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2 Peter 1:16 - 1:21



2 Peter - Steve Gregg

In this passage, Steve Gregg explores 2 Peter 1:16-21 and discusses the concept of eyewitness testimony versus scripture as reliable sources of truth. Peter's retelling of the Transfiguration is used as an example of possible literary and prophetic fulfillment. While some witnesses may have backed down on their testimonies, the proclamation of the prophetic word in scripture is deemed as solid truth. Gregg concludes by exploring the transition from chapter 1 to chapter 2 in terms of distinguishing true and false prophets.

Transcript

At this point we're turning to 2 Peter 1 verse 16. Reading verse 16 and following. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

I'm not sure what this means. I'm not sure what this means. Now the about is kind of interesting.

He says about the power and coming when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he's talking about the coming of Christ this is difficult because he certainly isn't talking about the first coming. It's not as if he has to affirm that Christ was born.

Everyone there knows that. Even the pagans know that. There's no question among historians and certainly not in that day either whether Christ had come So what does he mean by the coming? He says the coming and the power we've made known to you.

Many people think that he's referring to the coming of Christ in the transfiguration because he goes on to talk about that. He talks about the transfiguration there in verse 17. He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to him from the excellent glory.

This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. That's the voice that spoke on the Mount of Transfiguration. He makes it very clear that that's what he's talking about in verse 18.

We heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. We meaning Peter and two others. There were three there when Jesus was up on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Peter and James and John. The other nine were left at the foot of the mountain as the other three went up with Jesus and spent the night up on the hill where Moses and Elijah appeared. It's interesting how few of the details are given.

There's no mention here of the Moses and Elijah. In fact even the whole statement from heaven isn't given. The whole statement was this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased.

Hear him and the hear him part is omitted here but it's a very important part since Peter and the others were accustomed to hearing Moses and Elijah. That is the law and the prophets. They were accustomed to following the Torah which was given by Moses.

Sometimes the Torah was simply called Moses. It is written in Moses because Moses was the author and Elijah was counted by the Jews to be the chief of the prophets, the prince of the prophets and therefore Moses and Elijah appearing on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ represent the authority of the law and the authority of the prophets. And of course what they were doing according to Luke's version, this is recorded in all three synoptic Gospels, but in Luke chapter 9 it says they were discussing with Christ the exodus it says in the Greek, the exodus that Christ was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

They were therefore acknowledging the importance of what Christ was there to do and obviously giving their endorsement of what he was about to do. Peter on the mountain blurted out, Lord it's good for us to be here. Let's build three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.

And the gospel writers who record Peter making that statement, they give their own comment. They say Peter said that because he didn't know what to say. Peter often spoke up before he thought about what he wanted to say and it's not entirely clear why that statement would be wrong.

Why not? These guys are going to spend the night, let's build some shelters here. But the idea seems to be that Peter's saying, wow we've got three heavyweights here, let's have a camp meeting, let's listen to Moses, let's listen to Elijah, let's listen to Jesus, we'll just have a camp meeting. We'll just keep Moses and Elijah and Jesus around.

But when Peter said that, a cloud came down and Moses and Elijah disappeared. And according to the records, only Jesus was left there. And that's when the voice spoke and said, this is my son, in whom I will please hear him.

Which of course, in the absence of Moses and Elijah in that setting, hear him means

listen to him now. You're no longer under the authority of the law and the prophets as you were in the Jewish religion. You're now going to be listening to Jesus.

Jesus is going to basically eclipse the authority of the Old Testament. That's what I think was going on there. That was the message.

Peter speaks here as if he was there. So he is one of the three, at least unless he's impersonating Peter. It's clear that the idea that he was on the mountain is consistent with the claim that he is Peter writing this.

And he says that this was the proclamation he made of the coming and power of Jesus. Now, why does he refer to that as the coming of Jesus? I'm not sure that I can answer that. But in every one of the gospels, that is of the synoptic gospels that record the transfiguration, this story is immediately preceded by a prediction that Jesus made.

In Matthew chapter 16 verses 27 and 28, Jesus said, For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and he will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And then it says, Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves.

And then follows the story of the transfiguration to which Peter alludes in 2 Peter 1. Now notice that just before this story, Jesus predicts that the Son of Man will come. And he said, Some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. This prediction, although it's worded a little differently in Mark and in Luke, the prediction is made and recorded immediately before giving the story of the transfiguration in all three of these Gospels.

