



## 2 Peter 1:16-21 (ESV)

### Christ's Glory and the Prophetic Word

<sup>16</sup>For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son,<sup>[a]</sup> with whom I am well pleased,” <sup>18</sup>we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup>And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, <sup>20</sup>knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup>For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

#### Footnotes

- a. 2 Peter 1:17 Or *my Son, my (or the) Beloved*

## 2 Peter 1:16-21 (HCSB)

### The Trustworthy Prophetic Word

<sup>16</sup>For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. <sup>17</sup>For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory:

This is My beloved Son.<sup>[a]</sup>  
I take delight in Him!<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>18</sup>And we heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with Him on the holy mountain. <sup>19</sup>So we have the prophetic word strongly confirmed. You will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dismal place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup>First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation, <sup>21</sup>because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

#### Footnotes

- a. 2 Peter 1:17 Other mss read *My Son, My Beloved*
- b. 2 Peter 1:17 = Christ's transfiguration; Mt 17:5

**1:16-18 Peter's Preaching Results from His Own Eyewitness Experience.** Peter recounts his personal experience with Jesus during the transfiguration ([Matt. 17:1-8](#); [Mark 9:2-8](#); [Luke 9:28-36a](#)). He contrasts this truth with man-made myths. The content of Peter's preaching is not of human origin but is based on direct revelation from God.

**1:16 cleverly devised myths.** "Myth" translates Greek *mythos*, "a story without basis in fact, a legend." The gospel of Christ was no myth, because the apostles **were eyewitnesses of his majesty**. Peter had observed the "majesty" of Christ firsthand at the transfiguration. He knew that Christ had come in **power**; he was no mere literary character invented for a mythological narrative. But Jesus' transfiguration also functions as a prelude and anticipation of his coming in glory. Readers learn from [3:3-4](#) that the false teachers believed that the second coming was also a myth, but Peter refutes this, underscoring the certainty of Christ's return.

**1:17 Majestic Glory.** A name for God the Father emphasizing the transcendence of his glorious presence (see [Ex. 33:12-23](#); [34:29-35](#); [2 Cor. 3:12-18](#)). At the transfiguration, God displayed the **honor and glory** of his **beloved Son**, a declaration by the Father of Jesus' divine sonship (cf. [Ps. 2:7](#); [Isa. 42:1](#); [Matt. 3:17](#); [Mark 1:11](#); [Luke 3:22](#)).

**1:18 we ourselves heard.** Peter emphasizes his own eyewitness status, and that of the other apostles, with regard to the transfiguration ([Matt. 17:1-8](#)); he personally heard the voice of the Father declare Jesus to be his Son. If someone else had written this letter in Peter's name (see [Introduction: Author and Title](#)), that person's claim of eyewitness status would have been a lie.

**1:19-21 Truth about Jesus Christ Anchored in the Prophetic Word of Scripture.** The truth about Christ is based on the prophecies of Scripture, something even more certain than (or just as sure as; see note on [v. 19](#)) eyewitness testimony.

**1:19 something more sure.** Some have understood "more sure" as an affirmation that the prophetic writings of the OT are even "more sure" than Peter's spectacular personal experience at the Transfiguration, thereby underscoring the complete reliability of written Scripture. Others have understood that Peter's experience of the Transfiguration provides confirmation of OT prophecy, making the already-sure prophecy of the OT even "more sure" as confirmed by the experience of the Transfiguration. In either case, believers are admonished to **pay attention** to the certainty of the **prophetic word**. In the contrast between "**we have**" and "**you will do well**," Peter is apparently emphasizing that the interpretation of the apostles ("we") is to be regarded as authoritative for the church ("you"). **Day dawns** and **morning star** both refer to the second coming. The day of the Lord is the day of final judgment and salvation, as the OT often teaches ([Isa. 13:6, 9](#); [Ezek. 13:5](#); [Joel 1:15](#); [Amos 5:18, 20](#)). Jesus' second coming will not only be an objective event in history, it will also rise **in your hearts** as the full light of Christ's presence transforms the hearts of his church to perfect purity.

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1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Peter 1".

**1:20** Two main views of this verse have been proposed: (1) The first view, the one most in harmony with the ESV rendering, understands the verse to explain the origin of the prophecies of OT Scripture, namely, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from** (i.e., originates out of) **someone's own interpretation** (i.e., from someone's individual understanding of events, visions, or other things), but rather, that "all prophecy of Scripture" came about from the Holy Spirit's leading (see [v. 21](#)). (This takes the Gk. word *ginomai* in its most common sense, as meaning "come into existence".) According to this first view, then, Peter is assuring his readers that all the OT Scriptures that pointed to Christ were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that the readers should pay close attention to them ([v. 19](#)), perhaps in contrast to false teachers who were denigrating Scripture. (2) The second view understands the verse to be speaking of *how* OT prophecies are to be interpreted, therefore some translations render this verse, "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of [or "for"] one's own interpretation." According to this second view, Peter is saying that one must interpret the OT Scriptures as they are interpreted by the apostles, and hence the interpretations of the OT by the false teachers should be rejected. Although this second view is possible, the first seems more likely, in light of the immediate context and Peter's overall emphasis on the authority of Scripture.

