



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Peter 1:12-21

"The Sure Word of God"

2 Peter

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our text this evening is 2 Peter 1:12-21. Let's begin the prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this time together this evening and this opportunity we have to continue our studies in this second epistle that Peter wrote, and we pray that as we consider the things that are before us this evening, that you'd bless us and teach us and, as a result of our time together, we will be built up in faith, and we'll have some wisdom as the result of it.

We would ask that you would help us to appreciate the exhortation that Peter gives us and the instruction that he gives us about your Word, and the importance of it, the sufficiency of it, and that we would be excited to study it and be diligent about that. It is important, and I pray that we'll see the importance of it and see the authority of it and the reliability of it for our lives.

So, we look to you to bless us in this way. We look to you to build us up in the faith, and instruct us, and we pray that for other glasses that are going on this evening, and we pray that you bless those who teach and those who listen. May the Spirit of God minister to us, and we pray these things in His name. Amen.

Well our text again is 2 Peter 1. I'm going to read the text this evening, and then we'll consider it. We're beginning with verse 12 and reading through the end of the chapter.

"Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.

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. 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.

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. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

I have a couple of books at home about people's last words, which they said before dying. And what is surprising to me about many of the statements that are made is how uninspiring they are. You would think that a person that is facing the end and has something to say right before the end might say something that's profound. But, very often they don't. And I suppose it's because in order to say something profound, you have to be rather profound yourself.

You have to have lived a life that would generate that kind of a statement. But sometimes they are profound, and Peter's last words certainly were, because this second epistle, as far as we know, is the last word from him – at least it's the last that we have in the Scripture. He says, for example, in 2 Peter 1:14, "...the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent." And what he's referring to there – he mentions that the Lord had told him about this. He says, "as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made

clear to me,..." he's speaking of that statement in John 21 where the Lord told him how he would die.

And so this death, which is a martyr's death, "is imminent" he said. It's coming soon. So what he wrote here, he wrote with some urgency. He sensed the importance of the moment and the importance of the words, and so he does have profound words for us – they are the words of Scripture. And what he tells us in the last part of this first chapter, the last half of it, in verses 12-21, is, the Word of God is reliable and should be reviewed continually.

He speaks of the importance of reviewing Scripture truth in verses 12-15. He verifies the reliability of Scripture in verses 16-18, and then he explains the reason for the Scripture's reliability. He explains the reason why it has integrity – it's trustworthy, in verses 19-21, and the reason is it's inspired by God. What Peter is saying here, in this last portion of the first chapter, is that Scriptures are the inerrant Word of God.

They are sufficient for life. They are essential for life if we are to navigate our way through this world, so we must hold on to them. We must study them. We must give heed to them, pay attention to them. That is his exhortation in verse 19. That's really what this passage is about. He's seeking to engender within them, confidence in the Scripture and giving complete attention to them. Well, in light with that, he begins with the importance of remembering the things of God, the truths of God's Word.

"Therefore," he says in verse 12 – now that tells us therefore, based upon what he said. Therefore he puts us back to the things that he's already said, and what he said is we have a great salvation. He's reminded his readers about their salvation, reminded them of the magnificent promises that they have and of the importance of the assurance we have of salvation, and to make our calling and election sure, confirm it with our minds.

And that's all important. It's important to know these promises. It's important to live out this great life that we have, sharing in the Divine Nature, as he pointed out in verse 4. And, in light of that, he says, "I will always be ready to remind you of these things." He's already reminded them of these things. They already know these things. They've been established in these things. He says that.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that they know them and that they've heard them before, he says that he needs to remind them of them. And that is a real need. Teachers know the importance of review. I read a statement about teaching, and instruction, and some research was done in which it was learned that, within an hour after a spoken message has been given, people can lose or forget up to 90 percent of what they've been told.

And I thought about that and well, people who preach sermons can forget what they preached within that same amount of time, and I can say I'm guilty of that. Well, that's the way we are. We tend to forget things rather quickly, and for that reason, we are to give attention to these things. We're to review them. We're to go over them and over them again.