It's connected chronologically as if it's immediately after it, although the Gospels don't make it very clear. It's about six or seven days later that this happened. That week is passed over without comment in order to tell of the transfiguration.

Many feel that this is a literary, a deliberate literary way of saying that the transfiguration was the fulfillment of that prediction. In favor of that, it's pointed out that Peter himself, when he's talking about the transfiguration, refers to this as the coming and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. So Jesus predicted some will see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom, and then the transfiguration occurs.

Peter, in talking about the transfiguration, says we were not following cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the coming and the power of Christ, for we witnessed his majesty. It does sound like Peter, maybe, you know, he does seem to be speaking about the transfiguration as in some sense a coming of Christ. Is that, though, the fulfillment of the prediction? There are many different ways in which the Bible

predicts the coming of the Lord, and they don't all refer to the same thing.

Of course, the coming of Christ that we are all very mindful of at this stage is the coming of Christ at the end of the world to raise the dead and to bring a new heavens, new earth, and you know, all that. The eschatological, final coming of Christ, that's the coming that we focus on. And lots of times when we read in the New Testament references to the coming of Christ, we immediately assume it's that coming and not some other.

But it's very clear from the prediction in Matthew 16, some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the coming of the Son of Man in his kingdom, that this can't be a reference to the second coming because, of course, all those people are dead and the second coming has not yet occurred. And for that reason, it is often suggested he is predicting not his second coming but the transfiguration. And this is entirely possible.

One thing it would illustrate is the language which we find at the end of Matthew 16, the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. If it is referring to the transfiguration, we have to say that language like that doesn't always refer to the second coming. It sounds like it does, but clearly in this case, it doesn't.

And that raises questions. And how would we know which times the coming of the Son of Man is mentioned and is referring to the second coming? And when might it be referring to something else? That's not the easiest question to answer, but usually context has a lot to do with it. Also, of course, many of the passages about the coming of Christ talk about the resurrection of the dead and the catching up of the saints.

That certainly has not happened. Whenever you find a passage discussing that, you certainly cannot be talking about anything other than the second coming, in my opinion. But there are other times when Christ is said to come, which is not talking about the second coming.

For example, in Matthew 10. In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the twelve, two by two, to evangelize certain villages. And in verse 23, he says, But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another.

For assuredly I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. Now, he's made it very clear. Don't dilly-dally here.

There's limited time. You will not reach all the villages before the Son of Man comes, so don't waste time in villages that are non-receptive. If they don't receive you, stamp the dust off, move along.

There's plenty of villages you've got to reach. And the idea is you need to have some measure of haste, at least not wasting time, because the time is limited for reaching all these villages. You won't reach them all before the Son of Man comes.

Now, if he's talking about his second coming, this would seem strange because there's been 2,000 years since this was uttered, and certainly that's enough time to reach all the villages of a small country like Israel. In fact, the Gospels reach most of the world now, to say nothing of the villages of Israel. So what does he mean by that? Well, it would seem probably that, as we saw in chapter 16, Matthew 16, 28, he's apparently referring to something closer in, a closer range, historically.

The Son of Man coming could mean basically just, you know, I'm going to meet you at such-and-such place at the end of this short-term outreach, our rendezvous point. You'll meet me there and it's going to be soon enough that you won't have reached all the villages of Israel. In any case, we would have, and that might be what he means, in any case, we'd have, again, another case where he talks about the Son of Man comes, where he's not necessarily talking about the second coming.

Now, one view that has been held is that the Son of Man coming can refer to the judgment upon Jerusalem in AD 70, in which case that would end the opportunities to do further evangelism in Israel, because that was the culmination of the Jewish war, where the Jews were all banished from Israel and scattered throughout the Roman Empire. If you're hoping to reach the villages of Israel, you better do it before then. But there's different views.

Someone suggested on the air just today or yesterday to me, maybe it's referring to the resurrection of Christ, Easter Sunday, Jesus coming in his kingdom, so to speak, coming in power out of the grave. Others believe it's a reference to Pentecost. So my thought is that you're going to find references to Christ's coming in different contexts and apparently meaning different things.

For example, in John chapter 14, Jesus is promising that he'll send the Holy Spirit, which occurred at Pentecost, of course. And he said in verse 15, if you love me, keep my commandments and I will pray the Father and he will give you another helper that he may abide with you forever. Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

Now, I will come to you in this context seems to mean I will come to you in the person of my spirit. So there's different ways that Jesus is said to come. You know, in the book of Revelation, he speaks to the different churches and several of them, he makes some kind of a statement about his coming to them.

