

2 Peter 1:16-21
September 10, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

If you were here last week, we took note of Peter's desire to remind his fellow Christians of the firmly established truths that has been imparted to them. Peter acknowledged that his remaining time on earth is short, so he wants them to remember these truths and build their faith accordingly, even when he's gone.

Transition: But Peter wants to put an exclamation point on the truth he has imparted to his believers. In order to appreciate what he writes to his disciples, I want to prep you so you can appreciate the opening Scripture passages we will start with today. To that end, let's turn to Mark 9:2-8 before we read today's text.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.16:

- We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

V.17:

- For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

V.18:

- We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

V.19:

- And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

V.20:

- Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

V.21:

- For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Process Questions:

Q V.16: Peter says "we were eyewitnesses to His majesty." First, what is he referring to? [His experience of the Mount of Transfiguration. (John referred to this experience in John 1:14—"We beheld His glory.")]

Q: Second, who is "we?" [Peter, James and John]

Q: Peter witnessed the power and majesty of Christ. Jesus was a “man” just like them, but then a transfiguration happened. What did he see? [clothes became dazzling white, “whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them;” appearance of Elijah and Moses talking to Jesus]

Q (Mark 9:5): When Peter said, “let me build three shelters, one for each of you,” what was he feeling? [Fright! He had no idea what to say!]

Q: Then what happens? [A cloud appears and envelops them, and they hear a voice]

Q V.16-18: Peter states that he heard God’s “voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.” Who is the “voice?” [God]

Transition: Now that we have processed the details of what happened, let’s move toward the significance of it. Jesus was obviously intentional about bringing Peter, James and John up high on a mountain.

Q: Why do you think Jesus wanted them to see this Transfiguration? What do you think He hoped these three men would take away from this experience?

- It confirmed Peter’s testimony about Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13–16). Peter saw the Son in His glory, and he heard the Father speak from heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (2 Peter 1:17)
- From Jesus’s vantage point, it was the Father’s way of strengthening His Son for that terrible ordeal of being the sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Law and the Prophets (Moses and Elijah) pointed to His ministry, and now He would fulfill those Scriptures. The Father spoke from heaven and assured the Son of His love and approval. The Transfiguration was proof that suffering leads to glory when we are in the will of God.
- In all three Gospels where the account of the Transfiguration is recorded, it is introduced with a statement about the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). Jesus promised that, before they died, some of the disciples would see the kingdom of God in power!

Q: Why do you think Peter decides to share the Transfiguration account with his readers?

- He affirmed that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God. He affirmed the truth of the Scriptures. Moses represented the Law; Elijah represented the Prophets; both pointed to Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–3). He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Luke 24:27). We believe the Bible because Jesus believed the Bible and said it was the Word of God. Those who question the truth and authority of the Scriptures are not arguing with Moses, Elijah, or Peter, but with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q V.19-21: What do we learn about prophecy from Peter?

- Prophecies from prophets were “made more certain” by God on the Mount of Transfiguration. The Transfiguration experience corroborated the prophetic promises.
- God is light and His Word is light. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). When Jesus Christ began His ministry, “the people which sat in darkness saw great light” (Matt. 4:16).
- No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.

- Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

LOOK:

The truths of Scripture have been firmly established. Peter saw firsthand the power and majesty of Jesus. By reminding his readers of the Transfiguration, Peter affirmed several important doctrines of the Christian faith. He affirmed that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, affirmed the truth of the Scriptures, and affirmed the reality of God's kingdom.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 442–446). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Experiences Fade, but the Word Remains (2 Peter 1:16–18)

The focus in this paragraph is on the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. The experience is recorded by Matthew (17:1ff), Mark (9:2–8), and Luke (9:28–36); yet none of those writers actually participated in it! Peter was there when it happened! In fact, the very words that he used in this section (2 Peter 1:12–18) remind us of his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. He used the word *tabernacle* twice (2 Peter 1:13–14), and this suggests Peter's words, "Let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. 17:4). In 2 Peter 1:15, he used the word *decease*, which is "exodus" in the Greek and is used in Luke 9:31. Jesus did not consider His death on the cross a defeat; rather, it was an "exodus"—He would deliver His people from bondage the way Moses delivered Israel from Egypt! Peter wrote of his own death as an "exodus," a release from bondage.

