


# Triennial Torah Study – 3<sup>rd</sup> Year 21/04/2012

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Lev 25	Ezek 29-32		1 Peter 5 & 2 Peter 1
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## Leviticus 25

### Review of Israel's Rebellions

#### Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land (Leviticus 25)

These words of verse 10 are engraved on the American Liberty Bell, a traditional symbol of U.S. freedom that sits outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While it was first rung on July 8, 1776, to celebrate the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, it was actually commissioned by the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly in 1751 to proclaim the Jubilee year. (Ironically, the bell was first cast in London.) In any event, it was seen by Revolutionary America as a symbol of freedom from tyranny. And the verse quoted is quite fitting in that regard.

In actuality, the proclamation of "liberty" in the 50th year specifically referred to the fact that all debts were canceled, all Israelites who had sold themselves into slavery were freed, and all land went back to its original owners. The phrase "proclaim liberty" also occurs in Isaiah 61:1, where it is proclaimed to the "captives," along with "the opening of the prison to those who are bound." To whom is this referring? Those who are in "the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:26), i.e., the world at large. This is also seen as proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:2), which was a Sabbatical year of 28 C.E.

When Christ began His earthly ministry, He explained that He was fulfilling these very verses in Isaiah (Luke 4:16-21). We should easily see how this relates to the issue of debt and servitude. The penalty earned for sin is compared to debt in the Scriptures. And in Romans 6, the apostle Paul explains that the way of sin is actually a form of bondage or slavery. It is the debt of sin that has separated mankind from his intended inheritance.

Land, in this picture, is quite important. Notice this from The Nelson Study Bible on "Redeeming the Land": "An ancient Israelite was in desperate straits if he had to sell his

family's land. Both food and income came from the proceeds of the land. Dispossessed family members would quickly become someone else's servants. Most people would work hard to avoid such a situation. However, illness, crop failure, or other misfortunes could force a person into debt to the point that his only alternative was to sell his land. Even in this distressing situation there was hope. A dispossessed family could be saved from poverty and hardship: "First, a redeeming relative could redeem (or buy back) the land (Lev. 25:25). From the proceeds, the man could pay off his creditors. The land stayed in the extended family; the poor family stayed on their land; and eventually the redeemer was repaid. The redeemer was the nearest male relative. If he could not fulfill this privilege and obligation, it passed down the kinship line until someone could. This is the scenario of Ruth 4: Boaz acted as a kinsman redeemer and bought Naomi's field.

"If a man did not have any relative who would redeem his land, he could save enough to buy it back himself. The purchase price would be prorated according to the number of years left until the next Jubilee year, the fiftieth year (25:26, 27). A man might have to wait until the Jubilee year to reclaim the land of his inheritance (25:28). Even in this most desperate situation there was the hope and promise that at the Jubilee year the family would be able to return debt-free to their land and make a fresh start.

"The law of redemption and the law of the Jubilee year are vivid symbols of what Jesus Christ did on the Cross for every person [1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18—19]. What our first father and mother lost in the Garden [i.e., man's dwelling in the paradise of God and opportunity to eat from the Tree of Life], we cannot retrieve by any means [on our own]. We cannot go back to Eden [of ourselves]. Yet Jesus Christ, our elder Brother, redeemed it for us. We have been evicted from our inheritance, but in the Year of Jubilee, we will be allowed to return (cf. Is. 51:3; Ezek. 36:33-35; Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2, 14). We will live with Jesus in Paradise." Moreover, we will at last inherit the whole universe with Him (Romans 8:16-19; Hebrews 2:8-9; Revelation 21:7), which was God's intent for mankind from the beginning (compare Deuteronomy 4:19). What a glorious redemption—of both us and our heritage.

#### Egypt to Be Laid Waste and Scattered for 40 Years (Ezekiel 29:1-16)

In the 10th year of Ezekiel's captivity, January of 587 B.C., God gives him a prophecy of the downfall of Egypt. The timing here is significant, as this is the period during which Pharaoh Hophra's forces came up to oppose the Babylonians, causing the siege of Jerusalem to be temporarily lifted. In our next reading, we will go through another prophecy of Ezekiel-given a few months later-that alludes to the outcome of this particular conflict and describes the coming fall of Egypt to Babylon. The current reading concerns the latter aspect.

