

Excerpts from Life-study of 2 Peter, Message 8

THE DIVINE PROVISION (8)

Bible Verses:

2 Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.

2 Pet. 1:19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

In verse 16 Peter goes on to say, "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty." Myths were superstitious stories cleverly devised in Greek philosophy, which was related to the apostasy. To unbelievers, the preaching concerning the Lord's

coming sounded very much like a myth or superstitious tale. But here Peter says that the apostles did not follow cleverly devised myths when they made known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter realizes that he, James, and John were admitted to be the initiated spectators of His majesty. Peter considers the Lord's transfiguration as a figure of His second coming. The Lord's transfiguration in glory was a fact, and Peter was in it. The Lord's coming back in glory will also be a fact as real as His transfiguration. This is not a cleverly devised myth passed on to the believers by the apostles.

Peter says that the apostles became eyewitnesses of the Lord's majesty. This majesty denotes magnificence, greatness in splendor, honor, and glory. Peter seems to be saying, "We have told you that the Lord Jesus will come back in glory. This is not a tale or a myth. We saw His majesty when we were with Him on the mountain."

In verses 17 and 18 Peter continues, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory, such a voice being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I delight. And this

voice we heard being borne out of heaven, being together with Him in the holy mountain.” On the mount of transfiguration, the Lord was in a position of honor and in a state of glory. The magnificent glory denotes the overshadowing cloud at the Lord’s transfiguration.

This Epistle was written in the time of the church’s degradation and apostasy. Apostasy is a deviation from fundamental truth or belief. Approximately thirty years after the church had been established, apostasy began to creep in. Certain ones were teaching heresy, saying that the coming back of the Lord Jesus in glory is a myth.

In this Epistle Peter is giving the believers a strong testimony as an inoculation against heresy. He points out that the apostles did not follow cleverly devised myths. Peter seems to be saying, “We testified of what we have seen and heard. We saw the Lord Jesus transfigured, and we know that as He was glorified in His transfiguration, so He will come again in glory.”

In verse 19 Peter continues, “And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your

hearts.” After speaking of his personal experience, Peter goes on to use the word of the prophets to confirm his testimony.

Peter indicates that the believers do well to give heed to the prophetic word. Peter likens the word of prophecy in the Scripture to a lamp shining in a dark place. This indicates that this age is a dark place and that the prophetic word conveys spiritual light and guides them until the day of the Lord’s appearing dawns.

Peter says that we do well to give heed to the prophetic word until the day dawns and the morning star arises in our hearts. This illustrates a time coming which will be full of light, with the morning star rising in the hearts of the believers. The prophetic word, as a lamp, may shine through the darkness until such a day dawns upon them.

It is correct to say that the dawning of the day refers to the time of the Lord’s coming back. Peter is speaking both of a spiritual day and the day of the Lord’s coming. The prophetic word is our lamp shining in the darkness. As we give heed to this prophetic word, we receive the shining of the light.

Eventually, this light will shine until a spiritual day dawns within us, and a morning star rises in our hearts.

In verse 20 Peter continues, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one’s own interpretation.” No prophecy comes from the private and personal thought of any prophet or writer.

Verse 21 says, “For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God, being borne by the Holy Spirit.” No prophecy was ever carried along by the will of man. The source is God, by whose Holy Spirit men were carried along to speak out the will of God.

Verses 20 and 21 prove that the prophetic word is altogether reliable and trustworthy. This prophecy is God’s word, God’s speaking. Therefore, it is trustworthy. Do not listen to heretical teachings, but give heed to the prophecies and hold to the testimony.

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Note: This version is not intended to be printed as material for pursuit during the small group gathering. Instead, it is to be used as additional reference for brothers and sisters who want to prepare in advance for fellowship on the message. We include here notes from the commentaries of the brothers in the life-study radio program. The points from these commentaries can help enrich our understanding and, eventually, our fellowship with the saints on the selected portions of the life-study message. We still recommend that, if possible, the saints still listen to the [audio message](#) in addition to reading the [life-study message](#) for personal pursuit and for preparation for small group gatherings. We also wish to point out that these notes have not been fully polished.