Note the repetition of the pronoun *we* in 2 Peter 1:16–19. It refers to Peter, James, and John—the only Apostles with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. (John referred to this experience in John 1:14—"We beheld His glory.") These three men had to keep silent about their experience until after the Lord was raised from the dead (Matt. 17:9); then they told the other believers what had happened on the mountain.

What was the significance of the Transfiguration? For one thing, it confirmed Peter's testimony about Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:13–16). Peter saw the Son in His glory, and he heard the Father speak from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:17). First we put our faith in Christ and confess Him, and then He gives us wonderful confirmation.

The Transfiguration also had a special significance for Jesus Christ, who was nearing Calvary. It was the Father's way of strengthening His Son for that terrible ordeal of being the sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Law and the Prophets (Moses and Elijah) pointed to His ministry, and now He would fulfill those Scriptures. The Father spoke from heaven and assured the Son of His love and approval. The Transfiguration was proof that suffering leads to glory when we are in the will of God.

But there is a third message, and it has to do with the promised kingdom. In all three Gospels where the account of the Transfiguration is recorded, it is introduced with a statement about the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27). Jesus promised that, before they died, some of the disciples would see the kingdom of God in power! This took place on the Mount of Transfiguration when our Lord revealed His glory. It was a word of assurance to the disciples, who could not understand our Lord's teaching about the Cross. If He were to die, what would happen to the promised kingdom that He had been preaching about all those months?

Now we can understand why Peter used this event in his letter: he was refuting the false teachings of the apostates that the kingdom of God would never come (2 Peter 3:3ff). These false teachers denied the promise of Christ's coming! In the place of God's promises, these counterfeits put "cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16) that robbed the believers of their blessed hope.

The word *fables* means "myths," manufactured stories that have no basis in fact. The Greek and Roman world abounded in stories about the gods, mere human speculations that tried to explain the world and its origin. No matter how interesting these myths might be, the Christian is not to heed them (1 Tim. 1:4), but refuse them (1 Tim. 4:7). Paul warned Timothy that the time would come in the church when professed Christians would not want to hear true doctrine, but

would “turn away their ears from the truth, and ... be turned unto fables [myths]” (2 Tim. 4:4). Paul also warned Titus about “Jewish fables [myths]” (Titus 1:14), so even some of the Jews had abandoned their sacred Scriptures and accepted man-made substitutes.

Peter wrote a summary of what he saw and heard on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw Jesus Christ robed in majestic glory, and therefore witnessed a demonstration of the “power and coming” of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ came to earth at Bethlehem, He did not display His glory openly. To be sure, He revealed His glory in His miracles (John 2:11), but even this was primarily for the sake of His disciples. His face did not shine, nor did He have a halo over His head. “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isa. 53:2).

Peter not only saw Christ’s glory, but he heard the Father’s voice “from the magnificent glory.” Witnesses are people who tell accurately what they have seen and heard (Acts 4:20), and Peter was a faithful witness. Is Jesus Christ of Nazareth the Son of God? Yes, He is! How do we know? The Father said so!

You and I were not eyewitnesses of the Transfiguration. Peter was there, and he faithfully recorded his experience for us in the letter that he wrote, inspired by the Spirit of God. Experiences fade, but the Word of God remains! Experiences are subjective, but the Word of God is objective. Experiences may be interpreted in different ways by different participants, but the Word of God gives one clear message. What we remember about our experiences can be unconsciously distorted, but the Word of God remains the same and abides forever.

When we study 2 Peter 2, we will discover that apostate teachers try to turn people away from the Word of God and into “deeper experiences” that are contrary to the Word. These false teachers use “feigned words” instead of God’s inspired Word (2 Peter 2:3), and they teach “damnable heresies” (2 Peter 2:1). In other words, this is really a matter of life and death! If a person believes the truth, he will live; if he believes lies, he will die. It is the difference between salvation and condemnation.