**1:21** No biblical **prophecy** was ever **produced** merely because a man wanted to prophesy (**by the will of man**). The prophecy in Scripture was given only by God through men, who "spoke" as they **were carried along by the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit was the active, revelatory agent working within the OT prophets and through their lives and circumstances as they prophesied. This is a key verse for the doctrine of Scripture, indicating that Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, but at the same time **men spoke** God's words, using their own personalities, knowledge, background, vocabulary, and style. "They were carried along" implies that the inspiration of Scripture was invisibly directed by the Holy Spirit, though without overriding the personalities of the human authors. Thus Scripture is fully the Word of God, even though it is recorded in the words of human beings. The exact way in which this was accomplished remains a divine mystery. What is true of OT prophecy is true of "all Scripture" (see [2 Tim. 3:16](#) and [note](#)).

**Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>**  
*2 Peter 1:16-21*

**1:16-18** Peter's words were not based on **cleverly contrived myths**. He emphasized that he had been an eyewitness of Jesus' transfiguration ([Mt 17:1-7](#); [Mk 9:2-9](#); [Lk 9:28-36](#)).

**1:19-21** Peter argued that the prophetic Scriptures affirmed the apostolic witness. In essence he was saying, "If you don't believe me, go to the Scriptures." The metaphor of the prophetic Scriptures as **a lamp shining in a dismal place** means that they act as a torch that shines in this dark world, exposing the dirt and defilement of sin and making it possible to get rid of it. Believers live by Scripture's torchlight **until the day dawns and the morning star rises**, which seems to refer to Christ's return. **In your hearts** may refer to the glowing hope that occurs in believers' hearts when they see clear signs of the Lord's return. Peter further explained that Scripture is trustworthy because it has a divine origin; **men moved by the Holy Spirit** wrote the prophetic statements of the OT.

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2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Peter 1".

## NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>

### 2 Peter 1:16-21

**1:16-18** Peter is referring to the Transfiguration where Jesus' divine identity was revealed to him and two other disciples, James and John (see [Matthew 17:1-8](#); [Mark 9:2-8](#); [Luke 9:28-36](#)).

**1:16-21** This section is a strong statement on the inspiration of Scripture. Peter affirms that the Old Testament prophets wrote God's messages. He puts himself and the other apostles in the same category because they also proclaim God's truth. The Bible is not a collection of fables or human ideas about God. It is God's very words given *through* people *to* people. Peter emphasized his authority as an eyewitness as well as the God-inspired authority of Scripture to prepare the way for his harsh words against the false teachers. If these wicked men were contradicting the apostles and the Bible, their message could not be from God.

**1:19** Christ is a "Morning Star," and when he returns, he will shine in his full glory. Until that day we have Scripture and the Holy Spirit to illuminate it for us and guide us as we seek the truth (see also [Luke 1:78](#); [Ephesians 5:14](#); [Revelation 2:28](#); [22:16](#)).

**1:20, 21** "Those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God" means that Scripture did not come from the creative work of the prophets' own invention or interpretation. God inspired the writers, so their message is authentic and reliable. God used the talents, education, and cultural background of each writer (they were not mindless robots); and God cooperated with the writers in such a way to ensure that the message he intended was faithfully communicated in the very words they wrote.

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3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 2138-2139.

## Study and Discussion Questions



### Prophecy of Scripture - [2 Peter 1:12-21](#)

Topics: [Basics of the Faith](#), [Bible](#), [Death](#), [Doctrine](#), [Glory](#), [God](#), [Honor](#), [Inspiration](#), [Interpretation](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Prophecy](#), [Remembering](#), [Truth](#)

#### *Open It*

1. \*If you knew you were about to die and had time to make only one phone call or write one letter, whom would you contact? Why?
2. To what interesting event have you been an eyewitness?

#### *Explore It*

3. In what did Peter say his readers were established? ([1:12](#))
4. What did Peter think it was right for him to do? ([1:13](#))
5. What did Peter know that he would soon do? ([1:14](#))
6. What did Peter want his audience to be able to do after he had died? ([1:15](#))
7. What did Peter say he and others had not followed? ([1:16](#))
8. \*What gave Peter credibility? ([1:16](#))
9. What did God say about Jesus? ([1:17](#))
10. Who heard the voice of God? Where? ([1:18](#))
11. \*What did Peter tell his readers that they should do? ([1:19](#))
12. What did Peter want his readers to understand? ([1:20](#))
13. \*What makes prophecy special? ([1:21](#))

### *Get It*

14. About what do you need to be constantly reminded?
15. \*Why do we need to have our memory refreshed about biblical truths?
16. Why is it easy for us to forget truths that are important to us?
17. In what way are our bodies like tents?
18. How important to your faith is it that Peter (and other New Testament writers) were eyewitnesses of the life of Christ?
19. Why is it important to know that our faith is grounded in history?
20. \*How do you need to change your Bible study habits in light of Scripture's importance?
21. How do you think the Bible was written?
22. How should Peter's statements about the origin of Scripture impact our faith as well as our study of the Bible?
23. Why is it important to know about the origin of the Bible?
24. What is unique about Scripture?
25. How can we be confident that the Bible is the Word of God?

### *Apply It*

26. \*What portion of Scripture that you have neglected lately will you take the time to study this week?
27. How can you read the Bible differently this week in light of its importance?