

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Our Prophetic Revelation 2 Peter 1:16-21**

We will be in **2 Peter 1:16-21** this morning so if you have your Bible you can open up and follow along and I will read it in mine. **"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. (17) For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased'— (18) and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. (19) And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. (20) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, (21) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."**

In this passage we find the conclusion of this chapter, which builds upon certain concepts that we have everything that we need to live a life of godliness that is laid out for us of faith and perseverance and brotherly kindness leading to love. If we have these qualities we will be secure. We should be remembering these things and not forgetting them and the reason we can now move forward is because we have been given the revelation of God, the prophetic revelation that enables us to live the life that God would have us to live.

In this section we see an event, a personal witness of the truthfulness of an event know as the transfiguration of Christ and that's referenced in **verses 16 to 18**. This event was seen by the writer, Peter, and he wrote **"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty."** So they were eyewitnesses. There's a contrast here between the cleverly devised tales and the clearly compelling truth of this event.

In our day there are often people that have stories they want to tell about what has supposedly happened. Here's a tall tale for you. It was shared by one of the well-known purveyors of tall tales, Benny Hinn, on one of the most prominent networks of tall tales, The Trinity Broadcasting Network. He says, "Adam was a super-being when God created him."

Now there's a tall tale for you. Just because he is on T.V. and millions of people are watching, how do you know whether he is right or wrong? Or how do you know what Peter describes as the transfiguration is true or if that's a tall tale as well? Well, we can contrast the tale tales with the truth because of the eyewitness account. We know the transfiguration is true because of the eyewitnesses, and notice that "eyewitnesses" is plural. There is a "we" here. There's a plurality of people and this is very important in Scripture.

For example, we see church discipline spoken about by Jesus. How do you know whether someone is going to be falsely accused? There's a protection that by every fact it will be confirmed if there are two or three witnesses given in that. And that harkens back to the law and the requirement of the law in dealing with sin.

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In **Deuteronomy 17:6** there are issues of idolatry and how to deal with that. It is written, **"On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness."**

And this is echoed in **Deuteronomy 19:15**. **"A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."** So, Jesus ensured at that event there was not just one person observing it, but that there was a plurality of people. So, He brought Peter, James, and John with Him to observe this.

Now you could say maybe there was a conspiracy. They got together and concocted a story. How do you know that's not true and it's because of their credibility. Their credibility going into this event was one that they were not known for being deceptive or lying, or telling tall tales. They don't have a string of these things preceding them or following after them. And they were so convinced of this event and the person who was revealing this to them, they follow Him to the point of death themselves.

There were eyewitnesses testifying to this event and they were credible. **Verse 17, "For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.'"** And we will look at this event spoken about by Peter a little more in depth.

It's in three places in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, and we will just look at the account given in the book of Matthew today. I will read it for you, and you will gain a better understanding of what Peter is referencing here.

**Matthew 17:1** says, **"And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. (2) And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. (3) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. (4) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' (5) While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!' (6) And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. (7) And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.' (8) And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Jesus Himself alone."**

In these passages we find the transfiguration, which occurred on Mount Hermon. He was in the area of Caesarea Philippi at the time and the mountain in that region is Mount Hermon, which is the tallest mountain in Israel. It's over 9,000 feet tall. So, it's no small place. A very dramatic event occurred on a very dramatic place in the nation. This pronouncement given by the Lord about Christ testified about Him. He was honored about what was spoken of His position, my beloved Son. He was honored in the position of being revealed as the Son of God uniquely so. With whom I am well pleased, He was honored in that statement as well.

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He has the authority from me; listen to Him. He was honored and He was glorified. He was glorified in what was done to Him. He was honored in what was spoken about Him and the glorification of His face like the sun, His garments as a white light.

This harkens us to the glory of God that came upon the nation at certain times, in the tabernacle for example, the wanderings in the wilderness. Now we see the cloud in the wilderness and hear a voice out of the cloud. There is so much Old Testament imagery here, the tabernacle and of course Elijah and Moses. Moses most likely referencing the era of the law and Elijah the prophets, and these people appeared with Him as well. There's a purpose for this dramatic event and the purpose for this dramatic event, I think, is shown to us by what just precedes this.

