

XVI. True Prophecy

April 12/14/15, 2021

2 Peter 1:12-21

Aim: To recognize the authority of Scripture is derived from the Holy Spirit's superintendence of its human authors, making it infallible, reliable, and worthy of our repeated study and application.

A. Testament of Peter—The Remembered Word (2 Peter 1:12-15)

Moo: This paragraph is transitional. Peter has introduced the letter (1:1-2) and its central purpose (vv. 3-11). In verses 16-21, he will begin to explore the specific issues that have led him to write this letter—the erroneous ideas and practices of certain so-called Christians. But before Peter launches into these specifics, he does two things: 1) he commends his readers for their spiritual maturity; and 2) he lets them know that he writes to them as one who himself is near death (vv. 13-15). Both points reinforce the strength of his appeal. The first removes the possibility that his readers might be offended by his warnings, while the second gives his words a ‘death-bed’ earnestness that reinforces the seriousness of what he is saying.

1. Peter's Testament

Moo: Many scholars classify [2 Peter] as a ‘testament or at least think that it has many of the characteristics of a testament.... A ‘testament’ (from Latin *testamentum*) refers to the arrangements one makes for the disposition of one's property at death. The word has then been applied by modern scholars to a book, or part of a book, in which a person makes a final speech from his or her deathbed (cp. Gen. 48:8-49:27).... It was particularly during the intertestamental period that Jews began using this form extensively (Pseudepigrapha).... Typical features of these testaments are: 1) the speaker knows (sometimes by prophecy) that he is about to die. 2) The speaker gathers around him his children or a similar audience. 3) The speaker often impresses on his audience the need for his hearers to remember his teaching and example. 4) The speaker makes predictions of the future. 5) The speaker gives moral exhortations. Each of these features is present in 2 Peter. Peter announces that he is near death (1:12-15); he addresses an audience that is close to him; he asks his hearers to remember his example and teaching (1:12-15; cp. 3:1-2); he predicts the future (cp. 2:1-4; 3:3); he issues moral exhortations (throughout the letter). We should not therefore, be surprised that scholars identify 2 Peter as a testament.

Helm: The letter before us gives some indication that we are reading Peter's farewell address—his final declaration and testament.... While the parallels between 2 Peter and other first-century final testaments are not exact, there are enough similarities to allow us to think of the letter in this way.... Peter has come to terms with the idea that his days on earth are receding. Heaven will soon be opened to him. Knowing that the church couldn't possibly make it to his bedside, Peter, ever the productive one, picks up his pen in an effort to put his final testament down on paper.

Moo: There is however, one important difference between 2 Peter and these Jewish testaments. As the title of these books indicate, they claim to be the farewell discourses of well-known figures in Israel's history. Yet, as all recognize, they were written from about 200 BC to about 300 AD. In other words, the testaments are decidedly pseudonymous, written by an unknown author in the name of a spiritual hero from Israel's past. It is precisely because 2 Peter resembles

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these testaments that many scholars have concluded it, too, must be pseudonymous. But unlike these Jewish testaments, there can only be a very short period of time between Peter's lifetime and any reasonable date for this letter. Moreover, 2 Peter, as its introduction and conclusion make clear is, in its basic literary form, a letter, written to a specific audience facing a specific set of circumstances. These factors, along with others we enumerated in the introduction, make it unlikely that 2 Peter is pseudonymous.

Moo: We can surmise that Peter deliberately chose to write in this literary style as one that was most appropriate for his circumstances (facing imminent death) and purposes (to warn and exhort his readers). What we have, in fact, is a biblical author adapting a form popular in his own culture and 'baptizing' it in the service of the gospel.

2. Peter's Intent (1:12)

¹²*Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.*

a) Remind (1:12a)

¹²*Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities...*

Moo: The *so* at the beginning of verse 12 creates a connection between verses 3-11 and verse 12-15. Peter seems to suggest that it is because the believers' ultimate reward (v. 11) depends on earnestly striving for godliness (vv. 5-9) that he will continue to *remind* them of *these things*. The theme of reminding frames this message, being found again at its conclusion: '...you will always be able to remember these things' (v. 15b). Peter realizes that what he is saying to these Christians is not new.... It is somewhat surprising that he speaks of this reminding as taking place in the future (*will...remind*). However, as he does again at the end of the paragraph, Peter probably refers to the permanent effect he hopes his words in this letter will have.

Gardner: We can see immediately what Peter is concerned to do. In view of his death, he wants his readers to hold on to the whole gospel that he has preached to them during his lifetime. He repeats three times (v. 12, v. 13, v. 15) that he will remind them of these truths. Indeed this call to remember is at the heart of the letter (see also 3:1 and 3:2).

MacArthur: *Therefore* refers back to the greatness of salvation (1:1-4) and the blessedness of assurance (1:5-11), themes so crucial they must never be forgotten.... When Peter used the future tense *will always be ready*, he was first indicating that he would *remind* his listeners of truth whenever given the opportunity, including when writing this Spirit-filled epistle. But he also anticipated all who, in the ages to come, would read this letter and be reminds of the great *things* God gave him to say.

Helm: In disclosing the nearness of his death, Peter not only underlines the urgency of the hour and, therefore, the importance of his words, but he reveals the method by which he would have us learn. He teaches by way of *reminder*. In fact, in these four brief verses he puts his favorite pedagogical term into play no fewer than three times.... 'I am writing to *remind* you...by way of *reminder*...so that...you may be able...to *recall* these things' (vv. 12, 13, 15). Peter's commitment to this method of teaching is so thoroughgoing that he extends it to the entire letter (cp. 3:1, 2).... What are we to make of this if not that finishing well requires returning to things we have already learned.... We can never outgrow the good news that Jesus came to make substitution for sin and that this teaching—received by faith—makes demands upon us to live

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upright, changed, and holy lives. So remember that, according to Peter, nothing new will have the power to establish us in the faith.

b) Commend (1:12b)

...though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.

Moo: Not only have his readers heard already about the importance of pursuing godliness, they have also been obedient to the exhortation. As Peter puts it, they are *firmly established in the truth*. Yet Peter knows well how prone believers are to lose the fine edge of their zeal for godliness, for the world keeps trying to ‘squeeze us into its mold (cp. Rom. 12:2 LBP), and false Christians arise to propagate their own brand of faith without fervor.

Gardner: This is not by any means new information for his readers. Peter insists that the reminder of *these things* is given *even though you may know them and are firmly established in the truth*. They already knew all that he had spoken of in verses 3-11. They knew of Christ’s gracious provision. They knew they had been forgiven and saved. They knew that a response was required in the form of a godly life. They knew they had Christ’s power within to help them in day to day life. And they knew of the rich welcome and eternal kingdom that awaited them. All of this was standard gospel teaching and these Christians both knew the truth of the teaching and were also firmly established in it. Yet they still needed ‘reminding.’ Peter is not so much concerned about whether they remember the facts of the faith. His concern is that these facts continue to make a difference in their lives as they live for Christ... In Christian life there is a continual need to ‘remember’ in this way. That’s why Peter says *always* here in verse 12 and ‘at all times’ in verse 15 (NIV, ‘always’). Christians may not forget the factual teaching about Christ’s death, but all of us can so easily forget the implications of that message for how we live and how we are. No Christian has the right to ‘forget’ (v. 9) the gospel core of Christ’s gracious work for us. The more we remember all that Christ has done for us and continues to do for us, then the better we will live for Him and the more we will seek to respond in love and obedience.

MacArthur: Peter was a kind shepherd who understood and exhibited sensitivity for his flock...when he acknowledged that his readers *already* possessed godly virtue. He was encouraging, not condescending or indifferent to their devotion to Christ (cp. 1 Pe. 5:2-3). The recipients of this letter undoubtedly had heard other inspired New Testament letters read and preached (cp. 3:15-16), so they knew and believed *the truth*, so as to be *established* in it. The verb rendered *established* (*stērizō*), meaning ‘to firmly establish,’ or ‘to strengthen,’ is a perfect passive participle indicating a settled condition. They had given evidence by their faithfulness that the true gospel was strongly *present with* them. Peter affirmed them without doubt as genuine, maturing believers.

Sproul: Peter’s readers know the things he is writing about, and not only do they know them, but they are also firmly established in them. Yet Peter finds it necessary to be repetitive, to remind people of the truths of which they are already aware... We learn through repetition; that is what Peter is saying here. If he failed to repeat what his readers had already learned, he would be guilty of negligence. He reminds his readers of what they already know because the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak, and no sooner do we learn something about the things of God than we become at ease in Zion. We begin to rest on our laurels and lose any sense of urgency about pressing forward into the kingdom of God. Perhaps the Apostle was thinking of his own pathetic experience. Surely he never forgot the ignominy of his denial of Jesus, the shame that came with it after he had declared, shortly after the transfiguration, that he would never deny Christ. No

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sooner had he made that emphatic claim than that is exactly what he did—not once, not twice, but three times.

Helm: This is an interesting sentence. On the one hand, he claims that his readers already *know...and are established*. Yet, on the other hand, if their knowledge and footing in the truth was firmly fixed, there would be no need to remind them of anything. By embedding his intention within a threefold call to remember, we can be assured that he desires us to be more firmly rooted. The word translated ‘established’ here can also mean to *stabilize* or *strengthen*. In this way, Peter wants his readers to progress in the gospel from strength to strength.

