

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**  
**Chapter 9- Luke 9:26-36/2Peter 1:16-21**  
178- The Son of Man Coming in His Kingdom- Part 5

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## Luke 9:26-36

**26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.***

**27 "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."**

**28** Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

**29** And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming.*

**30** And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah,

**31** who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

**32** Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

**33** And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not realizing what he was saying.

**34** While he was saying this, a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

**35** Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, *My Chosen One*; listen to Him!"

**36** And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen.

**2Peter 1:16-21**

**16** 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** 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.

To the Glory of God

On June 27, 1819, Adoniram Judson baptized his first convert in Burma. His wife, Ann Hasseltine, described how MOUNG NAU had responded to the Scripture as she wrote in her diary:

“A few days ago I was reading with him Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He was deeply impressed and unusually solemn. He told me, ‘These words take hold on my liver and make me tremble.’”

Actually that is a very common experience. About 2,700 years ago- the prophet Isaiah wrote this in **Isaiah 66:2:**

**But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.**

So for as long as it has been in print- the Holy Bible- the Word of the Lord has been “taking hold of people's livers” and making them tremble- first with fear because it reveals our sin and then with faith because it reveals God's Grace.

Just to give you some examples of the Power that Scripture has to make people tremble and to alter the very course of their lives- it was a single verse in **Romans 13:13** that convicted and converted a young man who was caught up in blatant fornication and who had sired an illegitimate child and was determined to live his life in unspeakable debauchery. That man's name was Aurelius Augustine- who was used by God after his conversion as perhaps the greatest Theologian the Christian Church has ever seen.

1100 years later- God Sovereignly shown the glorious Light of the Gospel into the heart of an Augustinian monk through just one verse of Scripture- **Romans 1:17**. And Martin Luther later wrote about that in his diary:

“Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.” (*Here I Stand*, p. 49)

For Jonathan Edwards it was **1Timothy 1:17**. Of that verse he wrote:

“The first instance, that I remember, of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading these words, **1 Tim. 1:17**, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." As I read the words, there came into my soul . . . a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense quite different from anything I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did.” (*Works*, vol. 1, p. xii)

From century to century, from Egypt to Germany to New England to Gulfport- the Bible has been drawing people to Christ and making them new.

But why is that? Why has the Bible had this abiding relevance and power? I believe the answer is found in our text in **2Peter**.

Now for the last four weeks- we have been examining what Dr. Luke wrote concerning this amazing event that is known to us as “The Transfiguration”. In **Luke 9:26-36**- we have learned that three Apostles- Peter James and John literally saw Jesus in the Glory that He had with the Father before the world was and in the very same Glory that Jesus will have when He returns.

And we have gone over that text in Luke about as thoroughly as we could. But I still think that we would be missing something if we did not also examine what Peter himself wrote about this amazing event from **2Peter 1:16-21**.

This passage is Peter’s own eyewitness testimony of this event that Luke recorded about Jesus’ Transfiguration and so just from that standpoint alone- it is very useful to us. But Peter doesn’t stop there- but he goes on to say several very important things about this event and about Scripture that we need to know.

Peter teaches us here the relationship between personal experience and Scripture; between what we see with our eyes and hear with our ears and feel with our hearts and the inspired, inerrant and infallible Words of Holy Scripture.

Peter teaches here that when we read sacred Scripture- what we are reading is not merely the product of Man but is the very Word of the living God. Yes, the Bible is the writing of about 40 different men- who lived over a 1500 year time period. But it is far more than that. Yes, men spoke. And they did things and they saw things and they experienced things that were ordained and orchestrated and allowed and caused by God and these 40 men wrote those things down.

And when they wrote- they did so in their *own* languages and in their *own* individual style- using their *own* terminology and their own logic. And that isn’t unique or unusual at all. A lot of people do that. Most writers do that very same thing. But what makes these particular men different and what makes what they wrote to be so utterly different is that somehow- and we really don’t know just how- but somehow- God moved upon these men as they wrote through a mysterious process called, “inspiration” so what these 40 men wrote down in these 66 Books are the most unique and special Words that any man has ever or will ever write. These Words are the Words of the Owner and the Creator of the Universe.