By reminding his readers of the Transfiguration, Peter affirmed several important doctrines of the Christian faith. He affirmed that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God. The test of any religion is, “What do you say about Jesus Christ?” If a religious teacher denies the deity of Christ, then he is a false teacher (1 John 2:18–29; 4:1–6).

But the person of Jesus Christ is only one test; we must also ask, “And what is the work of Jesus Christ? Why did He come and what did He do?” Again, the Transfiguration gives us the answer; for Moses and Elijah “appeared in glory, and spake of His decease [exodus] which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:31). His death was not simply an example, as some liberal theologians want us to believe; it was an exodus, an accomplishment. He accomplished something on the cross—the redemption of lost sinners!

The Transfiguration was also affirmation of the truth of the Scriptures. Moses represented the Law; Elijah represented the Prophets; both pointed to Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–3). He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Luke 24:27). We believe the Bible because Jesus believed the Bible and said it was the Word of God. Those who question the truth and authority of the Scriptures are not arguing with Moses, Elijah, or Peter, but with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This event also affirmed the reality of God’s kingdom. We who have a completed Bible can look back and understand the progressive lessons that Jesus gave His disciples about the Cross and the kingdom, but at that time those twelve men were very confused. They did not understand the relationship between His suffering and His glory (Peter’s first epistle discusses this theme)

and the church and the kingdom. At the Transfiguration, our Lord made it clear to His followers that His suffering *would lead to glory* and that the cross would ultimately result in the crown.

There was also a very practical lesson that Peter, James, and John needed to learn, because each of these would also suffer. James was the first of the apostles to die (Acts 12:1–2). John lived a long life but it led to exile and suffering (Rev. 1:9). Peter suffered for the Lord during his ministry, and then laid down his life just as the Lord had prophesied. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John learned that suffering and glory go together, and that the Father’s special love and approval are given to those who are willing to suffer for the sake of the Lord. We need this same lesson today.

Peter could not share his experience with us, but he could share the record of that experience so that we could have it permanently in the Word of God. It is not necessary for us to try to duplicate these experiences; in fact, such attempts would be dangerous, for the devil could give us a counterfeit experience that could lead us astray.

Remember Peter’s wonderful news at the beginning of this letter: “like precious faith.” This means that our faith gives us “an equal standing” with the Apostles! They did not travel first-class and leave us to travel second-class! “Like precious faith *with us*” is what he wrote (italics mine). We were not on the Mount of Transfiguration, but we can still benefit from that experience as we meditate on it and permit the Spirit of God to reveal the glories of Jesus Christ.

We have learned two important truths as we have seen these contrasts: men die, but the Word lives, and experiences fade, but the Word remains. Peter added a third contrast.

The World Darkens, but the Word Shines (2 Peter 1:19–21)

In some respects, the world is getting better. I thank God for the advances in medicine, transportation, and communication. I can speak to more people in one radio program than the Apostles preached to in their entire lifetimes. I can write books that can be spread abroad and even translated into different languages. In areas of scientific achievement, the world has made great progress. But the human heart is still wicked, and all of our improvements in means have not improved our lives. Medical science enables people to live longer, but there is no guarantee they will live better. Modern means of communication only enable lies to travel faster! And jet planes enable us to get places faster, but we do not have better places to go!

We should not be surprised that our world is engulfed in spiritual darkness. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord warned that there would be counterfeits who would invade the church with their false doctrines (Matt. 7:13–29). Paul gave a similar warning to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28–35), and he gave further warnings when he wrote his epistles (Rom. 16:17–20; 2 Cor. 11:1–15; Gal. 1:1–9; Phil. 3:17–21; Col. 2; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3–4). Even John, the great “apostle of love,” warned about antichristian teachers who would seek to destroy the church (1 John 2:18–29; 4:1–6).