3. Peter’s Tent (1:13-15)

¹³*I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder,* ¹⁴*since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.* ¹⁵*And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.*

a) Current Life (1:13)

¹³*I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder...*

(1) Tent (1:13a)

¹³*I think it right, as long as I am in this body...*

Moo: *Tent of the body* is the NIV’s paraphrase of what in Greek is a single word: *skēnōma*, ‘tent.’ The NIV undoubtedly intends that the word ‘body’ defines ‘tent’; this tent, that is this body of mine. The Greek word has this metaphorical significance, particularly when an author wants to distinguish the (physical) body from the soul, or spirit, of a person. (The Greek word occurs elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 7:56, where it has a literal significance, referring to the desert ‘tabernacle’ of the Israelites.). Paul, for instance uses a related term in a similar context: ‘Now we know that if the earthly tent [*skēnos*] we live in is destroyed, we have a building for God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.... For while we are in this tent, we groan...’ (2 Cor. 5:1, 4a). Thus, it is an appropriate word for Peter to use in this context (he also uses it in v, 14, although NIV simply translates ‘it’), since he is thinking of his death, when he will *put aside* his (earthly) body.

Gardner: he regards his life as being *in the tent of this body*. The physical body is but one part of our existence before God and it is temporary. Peter is not saying it is insignificant because of that, nor is he looking forward to a better spiritual state in which he will exist as a disembodied spirit. He of all people has seen the risen Lord Jesus and knows that a *real*, though different body awaits us at the *bodily* resurrection. Rather, here he is emphasizing the fact that this life is temporary and passing. He is not so tied to this world and to its possessions that he cannot bear the thought of passing on.

MacArthur: His devotion as a shepherd made him faithful to his people because he was loyal to his Lord in doing what was *right, as long as* he was *in this earthly dwelling*. The term rendered *earthly dwelling* (*skēnōma*) is the word for ‘tent,’ drawing from the familiar image of Middle Eastern nomads living in portable tents. Peter, too, was in a temporary house and knew that one day God would fold up that tent to free his eternal soul to enter heaven.

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(2) Reminder (1:13b)

...to stir you up by way of reminder...

MacArthur: As long as God gave him earthly life, Peter would be faithful *to stir up* those the Lord had put in his life *by way of reminder*. *To stir you up* is a compound form of the verb *diegeirō*, meaning ‘to arouse completely,’ or ‘to thoroughly awaken’ from lethargy, drowsiness, or sleep. Nothing short of spiritual alertness would satisfy this loyal pastor.... That word may have caused Peter to recall his own ability to stay awake in Gethsemane the night before Jesus’ death (Mt. 26:36-46). The godly shepherd stimulates his flock primarily *by way of reminder*. He consistently and tirelessly keeps teaching and reviewing all the major themes, doctrines, and commands of Scripture. No matter how much divine truth believers have heard or how spiritually mature they are, they still need reminders to apply that truth. Wanting them to remember, the true shepherd constantly feeds his flock spiritual food in all its scriptural dress. Realizing that familiarity can breed contempt, he employs all the passages on all the themes, so there is a freshness instead of familiarity.

Sproul: The word translated *stir you up* was used when someone had to be roused from sleep. In our slumber we are unconscious of holy things.... Peter is saying that so long as he is alive, he will continue to issue wake-up calls. He knows he needs to rouse his readers from slumber and call them to vigilance in working out their faith.

b) *Impending Death (1:14)*

¹⁴*...since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.*

Moo: But what Peter wants especially to stress in this paragraph is that the time available to him to continue his ministry of exhortation is limited. He knows he will soon be putting aside his earthly body. How does he know this? Because *our Lord Jesus Christ has made it clear to me*. Commentators speculate about when and how Christ mentioned this to Peter. Some think he must have communicated it to Peter in a prophecy or vision that is no longer available to us.... It is...simplest to think that Peter refers to the prophecy about his death that we find at the end of John’s gospel. Jesus, after forcing Peter three times to assert his love for Him, says to him: “I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God’ (Jn. 21:18-19a). Jesus’ words refer to Peter’s death by crucifixion as a martyr. (‘Stretching out the hands’ probably refers to the custom whereby condemned prisoners were forced to carry the horizontal piece of the cross to the place of execution.) Some commentators do not think Peter can have this prophecy in mind, since it refers only vaguely to Peter’s death as an old man. And how could he know from this statement that death was imminent now? But we can surmise that Peter found himself in a situation where persecution had arisen and that he had drawn the conclusion that the Lord’s prophecy about his death was shortly to be realized. Moreover, the Greek word that connects Peter’s assertion about his imminent death and the reference to Christ (*kathos*) is one that normally indicates a correspondence (‘just as’) rather than a cause (‘because’). So Peter may simply be noting that his expectation of death is in keeping with Jesus’ prediction about his end.

Gardner: *...as long as I live in the tent of the body* (v. 13) does not indicate to us how close Peter’s death was, but obviously he was awaiting it soon (*I will soon put it aside*). Interestingly,

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he reminds his readers that his death was prophesied by the Lord Himself. Perhaps some of the false teachers may have thought that Peter's impending death showed his lack of spirituality or a lack of real power that would enable him to escape. But Peter knows there are no promises to any Christians, even apostles, that they will not suffer in this world. Some will even be called upon to give their lives for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter was one of those and Jesus had mentioned it shortly after His resurrection at the end of John's Gospel. Jesus pushed Peter to express his love for Him. Three times recalling Peter's earlier denials of Jesus, Jesus had asked whether Peter loved Him. Peter had passionately reaffirmed his love for Jesus. Then Jesus added [prophecy of Peter's death, Jn. 21:18].... The reference to Peter's hands being 'stretched out' probably refers to death by crucifixion, but this is not certain. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down because he would not allow them to crucify him in the same way as the Lord had been crucified. The evidence we have for this tradition, though, is late and we should not put much store by it. The important thing for us as we seek to understand what Peter was teaching, and his purpose in doing so, is to see that he knew he would shortly die and that this would be a fulfillment of the Lord's own prophecy to him.

MacArthur: He wrote *knowing* for certain *that the laying aside* of his *earthly dwelling* was *imminent*. Clearly, Peter believed that his death was near. He described death in the analogy of *laying aside* his tent, the same imagery Paul used in his second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:1-2).... The term *imminent* carried a dual meaning in that it can denote 'soon,' or 'swift.' Perhaps it conveys both here. When he wrote this he was already in his seventies; thus it was reasonable for Peter to expect that his death was not far off. He also knew that his death would be sudden or swift, *as also...Christ...made clear to me*. The Lord Jesus had clearly indicated to the apostle that his death would be rather sudden, about forty years before, during Peter's restoration and recommissioning, between the Lord's resurrection and ascension (Jn. 21:18-19).... Jesus' words were a prediction of Peter's martyrdom. That He predicted Peter would be executed, specifically by crucifixion, is evidence by the expression 'you will stretch out your hands.' So Peter had lived another four decades or more, being faithful to feed the Lord's sheep, knowing all the while that at any moment his life could swiftly end. (Tradition—recorded by Eusebius [*Ecclesiastical History*, 3:1, 30]—attests that he was crucified, and upside down at his request because he felt unworthy to die exactly as Christ had died.)

Sproul: In this passage, as the Apostle Paul did in his second letter to his beloved Timothy, Peter announces his imminent departure from the world. He realizes that his days are growing short; his death is at hand. He had been ministering for many years, yet now the urgency is heightened because he is about to die. Peter refers to his body not as a house but as a tent.... Living in tents is normally not how we choose to live, but the metaphor indicates that the body that houses our soul is not permanent but transient. Peter is saying that it is time for him to pull up the stakes and move. He did not see himself passing out of existence but moving from one place to another. He was about to pack up his tent and go home.

c) *After Departure (1:15)*

¹⁵*And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.*

Moo: Faced with imminent death, then, Peter makes a last appeal to his readers. But he trusts that the force of this appeal will go on *after* [his] *departure*. (*Departure* translates the Greek word *exodos*, which Luke uses to describe Jesus' death in his Transfiguration narrative (Lk. 9:31). Since Peter goes on in this context to describe the Transfiguration, some think he alludes to this

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text. But quite apart from the problem of dating, the word is too common to make the allusion probable.) How does he expected this to happen. He may be referring to the Gospel of Mark, since reliable tradition has it that Mark wrote down Peter's preaching. Or Peter may be thinking of additional teaching he is hoping to give them, either through his personal presence or through another letter. But it is best to think that he has in view the letter of 2 Peter itself. By recording his exhortations and warnings in written form, Peter hopes that what he has said will have an enduring ministry in the lives of these Christians.

Gardner: To his readers, and to us across the centuries, who live so long after his *departure*, Peter says remember *these things*. Peter may not have had long to live, but in writing his epistle he achieved his objective of ensuring people did indeed 'remember' and thus continued in future generations to live godly lives for Christ in the face of all kinds of persecutions and false teaching.