For example, in Ephesians chapter 2, excuse me, Revelation chapter 2 to Ephesus and Revelation 2 5, he says, remember, therefore, from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its

place. So coming to remove the lampstand from the church of Ephesus, that's not the second coming. One way I know that is that the second coming hasn't happened yet and Ephesus is gone.

The city and the church are gone. They don't exist anymore. That lampstand is gone.

It's been removed. And so apparently it referred to some event that removed the church or the city or both simultaneously, maybe the Muslim invasion of the region. It's Turkey.

I'm not sure. But the point is, there are times when Jesus coming, he said, I will come to you and remove your lampstand. He's got a lot of different ways in which Christ is said to come.

And the same is true in the Old Testament of God. In Isaiah 19 1, which is a prophecy about the Assyrian invasion of Egypt, the entire chapter, Isaiah 19 is about the Assyrians invading Egypt. The way it's worded in the poetic language of the opening verse, it says, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and will come into Egypt.

God comes to Egypt. Well, really, it's the Assyrian armies coming to Egypt. God sent them.

It's the judgment of God and therefore it's God coming. So we have this language of scripture and we have Jesus predicting that some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. And then there's this reference to the transfiguration.

This has led many Christian scholars, most evangelical scholars probably, to believe that Jesus is predicting the transfiguration. I think another suggestion may even be more probable, but this one has some merit. And we find that Peter, in 2 Peter chapter 1, uses that word.

We made known to you the coming and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he talks about the transfiguration as if that was, as if he's referring to the transfiguration as a coming of Christ of sorts. It's not the second coming.

There's more than one way in which the coming of Christ is spoken of in the scriptures. And Peter uses the word coming here where he's not necessarily talking about, you know, the eschatological coming. Now back to 2 Peter 1. He tells how Jesus was glorified.

He received from the Father, in verse 17, honor and glory. The glory here would be no doubt radiance, because the description of the transfiguration, all the Gospels that record it tell us that Jesus shone, his face shone like the sun, and his garments shined like white, whiter than any launderer could get them. So the glory here is at least manifested through radiant light, but there's also the voice that came to him from the excellent glory.

That's from the radiant, he couldn't see God, of course. They didn't, they didn't see God there, but there's this radiant light apparently, and the voice came from there, saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. That same line, of course, was uttered at Jesus' baptism.

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the voice from heaven said, this is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. So Peter is not mentioning that, because the baptism wasn't apparently quite as much a manifestation of what he's talking about as the transfiguration was, and that is that God demonstrated that Jesus was his Son, declared him to be so, but also gave a visual to the disciples. Now, of course, there was a visual at the baptism, too.

There's the Spirit descending as a dove, and a voice from heaven made the same proclamation about Jesus as we read here, but it is possible that Peter wasn't present for that, and he is giving eyewitness testimony. That's the point he's making. We are eyewitnesses of his majesty, he says at the end of verse 16, and while God may have given supernatural visual attestation of Christ at his baptism, accompanied with the same kind of comment from a voice from heaven, Peter doesn't record that, because he wasn't there, perhaps, but he was here on the Mount of Transfiguration, and he's giving the eyewitness testimony.

It's very important to note that what we have in Scripture, in the Gospels, is eyewitness testimony. When I've debated atheists, like on the radio and elsewhere, and I mentioned, well, I believe the Gospel records are true, for one reason, the writers were willing to die for what they recorded. The atheist always says, well, people will die for all kinds of religions.

Muslim terrorists are willing to die for their religion, too, for their beliefs. And I say, well, I didn't say they died for their beliefs, I said they died for their testimony. People might believe any harebrained thing, whether they've got a basis for it or not, and some are crazy enough just to die for it, but these people didn't die for what they believed, they died for what they saw.

Any Muslim who gets in a jet and runs into a building, he may believe that he's going to some number of virgins up in the sky, and he believes the Muslim religion enough to die for it, but he doesn't know. He's going by faith alone in his prophet. He hasn't seen anything.

He can't testify that this is true as if he's a witness in court. The Apostles who wrote the Gospels, like Peter says, we were eyewitnesses. You might very well be deceived about what you believe and deceived enough to die so that your death doesn't prove anything about the validity of your statement.

You're sincere, but you're wrong. But if you're an eyewitness of something and you say,

I'd rather die than deny this because I saw it and I know it's true, that's not the same thing as someone being willing to die for their faith. That's dying for what you know to be true and what you're testifying as in a court of law to be true.