In other words, the Apostles did not expect the world to get better and better either morally or spiritually. They all warned the church that false teachers would invade the local churches, introduce false doctrines, and lead many people astray. The world would get darker and darker; but as it did, the Word of God would shine brighter and brighter.

Peter made three affirmations about this Word.

It is the sure Word (v. 19a). Peter was not suggesting that the Bible is more certain than the experience he had on the Mount of Transfiguration. His experience was real and true, and the record in the Bible is dependable. As we have seen, the Transfiguration was a demonstration of the promise given in the prophetic Word; and this promise now has added certainty because of

what Peter experienced. The Transfiguration experience corroborated the prophetic promises. The apostates would attempt to discredit the promise of His coming (2 Peter 3:3ff), but the Scriptures were sure. For, after all, the promise of the kingdom was reaffirmed by Moses, Elijah, the Son of God, and the Father! And the Holy Spirit wrote the record for the church to read!

“The testimony of the Lord is sure” (Ps. 19:7). “Thy testimonies are very sure” (Ps. 93:5). “All His commandments are sure” (Ps. 111:7). “Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Ps. 119:128).

It is interesting to put together 2 Peter 1:16 and 19: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables ... We have also a more sure word of prophecy.” As I travel, I often meet zealous cultists in airports, all of whom want me to buy their books. I always refuse because I have the sure Word of God and have no need for the religious fables of men. “‘What is the chaff to the wheat?’ saith the Lord” (Jer. 23:28).

But one day I found one of those books, left behind in the men’s room, so I decided to take it with me and read it. How anybody could believe such foolish fables is more than I can understand. The book claimed to be based on the Bible, but the writer so twisted the Scriptures that the verses quoted ended up meaning only what he wanted them to mean. Cunningly devised fables! Yet there was spiritual death between those covers to anyone who would believe those lies.

It is the shining Word (v. 19b). Peter called the world “a dark place,” and the word he used means “murky.” It is the picture of a dank cellar or a dismal swamp. Human history began in a lovely Garden, but that Garden today is a murky swamp. What you see when you look at this world system is an indication of the spiritual condition of your heart. We still see beauty in God’s creation, but we see no beauty in what mankind is doing with God’s creation. Peter did not see this world as a Garden of Eden, nor should we.

God is light and His Word is light. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). When Jesus Christ began His ministry, “the people which sat in darkness saw great light” (Matt. 4:16). His coming into this world was the dawning of a new day (Luke 1:78). We Christians are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14–16), and it is our privilege and responsibility to hold forth the Word of life—God’s light—so that men might see the way and be saved (Phil. 2:14–16).

As believers, we must heed this Word and govern our lives by what it says. For unbelievers, things will get darker and darker, until they end up in eternal darkness; but God’s people are looking for the return of Jesus Christ and the dawning of the new day of glory. The false teachers scoffed at the idea of Christ’s return and the dawning of a new day, but Peter affirmed the truth of the sure Word of God. “But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night” (2 Peter 3:10).

Before the day dawns, the “day star” (or morning star) shines brightly as the herald of the dawn. To the church, Jesus Christ is “the Bright and Morning Star” (Rev. 22:16). The promise of His coming shines brightly, no matter how dark the day may be (see Num. 24:17). He is also the “Sun of Righteousness,” who will bring healing to believers but judgment to unbelievers (Mal. 4:1–2). How thankful we ought to be for God’s sure and shining Word, and how we ought to heed it in these dark days!

It is the Spirit-given Word (vv. 20–21). This is one of two important Scriptures affirming the divine inspiration of the Word of God. The other is 2 Timothy 3:14–17. Peter affirmed that the Scriptures were not written by men who used their own ideas and words, but by men of God who were “moved by the Holy Spirit.” The word translated *moved* means “to be carried along, as a

ship is carried by the wind.” The Scriptures are “God-breathed”; they are not the inventions of men.

Again, Peter was refuting the doctrines of the apostates. They taught with “feigned words” (2 Peter 2:3) and twisted the Scriptures to make them mean something else (2 Peter 3:16). They denied the promise of Christ’s coming (2 Peter 3:3–4), and thus denied the very prophetic Scriptures.