We have a great example of that, I think, in Israel. Because Israel was told, throughout the Old Testament to "remember." That's a very important command that you find throughout the Old Testament. Israel's religion was structured to be a continual reminder of their origin, of God's salvation, of God's faithfulness. The Sabbath was a reminder of that. The great feast days were reminders of that.

All through the Old Testament they're told to remember. Deuteronomy 15:15, "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." That's the old King James version of that statement. I quote that because, John Newton, who's famous to us for having the great hymn, *Amazing Grace*, he was himself at one time a slave trader and in fact he became actually a slave of the wife of an African slave trade, in Africa, before he was able to escape, I think, after a year or so in that condition.

He put that verse in large letters over his mantle in his home in London, and it's a great thing to remember. Israel was to remember that, and we're to remember that, that we were slaves in Satan's domain when Christ delivered us. So remembrance is important. Israel's chronic problem was that it forgot. That's the indictment that Isaiah brings against the nation in Isaiah 17:10. "For you have forgotten the God of your salvation." That's what he said to them. And because of that, he says, "And" because of that he says, "the land will be a desolation."

There are consequences to forgetting. And forgetting leads to going astray. We need to remember because we all do that. We forget. We go astray. We're prone to forget. We're prone to wander. That's the reason we need to be reminded of God's

great truths, even though we've learned them before, even though we may be established in them, we need to be reminded of them. And so, Peter tells the churches that he was always ready to remind them.

He considered it the right thing to do, and that's what he says in verse 13. It was his apostolic duty certainly to remind of them. He considered it the right thing to do, as an apostle. But really, it's the right thing to do simply in terms of his Christian duty. It is the right thing for a Christian teacher to do. The church needs to be reminded. The church needs to be built up in the faith. But we can only be built up to the degree that our foundation is firm and strong.

It's like building a house. If the foundation is weak, then the walls will crumble. A foundation is fundamental to building a house, and it's the same in building a Christian life. The foundation must be strong, and so we need to repeat these things, and go over these things. I think I mentioned this last week or the week before, going over this idea of repetition. That's why we remember the Lord every Sunday night.

That's the instruction that the Lord gave us. We don't have lots of ceremonies in the church. We really have two, if you want to call them ceremonies – two ordinances – baptism, which occurs once because it describes our condition of being joined to Christ and being baptized in Him. That happens once and forever. But we're constantly dependent upon the nourishment of the Lord Jesus Christ, every moment of our lives.

And so we take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of that, that we live by virtue of His death, and we continue, day-by-day, moment-by-moment, by virtue of the life that He gives to us. So we continually live in dependence upon Him, and so we take the Lord's Supper repeatedly. That's really, the one thing that is repeated constantly, and it's to remind us of these fundamental facts – that we are creatures and we depend upon the Creator.

We depend upon the Savior to take care of us, to give us life, moment-by-moment, and direct us. So we need to be reminded. We need to remember. And he says that he will do this for the rest of his days. He'd spend the rest of his life gladly reminding them of these things, "as long as I am in this earthly dwelling," he says that he is going to do that. And he gives two reasons for that resolve in verse 14. His death was imminent, so it's urgent that he do this. There's not much time left.

And secondly, he says in verse 15, that he was resolved always to remind them of the Biblical truths so that they would be able to call these things to mind, to remember them themselves. They'll be self-sufficient. The Bible is our standard. It's our sole authority for faith and practice for the Christian life. We know right from wrong. We know truth from error. We know good behavior from bad behavior from the Bible. Take it away, and we really don't know these things.

Everything is relative. The Bible is our moral and spiritual compass. So we always need to be able to call these truths to mind, and he wanted them to be in that position where they could do that, independently of him because, he says, that his departure is near. He's about to depart from them. He's speaking of his death when he speaks of his departure.

