

# Ministry of Grace Church

## 2 Peter 1:16-21 - Speaker Notes



### Background

Last time we looked into 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter we were reminded again to develop certain Christian character qualities. Peter instructed us not to expect these things to just happen by themselves, he said we are to put every ounce of effort into developing them. These include faith (trusting God more in our everyday lives), morality (doing what is right and decent in all situations), knowledge (learning more about God and His Word), self-control (doing the things that please our God and learning to not do the things that do not please Him), perseverance (hanging-in there especially when the weight of life gets heavy), godliness (being an example to others of what a Christian looks and acts like), brotherly kindness (doing nice things for those around you), and agape love (putting the needs and desires of others ahead of your own).

Do you remember why we are told to develop these character qualities? Because this life is not our real life. The analogy that I have used before is that this life is only the audition for our real life. One day (a day that is coming ever closer with each new dawn) we will end our audition here and we will be ushered into the eternal kingdom where the efforts of our audition will determine the amount of splendor with which we are clothed as we enter into that kingdom.

Peter may have been impetuous and may have had the tendency to insert his foot every time he opened his mouth, but in spite of this he had learned to live in obedience to his calling from God. He wasn't ready to retire until he had again reminded others to be strengthened in the truth. He knew his death was near, but he wasn't about to let anything get in the way of his serving God with every ounce of effort that he had left.

Now, he goes on to explain the certainty of his faith and why we, too, can be certain that Christ will return just as He promised.

### 2 Peter 1:16-18

**For we did not make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly devised myths, but being eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"— and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.**

One of the foundational truths of Peter's ministry is the fact that Jesus Christ will return soon. This is a doctrine that was preached by all the apostles and is one that was ridiculed by detractors of Christianity from the very beginning. In response to this opposition and by way of emphasizing the points he has been making since the beginning of this letter, Peter now offers evidence of why he believes so strongly that Christ will, indeed, return again soon.

He starts off by telling his readers that the things that he has been witness to in the past were in truth, the power and presence of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory. Peter declares that his previous testimony of Jesus's first coming in the flesh and of His death and resurrection were not cleverly devised myths, but true events. When Peter refers to the power of Jesus, he uses the Greek word *dunamis*, from which we get our English word dynamite. Although the English word implies strength in action, this Greek word literally means "possessing great ability."

The words "cleverly devised" come from *sophidzō*, meaning "to make wise" or "to devise skillfully." It refers to something that is carefully put together with the skill of a wise master craftsman. And the word "myths," from *muthos*, means "that which is fabricated by the mind, in contrast to that which is real and true." In other words, the disciples who testified of these facts did not make-up the stories of these events. That is, the stories of Christ's resurrection and His coming again are not made-up at all. Instead, he says that he and the others were "eyewitnesses." He is referring to the time when he actually observed the majesty of Jesus Christ as He was transformed before him, James, and John on the mountain top. And – they were not just eyewitnesses, they were ear witnesses as well. They heard the very voice of God, the Father proclaiming His satisfaction with the Son.

And because Peter had personally experienced the majesty and glorious splendor of the Savior, he was absolutely convinced of Christ's promised return. He tells us that this return will not simply be a casual experience any more than the one that he witnessed on the mountain top. Peter refers to it as, "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In fact, Christ's return will be with such a demonstration of power that no one will be able to deny it.

He tells us here that Jesus received honor and glory when he showed his divinity to the disciples on the mount of transfiguration. The word "honor" is a translation of *timē*, which also occurred earlier in this chapter. It refers to something "having value." In verse 4 it was used in reference to the promises that have been given to us and there it was translated as "precious," i.e. very valuable. In the current verse it is translated as "honor." According to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, the word honor means, "High respect, or esteem as that shown for special merit" but this doesn't quite carry the same sense as the Greek word. *Timē* expresses more than respect or esteem, it is recognition of His value in the order of creation, He is preeminent, that is, He is the highest, He is the most valuable, and He is the absolute greatest!

The word "glory" is from the Greek word *doxan*, which refers to "glory, dignity, or honor." There is a subtle but distinct difference in these two words. Glory refers to His worth as a being and honor refers to recognition for what He has done.

According to Peter, there was an audible voice carried forth from the majestic glory saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased ..." Jesus received glory in that God the Father referred to Him as "my Son" (the Son of God), and He received honor from God the Father when He proclaimed, "with him I am well pleased."

Here is what Matthew said about this event in his gospel account:

And six days later Jesus brought with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three booths here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" (Matthew 17:1-5)

Wow! What an event! The word "transfigured" is from the Greek word *metamorphoō*, which is a compound word made up of *meta*, which means "a change of place or condition" and *morphoō*, which means "to form something." So, Matthew is telling us that he didn't simply change appearance, he actually changed form on that mountaintop.