MacArthur: In view of the brevity of his life and ministry, Peter was relentlessly *diligent* to remind believers of the truth, so *that at any time after his departure*, they would *be able to call these things to mind*. There is no reason to restrict his words, *these things*, to what he wrote just prior (vv. 1-11), as some do. All that is in this letter is part of essential doctrine, to be imbedded unforgettably in believer's minds. The apostle used the term *departure* (*exodos*) to refer to his death because the word connotes the leaving from one place (earth) to go to another (heaven)—the exodus that every believer will enjoy (1 Cor. 15:50-57; Heb. 4:9-10). Peter, like Paul (Acts 20:24), was not concerned that his audience remember him or his death, but that they would remember the truth he taught them.

Sproul: Again Peter reminds his readers of the things of God and the truths of the gospel. Some commentators think that the reminder to which Peter refers here is this very epistle. When the Apostle Paul was removed from active ministry and thrown into prison, he could do little but write letters. Yet the greatest impact he made on the world was not through his missionary journeys but through his pen. Maybe Peter was thinking about that here, and if so, he was saying that the purpose of this epistle was to leave them a reminder of his teaching after he was gone.

B. Transfiguration of Christ—The Spoken Word (2 Peter 1:16-18)

Moo: In 1:12-15, Peter has underscored the importance of what he had to say by characterizing this letter as a sort of last will and testament. Peter wants to leave his readers a last—and lasting—'reminder' of what he has taught. Fittingly, then, in verses 16-21 he turns to the doctrinal issue he thinks his readers are most in need of remembering in their present circumstances: the return of Christ in glory and judgment at the end of history. Peter highlights this matter by returning to it again at the end of the body of the letter (3:1-13), thereby creating a frame around the central part of the letter.

Moo: Why does Peter focus so narrowly on this one doctrinal point while ignoring or saying little about matters such as Christ's atoning death, His victorious resurrection, and the work of the Holy Spirit? Clearly, because the false teachers were attacking Christian truth at precisely this point. Peter makes this clear in 3:3-4..... We do not know precisely why, or on what basis, the false teachers were denying the truth of Christ's return.... [But] the false teacher's eschatological skepticism was undoubtedly tied to their immoral lifestyle. With no prospect of future judgment, one did not have to worry much about living a righteous life.

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Moo: Peter attacks this eschatological skepticism by reaffirming ‘the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ’ and by citing two reasons why Christians can be sure that this coming will take place: 1) the eyewitness testimony of himself and other apostles who had seen the transfiguration of Jesus (vv. 16-18); and 2) the reliability of the prophecies of Scripture (vv. 19-21).

Helm: With dominical knowledge that the apostolic era was drawing to a close, and an awareness that he was writing this letter to establish the church after his impending death, we might rightly expect Peter to interact with the succession plan during this time when he asks the faithful to contemplate the implications of his departure. Put simply, in 1:16-21 we expect to learn what it will look like to follow in the apostolic way long after the great apostle has died. In light of this, verses 16-21 are fascinating, both for what they tell us as well as what they leave unsaid. There is not a word here that even hints that Peter intends for us to follow in the way of apostolic succession. No other person or plan is put forward. Rather, in response to an *accusation*, Peter advances an intricate *argument* by elevating the Scriptures above everything else. A person’s willingness to submit himself or herself to the authority and teachings of the Bible alone is held up by Peter as the unique, powerful, and exalted way for all those following in the apostolic faith.

1. Eyewitnesses (1:16)

¹⁶*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

Moo: Grammatically, the main assertion in verse 16 is that *we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Significantly, Peter shifts from the first singular person he used in verse 12-15 (*I will remind you...I think it right...I will make every effort*) to the first person plural in verses 16-18 (*we told you...we were eyewitnesses...we ourselves heard this voice...when we were with Him*). This *we* must refer to Peter and the other apostles, since it was only they who were eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration. Peter’s point is that the fact of Christ’s transfiguration, and thus also the belief that He will come again, rests on the testimony of several apostolic eyewitnesses.

Gardner: Peter now returns to this most important aspect of Christian teaching: our Lord’s coming in glory. The way he tackles the subject here and then returns to it at greater length at the end of the epistle suggests that it was one of the doctrines criticized by or misrepresented by the false teachers. Indeed, Peter’s move at this point from ‘I’ to ‘we’ suggests he was confronting a full blown attack on this aspect of apostolic teaching.

a) Myths (1:16a)

¹⁶*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths...*

Moo: The apostles made known the return of Christ not in following *clearly invented stories*, but in being *eyewitnesses of His majesty*. *Stories* translates the Greek word *mythos* (from which we get ‘myth’). This Greek word had a broad range of meaning, but the meaning most relevant to our verse is the sense ‘fictional account, fable.’ Jewish authors used the word with this meaning to depict pagan fictions about the creation of the world and of the behavior of the gods. Enhancing this meaning here is Peter’s addition of the modifier *sesophismenois*, ‘cleverly invented,’ ‘deceitfully concocted.’ The closest biblical parallel to the phrase comes in Paul’s references in the Pastoral Letters to ‘myths and endless genealogies’ (1 Tim. 1:4) and to ‘myths

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and old wives' tales' (1 Tim. 4:7; cp. also 2 Tim. 4:4 and Titus 1:14). Peter may have been led to deny that the apostles followed such clever fables in proclaiming the return of Christ in order to distinguish their teaching from the teaching of the heretics. But it is more likely that his denial came because the false teachers were accusing the apostles of inventing the whole idea of the Parousia and the judgment it would bring.

Gardner: Perhaps the false teachers were so influenced by their pagan Greek-thinking environment that they objected to teachings about Christ's glorious Coming, and judgment after death, and refused to accept the idea of divine sovereignty in history. For example, Epicureans were noted for their emphasis on 'freedom' in which they affirmed that human sensations, preconceptions, and feelings were the standard of truth, and that the end of all action was to be free from pain and fear. Teachers of this school of thought were particularly scathing in their attack on what they regarded as 'myths,' specially 'myths' that concerned future worlds and judgment. Although we cannot be certain that this was what was being taught by the false teachers, it seems that something of the sort was probably causing the serious problem Peter confronts, for he insists that what he and the apostles taught were not *stories* ('myths' in Greek). And later in chapter 2, he spends some time insisting that God will indeed return to judge in the future as he has judged in the past. However, here in chapter 1 Peter vehemently insists on the genuine nature of the original apostolic gospel concerning Christ's return.

MacArthur: For is the causal term linking this passage to the previous one and explaining why Peter reminded his hearers of the truth. He was absolutely convinced of the truth he taught because he had personally experienced it. He also spoke for the other apostles and New Testament authors when he asserted, *we did not follow cleverly devised tales*. All of them received supernatural revelation (Jn. 1:51; 1 Jn. 1:1-3) verifying that what they were taught and were subsequently preaching was the truth. Peter's opening assertion answers the accusation of his critics that he taught carefully crafted lies only to attract gullible followers and make money off them. False religious teachers commonly sought the power and popularity that brought not only money (cp. Mic. 3:11), but also sexual favors (cp. Jer. 23:14). However, Peter refuted his accusers by saying he and his fellow apostles *did not follow* the deceptive approach of false teachers. *Cleverly devised* stems from *sophizō* ('to make wise') and connotes sophisticated, subtly concocted ideas. The expression also refers to anything clandestine or deceitful.... *Tales* (*muthos*, from which the English *myth* derives) refers to legendary stories of gods and heroic figures participating in miraculous events and performing extraordinary feats. Those tales characterized pagan mythology and its worldview. Paul used *muthos*, much as Peter did, to refer to the lies, fabrications, and deceptions of all false teachers (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:14).

Sproul: Here Peter makes an important declaration. He wants to explain what his message is *not* and where it has *not* come from before he speaks about what it is and where it has come from.... Here Peter strongly negates any hint that the apostolic message is rooted in mythology.

Helm: The text opens with Peter defending his gospel against the accusation that his teaching, along with that of the other apostles, followed the stuff of fairy tales.... A careful reading of this verse discloses that some people in the early church were willing to dismiss *certain aspects* of the apostles' teaching as outdated and antiquated. The challenged teaching, that which was being called fable, or myth to be more exact, pertained to *the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

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b) Message (1:16b)

...when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Moo: The power and coming can, of course, refer to two distinct things: Christ's inherent power and His coming again in glory. But the two words probably form a hendiadys; that is, together they refer to a single entity: Christ's 'coming in power' (cp. TEV: 'mighty coming').... The word *coming* is used throughout the New Testament as almost a technical term for Christ's return in glory—so much so that the underlying Greek word, *Parousia*, has passed into our theological vocabulary. The word can mean simply 'presence' (as it does at least three times in the New Testament: 2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12; 2 Th. 2:9), but it usually means 'arrival' or 'coming.' The Greeks used the word to refer to the special 'presence' or even 'coming' of a God.... Especially significant perhaps for the New Testament use of the word is the application of *Parousia* among the Greeks to the official visit of a ruler. Hence, as in verse 16 here, the word occurs seventeen times in the New Testament to refer to Christ's return in glory.

Gardner: First, we need to note that Peter makes it clear the apostles did not differ in what they taught as 'Gospel.' As a group they had taught what Peter had just summarized and they had all taught the truth of Christ's coming. Secondly, they had taught of *the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Unlike the false teachers who really were making up stories to lead people into heresy, the apostles truthfully and accurately recounted the teachings of Jesus. This included relating the *power* of Christ's glorious Coming.