And I think it's worth noting the way that he describes his death, it is distinctively Christian, the words that he uses here. In both verses 13 and 14, he speaks of his "dwelling." "The laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent." That word, dwelling, is literally, "tent," which gave a familiar picture to Peter's readers, at least many people in the ancient world, of what's common in the Middle East, these nomads who would live in tents. Common in that day, but you can still see these people in modern times in some places in the Judean Desert.

Out in the desert you see these black tents where shepherds would live, and they'd herd their sheep. That's where they'd live. Well, tents are temporary. They're not permanent. Nomads don't put down roots. They don't build villages. They don't build houses. They live in tents, and they move on from where they are. And that's the image that Peter is giving.

Life in this body is temporary. It's like living in a tent. We're just pilgrims in this world. We're moving on. We're departing. In fact, in the Greek text, the word that he uses there is "exodus." That's the literal word that he uses, exodus. He's about to make his exodus, his departure, which suggests a destination to which he's going.

Now in Hebrews 11:10, we're told that Abraham lived in tents. So he lived in tents as an act of faith. As a statement, in effect, by his behavior, by his actions, that he was looking for a city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. That's what Peter is indicating as well. He's indicating that this world isn't his home. It's not our home. We're aliens here. We're moving through this world as one is moving through hostile territory.

So because that is the fact, this world is not our home. We're aliens, and it is hostile to us. It is hostile to our very nature. We need to be able to call these things to mind. We need to be able to use Scripture. Now, these things that Peter taught had been attacked. That's really the occasion for what he's writing here. The false teachers were introduced to them in chapter 2. These teachers had tried to undermine the authority of the apostles.

That's what a false teacher will do -- undermine the authority of the apostle or the apostolic writings, in order to gain the allegiance of the people for himself, and they had done that. They had attacked the teaching of the apostles. They had attacked the Scriptures, and so Peter takes a defense of the apostles' teaching in verse 16. And in verses 17 and 18, he gives a reason why Christians can have complete confidence in the teachings of the apostles, why they can have complete confidence in the New Testament, why they can have complete confidence in all of the Bible for that matter.

His argument is simple. The teaching of the apostles is credible because it's based on eyewitness accounts while the teaching of the false teachers is not. The apostles' teaching has been authenticated by the Transfiguration. They were there. They were eyewitnesses, so their teaching is grounded in historical fact, and because of that, Christians should never doubt the veracity of the Scripture, so "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."

Now the doctrine that is in question here is the Doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. The word "coming" here is the Greek word "parousia" and that word is frequently used of the Lord's second coming. It's used that way in Matthew 24. When He speaks of His coming, that's what it's about – that whole discourse. In his book in chapter 3, he uses that same word in verses 4 and 12. There the false teachers are denying it – denying the coming of the Lord.

Later in chapter 3:12, Peter recounts the coming, and so that's what it's about. Now, what the false teachers were saying, the exact attack that they made, the words given, the quotation given in verse 4 is that the coming won't happen. They say, "where is the promise of His coming. Ever the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." Well, he's indicating. He doesn't quote them

exactly, but he indicates what they were saying, the way they were undermining the authority of the apostles.

And they were saying that the apostles were following myths. That was the basis of their teaching, and really, they fabricated these ideas. They were "cleverly devised tales" That's how they described the apostolic teaching on the Lord's return. It's a false hope they were saying. He's not coming back. The apostles invented this idea. The story is like some of the old myths that no reasonable person, no educated person would believe.

Well, Peter denies that. He denies that they invented anything or that they used deception. Because that's also the idea here in these "cleverly devised tales" as they described them. And he says, " we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." He and others personally witnessed the Lord's coming. They did so in the Transfiguration, and that was witnessing His coming in that it was a preview of the Lord's coming and glory and His Kingdom glory.

And that's indicated in the gospels. It's indicated in the synoptic gospels. It's indicated in, for example, Matthew 16:28, when Jesus told the disciples that some of them, some of those standing there with Him, would not die before they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. When you read that you think, when how in the world is that possible. Two thousand years have elapsed. He hasn't come back, and they're long gone.