And in a court of law, though many kinds of evidences are often admitted, including circumstantial evidence and so forth, nothing is so good as eyewitness evidence. If someone saw it and can testify to it, that's the strongest evidence of something. We have that.

The life of Jesus and this particular incident in the life of Jesus where God glorified him and the supernatural glory was seen upon him in the voice from heaven. Peter insists, I was there. I saw that.

He says in verse 18, and we heard this voice. So we not only saw it, we were eyewitnesses, but we also heard it. We heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

So we're not just passing along a story. We're not following somebody else's cunningly devised fables. We saw this ourselves and we heard it with our own ears.

We were there. Now this is a very powerful testimony because we don't have any such testimony, for example, of the life of Muhammad, though he did live and we don't doubt that he lived. Yet we don't have eyewitnesses who saw, for example, that he received the Quran from the angel Gabriel, as he claimed.

No one was there to see that. Joseph Smith can claim that he got the gold tablets from Moroni, but no one was there to see it. Now it's true the Mormons have their witnesses who claim they saw the gold tablets.

They didn't see Moroni, and a lot of those witnesses later kind of backed down and said, well, we didn't exactly see him. But the point here is if somebody has not seen, they can believe, but if you've seen, you can testify. And Peter's giving testimony.

That's what Christians have that other, I mean, what could Buddha testify to? He got enlightened. A light went on in his head and he had these ideas. Wonderful, great ideas, but how could anyone testify whether they're true or not? A lot of people have ideas.

How could you know? But Christianity is based on the eyewitness testimony of Christ's life, Christ's glorification, and Peter emphasizes that that's what he's passing down, not something he heard from someone else or some fable that's been perpetrated that he's simply passing along. Now, verse 19, we also have the prophetic word made more sure, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. This first line, we have the prophetic word made the more sure.

Its actual wording is disputed. Modern translations read it like the New King James, which I just read. We have the prophetic word made more sure, as if he's saying we already had the prophetic word and we were pretty sure of it before, but now that we've seen Christ glorified, the prophetic word about him is made much more sure.

It confirms it to us. Now, the King James actually renders it differently, this first line, and in a way that is entirely legitimate. It's an alternative possible rendering.

In King James, it says we have the more sure word of prophecy. More sure than what? More sure than the eyewitness testimony he's just given. Now, depending on how Peter meant this, because it could be rendered either way.

We have the prophetic word made more sure, or we have the more sure word of prophecy. You see, there's a slightly different nuance there. If he's saying it as it is in the New King James here, we have the prophetic word made more sure.

He's simply saying the Word of God was sure, but it's even more sure in that we've seen it materialized before our eyes. We've seen the prophecies told us about Christ, about the glory that would come, but we've seen it, and that makes us even more sure than we were before of the prophecy. But the way it's in the King James, we have the more sure word of prophecy.

The word of prophecy is more sure than the eyewitness testimony I've just given you. We have the eyewitness testimony, and even more than that, even more sure than that, we have the word of prophecy. As if to say God's Word is even more reliable than what we claim to see with our own eyes.

God's prophecy is even more sure than what we can testify to with our own eyes, which would be stating a very high degree of confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures. Now Peter is going to go on and talk about in verses 20 and 21 why he has that high degree of confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures, but it is not entirely known which way Peter means it because the words can go either way. One thing he's saying at least is this, that we have not only the witness of the eyewitnesses, but we also have the witness of the Scriptures, the Old Testament prophecies.

And he says about the prophecies in verse 19, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place. Okay, the Word of God is like a light. David said that.

He said your word is a light, a lamp unto my feet, a light into my path. David said the entrance of your word gives light. There's no question about that.

God's Word is a light in a dark place. But notice he says this, you should give heed to the Word of Prophecy as a light in a dark place until, apparently another light overwhelms that, until the day dawns and the day star arises in your hearts. Now that's a very, very strange line.

Until the day dawns and the day star, or the morning star, arises in your hearts. Now in the book of Revelation, Jesus is called the morning star. And of course he is in our hearts, but to say the morning star is going to rise in our hearts.

See Revelation 22, 16, Jesus said, I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I'm the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star. Morning star, day star, King James says day star.

This is the star of the morning. Now the day star or the morning star is a term that was used in the ancient world for the planet Venus. Because you can see Venus sometimes shining on the horizon around daybreak.