Introduction

[CW]: The book of 2 Peter continues the thought of his first epistle, God's governmental judgment, but it also stresses God's divine provision for His people to enable them to live under such a divine ruling. The first chapter of 2 Peter describes this provision in its various aspects, such as the divine power and all things pertaining to life and godliness, the divine promises, and even partaking of the divine nature. These provisions are all on the side of life, but Peter also details provisions on the side of the divine truth. First, we have the testimony of the apostles themselves, who were actual eyewitnesses of the glory and majesty of Christ. Second, we have the prophetic word shining as a lamp in a dark place to enlighten us until the morning star rises in our hearts. John Pester has joined us for our fellowship today. 2 Peter, John chapter 1, full of the divine provision and something we surely need, isn't it?

[JP]: Well, I certainly appreciate this portion of the Word because it's one thing to realize that the Christians live a life under God's judgment. We should accept that. We should realize that. We should appreciate that. We should endeavor to be people living under God's government. But we should also realize that there is a hindrance in the Christian life, which is the Christian life that we have to live under God's government, we have to live in an age of apostasy, where there are people are deviating from the provisions that God has given us, and they are being influenced by many, many heresies. And I just appreciate that Peter gives a divine provision both to keep us from the apostasy itself, and also mentions the divine provision that is available to us to keep us from the heresy that brings about these apostasies. And so that remedy, that inoculation is the divine truth. After focusing in on the divine life, which is a provision to keep us from deviating from God's way and God's path for us, he also points out to the believers that we have this divine provision, which is the divine truth itself, which can inoculate us and keep us from any heresies that would undermine our faith and drag us away from living a life that is under God's government.

[CW]: Good backdrop, John. I think that kind of gives us a point from which we can get into the program today, Witness Lee's portion. We're going to pick up the Scripture in 2 Peter 1, verse 16-18. I'll read those. I think this will now be a good solid foundation based on what you just brought to us. "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory. This is my Son, My Beloved in whom I delight. And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain." Peter giving an eyewitness account of what he experienced in Matthew 17 on the Mount of Transfiguration many years later in his life and in his ministry. Now this probably takes on a much different and greater significance than it must have even at the time, John.

[JP]: It was a central revelation that Peter received and it really governed him for his entire life. And it's what he points to when he's talking about the provision of the divine truth. It's one of the things, central points that he brings up. He could have mentioned many items of the Lord's history and of his time with the Lord, but he focuses in on this one. It's very critical.

[CW]: Let's join Witness Lee for this portion of our live study today from 2 Peter chapter 1.

Part 1

[CW]: John, you pointed out a minute ago, and of course he refers to it here. And it's critical to understand this portion of the Word that the backdrop that Peter's writing is this onset of this apostasy, deviation from the fundamental truth. So, he's really now fighting for the believers here, isn't he?

[JP]: He's fighting very much so. And it's almost incomprehensible to our mind to think that within just 30 years after the Lord's departure, there was already this deviation away from some of the fundamental truths. And the fundamental truth that was the most significant and in which there was the most deviation was the truth of the Lord's second coming. People began to speak of it as if it were a myth. And that's why Peter says we don't speak in cleverly devised myths. What we're speaking about is central and fundamental to our Christian belief. And like I said earlier, it's interesting that he focuses in on the Lord's experience on the Mount of Transfiguration where his inward glory was momentarily revealed to the apostles. And Peter's point is that the Lord, when He comes again, He will come in glory. He will come publicly, He will come openly, and He will be in the glory. And we have seen this already. We have seen it as a prefigure on the Mount of Transfiguration. We should have some confidence in the truth because we have witnessed it. We have seen it. We have seen the Lord's glory being momentarily manifested. And this is what should encourage you to realize and to understand that the Lord is coming again to all of the believers. We have to say strongly that our Lord Jesus is coming again and He will come again openly and in glory. It is wrong to think that there's some thought today that the Lord's not coming back. Even among Christians, the Lord's not coming back and actually the kingdom of the heavens is already here on the earth and we just need to improve it ourselves. We need to improve the world ourselves. But that is a wrong thought. The Lord is coming in glory and when He comes then He will set everything in proper order. And so, it's a fundamental point that Peter stresses and he relies upon the fact and he encourages the believers with his recounting of his eyewitness account of the Lord's glory being momentarily revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration.