MacArthur: Peter flatly denied that he was drawing upon such fictitious stories when he *made known* his teaching. Undoubtedly, false teachers had told his readers that Christian faith and doctrine was just another set of myths and fables. *Made known* (*gnōrizō*) is often used in the New Testament to speak of imparting new revelation. In this instance, the revelation concerned *the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*—His second coming in glory and dominion. Apparently the false teachers were not only undermining Peter's teaching in general, but also specifically denying what he said about the return of Christ. Peter's reference to that line of attack later in this letter (3:3-4) confirms that fact. Because Peter connected the phrase *power and coming* with the appearance of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, it is a sure indicator that he referred to His return (cp. Mt. 24:30; 25:31; Rev. 19:11-16). The description certainly does not fit His first coming in meekness and humility (cp. Lk. 2:11-12; Rom. 1:3; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-7). *Coming* is the familiar New Testament word *Parousia*, which also means 'appearing' or 'arrival.' The term, whenever used in the New Testament of Jesus Christ, always refers to His return.

Helm: The word translated *coming* is an important one. It must refer here to Jesus' Second Coming and not to His first—for words have meaning in context, and the context of 2 Peter is eschatological throughout. To confirm this, simply look ahead to 3:4 (cp. 3:11-12).... In view of this, the accusation against Peter's teaching at the close of his life is as clear as a light shining in a dark place. Other more enlightened teachers have arrived on the church scene, and they have begun to question, 'What is all this dark talk about Jesus coming again to judge the living and the dead? Certainly this must be false. After all, the apostles themselves are all passing away before our very eyes, and there is no sign of His return.' This charge against Peter was truly insidious.... Know this: their rejection of the Second Coming had more to do with their desire to dismiss the notion that everyone will be held personally accountable for moral and ethical infidelity than for anything else.... This false teaching rests upon the false premise that insists because God is love, God will forgive all vices that were once thought of as incompatible with godly virtue. In essence, the doctrine of the Second Coming was jettisoned because people want

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to secure the ability to live as they please.... To this charge, Peter would have his readers know that everything he taught, including his views on the Second Coming of Christ in judgment, rested not on fable or fairy tale but on the strength of the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the prophetic discourses that confirmed the veracity of his personal experience.

c) *Majesty (1:16c)*

...but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Moo: But Peter is not content simply to deny that the apostles' teaching about Christ's return was built on a myth; he asserts, positively, that the teaching is the direct product of eyewitness testimony. *Eyewitnesses* may be another of those distinctly Hellenistic religious words of which Peter is so fond, for it was used in his day to describe a certain kind of initiate into the mystery religions. But the word is also used quite generally, so we cannot be sure of this particular nuance. Peter claims, with others, to have been *eyewitnesses of his* [that is, the Lord Jesus Christ's] *majesty*. *Majesty* translates a word (*megaleiotes*) that has divine associations; and here, as the following two verse show, the reference is specifically to Christ's glorious appearance at the time of the Transfiguration.

Gardner: Interestingly, Peter now recalls the Transfiguration to argue that the final revelation of Christ in glory has the backing of apostolic eye-witness. This great event had left a lasting impression upon him. This was the time when he and James and John saw Jesus 'transfigured.' ... There had been no greater evidence during Jesus' whole lifetime of both His power and His majesty than this episode recounted for us in Matthew 17:1-8; Mark. 9:2-8; and Luke 9:28-36.

MacArthur: *Eyewitnesses* (*epoptai*) originally meant 'generally observes' or 'spectators,' but over the years, its meaning evolved. Barclay explains: 'In the Greek usage of Peter's day this was a technical word.... Mystery Religions were all of the nature of passion plays, in which the story of a god who lived, suffered, died, and rose again, never to die again, was played out. It was only after a long course of instruction and preparation that the worshipper was finally allowed to be present at the passion play, and to be offered the experience of becoming one with the dying and rising God. When he reached the stage of being allowed to attend the actual passion play, he was an initiate, and the technical word to describe him was in fact *epoptēs*; he was a prepared and privileged eye-witness of the experiences of God.' With that usage in mind, it is clear that Peter saw himself and his fellow apostles as preeminently privileged spectators who had reached the highest and truest level of spiritual experience in being with Christ. Peter had in mind one event in particular that dramatically previewed Christ's coming *majesty*. *Majesty* (*megaleiotēs*), which can also be translated 'splendor,' 'grandeur,' or 'magnificence,' is elsewhere in the New Testament used to identify 'the greatness of God' (Lk. 9:43).

Sproul: Peter was not ready to put off his mortal tent for a myth but for that which he had witnessed.

Helm: While Peter links his teaching on Christ's coming judgment to what he *sees* and *hears*, he will go on, and this is most important, to submit the entire fair-tale-like existential experience to that which he *reads* in the prophets. For Peter, that word alone is most sure. Thus, the prophetic voice written down in the Scripture and independent of His own experience will be enough to support his teaching on the final judgment. At first blush, though, it does appear that Peter attempts to support himself against his accusers strictly on the basis of what he sees and hears.... Four times in these brief verses (vv. 16b-18), Peter writes about what he saw and heard. The personal experience he recounts is the Transfiguration event (see Mt. 17, Mk, 9, and Lk. 9).

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2. Earwitnesses (1:17-18)

¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

a) Honor and Glory (1:17a)

¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father...

Moo: It was on that occasion [the Transfiguration], as Peter puts it, that Christ *received honor and glory from God the Father*. *Honor* (*timē*) and *glory* (*doxa*) may simply form an hendiadys to denote the majesty of Christ’s appearance. But the terms may have specific individual significance, *honor* referring to exalted status and *glory* to Christ’s splendid appearance. For on that occasion, the Gospel writers tell us, Christ’s ‘face was changed’ (Lk. 9:29), shining ‘like the sun’ (Mt. 17:2), and his ‘clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them’ (Mk. 9:3; cp. Mt. 17:2; Lk. 9:29). Bright, shining, or white clothing often symbolizes purity and victory and is associated in Jewish apocalyptic with the coming of Messiah. Jesus’s shining face reminds us inevitably of the glow on Moses’ face after he had been with the Lord on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:29-30). Unlike Moses’ face, however, which only reflected the glory of God, Christ’s face shone with the glory that was intrinsic to Him as both Messiah and God.

Gardner: The words *honor* and *glory* naturally hang together. *Glory* is a word that is specially linked with Christ’s return in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But right back in Psalm 8:5 the two words (‘honor’ and ‘glory’) are seen together in a Messianic Psalm emphasizing how man has been made ruler over all and given authority. That psalm is taken up and applied to Christ in Hebrews 2:7-9 who now has all authority and is crowned with ‘glory and honor.’ What Peter is thus stressing is that the words of the Father helped the apostles see the kingly divine rule of Christ which was yet to come.

MacArthur: Jesus had predicted that some of His apostles would see the manifestation of His divine greatness (Mt. 16:28; cp. Lk. 9:27)... God the Father was present at that special event, at which Christ *received honor* (*time*, ‘exalted status’) *and glory* (*doxa*, ‘radiant splendor’) from Him. The first term gives Jesus the highest respect and recognition, and the second accords divine, unparalleled brightness to Him.

Sproul: On the occasion of the transfiguration, Jesus had been preparing His disciples to return to Jerusalem, where Jesus was to be handed over and killed. He went aside with his inner group of the disciples—Peter, James, and John—and suddenly He was transfigured in front of them. The Greek word is *metamorphosis*. A profound change instantly came over the countenance of Jesus. His face became radiant, as bright as the sun, and His clothes were whiter than any fuller or clothes washer could make them. Before their very eyes they saw this radiance of divine glory shining from Christ. The Incarnation was, in a real sense, a veil of the divine nature of Christ... When Moses had that momentary view of the back of God (cp. Ex. 33:20-23), Moses’ face began to shine with an intensity that no human countenance had ever exhibited before. Moses’ face shone with a reflection of the divine glory that had just walked by him. God’s glory was bouncing off the skin of Moses, as it were, and it took quite a few days for that radiance to fade away. However, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the shining countenance of Christ was not reflected glory but a glory bursting from His very deity.

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b) *Majestic Glory (1:17b)*

...and the voice was borne to him by the *Majestic Glory*...

Moo: Christ's exalted status is indicated in the Transfiguration events especially by the accompanying signs and by the voice from heaven. Several elements in the narrative—the 'high mountain,' the cloud that 'enveloped them' (Mk. 9:7)—point to the event as a theophany (a manifestation of God). But most decisive, of course, is the voice from heaven, proclaiming Jesus as God's beloved Son. And it is this voice that Peter highlights in his account.... *Majestic Glory* is a substitute for the name of God, a practice common among the Jews who held the names of God in such high regard that they rarely pronounced them.

MacArthur: At that extraordinary event *God the Father*, also called *the Majestic Glory* (a beautiful substitute name for God; cp. Dt. 33:26, LXX), gave an extremely significant *utterance* (audible announcement) to Christ.

c) *Beloved Son (1:17c)*

... "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" ...