Just because it reflects the light of the Sun in such a way that it's often possible to see this, looks like a star from here, but it's actually Venus. It's shining down near the eastern horizon at dawn. And the ancients called that the morning star.

It was not the same thing as the Sun, but it came along with the Sun. It accompanied the Sun. It received its light from the Sun by reflecting the Sun.

And Jesus is called the morning star in Revelation, but here Peter says the morning star is going to rise in our hearts. Now it's awkward because there's no such parallel language anywhere else in Scripture to know what he means by this. There's something we're looking forward to.

The rising of the day star, the dawning of the day. Well you'd think that was the second coming of Christ. And I'm quite sure it is probably associated with the second coming of Christ, but he doesn't say just until the Christ comes, but until the day star rises in your heart.

Something's taking place inside of you that has yet to happen. The dawning has to take place inside of you. Now there is one way to avoid the awkwardness of that wording, though it's not necessarily preferred by scholars.

It's just a suggestion some make because they find it strange, the wording here. And that is that they would put a period after until the morning star rises. Period.

And then in your hearts they make an introduction to the next verse. In your hearts knowing this first. So that they take the phrase in your hearts and put it as the beginning of the next sentence, not the end of the sentence where we have it in our Bibles.

Nonetheless there still is this reference to something called the rising of the day star and the the dawn. And the Bible in a number of places speaks of Christ's first coming and his second coming. Both are referred to as if they are the dawning of the day.

For example in Isaiah chapter 60 the imagery of a daybreak is this is used in connection

with the with Christ's coming. Some say it's his first coming, some say it's his second. I think a case could be made for either, but the interesting thing about it is in Isaiah 60 verse 4. Let's go with verse 1. Isaiah 60 and verse 1. Arise shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For behold the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the people but the Lord will arise over you and his glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles should come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. So this is like a sunrise.

It's like the glory of the Lord is rising and the light is going to be upon you. He's going to rise over you and the Gentiles will see your light. So the rising of the glory of the Lord upon you makes you light.

You reflect that light and the Gentiles shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Who's rising? God's people. It's a very again a very strange thing.

Now I personally think that Isaiah chapter 60 is probably talking about the first coming of Christ but it's very common to take it of the second coming of Christ. I'm not a hundred percent sure which it is but it is a coming of Christ certainly that is predicted here. And in Luke chapter 1 when John the Baptist was born his father Zechariah prophesied.

In Luke 178 Zechariah said, this is kind of in the middle of a sentence, he's giving this prophetic word about John the Baptist's birth and the significance of it. In Luke 178 Zechariah says, through the tender mercy of our God with which the day spring which means daybreak from on high has visited us to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death to God our feet into a way of peace. Now giving light to those who sit in darkness is what Jesus did.

It's an allusion to Isaiah 9 which says those who sat in darkness have seen a great light and that verse Isaiah 9 2 is also quoted in Matthew of reference to Christ's Galilean ministry. It actually says it was fulfilled so this light shining in darkness that the light arising on a dark land is at least applied in Matthew to the first coming of Christ and his ministry in in Galilee. Just so that you'll know where I'm talking about it's Matthew chapter 5 I believe or 4 yeah chapter 4. It says in verse 13 of Matthew 4 leaving Nazareth Jesus came and dwelt in Capernaum which is by the sea in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali and this is of course where he started doing ministry that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet and this was from Isaiah 9 the land of Zebulun in the land of Naphtali the way of the sea beyond the Jordan Galilee of the Gentiles the people who sat in darkness saw a great light and upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death light has dawned Jesus preaching in Galilee is said to be the dawning of a light John the Baptist father said the daybreak from on high has visited us the coming of Christ is the rising of the Sun now Jesus actually said we won't look at all these passages but you may recognize them Jesus said as long as I'm in the world I