Well, the answer is given in the next verse, which is the next chapter in Matthew, where Matthew writes, "Six days later...Peter, and James and John" accompanied Jesus to the top of "a high mountain" and they witnessed the Transfiguration. And it revealed Christ's glory in His Kingdom and, in that way, they saw what He had prophesied. They saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom. This is how He would come. He would come with that glory.

And Peter describes the event here in 2 Peter 1:17-18. He describes it as an occasion when he saw Jesus receive glory and honor. He heard that from God the Father, who stated His approval of His Son. He said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And Peter writes, "we ourselves heard this utterance made from Heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain." So that tells us that this was at the Transfiguration where they heard this. They heard the divine testimony to Christ's Sonship, which is to say that it's Heaven's verbal witness to Christ's deity.

He's God's Son. He has the same nature as the Father. They share the same essence. He is God the Son. That is the affirmation from Heaven in the statement, "My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." And we know from the gospels that this testimony was accompanied by a great visual display. Christ's garments become white and bright, and there is great light there on the mountain. So it revealed Christ in His Kingdom glory and the splendor with which He will come back into this world.

So what the Old Testament prophesied and what the apostles taught has been seen, and it has been heard, Peter is saying, in this historical event. This is not some myth or some idea. They were there physically at a particular place, at a particular point of time, when they witnessed all of this and the Transfiguration, and the Transfiguration is a pledge of the Lord's second coming. So they had that affirmation, that historical event to affirm what they had taught. And then, Peter adds in verse 19, "we have the prophetic word made more sure."

The Old Testament prophets spoke of the same things that Peter did and the other apostles did. They spoke of the second coming. And the Old Testament prophecies have been made more sure because of the Transfiguration, which was a fore view of their fulfillment – the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Now you may have a King James version, and it's worded a little differently. In fact, it follows the literal reading of the Greek texts, which is, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" which gives, taken at face value at least, gives an additional reason for believing the message that Peter had preached and the other apostles had preached. In that case, they have two lines of evidence. They have the eyewitness testimony of the apostles and the even better witness of the prophecies of the Old Testament

That's the second way to interpret the text, and both interpretations are possible. In fact, as you read through the commentaries, you find very good commentators on both sides of the issue, in that, these are two different lines of evidence. The Transfiguration is a historical event, and the even better witness of the Old Testament prophets, or that what Peter is saying, he's citing the Transfiguration as confirming evidence of the prophecies of the Old Testament. They confirm what the prophets had foretold.

Now that second way is the way the translators of the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version interpret Peter. So "we have the prophetic word made more sure." The meaning, if we take that, and I tend to take that position – meaning it's not the Transfiguration made the Old Testament prophets more certain, it added something to them, in the sense of, making them more real or more likely to occur.

It doesn't mean that any more than what Peter was saying back in verse 10, when he said that we are to make our calling and election sure. It is certain to begin with, but we need to confirm it for ourselves. We need to prove it to ourselves is what he's saying, and the prophecies – well they're God's Word, and they're absolutely certain in and of themselves, but the experience that the apostles confirm them gave evidence of their truth. So he's speaking, and they're humanly speaking. It makes it more certain or more sure in our minds.

Well however we take the position – either the Transfiguration confirms these things, or they're two lines of evidence, and the prophecies themselves are even more strong evidence, the point that Peter is making here is, apostolic teaching is reliable. It is based, not on myths, but on the prophecies of the Old Testament, which has been authenticated by the apostles' own experience of historical events.

So, in light of that, Peter now encourages the churches to give careful attention to this prophetic message that they had taught these people, taught to the churches. He compares to light in a dark place. "You do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place." Now that dark place that he's speaking about there is the world. And that word, "dark place" or "dark" is used only this time in the New Testament, but it has the idea of "dirty" "murky" – a place where things are obscure and not clean.