The words of Jesus leading up to this dramatic event are found in each of the three accounts, Matthew's account, Mark's account, and Luke's account. There's a verse just preceding the transfiguration and it says this, Jesus words. **"Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."**

And some people can get confused about what this means. Well, we just take it at face value that Jesus is speaking to the disciples. There are twelve of them that He is speaking to. Some of those won't taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Some of those are three of them, Peter, James and John and they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom before they died. That was at the transfiguration. Now note that it doesn't say that He came in His kingdom. They saw it; they saw a glimpse. The transfiguration was a glimpse of the kingdom of God. It provided verification that Christ was indeed the Messiah and He was going to come one day and reign in His kingdom and this is what it would look like. They got the privilege of the glimpse of the kingdom of God to validate Jesus Christ for them.

So, when we get to **verse 18** we can see these words. **"And we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain."** He reemphasizes this point. We are the eyewitnesses. We were with Him, we heard it ourselves, we were there, the voice was from heaven, the glorious majesty displayed honor and glory to the majesty of Jesus Christ. They were there on the holy mountain. The testimony is credible. There are three people who are credible testifying to this event.

The next section builds on this. We saw the truthfulness of the personal witness and now we will look at the triumph of the prophetic word. **Verse 19, "And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."** This deals with the assurance of the Word. If you have the New King James version it will read something like the prophetic word confirmed. If you have the New American Standard, or maybe another modern translation, you have the prophetic word made more sure, the word "made," if your noticing, is in italics. That means it's not really there. It's been added to help it read better.

What it literally is saying is we have the prophetic word more sure. In that, while it certainly is true that the supernatural events testify to the truthfulness of the revelation, this phrase, we have the prophetic word more sure, is in contrast to the event of the transfiguration.

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It is more sure. The prophetic word is not made more sure by the transfiguration, it is more sure than the transfiguration and there is some Greek grammar that plays into this but I won't go into that because I'm afraid I will lose you, but there is not a building upon the transfiguration, confirming or validating the Word of God.

The Word of God is contrasted with the transfiguration and it is even more assured, even more certain. Put it this way, we could have more confidence in the Scripture than even Peter had in his experience. And whatever experience you have had, and some people put a lot of stock in their experiences, I'm sure your experiences are not as dramatic as Peter's experience with the transfiguration. I'm sure your experience is pale in comparison to that experience. But whatever your experiences are, however convinced you are of your experiences, the Scripture is more sure, more certain.

We can have more confidence in the Scripture than any individual experience. It's a great testimony to the power and authority of the Word of God. Now this certainty leads us to give it our attention. Just as we would give a lot of attention if we had the opportunity of Peter to see Christ revealed, we would give even more attention to the revelation of God. **"Which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place."** There's the illustration of a lamp given for us.

I don't know if you have ever gone camping in a place that is desolate. Most of the camping done around here is next to somebody with an RV who's got his generator going and lights lit up. If you have ever gone to more of a wilderness setting the light becomes more compelling. When I was spending a couple of summers on the Navajo reservation I was miles and miles, as the crow flies, from any electricity at all, so the lamp, they have a kerosene lamp, became very important especially when the moon wasn't full. If it was a new moon you couldn't see anything except if you had your lamp. Well, the lamp becomes very compelling to you. When the lamp is lit it's almost as if you can't take your eyes off of it because it's the only thing to see in a dark place when you are outside. It illuminates and it draws your attention to it. So our attention should be drawn to the Word of God as a lamp in a dark place, fixed upon it. It should capture our attention because it is more sure than just someone's experience which some people can put a lot of stock in. Know that the Word of God is more sure.

There's another illustration, the dawn. The dawn illustrates the return of Christ because we look at a verse from Malachi 4:2 where the sun of righteousness is referencing the return of Christ there. The day dawns as Christ will return, and when He returns His glory will overshadow the revelation that we have to this point. There's the concept of progressive revelation. When Christ returns we get more revelation than we have now with God's Word and it will draw our attention away from the lamp. Yes, the lamp is still there, it is still shining, but it is having less of a dramatic effect because now the day has dawned and it's no longer dark.