Now the Words of Holy Scripture are seven things:

1. **Inspired**- they are God breathed (theopneustos)
2. **Inerrant**- they *do not* contain any errors
3. **Infallible**- the *cannot* contain any error
4. **Authoritative**- they have the power to bind the conscience and determine “Right” and “Wrong”
5. **Relevant**- They are as useful today as they were when they were first written
6. **Eternal**- they have always been God’s word and always will be God’s Word
7. **Sufficient**- They contain everything we need for both Life and Godliness

And so Scripture is trustworthy and it is reliable and we are correct to base our lives on what it says and we are proper to alter any aspect of our lives so that we may be in accord with what Scripture teaches. So in actuality- what it means to be “spiritual” is not walking around in some mystical or esoteric position but simply that we struggle against the lusts of our flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be found joyfully and humble submitted to the authority of Scripture in our daily lives- all to the Glory of God. That is what it means to be “spiritual” and therefore to live our lives in ignorance of or in rebellion to what Scripture teaches is to be “unspiritual” or to be “sinful”.

Glorifying God- bringing honor and Glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is brought about in our lives by first understanding what God said in Scripture and then it is to obey what God said and to do that joyfully. In other words- there is no such thing as serving God and living in blatant and unrepentant rebellion to what Scripture says and there is no such thing as bringing Glory to God and living in opposition to what Scripture says.

Now that ought to be all that needs to be said about this and we should simply be able to say, “Amen” and that would be that.

But sadly- we live in a day when there is an all- out war against the Bible and against the Truth and a fierce battle is raging over what God said and the Authority of Scripture in our lives. More and more people- even those who attend church- have come to the terrible conclusion that they are exempt from what the Bible says and that they are free to either disregard or outright ignore what God has spoken in sacred

Scripture and that this ignorance and this rebellion has no negative affect on their relationship with Jesus Christ and on their position in the Body of the Lord.

And so with that attitude- it is no wonder that we also live in a day when ancient heresies- patently false and blasphemous teachings that the Christian Church examined and exposed and rejected many hundreds of years ago- are making a huge comeback and becoming popular all over again and part of the reason why these doctrines of demons are so attractive to so many is precisely because of how the Bible has been minimized in the mind and heart and lives of so many who attend the modern Church.

And one of the most insidious aspects of this war against Truth is the most popular notion that our own personal experiences with the Lord- those things that people say that God told them or that God showed them or that God did for them are being promoted to be of equal or even greater value than the Bible itself.

And this is where what the Apostle Peter writes about here is of such relevance to us today.

I have listened to many people over the last 41 years tell me about what God supposedly told them or revealed to them or showed them or spoke to them or did for them. But none of those things even comes close to the amazing experience that Peter had with Jesus and John that day on this mountain as Jesus was transfigured before them. Truly we must say that Peter had a very powerful personal experience.

And unlike many of the *supposed* experiences that people talk about today- Peter's experience here really did happen. He really did see Jesus change before his eyes. He really did see Jesus shine in the Glory of His Father. He really did see with his own literal and physical eyes- the very Shekinah Glory of God. Peter saw and heard Moses and Elijah talk with Jesus. And Peter really did see a cloud cover them and he really did hear the audible Voice of God Almighty speak out of the cloud,

### **Luke 9:35**

**... This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!"**

So if anybody on earth had a right to lay claim to having a personal spiritual experience with Jesus- it would be Peter, right? And

if anybody would be tempted to place his own personal experience right up there to be as equal or perhaps even superior to the written Word- it would be Peter, right?

And yet Peter did not do that. And not only did Peter not do that- he actually rejected the entire notion that anybody's personal experience with Jesus was as reliable or more reliable than Scripture and he says that right here in this passage.