And the disciples actually heard the voice of God. The word translated "voice" is *phōnē*, which comes from the verb *phaō*, meaning "to shine." So *phōnē* actually means "to audibly shine forth." The Greek historian, Plutarch, calls it "that which brings light upon that which is thought of in the mind." So, not only did these three disciples see the shining glory of the Son of God revealed, but they also heard the revelation of the shining voice of God the Father.

Peter refers to the mountain as the “**holy mountain.**” The word translated “**holy**” is *hagios*, which comes from the word *hagos*, meaning “an awful thing.” Not awful as we often think of it as “terrible” or “very bad,” but awful as something that fills one with awe and wonder. It is a word that means “morally pure and set-apart from sin.”

As Peter continues his description of the transfiguration of Christ, he makes three assertions. First, that he, along with James and John, heard the voice of God the Father. It was not merely an inarticulate noise; they heard His words giving glory and honor to the Son. Just as the Israelites heard the actual voice of Almighty God at Mt. Sinai in Exodus chapters 19 and 20, Peter and the others heard the actual voice of God.

The second assertion that Peter makes is that the three disciples were “with Him.” Yes, they were physically with Jesus, but there is another sense in which they were with him. They were with him in spirit through their belief in him. They were his disciples, his followers, desirous of learning more about Him. Saying that they were with Him is not just hyperbole, but one of the “black and white” issues of the Scriptures. Christ, Himself, said it this way in **Luke 11:23**,

**He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.**

You are either with Him, that is, you believe in Him, you follow Him, and you obey Him, or you are against Him. There is no middle ground, there is no half-way Christianity. Either your faith is real, or it is pretend. That’s one of the points that Peter has been making throughout this chapter. We need to show our faith, let it shine forth like the voice of God by diligently working on developing the Christian character qualities he outlined in the early verses of this chapter.

The third assertion that Peter makes in this section is regarding the place where they were. He calls it the holy mountain, not because the mountain itself possessed any special moral purity, but because of the presence of the Almighty. We think of a temple or a church, particularly the “sanctuary” where church services are held, as a holy place. In fact, the very word “sanctuary” is a translation of the Greek word *hagia* meaning an awful (holy) place. It is not a place of holiness and awe because the physical structure possesses any holiness, but because of Whose presence is there. It is this presence of the Holy God that makes something, or someone, holy.

## **2 Peter 1:19-21**

**And we have as more sure the prophetic word, 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. Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes by one’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever made by the will of man, but men being moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**

The words “**more sure**” come from the Greek word *bebaios*, the root of which is *basis*, meaning “a firm footing or foundation.” This is the same root as the word we saw back in verse 10 where Peter told us to “**make our calling and choosing sure.**” The word in today’s verse is expressed as a comparative. Therefore, it means “firmer footing,” or “more foundational,” or “more certain.”

A literal translation of this passage reads, “and we have the prophetic word more firm.” It appears that what Peter is saying is, because of the coming of Jesus in his first advent, confirmed by his transfiguration, witnessed by only a few people, the words of prophecy concerning his second coming are made even more firm, more steadfast, and more believable. That is why Peter follows this phrase up with, “**to which you do well to pay attention**” The prophets have foretold both the first and second coming of the Messiah, and we need to take heed regarding those prophecies.

He compares these prophetic messages to a light that shines in the darkness. At night, when there is no light from the sun and very little from the moon, we use a flashlight to see where we’re going, but it’s not the same as daylight. That’s exactly what Peter is saying. Prophecy is only a partial illumination of things to come, and it does not make all things clear, yet it does give us a glimpse of what is to come. Peter is saying that we can believe what prophecy says regarding the second coming of our Lord because of His first coming. Having perfectly satisfied all of the predictions of His first coming as the Lamb, He will satisfy all the predictions of His second coming as the Lion, the King!

Peter says, “**Know this first of all.**” Literally, the Greek text reads, “knowing this first” (that is, first in importance). He has been talking about the fact that we can more firmly believe prophecies about Christ’s second coming because He has already demonstrated the veracity of the prophecies concerning His first coming. First, though, lest we get carried away and try to make other prophecies mean what we want them to mean, Peter gives us some instruction on how prophecies come about.

He uses a construction that would appear awkward to us today but, I believe, for a very good reason. He literally says,

**all prophetic scripture does not come into being by personal interpretation.**

He wants to make sure that we understand that he is talking about all of the holy writings of Scripture. With many of the English translations that we have, there is an exclusionary phrase (**no prophecy of Scripture**), but with Peter’s original writing there is an inclusionary phrase (all prophetic scripture.) It is a subtle difference, but one that is important in that what he has to say applies to all scripture.