When Christ comes again we will have a revelation of Him like Peter, James and John saw, and it will be dramatic and we will be tempted to respond as they did and fall on our face and hide, and Christ will say don't be afraid. The morning star rises in our hearts. The phrase morning star literally means light bringer. I think it got translated morning star because of the day dawning, but its literal translation is light bringer and this is the only place this word occurs in the New Testament.

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When Christ returns, He is the light bringer, He will illuminate.

And where is He illuminating? He's illuminating our hearts. The morning star rises in our hearts. This is really the focal point of our life. It's not just the stuff around us, it's really what the Lord is doing in our heart, and when He returns, our heart will be illuminated, it will be purified. We will be free from the sin that besets us and a heart that tends to be selfish. He will bring light to it. He will bring light to the world and we look forward to that day.

But in the meantime, while we are waiting, the lamp of God's Word has our attention. It's a light to our feet, a guide. Thy word is a light to my path, **Psalms 119:105**. This helps us to appreciate God's Word more and more. **Verse 20, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."** "First of all" shows the importance and appreciation for the Word of God. "First of all" speaks to what's most important. So it has our attention. It's the revelation of God and it is important. It is critical to us like the lamp is critical in a dark place.

Now back to how your versions may read this. It gets a little fuzzy perhaps and we need to clarify this, but notice, first of all, the no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. What does that mean? Some versions will help us out even more and make it even more interpretive for us and these are not accurate translations, but I will give them to you to show you how this could be read to understand. But you need, this is the Contemporary English Version of **verse 20 "But you need to realize that no one alone can understand any of the prophecies of Scripture."** Or the New English Bible says, **"No one can interpret any prophecy of Scripture by himself."** Both of those translations see the focus being on our inability to interpret it. But that's not what is being spoken of here and we can specifically see this in our text in **verse 21**. For explains **verse 20. "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will"** is describing the origin of the prophecy, not the understanding of the prophecy.

We can potentially accurately interpret the Scripture, but what is critical to understand here is that no prophecy ever came about by a human intention. It wasn't man's ideas, it wasn't man's interpretations; it wasn't man's take on things. This is God's Word; it's His prophecy. It originates with Him, not with man. This is very, very important. Because when I was a younger adult, I thought, well, this is just a book. Why give it this attention. Why base your life on a book. It's not just a book, as I came to understand. It is the Word of God. It is not what someone says, it's not their opinion or their interpretations. It is God moving to bring it to us, which should show Him as the author. He authored it along with man. **Verse 21** describes it this way. **"For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."**

It was authored by men moved by the Holy Spirit. God moved through people to accomplish the writing of the text. It did not happen because God wanted something written so He dictated it out and the writer wrote exactly what God said word for word. This is the mechanical dictation theory and it's not accurate. It didn't happen this way. And we can see that as we read it. We've got the evidence of the personality of the author and their involvement with the text as they are writing. They are speaking from themselves as they are writing. They give their own ways of writing, their styles. Even to the way that they write in Greek.



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If you are a Greek student you love the Gospel of John and the Apostle John because he wrote simply and you can understand it. You're not so fond of Luke who wrote a little higher level of Greek and it's a little harder to understand. And the Acts of the Apostles and Gospel of Luke takes a little more challenge to get through. They wrote as individuals moved by the Holy Spirit. Their personalities were involved. In other words, God guided the human authors so that using their own individual personalities they composed His revelation to man. God co-authored the Scripture with man.

They were moved by the Holy Spirit and spoke from God. Spirit moved writers wrote God-breathed writings. They were moved by the Holy Spirit to write inspired Scripture. **2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God."** So, what was inspired? It wasn't the author who had an inspiration and felt so warm and fuzzy that they had to write all this stuff down and God moved that way. What was inspired, according to **2 Timothy 3:16** is the writing. The text is inspired. So, we can look at the text and say it is true, it is the Word of God inspired, and it came about because the Holy Spirit moved through man to write what God wanted written through their personalities. You might ask how we can have confidence in this. If God is using man, isn't man flawed and likely to goof it up. Do we goof everything up? Every once in a while we get something right. It's possible for us to write something accurately and it's possible for God to work through people to assure that what they wrote was accurate and not in error. So, just because man was involved doesn't necessitate it being error filled. God is able to guide them to be truthful.