Now all through the centuries- the Bible has had many formidable critics and enemies. Attacks on the truthfulness and reliability of the inspired word of God reached its zenith during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century during a time of the so-called, "Enlightenment". And during that period- a man named, Hayden V. White articulated the climate of that era as follows:

"The Enlightenment attitude of mind was complex and internally varied, but it can be characterized roughly as a dedication of human reason, science, and education as the best means of building a stable society for free men on earth. This meant that the Enlightenment was inherently suspicious of religion, hostile to tradition, and resentful of any authority based on custom or faith alone. Ultimately the Enlightenment was nothing if not secular in its orientation; it offered the first program in the history of mankind for the construction of a human community out of natural materials alone- absent the Grace and Word of God." ("Editor's Introduction," in Robert Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition* [New York: Harper & Row, 1967], ix; cited in Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, revised and expanded [Chicago: Moody, 1968, 1986], 139)

Through their writings and the promotion of their secular ideas, pagan, atheistic, and godless philosophers brought forth a whole host of terrible ideas that we are suffering from in our day like:

- ✓ Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679; materialism)
- ✓ Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677; rationalistic pantheism and naturalism)
- ✓ David Hume (1711-1776; skepticism and antisupernaturalism), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804; philosophical agnosticism)

- ✓ Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834; romanticism and positive theology)
- ✓ Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831; philosophical idealism and the dialectical process [thesis, antithesis, and synthesis])

All of these doctrines of devils did much to undermine and destroy confidence in the infallibility of Scripture and a Biblical understanding of the nature of Truth.

Those Enlightenment philosophies also paved the way for theological liberalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries to infiltrate the Church and become the norm for many in the modern Church:

- ✓ Albrecht Ritschl, 1822-1899
- ✓ Adolf von Harnack, 1851-1930
- ✓ Soren Kierkegaard, 1813-1855
- ✓ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, 1844-1900
- ✓ Rudolf Bultmann, 1884-1976
- ✓ Martin Heidegger, 1889-1976
- ✓ F. C. Baur, 1792-1860
- ✓ Julius Wellhausen, 1844-1918

But God was faithful to raise up numerous men- who saw the great threat and rose up to not only challenge these men and their false teaching- but to offer reasoned and Biblical responses to their error. Men like:

- ✓ Francis Turretin (1623-1687)
- ✓ Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)
- ✓ Charles Hodge (1797-1878)
- ✓ Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921)
- ✓ J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

These heroes of the Faith tirelessly and consistently defended Scripture's sufficiency and trustworthiness. Those men and other God-honoring teachers firmly supported the Reformation's view of the supremacy of God's Word, which is summarized by Bush and Nettles:



“The Reformers believed Scripture to be God's Word written. It was trusted, not doubted. It was studied, not ignored. It was taken as the final authority with regard to those matters on which it spoke or made affirmations. God had not revealed everything. The Bible did not expressly contain all the truth that could be known. But what the Bible did teach was believed to be completely trustworthy. Truth in any other area would not contradict biblical truth. Starting from Scripture, one could find the true knowledge of reality.” (L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible* [Chicago: Moody, 1980], 175)

What the Apostle Peter wrote right here in **2Peter 1:16-21** is foundational to the Reformers' understanding of Scripture and clearly declares that in the Bible- believers have an accurate, written Revelation of God's Truth. Peter echoed the psalmist's declaration:

#### **Psalm 19:7b**

**The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple**

God Himself- through the prophet Isaiah, said this about both the reliability and impact of His Word:

#### **Isaiah 55:10&11**

**10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;**

**11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.**

Now in verse 16- Peter tells us why this reminder is so weighty. Let's read that verse again together.

#### **2Peter 1:16**

**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.**

In other words- Peter is saying here in this verse that the reason his reminder about the precious and very great Promises of God (which

are all summed up in Christ's second coming) that he wrote about back in verse 4- is so important for us- is because it is true. And he says here that what he tells us is *not* based on a myth or on cleverly devised tales- but is based on an eyewitness account of Christ's Majesty.

So like John and the other New Testament writers- Peter is not telling us about something that somebody else told him about and he is not telling u something that he made up in his own mind- but Peter is writing here about an event that he saw with his own eyes.

Now there are three important observations to make here:

1. The word "**coming**" in verse 16 does *not* refer to Christ's *first* Coming to the earth- but rather His *second* Coming. The Greek word *parousia* refers to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ-18 times throughout the New Testament and not a single time to the First Coming. The same word is used in **2Peter 3:4&12** where it certainly refers to Jesus' Return and not His first Advent.