(1) The Message

Moo: Peter's version of the voice that came from heaven at the time of the Transfiguration does not agree exactly (in the Greek) with the version we find in any of the Gospels, though it is closest to Matthew's wording: 'This is my Son whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him' (17:5). Scholars have accordingly debated the source of Peter's wording. But it is surely simplest, when we remember that Peter was on the mountain to hear the voice (cp. the next verse, in which he stresses this very fact), to think that Peter is quoting the words from memory.

Gardner: For Peter, the words of the heavenly Father were thus deeply significant in confirming the majesty of the one transfigured before them in a context where they had been thinking about His suffering and death.... These are virtually the same words we find in Matthew 17:5.

MacArthur: The Father's utterance...could refer to one of two different occasions—the Lord's baptism or His Transfiguration (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). The apostle's further description of the episode precisely identifies it as the Transfiguration.

(2) The Meaning

Moo: What is obviously of greatest importance is the import of the words. They gain their impact from allusions to two key Old Testament texts. *This is my Son* alludes to the language of Psalm 2:7, in which God addresses the messianic King; and *with whom I am well pleased* is language drawn from the first 'Suffering Servant' song in Isaiah (42:1). The voice from heaven, therefore, identifies Jesus as both Messiah and Suffering Servant. More important, perhaps, for Peter's purposes, are the implications of Jesus as Son of God. As this conception is developed in the New Testament, it becomes clear that far more than an 'official' status is intended by this designation; Jesus is, in some manner, identified with God the Father in a more essential, or even ontological, way (see particularly Jn. 10:30; 14:5-11).

Gardner: In using these words, the Father is alluding to two Old Testament texts full of meaning in their own right. The first is Psalm 2:7. Again, this is known as a 'Messianic Psalm' for here God the Father speaks to the Son who will come to rule the nations: 'He said to me, "You are my

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Son: today I have become your Father.” This, in turn recalls the wonderful covenant that God made with David in 2 Samuel 7:14 in which God promises that one day a king will sit on David’s throne who will rule for ever.... God’s assertion at the Transfiguration that ‘This is my beloved Son’ was thus identifying Jesus as the Davidic (Messianic) king of covenant love and promise. The background of the second part of the statement—*with Him I am well pleased*—is also fascinating. This is drawn from Isaiah 42:1 which speaks of the Suffering Servant, but also points to the servant’s role in bringing justice to all the nations: ‘Here is My servant, whom I uphold, My chosen one *in whom I delight*; I will put My Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.’ The allusion makes it clear that the Father was stressing that this Jesus was the one He had chosen to be the king.

MacArthur: The announcement...is the Father’s affirmation that the Son is both of identical nature and essence with Him and that He is perfectly righteous. Thus in one concise statement God declared a relationship of both divine nature and divine love with Christ—the perfect bond of love and holiness within the Godhead—and His complete satisfaction with everything Jesus said and did. By clear implication. The Father’s pronouncement also confirmed Christ’s right to come again, at the ordained time, and receive His own and possess the kingdom that is rightfully His.

d) *Holy Mountain (1:18)*

¹⁸...*we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.*

Moo: In verse 16, Peter stressed that he was an *eyewitness* of this event. Now in verse 18, he reminds his readers that he was an ‘ear-witness’ also. *We ourselves heard this voice*. As the Gospel accounts make clear, the *we* here includes Peter, James, and John (see Mark 9:2 and parallels)... Many scholars think that the phrase *sacred mountain* reflects a time in the second or third generation of Christianity where the sites of Jesus’ life had been hallowed by tradition. But there is no need for such an assumption. ‘Sacred’ translates *hagios*, which can also be rendered ‘holy.’ Some think Peter denotes the mount as *holy* because the Transfiguration itself made it a place ‘set apart.’ Others think that Peter may be reinforcing the allusion to the experience of Moses at Sinai that is so prominent in the Gospel accounts. But Bauckham notes that Sinai is never called the *holy mountain*, whereas Psalm 2:6 uses precisely this phrase just before the words to which the voice from heaven alludes: ‘I have installed my King on Zion, my *holy hill*. I will proclaim the decree of the Lord; He said to me, “You are My Son...”.’ Peter thus accentuates the notion of Jesus’ kingship revealed in the Transfiguration.

Gardner: So why is the Transfiguration such vital evidence for Christ’s return in glory? ... The important thing about the Transfiguration lies in both what the apostles *saw*, and in what they *heard*. They had seen the glory of the Son, but they had also heard God the Father from His Majestic Glory identifying this Jesus as the one appointed to be king and to fulfill the role of authority and judgment over the nations spoken of in Psalm 2:6-9. That Peter had this in mind is further indicated by his mention of *the sacred mountain*, a phrase which appears in very similar Greek form (LXX) in Psalm 2:6. Peter thus calls people to remember God’s truth, the gospel, specially the glorious return, because of what the apostles had heard and seen in the Transfiguration. They saw that Jesus was the Son,, the long promised and long awaited King of glory and ruler of the world. They had heard that He was both Servant and Judge. That day of the Transfiguration had been a foretaste of Christ’s glory, rule, power, and honor. Christ had not yet been seen again in this way, therefore it is clear that this is still awaited. At that time the

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prophecies surrounding the king in the specific passages to which the Father had referred would indeed come to pass.

MacArthur: The mountain was most likely Mount Hermon, the highest mountain near Caesarea Philippi (cp. Mk 8:27), where Peter, James, and John saw the cloud of divine glory surround them and Jesus and heard the voice of God (Mt. 17:5; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35).

Sproul: When that cloud enveloped Peter, James, and John, they were terrified, and they heard a voice from heaven say, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ (Mt. 17:5; cp. Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35). In this epistle Peter is pointing out that he, James, and John had seen that. They had heard the voice of God audibly on that holy mountain. The Apostles were not relaying legends, fables, or myths but the sober truth of what they had seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Why Witnesses?

Moo: Before we leave this paragraph, we need to tackle one other issue, central to its function in the letter. Why does Peter allude to the Transfiguration to confirm the truth of Jesus’ return in glory? Why not, for instance, refer to Jesus’ resurrection or ascension, at which time an angel promised that Jesus would come back (see Acts 1:9-11)? ... The most likely explanation is that the Transfiguration experience had an intimate relationship to the Parousia of Jesus from the start.... As its name suggests, the Transfiguration involves a transformation in Jesus’ appearance, but it is a transformation that reveals His true nature. It is this glorious and majestic nature, hidden, as it were, during His earthly life, that will be revealed to all the world at the time of His return. Put simply, the Transfiguration reveals Jesus as the glorious King, and Peter was there to see it. He therefore has utter confidence that Jesus will return as the glorious King and establish His kingdom in its final and ultimate form.

Gardner: In all three Gospels the episode is placed in the context of Jesus beginning to teach His disciples that He would have to suffer and die. What the disciples were being taught was that through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus lay the route to glory. At His return Jesus would be fundamentally different from His first coming. Instead of humbling Himself and limiting the exercise of His divine attributes, instead of coming to suffer and die, His return would be as sovereign Lord and King with full power and majesty. The Transfiguration, therefore, offered the disciples a foretaste of that glory. It offered them, as it were, a glimpse through to the future, through suffering and death and resurrection and into Christ’s glorification. It would be as the glorified Lord that He would return. Thus, for Peter and the apostles, this experience became evidence of the risen Christ and thus the returning Christ. This amazing insight was given by Jesus as a special privilege to Peter, James, and John.

Helm: We can only imagine what Peter’s accusers would do with this story. ‘Well, that’s nice for you, Peter, but we didn’t see it and we didn’t hear it. But if you can produce a god-like figure before our very eyes, and a voice that calls to us from Heaven, one that we can hear with our own ears, then we might be willing to believe the implications you are drawing from such an event about the supremacy and final reign of Jesus. But if you can’t well, we don’t think the world is obligated to hold certain aspects of your view. For all the supposed light present in your experience, it simply leaves us in the dark.’... Peter is well aware that his detractors will argue along these lines. So he quickly moves beyond that which he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears to speak of a light more sure and reliable than both—the prophetic word that God so graciously gave us to read.

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C. Testimony of Scripture—The Written Word (2 Peter 1:19-21)

Moo: The reliability of revelation is the idea that links verses 16-18 and verses 19-21. Peter, James, and John can testify to the revelation of Christ's glory in the Transfiguration. But also testifying to Christ's glorious appearance at the end of history are the prophets.

Gardner: The *spoken* words of the heavenly Father had been the key for Peter to understand the Transfiguration, but even those words of the Father had pointed back to Scripture. It is to this *written* word that Peter now turns for his second line of evidence for Christ's glorious Coming.

MacArthur: As accurate as they were, in declaring the truth God did not merely depend on the oral, eyewitness accounts of the apostles. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit He superintended the recording of those experiences and thoughts in the inspired revelation of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter's reply to those who would question the validity of his experiences is that believers have even a better source—the *prophetic word made more sure*—the Word of God.