am the light of the world he also said however to his disciples in Matthew 5 you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hid many times teachers have made the comparison I think probably legitimately that Christ and the church can be seen as depicted in the Sun and the moon and the relationship that the two have when the Sun is visible in the sky it's daytime when the Sun goes down at the end of the day it's night and the world can't see the Sun anymore but the moon is there the moon because it is not on the earth but it's up in the heavenly places with Christ as it were with the Sun it still sees the Sun when the world does not and reflects the light of the Sun back to the world so that at night there is light to the world that the moon provides it's not its own light it's simply a reflection of the Sun's light back to the world but of course the night is followed by another dawn another day when the Sun reappears and Christ said while I'm in the world I'm the light of the world well when he was here that was a day when he was born that was a day spring a daybreak that was a dawning of the day those who sat in darkness upon them the day has dawned Isaiah said but then he went away and we see him no more at least the world sees him no more but but we're seated with Christ in heavenly places the writer of Hebrews says we see Jesus and our seeing Jesus allows us to reflect him back to the world we don't have any light intrinsically ourselves but we reflect the light of Christ to the world during this time where he's not visible where he's out of sight this is the night remember Paul said in Romans 13 the night is far spent and the day is close at hand the day is when Jesus comes back Jesus was here it was day one now it's night there'll be day two when Jesus comes back there'll be another dawning now what happens when the dawn approaches if you happen to be looking at the horizon after a dark night you see long before the Sun appears there's some lightning of the sky because the Sun is thinking about showing up and you can see the black sky turns into blue sky dark blue then blue to light blue as you watch this the horizon becomes somewhat orange and then even yellow and then almost immediately after that you see the Sun itself appears the horizon lightens gradually and then the Sun himself is seen that's how a day dawns look at Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 18 Proverbs 4 18 says but the path of the just or the righteous is like the shining Sun that shines ever brighter unto the perfect or the complete day full day the way it reads in the New American Standard goes the the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until full day of course full day is when the Sun actually is visible what happens before that the light of dawn grows brighter and brighter until the Sun is appears when the Sun appears it's full day but prior to that it gets brighter and brighter if the light of dawn increases now what is likened to that light on the path of the righteous the Christian's life and path now with that in view consider Peter's words in 2nd Peter 1 and verse 19 where he says until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts Peter is looking forward to a day dawning as far as I'm concerned that's the second coming of Christ he's looking forward to the day dawned when Jesus was born that day ended when he left the night is here but there's gonna be another day dawning when Jesus comes back the Sun will be a visible again the world will not depend then as it does now on the light of the moon on the reflected light that the church gives but will be able

to see him as he is the Sun will be in full strength it'll be full day but what happens before full day well the light of the dawn grows brighter and brighter until full day there's a taking place and Peter may be associating that was something that goes on in us like the Proverbs in 418 says the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that grows brighter and brighter until the full day something's arising in us something's rising our heart what is it it's the glory of the Lord member Isaiah 60 rise shine for the light is coming the glory of the Lord has risen upon you Paul says that the glory of the Lord is to be seen in us we are being changed from glory to glory into that same image 2nd Corinthians 318 says Paul says in Romans 8 I think it's 18 he says the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in us the image of Christ in us I don't know exactly what to think about Peter's words here there are unique words they use imagery that's found elsewhere in the scripture but they it's nothing else in the scriptures quite like this statement when the day dawns the day star the morning star rises in your hearts and Christ perhaps it's like Paul said in Galatians 4 9 4 19 Paul said my little children in whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you that Christ is the church is supposed to be maturing into the fullness of measure the stature of Christ Paul said and so the church is supposed to become more Christ like when the light is getting brighter you're seeing something of the Sun itself but the Sun isn't visible as the day approaches I don't know what to think about Peter's words but it sounds like he's seeing something that takes place in us something takes place in the church as the end approaches not that we become more corrupt and more compromised but that we become our path becomes brighter and brighter until the full day more and more of Christ's likeness more more of the glory of the Lord arises these concepts are abstract and and therefore I'm not even sure if you say well what exactly do you mean I have to say I don't know exactly what I mean I don't know exactly what Peter means but he seems to speak of our dependence on the scriptures as a light that give us light in a dark place until this time well when will the scriptures be obsolete for us as a light only when Jesus is here I'm gonna be following the scriptures until Jesus shows up we won't need the scriptures then we'll have him but he says until the day dawns in the day star rising there's something Peter is thinking that he's not spelling out but it sounds like he's got a glorious image in his mind of what's going to happen in the hearts and the lives of the believers as the day of the dawning of the day is approaching that before Jesus himself is seen the church becomes more and more like him the light of Christ has seen more and more as the dawning of the day approaches maybe I'm seeing more than what Peter's saying but I suspect I'm seeing less my suspicion is he's he's actually alluding to more than I'm thinking about but I'm I'm curious I have to say I'm curious now he says in verse 20 knowing this first that is this is connected to us as paying heed to the prophecy the this prophecy of scriptures which you do well to take heed to well why would I take heed to it because I know this knowing this you will take heed to it knowing this that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation for the prophecy never came by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit now this statement no prophecy of scripture is of any private