2. The "**power**" and "**coming**" of Jesus Christ were part of Peter's earlier teaching to these same people. In verse 16- Peter says that he has already "made it known" earlier. So Christ's Power and His Return to this earth are not peripheral bits of information- tacked on at the end- but rather essential Truths that should take center stage in our minds and hearts. Jesus Christ has all Power and Authority, and He is Coming back to this earth.

One of the marks of a living breathing Biblical faith is that we expect and speak often about the personal, visible return of the God-man Jesus Christ with great anticipation and joy. The Second Coming is at the very heart of our faith- and our confidence in it should be the faith of our heart. We should long for it and speak about it often.

3. The confidence in Christ's future Coming in great Power and Glory is based not on a myth- but on an actual eyewitness experience of His Majesty at some point in time. In other words- this really happened. It is an historical fact- not merely a belief.

So what we need to take away from this is that the main difference between mythical speculations of all of the earths' false religions and Christian Faith are the facts of history. Peter says here

that our doctrines are not the result of clever inventions by religious geniuses. They are the result of historical truth and observation of historical facts.

This is why *knowledge* plays such a crucial role for Peter. Notice what he already taught earlier in this same Chapter:

Verse 2 "Grace be multiplied to you in the *knowledge* of God."

Verse 3: "His divine power has been given to us . . . through *knowledge*."

Verse 5: "Make every effort to add to your virtue *knowledge*."

Verse 8: "If you have these things, you will not be unfruitful in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (see also 2:20; 3:18).

So full-blooded Christian faith does not flourish in ignorance. God does not want His people to be ignorant. Everywhere that Truth abounds- knowledge always increases. It is the sects that flourish in ignorance. Heresies multiply in the dark. Cults thrive in ignorance. Doctrines of demons do their best work when people are ignorant of the Truth. And in those nations today that are dominated by Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism or Taoism or Humanism or other Man-made "isms"- ignorance and darkness and violence and destruction abound.

But all through history- two things have always followed in the wake of Christian Evangelism:

- ✓ Hospitals
- ✓ Schools

So what Peter is teaching here is that if your faith- if what you believe in and what you place your hope in and what you place your confidence in- if what you hold to and what orders your life is not grounded in reliable observations of historical reality and facts- then your faith is nothing more a "cleverly devised myth" and unworthy of acceptance- no matter how passionately you may believe in it. Now let's read verses 17&18 again together:

## **2Peter 1:17&18**

**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.**

Now here in verses 17 and 18- Peter tells us in particular what historical event has given him such confidence in Christ's Power and Promises and His Second Coming- namely, his own personal eyewitness experience with James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36**).

Now you recall from the last 4 weeks- how we learned that these three men went up to pray with Jesus, and while they were there- Jesus was transfigured before them in great Light and Glory, and then from the overshadowing cloud- God spoke of His Son.

Peter is telling us, “*We were physically and literally on that mountain at that time; and we literally heard God’s Voice; and we literally saw the Glory of Jesus.*”

And so based on that moment- and because God moved on Levi and John Mark and Dr. Luke and Peter to write about it- the entire world has an idea about what Power and Glory and Authority Jesus will return. The eyewitness experience of Jesus' Transfiguration was a preview of the Glory of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Now what is interesting is that this is not the only time Peter saw something. He *could* have written about how he saw Christ after his Resurrection, or how he saw Jesus bodily and literally and physically ascend into Heaven. But he didn't write about that here because in neither of those events was Jesus appearing in His *Majesty* as verse 16 talks about. And it is the Majesty and the Greatness of Jesus' Return that Peter wants to remind us of.

Now notice back in verse 4- the Apostle refers to *precious* and *very great* (or magnificent) Promises. And thirty years after this Event happened- the Revelation of the Majesty of Jesus Christ fills the mind of Peter with awe, and he wants more than anything to share the hope of that vision with his readers before he dies. Now look at verse 19:

### **2Peter 1:19**

***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.***

Now- as accurate as they were in declaring the Truth- in His Wisdom- God did not want us to merely depend on the oral, eyewitness accounts of the Biblical writers. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit- God superintended the recording of all those experiences and thoughts in the inspired revelation of Scripture.