1. Importance of Scripture (1:19)

¹⁹*And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,*

a) More Fully Confirmed (1:19a)

¹⁹*And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed...*

Moo: *We have the word of the prophets made more certain* is somewhat unclear. 1) Who is included in the *we*? Peter and the other apostles, as in verses 16-18? Or Peter and his readers? It is probably the latter, because Peter goes on in this verse to address his readers directly (*you will do well to pay attention...*). This suggests that Peter's focus has turned away from the apostles and to his own readers. 2) What is the *prophetic word*? ... Probably...the *prophetic word* is a collection of oral or written prophecies. Some think that Peter might have in mind the entire Old Testament or even Old and New Testament prophecy. But the context suggests rather that he refers specifically to Old Testament prophecies about the kingdom to be established by the Messiah at the end of history. This, as we have seen, is the point at issue in 2 Peter. 3) What does Peter mean with the comparative *made more sure*? *Sure* translates a Greek word (*bebaios*) that refers to the certainty and reliability of promises and agreements (see, e.g., Rom. 4:16; Heb. 6:16, 19). Peter may be saying, then, that the Old Testament prophecies are an even more certain basis for belief in the Parousia than the eyewitness testimony about the Transfiguration. But the Greek probably cannot bear this meaning. We think, rather, that Peter is suggesting that his testimony about the Transfiguration gives to the prophetic word an even greater certainty than it had before. The prophets predicted that Messiah would establish a universal and glorious reign. Some in the early church may have so spiritualized these prophecies that they eliminated any future reference. The Transfiguration, an anticipation of Christ's ultimate glory, shows that the words of the prophets, at this point at least, must be taken with full literal force. Thus Christians can be even more confident of their fulfillment.

Gardner: *We have* still refers, as in verse 16, to the apostles themselves. The apostles have been teaching that Christ will return. Among the evidences for this are the Transfiguration and the *word of the prophets*. More than likely, Peter is thinking of the whole Old Testament as the prophetic word, but he is specially interesting at this moment in passages which talk of Christ's

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return to judge and to save. *Made more certain* has caused a great deal of discussion among commentators. Simply the issue is, ‘more certain than what?’ Surely, Peter would not imply that the prophets were more certain than the apostles in what they said! Perhaps the best way of understanding this is that the apostles’ teaching about the coming of Jesus, based upon the Transfiguration and the words of God the Father, is still further authenticated by the sure word of prophecy. In other words, Peter is not comparing one evidence against another as if one might be more convincing, but is simply adding one evidence on top of another. Both the witnesses are definite and reliable, but together they will persuade still further any who might have been tempted to doubt by the false teachers.

MacArthur: Some commentators contend the phrase (*the prophetic word made more sure*) indicates that the apostles’ experiences, validated the Scripture, that glimpsing Jesus’ kingdom glory on the Mount of Transfiguration somehow confirmed the prophets’ predictions concerning His second coming. That is a possible interpretation, but the phrases’ literal rendering, ‘we have more sure the prophetic word,’ recommends another interpretation. That is, as reliable and helpful as Peter’s experience was, the *prophetic word* of Scripture is *more sure*. Throughout redemptive history, God Himself has repeatedly emphasized that His inspired Word is inerrant, infallible, and the all-sufficient source of truth, which does not require human confirmation. *We* in verse 19 is not an emphatic pronoun as it is in verse 18, where it refers to Peter, James, and John. Instead, this second usage refers generically to all believers. As a group they possess the Word, the source of God’s truth that is far more reliable than their collective experience, even as apostles.... The expression *the prophetic word* in Peter’s day embraced the entire Old Testament. The expression extends beyond the passages of predictive prophecy to include all the inspired Word, which in general anticipated the coming of Messiah.

Sproul: The Apostles did not need to see the prophetic word of the Old Testament confirmed by what they would learn in the New Testament era. Peter, as with all the Jews of his day, was already convinced of the full authority of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The context of verse 19 is somewhat encumbered and difficult to unpack, but basically Peter is declaring that what they had heard audibly on the Mount of Transfiguration is confirmed by the Prophets. This is a common motif in the New Testament, that the truth of the New Testament is declared as it represents a fulfillment of something in the Old Testament.

Helm: ‘We have both been given the prophetic promises of God. we can all read the words written down long ago. They are a more sure light than anything I ever saw or heard. Beloved, my seeing these things is important. Witnesses are essential. But God does not need to appear in the flesh every forty or fifty years to enlighten us and confirm His love to us. Seeing isn’t essential for believing—reading God’s Word is!’

b) *Shining Lamp (1:19b)*

...to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place...

Moo: Confidence in the reliability of the prophetic word should lead to a firm adherence to its teaching. Consequently, Peter urges his readers to *pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place*. The comparison of God’s word to a light is common in Scripture, one of the more famous instances being Psalm 119:105: ‘Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.’ In the darkness of this present world, God’s word casts light on His purposes and plans and so enables believers to live as those who are ‘in the day’ (see Rom. 13:11-12).

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Gardner: The prophetic word of (Old Testament) Scripture is utterly to be trusted and so Peter says, *you will do well to pay attention to it.* Time and again the Old Testament speaks of God returning to judge and on many occasions it becomes clear that it is the Messiah, the son of David, who will carry out that judgment. Though the Messiah has now come, it is self-evident that He has not yet returned in glory and brought judgment to the nations, and so there is ample prophecy, to which Christians must pay attention, that speaks of Christ's Coming. God's truth in Scripture shines out in a dark age, as *a light shining in a dark place.* We understand the picture all too well, for it so aptly describes the world as we know it now. It is a world full of uncertainties, and in which people are desperately trying to discover what the future holds. Horoscopes, the occult, New Age religions, strange religious sects are all symptoms for us of an age that still struggles in darkness. Christians, on the other hand, have revelation, God's own word on the matter, and it is to be trusted and listened to. God's word offers us a firm and solid foundation for living in this world where ignorance of God's word and therefore of the future leaves people lost in darkness (cp. Ps. 119:105; Rom. 13:11-13).

MacArthur: Peter asserts that his readers would *do well to pay attention* to the *prophetic word.* If they were going to be exposed to the subtle error of the false teachers, it was imperative that they know and carefully heed Scripture so that they could reject false teachings. To make his point even more direct, Peter offered a simple metaphor, comparing God's Word to *a lamp shining in a dark place.* That figure of speech recalls the psalmist's familiar words, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path' (Ps. 119:105). *Dark (auchmēros)* is the meaning that came from the original idea of this word, 'dry,' or 'parched,' then 'dirty,' or 'murky.' The phrase *dark place* encompasses the murky blackness of the fallen world that prevents people from seeing the truth until the *lamp* of divine revelation shines forth.

Sproul: Peter gives an admonition to his readers, which includes us by extension, that believers must heed the prophetic Word of God and regard it as a light that shines in a dark place, by which Peter means this fallen world.... The Bible speaks specifically of people who prefer darkness to light, those who refuse to recognize the light that God manifests in this world and through His Word and have been favorably inclined to live in the dark. As a result, God has given us over in our fallen condition, as it were, to a reprobate mind, and our foolish minds have been darkened. This metaphor of darkness is applied biblically to the condition of our mind. This is not a matter of one's education but of the condition of one's heart, which is hostile by nature to the light of God. We are by nature children of darkness, so Peter here gives this warning that when the light comes and shies in the darkness, we do well to heed it. There is nothing more foolish than refusing light that comes to us from the source of all truth.

c) *Dawning Day/Morning Star (1:19c)*

...until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

(1) Day

Moo: He wants his readers to pay attention to the prophetic word *until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.* The *day...* is an Old Testament metaphor for the eschatological climax.... The dawning of the day refers generally to the eschatological climax, whereas the rising of the morning star in the heart refers to the effects of that climax in the life of the believer.

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MacArthur: Thus Peter likens Scripture to a lantern that provides light to a dark and sinful world. The calendar of redemptive history moves toward a *day* God has designated for the glorious event when Jesus Christ returns in full, blazing splendor and majesty. When that *day dawns*, Christ will terminate the temporary earthly night of sin and spiritual darkness, returning in glory to establish His kingdom.

Sproul: Commentators struggle with exactly what Peter had in mind here. Some say it means that we are to give heed to the light by which we have been illumined until the ultimate victory of light over darkness, which will occur at the consummation of the kingdom of God when Christ shall appear in the fullness of His glory. At such time there will be the final vanquishing of every pocket and corner of darkness in this world. That might be what Peter was talking about, but since nobody will be able to miss it when it comes, Peter cannot be talking about opening our eyes to something but rather about a light that illumines the heart. I am not sure of the exact nature of Peter's reference.

(2) Star

Moo: *Morning star* transliterates a word that means, literally, 'light-bringer' (*phōsphoros*). People in the ancient world usually used the word to denote the planet Venus, which often appears just before dawn.... *Morning star* may refer to Christ Himself, since Scripture elsewhere uses 'star' as a messianic reference (Num. 24:17; Rev. 22:16). The clause, then, is a pictorial description of the way in which, at His coming, Christ will dissipate the doubt and uncertainty by which [believers'] hearts are meanwhile beclouded and will fill them with a marvelous illumination.

Gardner: By talking of the *morning star* Peter is probably recalling Numbers 24:17, which is another 'messianic prophecy.' ... The context talks of judgment that will be brought to the nations by one of the descendants of Jacob. But this morning star, Jesus, will not produce fear in the hearts of His followers. Rather, they will finally know Jesus fully and their hearts (and whole lives) will be filled with joy.

