the depth of it. I want to thank you...

RICK: ...We will.

AMIR: ...for being with us today. And I will thank everybody for watching today's *Explore the Bible*. Listen, it's not just sitting there and thinking, "Oh, it's going to come to me." We need to be active. We need to read. We need to ask the questions. We need to explore the Bible. And once we do, we get the answers. The Holy Spirit is moving. And we get revelation of so many things that we can be added to our faith that we can look forward to, ask for, and make sure that we have them so we're not short-sighted all the way to almost being blinded.

Thank you, Dr. Rick. Thank you, everybody. Remember, Dr. Rick has a website, rickyohnministries.org. You can also go to our website, beholdisrael.org for the *Explore the Bible* section and you'll see a beautiful presentation of our message today, as well as an option to write Dr. Rick a question related to our program today. Thank you again for watching. God bless you and Shalom.

* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.

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