Since the Spirit gave the Word, only the Spirit can teach the Word and interpret it accurately (see 1 Cor. 2:14–15). Of course, every false teacher claims that he is “led by the Spirit,” but his handling of the Word of God soon exposes him. Since the Bible did not come by the will of man, it cannot be understood by the will of man. Even religious Nicodemus, a leading teacher among the Jews, was ignorant of the most essential doctrines of the Word of God (John 3:10–12).

In 2 Peter 1:20, Peter was not prohibiting the private study of the Bible. Some religious groups have taught that only the “spiritual leaders” may interpret Scripture, and they have used this verse as their defense. But Peter was not writing primarily about the interpretation of Scripture, but the origin of Scripture: it came by the Holy Spirit through holy men of God. And since it came by the Spirit, it must be taught by the Spirit.

The word translated “private” simply means “one’s own” or “its own.” The suggestion is, since all Scripture is inspired by the Spirit it must all “hang together” and no one Scripture should be divorced from the others. You can use the Bible to prove almost anything if you isolate verses from their proper context, which is exactly the approach the false teachers use. Peter stated that the witness of the Apostles confirmed the witness of the prophetic Word; there is one message with no contradiction. Therefore, the only way these false teachers can “prove” their heretical doctrines is by misusing the Word of God. Isolated texts, apart from contexts, become pretexts.

The Word of God was written to common people, not to theological professors. The writers assumed that common people could read it, understand it, and apply it, led by the same Holy Spirit who inspired it. The humble individual believer can learn about God as he reads and meditates on the Word of God; he does not need the “experts” to show him truth. However, this does not deny the ministry of teachers in the church (Eph. 4:11), special people who have a gift for explaining and applying the Scriptures. Nor does it deny the “collective wisdom” of the church as, over the ages, these doctrines have been defined and refined. Teachers and creeds have their place, but they must not usurp the authority of the Word over the conscience of the individual believer.

Until the day dawns, we must be sure that the love for His coming is like a shining star in our hearts (2 Peter 1:19). Unless we love His appearing, we will not look for His appearing; and it is the Word that keeps that expectation bright.

Men die, but the Word lives. Experiences fade, but the Word remains. The world grows darker, but the prophetic light shines brighter. The believer who builds his life on the Word of God and who looks for the coming of the Savior is not likely to be led astray by false teachers. He will be taught by the Spirit and grounded on the sure Word of God.

Peter’s message is, “Wake up—and remember!” A sleeping church is the devil’s playground. It is while men slept that the enemy came in and sowed the tares (Matt. 13:24ff). “Be alert!” is the Apostle’s message. “Wake up and remember!”

Raymer, R. M. (1985). 1 Peter. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 868-869). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. Majesty of God's Word (1:16–18).

1:16. It is important to distinguish between the written Word (the Bible) and the incarnate Word (Christ). They are both major avenues of God's revelation (cf. Ps. 19:7–11; John 1:18; Heb. 1:2) and therefore both come into focus throughout the remainder of this chapter. A Christian's faith does not rest on clever **stories** (*mythois*) as did the doctrines of the false teachers Peter attacked (2 Peter 2). Instead, true faith is founded on historical facts, which **eyewitnesses** corroborated. It appears that Peter introduced a new theme here. He plunged quickly into a mention of the Lord's return: **the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**. He had already talked about that welcome into the eternal kingdom (1:11), and had written about his own departure from this life. His defense of the doctrine of the Second Coming therefore is based on his eyewitness experience on the Mount of Transfiguration at which time he truly saw Christ's **majesty**. Several times in his earlier epistle he spoke of Christ's return (1 Peter 1:5, 13; 4:13). Obviously Peter considered this doctrine of great importance, one his readers should always keep in mind.

But how does the transfiguration argue that the Lord will come again with power? The transfiguration was designed to show the three apostles, Peter, James, and John, what Christ would be like in His glory, to give them a foretaste of His kingdom (cf. Matt. 16:28–17:2; Mark 9:1–8; Luke 9:28–36). This was a glorious demonstration they could never forget.