God refers to the Egyptian pharaoh as a great "monster" (NKJV) or "dragon" (KJV) in the midst of his "rivers," saying, "My River is my own" (verse 3). The major "River" of Egypt is of course the Nile-which represented the entire country of Egypt, as the population was concentrated along its length. The "rivers" (plural) likely denote the many branches of the Nile in the northern delta region. The word "monster" is translated from the Hebrew tannim. "The word's meanings

and its cognates range from 'jackal' to 'serpent,' 'dragon,' 'sea-monster,' 'monster,' 'crocodile.' In all O[ld] T[estament] contexts where the term is used, a fearful creature is imagined" (Expositor's Bible Commentary, footnote on verse 3). The fearful dragon like beast of the Nile and its branches-a river-dwelling creature with powerful jaws and thick scales (see verse 4)-is surely the crocodile. "The crocodile god, Sebek [or Sobek], was very important to the Egyptians in the Nile delta area. He was considered Egypt's protector and at times was identified with the solar deity, Re [or Ra] (cf. Diodorus 1.35)" (Expositor's, note on verses 1-7). Recall from Isaiah 30:7 and 51:9 that God referred to Egypt as a monster called "Rahab," meaning "Fierce" or "Violent"-parallel to the Egyptian name Sobek, meaning "Rager" (conjuring images of a fierce crocodile attack).

The pharaoh was identified with Egypt's divine protector. God says the pharaoh considers himself the creator of the Nile (verse 3), meaning, essentially, of all Egypt. Besides being a blasphemous concept of the pharaohs in general, as they promoted themselves as divine incarnations, "this was [a particularly apt description of] Hophra's (Apries') arrogant self-image. [The Greek historian] Herodotus implied that Pharaoh Apries was so strong in his position that he felt no god could dislodge him. In his reign he sent an expedition against Cyprus, besieged and took Gaza (cf. Jer 47:1) and the city of Sidon, was victorious against Tyre by sea, and considered himself master over Palestine and Phoenicia. Such pride was consistent with the denunciation in this message ([Ezekiel 29] v. 3), for the Pharaoh felt that the Nile (Egypt) belonged to him and that he had created it for himself. This arrogance had also shown itself in an attempt to interrupt Babylonia's siege of Jerusalem-an attempt thwarted by God" (note on verses 1-7).

God says He will draw the pharaonic crocodile out with hooks along with all the "fish" clinging to his scales, meaning the Egyptians in general who clung to or followed the pharaoh (verse 4). The pharaoh and his people would be pulled from their position of national strength and left "in the desert" as carrion for the birds and beasts (verse 5, NIV). The Egyptian ruler, at least in a figurative sense, "would not even be afforded the royal burial so important to the Pharaohs. The tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes demonstrate how important proper royal burial was to the Pharaohs' successful journey through the Egyptian afterlife. Lack of such burial would have been [seen as] a horrible fate" (note on verses 1-7).

The imagery then changes from that of a mighty, thrashing river beast to that of a weak river plant. God calls Egypt a "staff of reed to the house of Israel" (verse 6)-just as the Assyrians had described it more than a century earlier (see Isaiah 36:6). This is an allusion to Egypt's weakness and unreliability as an ally for the Israelites-as well as the worthlessness and even danger of looking to this nation for protection. When the Israelites lean on Egypt for support, it shatters, leaving them seriously wounded (Ezekiel 29:7).

God says He will bring the sword of warfare on Egypt to lay it waste, showing that He, not the pharaoh, is the one who determines whether the nation exists or not (compare verses 8-9). The devastation would extend across the length of the land, from Migdol in the north (in the eastern delta region) to Syene in the south (modern Aswan) and even down to the border of Nubia in

what is today Sudan (verse 10). The prophet Jeremiah later foretells the fall of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar's forces (Jeremiah 43:8-13). And Ezekiel later gives more details of this Babylonian invasion in Ezekiel 29:17-30:19. The prophet placed this other prophecy right after the one we are currently reading because it follows thematically-even though it was given more than 16 years later (compare 29:1, 17).

According to our current reading, the land would remain desolate for 40 years, during which time the Egyptians would be scattered-after which they would be returned to their homeland of Pathros, southern Egypt (verses 11-14). There is no secular confirmation of this period of scattering. Indeed, we would not expect an admission of such a massive defeat in the Egyptian records. However, "a Babylonian chronicle suggests that Egypt was conquered [by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar] around 568 B.C. Forty years after this date, the Persians [having overthrown the Babylonians] instituted a policy of resettlement for many of the peoples who had been dispersed by Babylon" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verse 11). Pharaoh Hophra was executed at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, not long after a coup by Hophra's own general Amasis or Ahmose, who replaced him as pharaoh. Ahmose (II) remained on the throne as a Babylonian vassal and continued into the Persian period, dying a year before the Persian invasion of Egypt in 525 B.C.