Light comes into this place, this room, and it exposes dirt. It exposes the filth. In fact, that word is used in a tomb of a young boy, and it's connected to that idea of a tomb. And you can imagine opening a tomb, and it's dark, but the light comes in, and it shines. It shows you what's really in there, unclean things.

And that's what the Word of God does in this world in which we live. It brings clarity where things are hidden or obscure. Darkness throughout the Bible represents ignorance and error as well as sin and rebellion. And God's Word is truth. It's light. It comes, and it shines and exposes all of these things.

And it shows us where to go. It illuminates the world in which we live so that we know what to avoid and what path to follow, so the Christian is to ponder it, to keep it. Peter says to do that "until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts." In other words, stay with the Word of God.

Keep studying the Word of God to the very end. The day that he mentions here, in our text, is the parousia again, the second coming and it's used again, as I have stated, throughout the Scriptures, of the Lord's return.

The morning star is a description of Christ. We have that same description, but different words are used, in other places. But we have it, for example, in Revelation 22:16 and Jesus is called, "the bright morning star." It's a reference to Venus, the first star to appear in the morning when the sun rises.

That's a description of the Messiah that is taken from Numbers 24:17, one of Balaam's prophecies, and in it the Messiah is prophesied as a "star that shall come forth from Jacob." Christ is that star. Literally, that word that's used here is "light bearer."

The moon is not a light bearer, in the sense that, it reflects light, but a star gives out light, and that's what Christ is. He doesn't reflect the light, He is the source of light. So, that's a description of Our Lord, His coming in brightness in light, at the second coming and His return. But this phrase, "we are to pay attention to the Word as a light shining, until the morning star rises in your hearts" – that's a little more difficult to explain.

The day is obviously the second coming. The star is obviously Christ, but what does he mean to do this "until the morning star rises in your hearts." Well, it doesn't mean that the second coming is a strictly subjective experience that goes on within our minds and within our hearts. No, it's very clearly from the Scriptures, an event to occur in the future.

He will literally come back. His feet will touch the Mount of Olives and split it. There will be a transformation of the world. He's coming again physically, materially. But it will have subjective effects, a transforming effect in the heart. When He comes, there will be a real transformation in believers.

There's a transformation that's going on now, as we consider Christ, as we read the Scriptures, as we study the gospels. As we see Him in the Scripture, we're

transformed. That's what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 3:18. We're transformed "from glory to glory."

There's this constant transformation that's going on. You may not perceive it while it's taking place, but by what Paul tells us, it is taking place. But a dramatic change is yet to come, and that's what John talks about in 1 John 3:2, when Christ actually comes, John says, "we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

Seeing Christ physically with our eyes will actually transform us outwardly and inwardly. So that day is coming, and we are to give attention and pay attention to the Word of God until that day comes and until things are complete. Our life in the meantime is a pilgrim. We need to understand that.

We need to understand that we're strangers. That we are aliens in this world, and regardless of all the glitter and all the glamour of the world in which we live – and there's lots of that, what the Scriptures tell us is, it's a dark place. We need the Scriptures to tell us, "No, this isn't the light that we should desire. This isn't the place that we should want to put down roots. We want to do that naturally. It beckons us, so to speak. But this world is dark.

But God, in His grace, has provided for us. He has given us a lamp in this dark place. He has given us the Scriptures, and if we will pay attention to them, if we walk according to their light, if we will heed their warnings, exhortations, and guidance, if we follow the Scriptures, we will walk safely. Conversely, if we neglect the Scriptures, we won't. If we neglect the Scriptures, we will be engulfed in the darkness. We'll lose our way. We'll stumble.

Our life must be governed by the Word of God. So Peter says keep trusting in the Scriptures. Keep holding onto the Scriptures until Christ is fully realized in your hearts. And we have good reason for doing that, as Peter explains, in verses 20 and 21, not only because of the witness of the apostles but because of the inspiration of the prophets and their prophecies, verse 20. "But know this first o

The first thing that they need to know about the Scriptures, what is first importance in approaching the Word of God, is to know that it is the Word of God. The Bible is of God. It is unique. It is a supernatural book. I suppose that must have had some influence upon the men of the first century because most of these people evidently were gentiles.