MacArthur: *Morning star* (*phōsphoros*), which literally means 'light bringer,' was the name for the planet Venus, which precedes the morning sun in the sky, and is used here for Christ, whose coming inaugurates the...establishment of His kingdom. Scripture in several places refers to Christ as a star (Num. 24:17; Rev. 2:28; 22:16; cp. Mt. 2:2). Peter adds the fact that the star *arises in believers' hearts*. Christ will return in a blaze of physically visible, all-encompassing light that will affect everyone for blessing or cursing.... The reference to the *hearts* indicates His return will also transform believers into perfect reflections of the truth and righteousness of Christ and make them into the image of His glory.

Sproul: We do know the identity of the morning star in Scripture (cp. Num. 24:17).... This section of the prophecy of Balaam was treasured in the hearts of Jewish people, because they saw in it the promised Messiah, who would be the Star coming out of Jacob and the One given the scepter. In the final benediction that Jacob gave to his sons, he said, 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah' (Gen. 49:10). The scepter is the symbol of royalty, the sign of authority of the king, and that scepter of kingship is promised to the One who will come from the tribe of Judah, from which comes David and then David's greater Son, our Lord Himself. At the end of the Bible, in the last chapter of the New Testament, we read Jesus' words... 'I am the Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star' (Rev. 22:16). This is one of the loveliest titles for Jesus that we find in the New Testament—the Bright and Morning Star. Peter speaks of the

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rising of the morning star in our hearts when the day dawns.... Traditionally Venus has been called the morning star because it reflects the light of the sun before the sun has risen. It is the herald, the harbinger, of the dawning day. In biblical application Jesus is the One who ushers in the day that breaks through the darkness in our hearts.

2. Authority of Scripture (1:20-21)

Gardner: Peter re-emphasizes just what authority the *prophets*, the writers of Scripture, really did have.... These verses give us some indication of the sort of arguments that may have been used against the apostolic teaching. Perhaps the false teachers were saying something like this: ‘The prophets spoke for themselves and wrongly interpreted events. Indeed, some of them simply made up their own prophecies—a creation of their all too clever minds.’ Of course, we cannot know for certain that this is what they were saying, for we have only Peter’s response to look at.

MacArthur: From considering the end of Scripture, when it completely rules the perfected heart, Peter went back to the start of Scripture—its divine inspiration. As Paul wrote, ‘All Scripture is inspired by God’ (2 Tim. 3:16); therefore *no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation.*

a) *Not from Man (1:20)*

²⁰*knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.*

(1) Interpretation Options

Gardner: *Above all, you must understand* is a phrase that recurs in 3:3 and indicates that Peter considers what he is about to say to be vital. Indeed, what follows is the main thought of the sentence which concludes at the end of verse 20: *no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.* Once again, there is a problem as to just what Peter means here. The Revised Standard Version captures the Greek more literally: ‘no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation.’ The NIV interprets ‘one’s own’ as the ‘prophet’s own.’ In other words, Peter may be suggesting either that no prophecy in Scripture is a matter of the reader’s own interpretation in the present, or that the origin of prophecy lay not with the prophet’s own understanding but was directly from God.

MacArthur: The phrase *is a matter of* translates *ginetai*, which more precisely means ‘comes into being,’ ‘originates,’ or ‘arises.’ No portion of the holy writings, Old Testament or New, came into existence in the manner all false prophecy did (cp. Jer. 14:14; 23:32; Ez. 13:2).

Moo: What is it that believers know? There are two main possibilities, well represented by the NIV translation on the one hand and the REB rendering on the other. NIV: ‘No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.’ REB: ‘No prophetic writing is a matter for private interpretation.’ These quite different interpretations are created by three ambiguities in the Greek text. 1) The verb in this sentence (*ginetai*) is vague in meaning. The NIV translation ‘came about’ and the REB translation ‘is a matter of’ are both fair renderings.

Moo: 2) Critical for the differing interpretations is the Greek word *idias*, which mean’s ‘one’s own.’ The NIV takes this to refer to the prophet. It therefore suggests that the issue in verse 20 is the *origin* of prophecy. It did not come about through the prophet’s own fallible and quite possibly mistaken notions about the visions he saw or the words he heard. Rather, as verse 21

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asserts, it came about through the sovereign work of God in His Spirit. The REB, on the other hand, applies ‘one’s own’ generally to any particular individual. It therefore sees verse 20 as a statement about the *interpretation* of prophecy. It should not be given whatever meaning a particular individual (who may have his own axe to grind) wants to give it. Peter would then be suggesting either that there is only one true interpretation of prophecy, or that the church at large, rather than self-appointed individuals, should be responsible for its interpretation.

Moo: 3) The Greek construction connecting verse 19 and 20 (a participle) can indicate a close relationship between the verses or an indirect one. Most English versions put a period after verse 19 and being verse 20 with a new sentence. This could match either of the interpretations of verse 20. But if the NIV interpretation is adopted, it is tempting to connect the verses more closely, giving the participle a causal meaning. Believers are to pay attention to the prophetic word (the main point of v. 19) *because* they know first of all that it does not original from human beings (v. 20), but from God (v. 21).

Sproul: The way in which Peter crafts the same idea (cp. 2 Tim. 3:16-17) here is problematic. His text has proven to be immensely controversial in the history of the church.... The doctrine of private interpretation set forth by the Reformers stated that every Christian has the right to interpret the Bible.... However, God has never given us the right to be wrong about the Word of God. That is why we guard our interpretation of Scripture carefully, looking at the best commentaries that we can find, studying diligently, and not relying on our naked ability. We consult the giants of church history and the confessions of the church. Even though they do not have binding authority over us, they certainly can inform us and help us out of errors born of our ignorance. Private interpretation always carries with it the heavy burden of accurate interpretation.

(2) Interpretation Opinion

Moo: A decisions between these two interpretations of verse 20 is difficult. Each fits well into the context. An emphasis on the origin of prophecy fits well with Peter’s concern in verse 19 to get his readers to pay closer attention to prophecy. But a reminder that prophecy is not a matter of private interpretation would make a fitting response to the false teachers, who were probably twisting Scripture to suite their own purposes. In the last analysis, however, we think the interpretation reflected in the NIV should be accepted. It suits the immediate context best, affording a natural basis for the command in verse 19. Moreover, the word *interpretation* also points in this direction. The Greek word means literally, an ‘untying’ or ‘unraveling,’ and it was widely used to denote the explanation of mysterious events, visions, and sayings.... Thus the word is better suited to described the prophet’s own interpretation of visions and revelations given them than to characterize the interpretation of the prophet’s words by believers in Peter’s day.

Gardner: The latter is the NIV’s understanding and probably makes the best sense of the verse, which then leads naturally into verse 21.

MacArthur: False prophets spoke of their own things from their own ideas, but no true message from God ever arose from a human *interpretation*. *Interpretation* (*epiluseōs*) is an unfortunate translation because in English it indicates how one understands Scripture, whereas the Greek noun is a genitive, indicating source. Thus Peter is not referring to the explanation of the Scripture, but to its origin. The next statement in verse 21, *for no prophecy was every made by an act of human will, but (alla, ‘just the opposite,’ ‘quite the contrary’) men moved by the Holy*

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Spirit spoke from God, further supports the point of source. What human beings might think or want has absolutely nothing to do with divine prophecy.

Sproul: That being said, I do not think that was Peter's point. If we look at the statement in context, it is not the interpretation of the Bible but the authority of the Bible that Peter is talking about. He is saying that prophecy, that is, the declaration of the Word of God, did not arise out of the private insight or judgment of human beings.

Helm: In essence, he is arguing that the Bible, in particular the fullness of its message from first to last, isn't myth. It isn't the stuff of fables and fairy tales. Nothing written down here came from the mind or will of man. As such, the Scriptures are not a human record of the history of God; rather, they contain the true and authoritative story of God as He enters into human history.

b) *But from God (1:21)*

²¹*For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

(1) God Spoke

Moo: Peter in verse 21 reinforces what he has said about the origin of prophecy in verse 20. The prophet's predictions did not arise from their own private ideas about what the visions they received meant, *for*, as he now explains further, what the prophets said did not *have its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*. The belief that the prophets spoke for God is, of course, basic to the Scriptures (cp. Jer. 1:9; Ez. 13:3; Jer. 23:16)... Peter's reassertion of this standard biblical teaching may have been sparked by the false teachers.... Peter insists that the prophets were God's spokesmen, *carried away* by the Holy Spirit. Many commentators find a sailing metaphor in these words.... Peter may well have intended the allusion, since the verb he used here can refer to a boat 'driven along' by the wind (see Acts 27:15, 17). But the verb is a common one, and it certainly does not usually refer to sailing. More relevant, then, is the fact that Peter has used this same verb in verses 17 and 19 to describe the divine voice that 'came' from heaven. The words Peter and the other apostles heard from heaven at the Transfiguration and the words that the prophets spoke came from the same place: God Himself.