interpretation has been badly interpreted the way it's worded sounds as if it is saying at least to some people's ears it sounds like it's saying don't interpret the Bible yourself it's not for private interpretation this is the way the Roman Catholic Church for centuries used this verse they basically argued that the layman should not read the scripture it'll only confuse him the scriptures are for trained theologians to handle too many things hard to understand after all didn't Peter say in chapter 3 some of things Paul wrote are hard to understand even Peter found them hard to understand apparently if Peter did what's the average schmuck who's just an ordinary street Christian gonna do when he's reads these hard to understand things it's dangerous you know all kinds of heresies going around so the Roman Catholic Church said let the church interpret the scripture for you let the Pope's and the bishops tell you what it means otherwise you get into trouble and in support of this they quoted this verse this is a Roman Catholic proof text for this don't read the Bible for yourself it's not for private interpretation it's for officials to interpret for his church officials now obviously Protestants don't agree with the Catholic notion about that but they do too in some cases I have found I mean they all agree that Luther had every right to read the Bible for himself and interpret it differently than the Catholics if he hadn't done that we'd have no Reformation and we're glad we had that so obviously to interpret the scripture differently than the Roman Catholics was something we celebrate in Luther and the other reformers but now that we have reformed denominations and present denominations sometimes the leaders say let us do the thinking for you believe it or not just the same thing the Catholics said and I and you often will find I don't know if you've ever been in church like this I have where the pastors if you if you're seeing something different in the scripture then their denomination teaches it they just say well the scriptures not for private interpretation now often Protestants and trying to make sense of this know that I mean Protestantism believes that we should read the Bible and study it for ourselves and how could you not interpret I mean you got how can you read anything without interpreting it if you read a newspaper article you've got to interpret the words what they mean the phrases that if the guy uses figures of speech you have to kind of sort it out and figure okay but this is what he's saying interpretation is what you do whenever you read anything if you're going to understand it interpretation really is just the process of transferring letters on a page into concepts that make sense that are intended by those letters in talking to Jehovah's Witnesses I often have heard them say we don't interpret the scripture we just take it literally well that means you interpret it literally it's an interpretation nonetheless I don't think you do and or sometimes I don't think you should be as quite as literalistic but they're the truth is to translate printed letters on a page to thoughts and concepts and head requires a process called interpreting it might be that you give it a literal interpretation or figurative interpretation or some other kind of interpretation but it's interpreting how could anyone be forbidden to interpret the scripture for themselves and so one of the approaches that sometimes people use is private interpretation sometimes Protestants substitute that with the word isolated that is you don't want to interpret the scripture in an isolated context either they mean you alone but you need the body of Christ to help you interpret

it so that it's a joint effort of the body of Christ to do the scriptural interpretation or sometimes they mean you don't take any scripture in isolation and interpret it without reference to other scriptures you need to take it in context of the whole Bible so you don't interpret any prophecy of scripture isolated from other context in the Bible on the subject all of these ways I've just surveyed about four different ways people have understood this all of them are wrong because Peter's not talking about the legitimacy of interpreting the scripture he's not talking about who should or who should not or how they should or should not interpret he's not talking about interpreting the scripture he doesn't say no prophecy of scripture is for anyone's private interpretation he says no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation of means from he's not talking about what you should or should not do with the scripture he's saying where the scripture did not come from and you can see he elaborates on it in the very next verse he says for prophecy never came by the will of man it didn't come that way it wasn't that the Prophet Isaiah interpreted things for himself as to the direction he thought things were going to go it's not as if Ezekiel or Jeremiah looked at the trajectory of things that I am in my interpretation I think it's going to end up over here and so he wrote down his interpretation now it wasn't any human interpretation that got written down there the statement about no prophecy of scripture is of means from any human interpretation a private interpretation of the of the writer and therefore the question of whether you should interpret it is not even on the table it's not even being addressed the question here is where did scripture come from notice he says knowing this first and that is modifying this the statement in the previous verse that you must take heed to the prophecies as unto a light that shines you take heed knowing what not not knowing that you're not supposed to interpret them knowing where they came from you heed them because of their origin you heed them because they're not of human origin their divine origin that's why you heed them how would the statement knowing that you're not supposed to interpret the scripture for yourself how could that be part of the reason why you would seek light from it he's saying you follow the scriptures as a light because you know God inspired it it's not from anyone's interpretation the prophecy never came by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit now this is a very famous proof text for the inspiration of scripture the other most famous one is of course 2nd Timothy 3 verses 16 and 17 in 2nd Timothy 3 16 Paul said all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching for reproof for correction for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly equipped for every good work so all scripture is given by inspiration of God Paul says Peter says something similar here no prophecy ever came by the will of man but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit when people say as some skeptics do well the Bible is only written by man well first of all who'd you want it to be written by you know I mean I remember David Hunt said when he was in college he had a professor a skeptical professor of course and this professor said those things that Jesus said well those are just the opinions of one man and Dave said he rose raisins well could you tell me whose opinions are those things that you're telling us you know what are where your