Following its conquest by the Babylonians, Egypt would never again be a superpower empire. This was especially true of the original ethnic Egyptians. More than 200 years later, after Alexander the Great, the land of Egypt did emerge again as an independent power under the Ptolemaic dynasty for three centuries-but, besides the fact that it was nowhere near the great power that Egypt had once been, this was actually a Greek kingdom, not a truly Egyptian one. Afterward, Egypt became a Roman possession and then, centuries later, a province of the Islamic empire. When Egypt became an independent nation in modern times, it was as an Arab, not a true Egyptian, state. The original Egyptians today may be found among the Copts of Egypt and possibly the Gypsies (according to some of their historical traditions)-both of whom are indeed very lowly peoples in geopolitical terms.

In verses 6 and 16, God says that His purpose in punishment is to show the Egyptians that He is God. While some may have come to this conclusion at the time of the Babylonian conquest, or at least to the rejection of their own false gods, including the concept of the pharaoh as divine, the Egyptians as a whole did not forsake their false religion or come to know the true God. It may be, then, that this prophecy of Egypt is dual, with elements of it applying to the end time-just as in the prophecies of judgment on Judah's immediate neighbors in Ezekiel 25, where the purpose of punishment is also repeatedly given as teaching the recipients of God's judgment that He is really God, a fact they will not truly learn until the last days. Like the great majority of other peoples and nations of the region, the inhabitants of Egypt have for centuries been overwhelmingly Muslim, worshipers of Allah. In time they will learn who the true God is. Concerning Egypt of the end time, it is interesting to note that the future king of the North (a revival of Babylon) will invade and subjugate the nation (Daniel 11:40-42). Afterward, Egypt will

be delivered under the reign of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 19:20-25)—when the nation will finally come to truly know God and learn of His ways (verse 21).

### **Egypt Will Fall to Babylonian Conquest (Ezekiel 29:17-30:19)**

In the spring of 571 B.C., two years after Ezekiel’s vision of the temple, the prophet receives one more dated prophecy. Jeremiah has already been taken to Egypt by the remnant of Judah, against his warnings from God. He prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would take Egypt (Jeremiah 43:10-13; 44:30). Ezekiel, too, has already received a series of prophecies about

the coming fall of Egypt to the Babylonians (see the other prophecies of Ezekiel 29-32). God now gives Ezekiel two more prophetic messages concerning Egypt, which the prophet includes with the section of his book dealing with that nation.

Ezekiel is told that God will give Egypt into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand, as “payment” for the work the ruler of Babylon unwittingly performed on God’s behalf, especially against Tyre (Ezekiel 29:18-20). “As a fulfillment of God’s judgment on Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years (cf. Jos[ephus] Antiq[uities of the Jews] X, 228 {xi.1}). The scant historical data indicates that Egypt and Tyre became allies under Pharaoh Hophra (Apries). The extended siege of Tyre was perhaps due to the aid Tyre received from the Egyptians. In such an act Hophra was going contrary to God’s purposes. Not only was the siege prolonged by Egyptian support, but some also surmise that Egypt’s maritime aid enabled Tyre to send away her wealth for security during the siege” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, note on Ezekiel 29:17-21).

As you may recall from our reading of Ezekiel 26 and the prophecies against Tyre, in spite of 13 years of siege, Nebuchadnezzar failed to capture the island fortress and its store of wealth. God says here that He will give him Egypt to make up for it.

The meaning of Ezekiel 29:21, in which God says He “will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth,” is uncertain. Given in the same context as the opening of Ezekiel’s mouth, it is usually interpreted to mean that the Jewish exiles would be strengthened or encouraged at the time of Egypt’s fall to Babylon along with further encouraging messages from the prophet that are unrecorded. Yet given the duality in these prophetic sections concerning Egypt, verse 21 could perhaps refer to a strengthened end-time Israel finally receiving Ezekiel’s prophecies. Yet there is another possibility. While the horn can symbolize national strength or power, it can also represent the power center of a nation—its ruler. Consider that it was during the period of Egypt’s ancient destruction that Jeremiah oversaw the transfer of the throne of David from Judah to the house of Israel in the British Isles (see *The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future* at [www.ucg.org/brp/materials/index.htm](http://www.ucg.org/brp/materials/index.htm)). This seems a likely fulfillment of this verse.

Ezekiel then receives another prophecy from God in the first part of chapter 30—the last recorded message in the book. Ezekiel 30:2-3 mentions the “day of the LORD” in wording very similar to Joel 2:1-2. In this case, he describes the day as it will be from Egypt’s perspective,

but the wording—fire and desolation—is quite similar (compare Ezekiel 30:7-8; Joel 2:3). However, the imagery need not exclusively apply to the end time. As Expositor's notes: "yom laYHWH ('a day of the LORD') is not a construct state and therefore is not properly translated 'the day of the LORD' [but], literally, 'a day {belonging} to the LORD.' The word yom ('day') is indefinite twice in this verse. Those who see the 'day of the LORD' here as an earnest of the eschatological [i.e., end-time] Day of the Lord (cf. Joel), keeping it as a technical expression, generally link together the near and distant future into a singular meaning with multiple fulfillments" (footnote on Ezekiel 30:3). This seems reasonable—that the ancient time of divine intervention was intended by the passage as well as, in type, the end-time intervention yet to come.