There were probably some Jews, but this is a gentile region, Asia Minor. It's the same audience to which he wrote in the first epistle. But if they were, then they're sacred writings. What they grew up as sort of their Canon were the poems of Homer, the Iliad and the Odyssey, maybe Virgil's Aeneid – literature of that time – Aesop's fables. That was sort of the Canon by which people lived. That was their scripture.

If you've ever read those things, you know they're interesting and they have a certain moral to them, but they cannot compare to what we have in the Bible. There's no comparison between them. In fact, we could take all of the great literature of the western world and the world put together, and there's much to learn in a Shakespeare or a Milton, or any of these writers.

You can read well known novels that will give you a good moral and give you a good instruction, and I gain illustrations from those kinds of things periodically, but this book is unique. This is God's Word. It is a supernatural book. Now the statement that he makes, "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation," has been taken basically in two ways.

First, it has been explained to mean that no prophecy is a matter of one's own interpretation, in the sense that, we are not capable of interpreting this of our own. We can't sit down and interpret the Bible in our own ability. We don't have that. We need the church to interpret it for us. Of course, that's the view of the Roman Catholic Church.

And some protestants have taken a similar position on that and interpreted what Peter has said here as being a warning against individuals interpreting prophesy in an arbitrary way. That, of course, is a dangerous thing, and that's what the false teachers were probably doing, something like that.

But the idea that we're not to interpret Scripture individually, that we're not to sit down and pour over the Scriptures, and ponder them, and study them, and understand them for ourselves, is just not true and not Biblical. We have the Holy Spirit, and the New Testament teaches that we, individually, are to be responsible. We are to study and show ourselves approved.

In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prays that the Ephesians would have "the eyes of their heart and the eyes of their mind enlightened" so that they can understand the facts of God's Word. Individually we're to be enlightened. We're to pray that for one another

and pray that for ourselves. So we are to study. We do interpret things individually. The context is also against that idea.

Peter is stating the origin and the reliability of the apostles' teaching. He's stating the reliability and he's here explaining the reliability in terms of the origin of their teaching, the origin of their work. The same God the apostles heard speak in the Transfiguration, spoke to the prophets. That's what he's saying here.

The Word is in the statement "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation," means no prophecy of Scripture comes or springs out of one's own interpretation. So that word, that verb that's used there, speaks of source or origin, not explanation. Not interpretation. And so the idea is "no prophecy of Scripture" comes out of private opinion. In other words, no prophecy arises out of the prophet. No prophecy is made up by the prophet. He didn't make up what he wrote. No prophet did that.

A. J. Young, who was an Old Testament professor at Westminster Seminary, back about 30 to 50 years ago. He explained it as, "The Scriptures are not the product of human investigation and reason." And that's true. They're not the result of human effort. They're the result of the supernatural. What is always characteristic of false prophets is they invent their prophecies. Jeremiah spoke of that.

The text that I want to look at for just a second is Jeremiah 14:14. And he speaks of false prophets, and there we read, and this is the Lord actually speaking to Jeremiah. But "the Lord said to me," Jeremiah writes, this is what the Lord said, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name." When He says "the prophets" He doesn't mean the real prophets, He's talking about false prophets, but He doesn't call them that, He says, "prophets."

Nevertheless, He says in verse 14, "The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds." That's what Peter is describing here when he says that "no prophecy is a matter of one's own interpretation" or one's own mind, or one's own invention.

Ezekiel says much the same in Ezekiel 13:2, 3, he writes that "false prophets...prophesy from their own inspiration" not from God's inspiration but from their own inspiration, and "following their own spirit" he says. Well real prophecy, all of the Scripture for that matter, comes from God's Spirit, not one's own spirit. And

that's what Peter says in our last verse, in verse 21, "no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Men prophesied when and only when they were moved by something outside of themselves – when they were moved by the Spirit of God. Isaiah didn't get up one morning and decided to write his prophecy. He didn't say, "I think I'll write a beautiful passage on the crucifixion of the Messiah and write Isaiah 53." He wrote it when he was moved by the Holy Spirit to do that, as is the case with all of his prophecies, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel's prophecies. We saw that.