Gardner: Peter is insisting on the full authority of Scripture because the origin of all that is said by the prophets is from the Holy Spirit. Against all who would say otherwise, Peter argues that the prophets were not simply making up something to fit the times, to interpret an experience, or to make a point based upon their own assessment of the situation. Rather, the prophets were *carried* or 'borne along' by the Holy Spirit so that what they *spoke* was *from God*. (It is of interest that the same Greek verb for 'borne' is used for God's voice being heard in verse 18, which was 'borne from heaven'—RSV)... Peter...insists that the men who wrote Scripture were carried along by the Holy Spirit. In other words, what *men spoke* was indeed the message of God Himself, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit.

MacArthur: *Moved (pheromenoi)* is a present passive participle that means 'continuously carried,' or 'borne along.' Luke twice used this verb (Acts 27:15, 17) to describe how the wind blows a sailing ship across the waters. For Peter, it was as if the writers of Scripture raised their spiritual sails and allowed the Spirit to fill them with His powerful breath of revelation as they penned its divine words (cp. Lk. 1:70).

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Sproul: He immediately says, *for prophecy never came by the will of man.* He uses the most forceful word for ‘never’ that appears anywhere in the Bible. He uses ‘never’ in an absolute sense. Rather, Peter says, *holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.* He did not mean that Scripture came about because people had religious experiences that gave them a sense of ecstasy so that, as their emotions were moved by the presence of the Spirit of God, they gave voice to the emotion and declared what they believed to be the things of God. Peter means that the content of the Word of God does not arise by human will. Its origin and authority are found in God alone. Peter does not use the word ‘God-breathed’ as Paul does in Timothy, but he uses another metaphor, that of men being moved by the Holy Spirit and, as it were, being borne along by the Holy Spirit. This metaphor goes back to the language of the sea, and it pertains to the movement of a ship on the waters. Without wind, a sailing ship gets stranded. It is unable to go anywhere. The motion of the ship is not found in the inherent power of the ship itself; rather, it moves when the sails are filled with something external to the ship—the blowing wind captured by the sails. The sails cause the ship to be carried across the waves.

Helm: Peter uses an interesting word to capture this reality. He writes that the authors of Scripture were *carried* ‘along by the Holy Spirit.’ *Carried* is the Greek word *pharoe*, from which we get our word *ferry*. In essence, Peter argues that all the writers of Scripture were ferried along by the Holy Spirit and arrived at the same destination. One has to imagine these writers as cars aboard a ferry. Each one got on the ferry—each one appeared to be doing his own thing—each one delivered his own distinctive word. But at the same time the owner of the ferry—in this case, God—made sure they all landed together at His port of call because He carried them to their destination on the ballast and strength of His Spirit.

(2) Men Spoke

Moo: The prophets, then, speak God’s words. But do they also speak their own words? Some theologians have so emphasized God’s role in prophetic (and biblical) inspiration that they have viewed the prophets themselves as passive mouthpieces. But note what Peter says here: ‘*men spoke from God.*’ He is not denying that the prophecies were genuinely the words of the prophets themselves, men who consciously chose their words in accordance with their own vocabulary, style, and circumstances. What Peter does affirm, however, is that the words they chose to use were *also* the words that God wanted them to use to communicate the message He intended.

Sproul: When we talk about the inspiration of the Bible, we speak of the superintendence of Scripture by the Holy Spirit. God did not write the book with His own finger. All the books found in the Bible were written by human beings, but these human beings were moved and protected by the revealing authority of the Spirit of God.... When the Holy Spirit superintended and moved the human writers, He did not annihilate their humanity. The style of each biblical author comes through in his writings. In the mystery of inspiration, the Holy Spirit so protected the text that He used the very vocabulary and style—the very humanity—that each author brought to the text, but He preserved each author from teaching error, for the author was being used by the Spirit to communicate God’s own word. That is why the prophets in the Old Testament could preface their oracles with ‘Thus says the Lord.’ The Lord spoke through Jeremiah, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Habakkuk, Nahum, Moses, Paul, Peter, Mark, Matthew, and Luke without annihilating their humanity.

For next time: Read 2 Peter 2:1-10a.

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Lesson Summary

XVI. True Prophecy (2 Peter 1:12-21)

Aim: To recognize the authority of Scripture is derived from the Holy Spirit's superintendence of its human authors, making it infallible, reliable, and worthy of our repeated study and application.

A. Testament of Peter—The Remembered Word (1:12-15)

Peter announces his imminent death (exodus from the tent of his body) and calls upon the church to remember his teaching of the gospel, even though they are already well-grounded and established in the faith.

1. Peter's Testament

- Peter uses the literary form of *testament* for greater emphasis of his 'farewell address'

2. Peter's Intent (1:12)

- His intent is to *remind* his flock of the gospel (both its content and its implications on how we are to live) as long as he remains alive—repetition is the key to learning
- Even though the flock is already firmly *established in the truth*; we need continual reminders of the gospel

3. Peter's Tent (1:13-15)

- Peter likens his body to a tent (*skēnōma*); a temporary dwelling on earth
- Peter announces his impending, imminent death, *as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me* (cp. Jn. 21:18-19); Peter died under Nero, allegedly crucified upside-down
- Peter wanted them to recall the gospel after his *departure (exodos)*; therefore, he has written it down in 2 Peter

B. Transfiguration of Christ—The Spoken Word (1:16-18)

Peter defends his gospel message, including the reality of Christ's *Parousia*, by describing what he saw and heard at the Mount of Transfiguration, which was a preview of the power and glory of Christ that will be revealed at His Second Coming.

1. Eyewitnesses (1:16)

- The false teachers accused Peter of teaching *cleverly devised myths (mythos)*, especially related to the *Parousia* (Second Coming) of Jesus, which he denied
- The false teachers denied this doctrine because they were uncomfortable with the idea of judgment; they wanted to live their libertine lifestyles without fear of punishment
- Rather, Peter proclaims that he (and James and John) were *eyewitnesses of His majesty (megaleiotes)* at the Transfiguration of Jesus

2. Earwitnesses (1:17-18)

- Jesus received *honor (timē)* and *glory (doxa)* from God the Father
- The voice of the *Majestic Glory* (God the Father): *'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'*; cp. Ps. 2:7 (also 2 Sam. 7:14) and Is. 42:1—Jesus is the Davidic King and Messianic Suffering Servant
- This voice was *borne* from heaven and heard by Peter, James, and John on *the holy mountain* (cp. Ps. 2:6)

3. Why Witnesses?

- The Transfiguration reveals Jesus as the glorious King; it would be as the glorified Lord that He would return; the Transfiguration was a down payment on the *Parousia*

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C. Testimony of Scripture—The Written Word (1:19-21)

Peter's second argument in defense of the *Parousia* is even more sure than his own witness—the written Scriptures. The Bible is not a collection of fables or human interpretation; rather it is the very word of God, written down by men as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

1. Importance of Scripture (1:19)

- As powerful as Peter's witness of the Transfiguration was, *we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed*; i.e., the written word of God is an even more certain surety of Christ's *Parousia*—reference to entire OT, especially prophecies of Messiah
- We must *pay attention* to the Scriptures, because like a *lamp shining in a dark place* (cp. Ps. 119:105), it is God's true and inspired revelation for us
- *The day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*; the Day of the Lord is coming when Jesus, the Morning Star (cp. Num. 24:17; Rev. 22:16), will return

2. Authority of Scripture (1:20-21)

- *No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation*: that is, Scripture's origin/authority does not rest in man (*for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man*)
- Rather, *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*; 'carried along' or 'borne by' the wind of the Spirit (cp. 'borne' in vv. 17, 18)
- Holy Spirit used the humanity of men to produce His inspired, inerrant, holy Word

In 2 Peter 1:12-15 Peter announces his imminent departure (exodus) from the 'tent of his body; i.e., his death is at hand. He takes this opportunity to write his last will and testament. He does not focus on his successors in church hierarchy; rather, his emphasis is on the Word of God. Specifically, he calls upon his flock three times to remember his gospel, even after his death. Although Peter knows they are firmly grounded and established on the truth, he also knows that false teachers and human nature will conspire to test their faith; therefore, he wants to continually remind them to live Christian lives according to the gospel and virtues he communicated in verses 3-11.

Peter then goes on to address in verses 16-21 his response to attacks from false teachers that the gospel preached by himself and other apostles contained 'myths.' Specifically, he addresses the doctrine of the power and coming (*Parousia*) of the Lord Jesus again in glory and judgment, which the false teachers denied, in order to justify their sinful lifestyles. Peter uses the example of the Transfiguration of Jesus in 1:16-18, to which he was both an eyewitness and earwitness, to demonstrate that the honor and glory of Jesus as the Davidic King and Messianic Suffering Servant was only a foretaste of the majesty that would be revealed at the *Parousia*.

But there is an even a greater surety than Peter's eyewitness description of the Transfiguration of Christ; it is the testimony of Scripture, the written word of God, which Peter addresses in 1:19-21. God's word is like a lamp shining in a dark place, illuminating the truth and dispelling shadows; we would do well to heed it. The Day of the Lord is coming, it will dawn, and the Morning Star, Jesus Christ, will be revealed in power and glory. Scripture does not spring from the inventions or imaginations of men (like the doctrines of the false teachers); rather *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*. Thus, we have the certainty of true prophecy revealed in the Scriptures, the inspired, inerrant, holy Word of God.