1:17–18. Peter's lofty language may stem from his burning desire to communicate the true majesty of the Savior which he, a member of the inner band of disciples, was uniquely privileged to see. Peter wanted his readers to look beyond Christ's first coming to the time when He will return with that same **honor and glory** He demonstrated on the mountain. In Peter's preaching during the days of the early church he was firmly committed to the doctrine of the Second Coming (Acts 2:32–33, 36; 3:16, 20–21).

Interestingly Peter was more profoundly impressed by what he **heard** than what he saw **on that sacred mountain**. The **voice that came from heaven**, the **voice** of God the Father, called **the Majestic Glory** (an unusual name for God), spoke approvingly of the **Son**.

C. Meaning of God's Word (1:19–21).

1:19. As Peter wrote of that unforgettable transfiguration experience, he was reminded of another form of God's Word, the written Word, given by the prophets. In fact, God's voice on the mountain made **the word of the prophets ... more certain** (*bebaioteron*; cf. *bebaiian*, v. 10) because the transfiguration pictured the fulfillment of their words. Both the prophets and the transfiguration pointed to Jesus' kingdom on earth.

In an exhortation Peter told how to derive meaning from God's Word—**pay attention to it**. **As a Light**, God's written Word has validity and authority. In today's experience-oriented societies many people, including some Christians, seek to determine or assess truth by the particular way God has worked in their own lives. But for Peter the splendor of his experience (with Christ at His transfiguration) faded as he spoke of the surety of the written revelation of the prophets.

The apostle wrote of illumination (v. 19), revelation (v. 20), and inspiration (v. 21). Old Testament prophecy is a light compared with the darkness of a squalid room. God's prophetic Word is a **Light** (*lychnō*, "an oil-burning lamp"; cf. Ps. 119:105) **shining in a dark place**. Though the world is darkened by sin (cf. Isa. 9:2; Eph. 6:12), God's Word, pointing to the future, enlightens believers about His ways. But **the day** (Christ's return, Rom. 13:12) is coming. In the daytime, lamps are no longer needed. And a lamp is nothing compared with **the Morning Star** (*phōsphoros*, "Light-Bringer"; used only here in the NT). Much as a lamp at night anticipates and is outshined by the bright morning star, so Old Testament prophecy looks ahead to the coming of Christ, "the bright Morning Star" (*astēr*; Rev. 22:16). Until He comes, believers are to let the Scriptures illumine their hearts (though the light which it brings on that great day will be greatly exceeded by the understanding which will be **in their hearts**).

1:20. Peter then wrote about revelation. The statement, **No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation**, has been interpreted several ways: (1) Scripture should be interpreted only in context, that is, a prophecy cannot stand alone without other prophecies to aid in its understanding. (2) Scripture should not be interpreted according to one's own individual liking. (3) Scripture cannot be correctly interpreted without the Holy Spirit. (4) The prophecies did not originate with the prophets themselves. The word *epilyseōs* ("interpretation," lit., "unloosing") and the word *ginetai* ("came about") favor the fourth view. The Scriptures did not stem merely from the prophets themselves; their writings came from God. Verse 20, then, speaks not of interpretation, but of revelation, the source of the Scriptures.

1:21. This verse also supports the view that Peter wrote in verse 20 about prophecies being born of God, not originating from the prophets themselves. **Prophecy came not from the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

As the authors of Scripture wrote their prophecies, they were impelled or borne along by God's Spirit. What they wrote was thus inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). "Borne along" or "carried along" translates the word *pheromenoi*. Luke used this word in referring to a sailing vessel carried along by the wind (Acts 27:15, 17). The Scriptures' human authors were controlled by the divine Author, the Holy Spirit. Yet they were consciously involved in the process; they were neither taking dictation nor writing in a state of ecstasy. No wonder believers have a word of prophecy which is certain. And no wonder a Christian's nurture must depend on the Scriptures. They are the very words of God Himself!