If you remember from our studies in Ezekiel, he would say routinely, thematically, as a kind of formula, "And I was in the Spirit." He'd be caught up in the Spirit, and he'd be in a prophetic vision. He didn't decide, "Now it's time for me to get into the Spirit." It would happen to him, and that's the way it is with the prophets.

That statement, "moved by the Holy Spirit" is very important for understanding the inspiration of Scripture. In fact, one of the commentators, a scholar named, Michael Green, called it, "Perhaps the fullest and most explicit Biblical reference through the inspiration of its authors." It's an important statement on understanding how the Bible came to us.

Paul gives us an equally important text in 2 Timothy 3:16 where he describes the origin of Scripture as being "God-breathed." That's literally the idea of "inspired by God." It's God-breathed, that is, not that God breathed something into the Scriptures the author wrote as though He made them, in some way, inspired or holy because He breathed something into the Scriptures that had been written when Paul wrote Romans or Peter wrote this book.

What Paul means by that is that the scriptures were breathed out by God and into the writer's Scripture. Well, Peter says that "the Spirit moved them" and that word, moved, is used in Acts 27. Acts 27 is about Paul's journey by sea from Caesarea to Rome. And there's a lot of wind in that passage because he's in a storm. And in verses 15 and 17, this word that we have here is used of the ship being "carried" or "driven along" by the wind. And that's the idea here. That's what Peter is saying. That's the picture that he's giving us here.

As ships were moved by the wind when the wind filled their sails, so too men were moved to prophecy when the Spirit filled them and directed them. He carried them to His goal, not to their goal. He knew what He was doing. He knew where He

was directing them. It's just that the wind would direct things, and the Spirit would fill these men and direct them.

It wasn't some mechanical or mindless movement. That's often the way inspiration is described, as kind of dictation. These men are sitting there and suddenly they begin to dictate this letter. They'd grab a pen, and some parchment, and they'd start writing these things down. Just like a machine, like a typewriter or something and just filling out the blanks.

That's not the Bible's idea or teaching on inspiration at all. It wasn't dictation. God used their personalities. The whole person was brought into it. If you read Isaiah, you read Jeremiah, you read Moses – the five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch – they're different. They're all different. The style is different.

The subjects vary, to some degree – to a large degree, often times. But you see the differences in the different writers. And so just as the cut of a sail will determine the capacity for wind and the direction that the ship would go, the education and the personalities of the writers determined much about what they wrote.

Inspiration didn't mean a suspension of normal mental functioning of the human author. God used all of that. But the Scriptures originated in the Holy Spirit and arose through the process of divine inspiration. It is through men, but it is from God, and it's therefore infallible. It's therefore inerrant. And so, Peter's last words, or at least, among the last words that Peter gives to us, are these. There's urgency in what he says.

There's importance in what he says. These are profound last words. They are that we should read the Scriptures. We should study the Scriptures. We should review the Scriptures. We should learn these things. Pay attention to them as you would a lamp in a dark place because they'll guide you, and they won't disappoint you.

And may God help us to do that, to reverence the Word of God, to study it, to learn it, to follow it. And if we do that, it'll take us through some rough places, but it will take us through them safely.

Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father we do pray that you bless us in that way and that you give us a great respect and a reverence for the Scriptures. They're not just good literature. They're not just profound books, this collection of 66 books, which is your Word.

They are that. They're your Word. This is a unique book, and it's God-breathed. It's inspired. It's inerrant. So help us to value it, and to pay attention to these things, and to go over them, and learn them. And as we do that, Father, conform us to the image of your Son, and bless us and use us. We pray these things in Christ's name, Amen.