your opinions come from an angel you know an alien mind or what I mean sure what what I tell you is my opinion I'm a man and yes scriptures were written by men but they weren't just writing their opinions and someone who says I don't believe the scripture because they're just written by men well what you want them written by women or what by chimpanzees what who do you want to write these down the question is not who was the scribe who wrote them down the question is who's expressing their mind in it it says these were holy men they weren't just men they were holy men there's a difference between a holy man and and the average man in fact the word holy is almost the opposite of the word average the average man is an ordinary man a holy man is set apart by God for himself from the average man from the ordinary anything that's holy is set apart by God so the men that wrote the scriptures were set apart by God for that test now either God made a good choice or bad choice but he made the choice if you don't say God made a bad choice then you can think these guys were incompetent to represent him and to write what he told him or you could be more reasonable and say God knew who he could trust he picked the men he wanted to use he set them aside for that purpose these were a holy men of God besides that they were speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit this word moved the Greek word means carried along carried along by the Holy Spirit it's often pointed out that this same word is used in Acts chapter 28 when Paul is in the ship and the storm is battering the ship and they threw the tackle overboard and they lightened the load and so forth and it says they were carried along says the ship was carried along by the storm this idea is of course that the ship was not determining where it was going the storm was determining where it was going they were being carried along as a ship in a storm is carried by the force of the storm this is the same verb here these men they spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit by the wind of the Spirit it was the Holy Spirit who is determining what they would write they weren't making this up this was not their own private opinions and interpretations of things this was what God inspired them to write they were carried along by the Spirit and they were holy men now they were men and if you think that disqualifies them like I said well what species came up with the opinions you trust you know what were the atheist philosophy come from the Buddhists or Hindu you know aren't those aren't those writings coming from him isn't Richard Dawkins a man why do people give credit to what he has to say he's just a man just written by a man and he's not a holy man and he is not carried along by the Holy Spirit given the whole range of literature expressing views on things calling for my loyalty to believe and follow give me the things written by holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit any day over the writings of people who are just ordinary men who aren't moved by the Holy Spirit and usually just move by their own ignorance and their own prejudices or maybe not so ignorant but still not inspired so Peter says we need to be loyally following the scriptures knowing that they are inspired by God now I would say this I need to close here but just to be technically accurate Peter doesn't specifically mention the written scriptures though he certainly has that in mind he's actually talked about the prophetic word which of course even before it was written was uttered Isaiah spoke verbally his process or did

Jeremiah and they spoke their prophecies and he does specifically in verse 21 say they holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit technically doesn't mention that they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit that they spoke there what they spoke though was written down we presume by competent scribes or by even themselves later so it's a moot point you know what are the written scriptures the Word of God well they were the Word of God spoken by the mouth of the prophets and insofar as they were written down accurately as they were spoken then there's no problem here the written scriptures are not so much the Word of God as they're the inscripturated Word of God the Word of God came through the mouth of the prophets they were written down inscribed and so we have the inscripturated Word of God we could say that's what we call it scripture but the point is Peter is emphasizing not even so much the writing but the speaking that God used human beings holy men as his mouthpieces his Holy Spirit moved them move their thoughts influenced what they believed and said and so what they said is reliable it comes from God not from man and that's the emphasis of those last two verses of this chapter now in chapter 2 which we won't go into right now you'll notice he begins by saying but there were also false prophets among the people that is we've been talking about the true prophets the holy prophets the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit but they weren't the only prophets in Israel there were false prophets too likewise you're gonna have false teachers among you he says and then he goes on to the description of that but that's how he transitions from the end of chapter 1 to chapter 2 I've been talking about the prophets who are the true prophets well there were false prophets too and you need to watch out for people because not everyone who says they're a prophet or a teacher is the real thing or is reliable and so he gives ways to recognize the false teachers in chapter 2