

Prophecy of Scripture

2 Peter 1:12-21

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2 Peter 1:12-21 (NIV)

¹² So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. ¹³ I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, ¹⁴ because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things. ¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

¹⁷ 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."

¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹⁹ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, 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. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

v12 – Why do we need to be reminded of these things?

Peter had just written about the promise of *entrance* into the everlasting kingdom of God (2 Peter 1:11).

- Because coming to that eternal kingdom is so important, it is helpful and necessary to be reminded **always** of the basics of the Christian life.
- Even though his readers did **know** the truth, in light of what was at stake — their eternal destiny — it was worth it to go over these ideas again and again.

Should we ever grow weary of hearing the fundamentals of the Christian life over and over?

We should rejoice every time Jesus Christ and His gospel and plan for our lives is preached.

- A sports team going for the championship will practice the same fundamentals over and over again.
- They do this, even though they know the techniques, because they want the victory.

What does it mean to be established in the truth?

Established is the same word translated *strengthen* in Luke 22:32, when Jesus told Peter "when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

- Here, Peter fulfilled that command of Jesus: he would establish and strengthen us by reminding us of the basics of the Christian life.

v13-14 – What gave Peter a sense of urgency to remind others of the basics of the Christian life?

Because of what is at stake, Peter knew it was **right** to remind people constantly, especially because he knew that the days of his earthly life were soon coming to an end.

Why did Peter describe His body as a tent?

A **tent** is a temporary place to live. Tents should be taken care of, but you wouldn't invest large resources into fixing up a tent. You save your real resources for a more permanent place to live.

- Our more permanent place to live is heaven, and we should invest more in heaven than our mortal body.

How did Peter know that shortly I must put off my tent?

Perhaps it was because Peter was simply getting old.

- Perhaps it was because the flames of persecution were getting hotter around him.

Church history tells us that Peter did die a martyr, *just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed him...*

John 21:18-19 – *Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.*

Peter believed that the prophetic words of Jesus would be fulfilled literally.

v15 – How would Peter *make every effort* to help people remember *these things* after he was gone?

Peter put this reminder in a letter, so the people of God would have a constant reminder even after his departure.

- Peter seemed aware of the significance of the passing of the apostles and the need to preserve the authoritative teaching of the apostles and prophets.
- This, the written teaching of the apostles and their associates, is the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20) preserved by God for all generations.

v16 – On what was Peter’s understanding of the promised return of Jesus based?

We did not follow cunningly devised fables (stories, NIV): Peter declared that the testimony of the apostles was not based on clever fables or even half-truths, but on eyewitness testimony; that they **were eyewitnesses of His majesty.**

What are fables?

Fables translates the ancient Greek word *mythos*. Some people think the Gospel and the Biblical record are just ancient myths. They may admire their power as myths, but Peter rightly insisted that his message was no myth. It was history, seen by **eyewitnesses.**

How do we know the biblical witnesses of Jesus were truthful?

The apostles and writers of the New Testament have been checked for centuries and have been found truthful.

- Since God is Almighty and wants us to know Him, He arranged for His Word to be accurately recorded and preserved even using His flawed servants.
 - God is that Almighty!

v17 – How did Peter witness of the majesty of Jesus?

There were many occasions, but one probably stuck out in his mind: the transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:1-9, and Luke 9:28-36).

- We know this because Peter quoted here what God the Father said to Jesus at the Transfiguration: *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

What happened at the transfiguration of Jesus?

Jesus was *transformed* in glory before the apostles, not merely changed in outward appearance. The effect was extremely striking; Jesus became so bright in appearance that it was hard to look at Jesus. He shined *like the sun* (Matthew 17:2).

v18 – Why did Peter quote what God, the Father said about Jesus at His transfiguration?

The words from heaven clearly put Jesus above the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was not merely another or even a

better lawgiver or prophet. Jesus was and is the **beloved Son.**

- Those words from heaven were important because Jesus had just told His disciples that He would have to be crucified and His followers would also have to take up their cross to follow Him (Mark 8:31-38).

Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus at His transfiguration?

They represented those caught up to God (Jude 9 and 2 Kings 2:11). And they represented both the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah).

- Moses and Elijah also have a strong connection to the witnesses of Revelation 11:3-13.

v18-19 – How did Peter’s experience seeing Jesus transformed impact him?

It was awesome for Peter and the disciples to see the transfigured, glorified Jesus and the voice from heaven.

- But its primary impact was only to confirm what they already knew about Jesus from Bible prophecy.

What does this tell us about the value of our experiences?

We should weigh the testimony of God’s Word about Jesus as greater than our experiences with Him.

- Experiences are helpful but only to confirm what we already know about Him from His Word.
- This means that *prophecy* is surer evidence of Divine revelation than *miracles*.

How do we know that fulfilled prophecy was more significant than authenticating miracles?

Only God can declare the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Miracles can be deceptive like Pharaoh’s magicians did to discredit Moses:

2 Timothy 3:8 – Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith

To what should we pay attention?

When we consider the prophetic testimony to Jesus, we **do well to heed it.**

- There are at least 332 distinct Old Testament predictions regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled perfectly.
- This evidence from a simple statistical perspective, is absolutely overwhelming...

Professor Peter Stoner has calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling eight of these prophecies is one in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (10 to the 17th power).

- That number of silver dollars would cover the state of Texas two feet deep.

Why are there way more prophecies of the return of the Messiah than His first advent?

The return of the Messiah is related to Him fulfilling the promises He has made to both Israel and the church.

- It is also associated with God pouring out on His wrath on earth on the same order of Noah's flood (resulting in a new earth).

What is the *light shining in a dark place*?

It is the gospel, the truth about who Jesus is, and what He did to enable our sins to be forgiven.

- The *day dawning* is our being born-again when we first start believing that Jesus is our Savior.
- The *morning star rising in our hearts* is the love and gratitude we have for what Jesus has done for us.

v20 – What should we understand about *prophecy of Scripture*?

No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation: Since it is inspired by God, its meaning is evident and can be confirmed by others.

- Those who take Scripture out of context to give it personal and bizarre meanings should be refuted by those who treat God's Word honestly.

How does context help us properly interpret Scripture?

- **Grammatical** – what does the text actually say without reading anything into it (exegesis, not eisegesis)
- **Textual** – what do the passages immediately surrounding the text say to shed light on the passage
- **Historical** – what did the passage mean to the original target audience
- **Doctrinal** – what else does the Bible say about the interpretation of a passage; Scripture interprets Scripture, no passage stands alone in what it reveals

What is the principle here that applies to those with the spiritual gift of prophecy?

There must be an honest *confirmation* of any prophetic word through the Scriptures. In the gift of prophecy, God never speaks to *only* one person, and always provides confirmation.

v21 – What does it mean that *prophecy never came by the will of man*?

The prophets did not invent their own predictions, they did not even always understand the meaning of what they wrote:

Daniel 12:8-9 – *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*

The prophets foretold the Suffering Servant aspects of the Messiah but these were not understood until after they were fulfilled by Jesus.

How do people abuse Bible prophecy?

Prophecy never came by the will of man: It is wrong and invalid to twist prophecy to our own personal meaning, because prophecy does not come from man but from God.

What does it mean that the prophets were *carried along by the Holy Spirit*?

The Greek word translated "*moved*" has the sense of *carried along*, as a ship being carried along by the wind or the current (the same word is used of a ship in Acts 27:15, 17).

- It is as if the writers of Scripture "raised their sails" in cooperation with God and the Holy Spirit carried them along in the direction He wished.

Was the Bible written by men or by God Himself?

It was written by men who were inspired by God. Then God made sure it was preserved and kept accurate despite the stewardship of flawed caretakers...

2 Timothy 3:16 – *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*

This is what makes God's Word inerrant.

What applications come to mind from this passage?

- We should never grow weary of hearing the basics of the Christian life over and over again.
- God's prophetic Word is way more important than our personal experiences.
- God's Word is inerrant; know it and apply it!