[CW]: Really good. Maybe for the sake of our listeners who haven't looked in the Gospels for a while, I thought I'd just read these verses from Matthew 17. There's a couple of accounts, Matthew and Luke, but I'll read a couple of verses from Matthew 17 to refresh them what the Mount of Transfiguration really was all about. After six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, His brother, and brought them up to a high mountain privately. And He was transfigured before them and His face shined like the sun and His garments became as white as the light. And while He was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, "This is My Son, the Beloved in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him." This whole event had a lifelong impression and a governing impression on Peter, didn't it?

[JP]: And that's why he reacted so strongly to those that would say the Lord is not coming. We need to stand on the side of Peter accepting his eyewitness account and what was revealed in that account. In other words, it was a manifestation of glory. What was inwardly within Christ as God was momentarily revealed. What will happen when the Lord comes the second time is that inward glory will be publicly displayed forever, permanently, and openly for all to see. It won't disappear. It will remain and it will guide and direct us in our Christian living.

[CW]: Well, as we mentioned, provisions for the supply for God's people to live under His divine government, that's the subject of this chapter. Two things on the side of the truth here. The one we just heard, the firsthand account, the eyewitness report of Peter and the apostles. The second is in verse 19 of 2 Peter 1. And we have the prophetic word made more firm to which you do well to give heed as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Here's Witness Lee once again.

Part 2

[CW]: Okay, John, there's two points here, according to what we've just heard in Witness Lee's understanding, his presentation. Two things that Peter is referring to about the morning star rising and the day dawning. Of course, one is a clear reference to the Lord's second coming, which we were just talking about, the end of the age. But talk more specifically about this other implied meaning, because it's more experiential, I think.

[JP]: Well, again, let's remember that Peter is focusing in on the heresy that denies the Lord's second coming, the Lord's return. And he addresses it first by speaking of his eyewitness experience, which confirms to him that the Lord will return in glory as He appeared to him on the Mount of Transfiguration. But he also says, in addition to that, we have the prophetic word, which is made firm, which confirms these points. And Peter is willing to bring the believer's attention back to the prophetic word. Don't just rely upon my eyewitness account. Realize that we have the prophetic word, and this word needs to be a lamp in our being that's shining to the point that eventually the morning star will rise in our heart. Now, many people have interpreted that just to mean the Lord's second coming. But you have to realize that Peter uses the term until the morning star rises in our heart, which indicates that there's another aspect to the Lord's coming, and that is an inward experiential aspect that we can experience every day during the days of our apostasy. We're living in a time of apostasy. We're living in a dark time where the truth is not all that clear, not all that present in the lives of many Christians. But we have the prophetic word, which will shine into our being, and it will cause the morning star to rise in our heart, which means that there can be experientially another coming of the Lord in our experience every day. The morning star has to rise in our heart, and isn't this our experience, that when we come to the Word and we open to the Word and we just let the Word soak into our being, we have an experience and a realization that the Lord is rising in our hearts. He's becoming more precious, more dear to us. And even that experience, that realization of the Lord rising in our heart, brings with it a sense of glory. And so in some respects, Peter talks about his eyewitness account of the Lord's coming so that he can point the believers to their own experience. You have, in some respects, an eyewitness account of the Lord's own coming yourself, because as the prophetic word operates in your being, don't you have the realization, fellow believers, that the Lord is rising in your being, and if He's rising in your being, He will come to and infuse and supply and sustain you. And so Peter points the believers not just to his eyewitness account, but to their own experience, which is the morning star rising in the heart. And it's wonderful that as Christians, in a period of a dark time, we can open to the Lord, we can open to His Word, and have that experiential rising of the morning star in our being every day.