And Peter's own reply to those who would question the validity of his experiences is that believers have even a better source- an even more reliable and trustworthy source of Divine Truth than his own personal experiences- no matter how great those experiences might be- so he writes in verse 19:

***So we have the prophetic word made more sure...***

Many people in the modern church- if not most read this statement by Peter and take it to mean that it indicates that the Apostles' own personal experiences are what validate the Scriptures. In other words- what many believe and teach today is that it is them actually seeing Jesus in His Kingdom Glory on the Mount of Transfiguration that confirms the OT Prophets' predictions concerning the Messiah's Second Coming. But that is simply not true.

The literal rendering of this phrase in the original Greek language reads:

we have more sure the prophetic word

which teaches that as reliable and helpful as Peter's experience was- it is the **“prophetic word”** of Scripture that is **“more sure”** or “more reliable” or “more trustworthy”.

All 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 and is not aided by any human confirmation. So the correct way to understand this is that it is not Peter's personal experience that validates Scripture- but it is Scripture that validates Peter's experience.

For example- we cannot say and we must not believe that seeing an angel would make seeing angel's to be correct. What we must believe and what we must say is that it is what Scripture teaches about

that or any other subject that allows for our personal experience to be either true or false.

You see, because we are fallen- we have an enormous capacity to be deceived. We have the ability to hold to certain things with every ounce of strength and believe in them passionately and faithfully and yet be as wrong as we can be about them. The level of our passion does not make something that is false to be true. Believing in something our entire lives does not make that thing to be true. Something is only true if it is true and the length of time that we have held on to it or the amount of energy we have devoted to it- is irrelevant.

In addition- we must acknowledge that satan is a deceiver and does most of his work- not in spinning little girl's heads around and making them vomit green bile- but in putting forth doctrines and beliefs that are in opposition to what God has said. For example-

### **2Corinthians 11:13-15**

**13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.**

**14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.**

**15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.**

### **Jude 3-4**

**3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.**

**4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

### **1John 4:1**

**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

### **1Timothy 4:1**

**But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,**

**Matthew 24:4**

**See to it that no one misleads you.**

**2Timothy 4:1-5**

**1 I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:**

**2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.**

**3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,**

**4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.**

**5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

In each of these cases- it is not the personal experiences of the individual that will keep him from falling into error and being deceived by heretics and false teachers- but his knowledge of and his obedience to the Holy Bible. We must know that all through the ages- people are not deceived because they hold too strongly in false beliefs- but because that do not hold strongly enough in the Truth. We cannot stop people from teaching things that are false. But what we can do and what we must do is to teach the Truth in such a way and to such an extent that people who hear those lies will easily and quickly and completely reject them.

Now the “**We**” in verse 19 is *not* an emphatic pronoun as it is in verse 18- where it refers to Peter, James, and John. So this usage refers generically to all believers. So as a group- believers possess the Word- which is the Source of God's Truth that is far more reliable than their collective personal experiences- even as Apostles.

**2Corinthians 12:1**

**Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.**

Here the Apostle Paul desired to defend his Apostleship- but later on in **2Corinthians 12:5**- he admits that personal visions and experiences- even of Heaven- are not substantial or even helpful as

defenses of God's Truth. That is because all personal experiences- no matter how glorious they may appear- are all unverifiable, unrepeatable, and incomprehensible. But as we study the New Testament- we discover that if any personal experience was used by the Apostles to verify their Divine Calling- it was their unbelievable suffering- and not their visions or revelations. Paul actually preferred to defend his Apostleship with his suffering rather than with his supernatural visions. And so when the New Testament writers wrote about Christ and His promised Return- they confirmed it with the Truth of Old Testament Scripture- rather than anything they personally saw or heard or received.