Where most people get off track on this verse is that they apply the “interpretation” to the reader, but that’s not what the verse is talking about. It is talking about the one proclaiming the prophecy, not the one listening to or reading it. Peter is saying that those who have proclaimed the prophecies did not give them their own meaning. Rather, as he tells us in the following verse, they (the prophets) were carried along in their message by the Holy Spirit of God! In other words, the prophets did not determine their message and then proclaim it. They were, rather, controlled by the Holy Spirit as they proclaimed their message.

In **2 Timothy 3:16**, the Apostle Paul said it this way, “**All scripture is God-breathed...**” (LSB) or “**All scripture is inspired by God...**” (NASB). The word here translated “God-breathed” or “inspired,” is *theopneustos*, a compound word made up of *theos*, which means “God” and a form of *pneō* which means “to breathe” or “to blow.” So - whether the prophet is “**carried along by the Holy Spirit**” or their message was “**God-breathed**,” the source of their message and the content of the message are from God, while the prophet or author is simply the channel through which the message is conveyed.

The Bible is not just a collection of stories and predictions written by a bunch of different men over the span of several thousand years. It is the writing of men who were controlled by the Holy Spirit of God and it is, therefore, without error (in the original manuscripts) and perfectly accurate in its predictions of future events. And though not all of the prophecies in the Bible have come true (yet), not a single one that has come to pass has been wrong! That’s pretty amazing for a book that has been penned by so many human authors (under divine control) over such a long period of time. Only by the power of God could this be accomplished.

## **So What?**

This section of Peter’s second letter is focused on prophecy. The Old Testament prophets proclaimed clearly that the Messiah would come in bodily form. They prophesied many things about His first coming that were perfectly fulfilled. Some of these prophecies are listed below.

He would be born of a virgin

**“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will be with child and bear a son, ... (Isaiah 7:14)**

He would be born in Bethlehem

**“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from everlasting, From the ancient days.” (Micah 5:2)**

He would be rejected by his own people

**Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows**

and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:1-3)

He would be betrayed by his own follower

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. (Psalms 41:9)

The reward amount for betraying Him and how it was to be spent

And I said to them, “If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!” So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. Then Yahweh said to me, “Throw it to the potter, *that* valuable price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of Yahweh. (Zechariah 11:12-13)

How He would respond to His accusers

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

He was to be mocked and ridiculed

All who see me mock me; They smack their lip, they wag their head, saying, “Commit yourself to Yahweh; let Him rescue him; Let Him deliver him, because He delights in him.” (Psalms 22:7-8)

He was to die by crucifixion (hands and feet pierced).

I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. (Psalms 22:14)

For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. I count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; (Psalms 22:16-17)

What was to be done with His clothing

They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. (Psalms 22:18)

Not one of His bones would be broken

He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken. (Psalms 34:20)

These are just 10 of the many prophecies concerning the first coming of the Messiah.

### **Prophecies about the Messiah's second coming**

Regarding the second coming of Christ (the Messiah) there are more than 200 prophecies that talk about it. I don't have the time nor the inclination to go over all of them right now. Perhaps the 2 most well known are:

#### **Christ's coming at the battle of Armageddon**

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; having a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself, and being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And 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 wine press of the wrath of the rage of God, the Almighty. And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” (Revelation 19:11-16)

#### **Christ's coming to Jerusalem**

Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. Indeed, I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city will go forth in exile, but those left of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then Yahweh will go forth and fight against those nations, as the day when He fights on a day of battle. And in

that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; indeed, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then Yahweh, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! And it will be in that day, that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. And it will be a unique day which is known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it will be that at evening time there will be light. And it will be in that day, that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. And Yahweh will be king over all the earth; in that day Yahweh will be the only one, and His name one. All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and inhabit its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. And people will inhabit it, and there will no longer be anything devoted to destruction, for Jerusalem will be inhabited in security. (Zechariah 14:1-11)

There are some churches today that believe the church has replaced Israel. This is known as "Replacement Theology." They don't believe in the event we refer to as the rapture. Because of that, they believe that we will all go through the 7 year period known as the Tribulation. Because of their theological standing, they believe that **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17** is referring to the second coming.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (**1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**)

However, they conveniently ignore the very next verse:

Therefore comfort one another with these words. (**1 Thessalonians 4:18**)

If we have to go through the tribulation, how are these words comforting? But, if this refers to the rapture of the church, we should rejoice that we have been chosen and will be taken out of this world before the tribulation.

Will you be ready when He returns, or will you be like those supremely religious people who completely missed His first coming? They fought against Him and conspired to kill Him because they wanted religion their way (based on their traditions) instead of salvation God's way (based on the Word of God).

Is your foundation the Word of God, or religious traditions?

As you read your Bible today, ask God to open your eyes to the truth of His word. May the Holy Spirit teach you His truth as you yield to Him rather than the whims of man.

The bottom line is that the Bible is truth. It is God's truth, and contained within its pages is everything we need for salvation, godly living, and peace! Praise God!

We all need to read it more!

Let's pray.