Let me give you this analogy to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to earth as a man to dwell among us. Does that mean that He, because He took the form of a man, was then flawed and sinful because men are flawed and sinful? No, it's possible for us to choose to not sin and choose righteousness. Now, we are depraved and we tend to want to sin, but Jesus didn't sin. So, though He took the form of man, He didn't sin because it is possible for us to not sin, we can choose righteousness. He, being God himself, was righteous even though He took the form of man.

So, with the Scripture, God moved through man. He co-authored it with man to accomplish something that was accurate, that was true. He co-authored the Scripture. He didn't just inspire people, He moved through them to write inspired Scripture. Which leads us to the authority of the Word of God. If it's the Holy Spirit moving man speaking from God, it is authoritative. And just for a moment we will look at how it speaks about itself. In other words, what the Bible says, God says and I will show you what Jesus' words say about this.

To validate the Scripture is from God, **Matthew chapter 19** quotes **Genesis 2:24**. Jesus says this in response to the Pharisees and we won't look at so much what's going on here but just how he describes it for us, and this should tell us something. **Matthew 19:4-6, "And He answered and said, 'Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh"? (6) Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."**

Jesus is saying that He, the creator, said from the beginning for this cause a man should leave his father and mother. He is quoting God as saying this. Now you look over at **Genesis chapter 2** and it's not saying the Lord said this, it just says this.

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The Scripture says this, for this cause a man should leave his father and his mother, it's what the text is saying. It's not quoting the Lord saying this but Jesus says God said it, so we can conclude that Jesus is considering what was written by Moses in **Genesis 2:24** as being what God said. It works the other way around, too. What God said the Bible said. In **Genesis 12:3** there is this promise that God gives to Abraham. The Lord said to Abraham, "**And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" And we look at **Galatians 3:8** and what does the Scripture say about this? "**And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you.'**" So, God's being quoted here and Paul says and the Scripture said this. So, what the Scripture said and what God said is interchangeable in the Scripture and these are just two examples of many examples I could give you. So, if you need more examples, come see me. I can provide more examples on this, that the Scriptures are viewing this as being God's Word.

If it's God's Word, it's accurate. The Bible is from God; it is accurate. **Titus 1:2** says God can't lie. He is the author of the Bible. It's from Him; it is true. And because it is from God, it also is authoritative. You can write accurate things but that doesn't mean it's authoritative, but because it is from God it is authoritative. It's what God says and what God says ends the discussions. But it's even more than that. It's even more than just accurate. It's even more than authoritative. Because God loves us, in His love for us He wants to relate to us through it.

When I was in seminary and I was writing my future wife, Kelly, back and fourth, these letters were very important to me, so I would look in my box and think did I get a letter today and I was either excited or disappointed if there was no letter there and so when I got one, I wanted to go read it the first thing. And I read it again and again because there was love there, and there is love when God writes to us and that is moving us to want to read it because God as the creator has communicated to us and it's like a lamp in a dark place drawing our attention and desiring us to relate to God through the Word.

You may say to your self well, that's just not what I experience. I don't even believe if it's true. Well, here is what I would suggest to you if you don't even necessarily believe this is true or you have friends who don't even necessarily believe this is true, here's what you should do. Read it. You owe it to yourselves to read it, and as you read it we will pray that God will work in your heart to see it for what it really is, the Word of God, and as you see it as the Word of God it will be compelling to you, meaningful to you, and you will be drawn to it. If you don't read it, you are doing yourself a great injustice because God is speaking and He wants you to listen. I pray that each of us will be attentive and respond to what He says.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank You for giving us Your Word to us. We thank You for giving us the revelation that has given us the opportunity to know You, to relate to You through it and to be conformed into your image.

Father, we pray that we would be responding to it as we should for what it really is, not just the word of man but the Word of God, and we ask that for each person here in the name of Jesus. Amen.