Therefore- it was not the Apostles' own personal experiences but the inspired and inscripturated Record of Christ's Life and Words and Acts- penned by the Spirit-directed writers and contained in the New Testament- which validated the Old. That validation fit the Jews' beliefs regarding the supremacy of written revelation, as Michael Green explains:

“The Jews always preferred prophecy to the voice from heaven. Indeed they regarded the latter, the *bath qael*, "daughter of the voice", as an inferior substitute for revelation, since the days of prophecy had ceased. And as for the apostles, it is hard to overemphasize their regard for the Old Testament. One of their most powerful arguments for the truth of Christianity was the argument from prophecy (see the speeches in Acts, Rom. XV, I Peter II, or the whole of Heb. or Rev.). In the word of God written, they sought absolute assurance, like their Master, for whom "it is written" sufficed to clinch an argument. . . . [Peter] is saying "If you don't believe me, go to the Scriptures". "The question", says Calvin, "is not whether the prophets are more trustworthy than the gospel." It is simply that "since the Jews were in no doubt that everything that the prophets taught came from God, it is no wonder that Peter says that their word is more sure". (*The Second General Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], 87)

The expression “**the prophetic word**” in Peter's day did not refer to ecstatic utterances that have become the norm in many modern Churches but rather dealt with the entire Old Testament. The Old Testament was considered to be prophetic in that it looked forward to the arrival of the Messiah who would bring Salvation through the New



Covenant. In our day- this expression extends beyond the passages of predictive prophecy in the Old Testament to include all the inspired Word- which in general- anticipated the coming of Messiah, as Paul made clear when he wrote:

**Romans 16:25-27**

**25** Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

**26** but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith;

**27** to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Jesus Himself affirmed that reality by saying in **John 5:39**:

**You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;**

And while it is true that the Lord was primarily speaking of Old Testament Scripture here- His Words are not limited to that. Scripture is Scripture, and what is true of the Old Testament is also true of New Testament Scripture. Now look again at **2Peter 1:19**:

**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.**

So Peter asserts that his readers would **do well to pay attention** to the **prophetic word**. In other words- if they were going to be exposed to the subtle errors of the false teachers- it was very important that they know and carefully heed Scripture- so that they could reject those false teachings.

And 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 in **Psalms 199:105**:

**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path**

The Greek word for “dark” in verse 19 means: "dry," or "parched," or "dirty," or "murky." So 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. So again- Peter de-emphasizes his own personal experiences and lifts up the always trustworthy testimony of written Scripture.

So here Peter likens Scripture to a lantern that provides light to a dark and sinful world. And the calendar of redemptive history moves toward a “**day**” that God has designated for the glorious event when Jesus Christ returns in full, blazing Splendor and Majesty.

And so Peter teaches here that when that “**day dawns**”, Christ will terminate the temporary earthly night of sin and spiritual darkness, returning in breathtaking Glory to establish His Kingdom. The Apostle John describes this in **The Revelation 19:11-16**:

**11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.**

**12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.**

**13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.**

**14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.**

**15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the <sup>2</sup>wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.**

**16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."**

And this bittersweet event marks the climax of God's Salvation Purpose and His Judgment on the unrepentant wicked of the world.

The term, “**Morning star**” literally means: *light bringer* and was the name for the planet Venus- which always *precedes* the morning sun in the sky, and is used here for Christ- Whose coming inaugurates the promised Kingdom.

Then Peter adds the fact that the star “**arises in**” the hearts of all of God’s elect. So Christ will return in a blaze of physically visible, all-

encompassing Light that will affect every human being either for eternal Blessing or eternal Cursing and will change the earth itself and will eventually destroy the universe and replace it with new heavens and a new earth.

Now the reference to the **“hearts”** here indicates that Jesus’ Return will also transform believers into perfect reflections of the Truth and Righteousness of Christ and make them into the Image of His Glory

So at that time- at His Second Coming- and not before- our Lord Jesus Christ will then replace the perfect temporal Revelation of Scripture with the perfect eternal Revelation of His Person. He will fulfill the written Word and write it forever on the hearts of the glorified saints. But until then we are to lean on the eternal Written Word of God and hold all of our personal experiences to the perfect Standard of Scripture and not the other way around!

Let’s pray