[CW]: Really, so I remember quite well as a new believer. I was a college-aged young person, and there was a period when I just dove into these prophecies in the Old Testament, and I loved them. And as they were coming to light, and I was realizing, oh, my faith was soaring, and there really was a keeping power there. But of course, gradually, bit by bit, my experience began to focus more on the Lord Himself, not to in any way depreciate the value of that prophetic word, because it keeps us in, and it does enlighten us. But the point is to bring us to the Person Himself, and this experiential day-dawning morning star rising, as you said, day by day as we come to the Lord in prayer and His word. And that's really the holding power, and not only that's really the confirming testimony in our being that He really is coming again.

[JP]: If all we had was Peter's eyewitness account, then we could discount it, because it would be just a matter of whether or not we believed him or not. But because Peter's eyewitness account is also confirmed in our experience with the morning star rising in us as we get into the prophetic word, which is made sure and firm, then they correspond, and they match each other, and we realize, indeed, the Lord is living, the Lord is real, and He's coming again.

[CW]: All right, let's go on with Witness Lee's portion, our final portion today in this life-study.

Part 3

[CW]: John, I remember in a number of the life-studies where we've covered the writings of Paul, we see Paul almost as an attorney in a court of law presenting a case. Somewhat, Peter enters the same realm here, doesn't he?

[JP]: He does very much, especially when he comes to the matter of prophecy and Scripture. I was very impressed with what he says. He says, no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own private interpretation. During his time, there were many prophecies that were going around. Even the word that the Lord was not coming, in some respects, was a prophecy. But that prophecy was, according to Peter, not of Scripture. All of the prophecy of Scripture is not according to one's own interpretation. It must be based in the Scripture, must be found in the Scripture, and must conform to the boundaries of the scripture. Because only the prophecy that is from the scriptures and is born by the Holy Spirit is real prophecy. We shouldn't have the thought that just by saying, thus saith the Lord, that that is a prophecy. It's a prophecy, but it may not be a prophecy of Scripture. And so, Peter's point is that we have to realize that there are boundaries to what we should speak and what we should say, and those boundaries should be confined to the revelation that's contained in the word. And then if you confine yourself to the revelation contained in the word, then you can have real interpretation. There really can be the unloosening and the unbinding of the difficult passages and understandings, but it must be according to the Scripture. So, Paul provided interpretation for many events in the Old Testament. The rock that followed them was Christ. But his interpretation conforms to Scripture. It's guided by the scriptures, guided by the overall revelation that God desires to impart Himself into man, that man would become His glorious expression. And that realization of that goal of God's will largely occur with the Lord's second coming. When the Lord comes, not only will the Lord come in glory, but the believers will also come in glory in their transfigured and transformed bodies to rule and reign with the Lord. And so, Peter is very wise in how he phrased his inoculation to the believers. He says no prophecy of Scripture. He points the believers once again back to the importance of the Bible.

[CW]: So, he points us to the sure word of prophecy and to the prophecy of Scripture. He's so thoroughly, totally grounded. Interesting, as you brought up, Paul, again, Peter makes that connection also, of course, in his epistles and really recognizes Paul's writings as Scripture.

[JP]: There really is the need for interpretation, but it has to be proper interpretation. And just simply saying, thus saith the Lord, many Christians shouldn't just fall for the thought, the easy thought that this must be a prophecy and this person must be a prophet. No, it has to be of Scripture. It has to be something that comes not from the will of man, but from the will of God. And it has to be born and carried by the Holy Spirit.

[CW]: Wow. Wish we had more time. Good topic. And this is a wonderful portion of Scripture, and I appreciate your help with it today, John.

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