Verse 5 mentions other doomed lands in alliance with Egypt. Where the New King James Version has "all the mingled people," the New International Version has "all Arabia." Expositor's explains: "The translation 'Arabia' is based on a revocalization of ha`erebh ('Arabia'?) to `arabh ('Arabia') with the Syrian. However, some prefer to read ereb ('mixed company') since the term is modified by kal ('all').... The exact meaning is still unclear" (footnote on verse 5). The identity of "Chub" or Kub is also unclear. Some have proposed the Cobii (or Cubians), a people of the Egyptian province of Mareotis in the western Nile Delta mentioned by the ancient Greek geographer Ptolemy (see John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, note on verse 5; Adam Clarke's Commentary, note on verse 5).

Nebuchadnezzar evidently laid waste the entire country of Egypt. "Migdol to Syene" (verse 6)—that is, Suez to Aswan—denotes, as it did in 29:10, the whole land from north to south. We read about Noph, Pathros and Tehaphnehes (Tahpanhes) in connection with Jeremiah's journey to Egypt in Jeremiah 43-44. Noph (Memphis), Zoan (Tanis), Sin (Pelusium), Aven (On or Heliopolis), Pi Beseth (Bubastis) and Tehaphnehes (Daphne) were in the northern Nile Delta region of Egypt. No (Thebes), Pathros (southern Egypt) and Syene (Aswan) were all in the south.

However, this could also refer to destruction meted out over time—by Nebuchadnezzar yes, but also by later invaders. Notice the prophecy of verse 13: "There shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt." This has been understood to mean that the rulers of Egypt would no longer be native Egyptian. Under Babylonian rule, the pharaoh was subject to the Babylonian emperor. Yet, although a vassal, the pharaoh did rule as king and was Egyptian. This changed after the invasion by the Persian emperor Cambyses II, son of Cyrus the Great. "When the last Egyptian king was defeated by Cambyses II in 525 BC, the country entered a period of Persian domination under the 27th Dynasty. Egypt reasserted its independence under the 28th and 29th dynasties, but the 30th Dynasty was the last one of native rulers" (<http://www.emayzine.com/lectures/egyptciv.html>). At the time of Alexander the Great, Egypt came under Greek rule, which was perpetuated through the dynasty of Alexander's general Ptolemy. This reign was broken when, following in the tradition of the earlier northern empires, the Romans later invaded and took over Egypt as well.

Perhaps a similar measure of destruction will come in the last days when the ruler of end-time

Babylon, the future Roman emperor and “king of the North,” invades and assumes control of Egypt, as described in Daniel 11:40-43.

### **Egypt Defeated as a Prelude to Complete Destruction (Ezekiel 30:20-31:18)**

The prophecy against the Egyptian pharaoh in Ezekiel 30:20-26 comes in the early spring of 587 B.C., just a few months after the prophecy of Egypt in our previous reading (30: 20; compare 29:1). God says He has “broken the arm of Pharaoh” (30:21) and that He “will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken” to “make the sword fall out of his hand” (verse 22). The “arm” is the symbol of strength. It holds a “sword,” meaning that it wields military power. The breaking of the first arm, which had already taken place at this point, refers to Pharaoh Hophra’s attempt to relieve the siege of Jerusalem, which we read about in Jeremiah 37:5. The attempt had obviously failed, with Egypt left sorely defeated.

The image of a broken arm was quite suitable. “The flexed arm was a common Egyptian symbol for the Pharaoh’s strength. Often statues or images of the Pharaoh have this arm flexed, wielding a sword in battle. A king with great biceps was especially a popular concept under the Saites Dynasty of Ezekiel’s day. In addition Hophra took a second formal title that meant ‘possessed of a muscular arm’ or ‘strong-armed’” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, note on Ezekiel 30:20-26).

The initial defeat of the Egyptian forces by the Babylonians was a mere prelude to the complete destruction Egypt would soon suffer. The nation would be devastated, with its people scattered (verses 23-26), as previously proclaimed in 29:12-13. Also repeated is the intended goal of God’s discipline—that the Egyptians would know that He is the true God (30:26). As in other prophecies, this seems to signify that ultimate fulfillment will not come until the end time.

### **Egypt to Be Felled Like the Great Tree Assyria (Ezekiel 30:20-31:18)**

Two months later, God gives Ezekiel another prophecy of Egypt’s fall (31:1; compare 30:20). A comparison is made between Egypt and Assyria. Egypt was a powerful and arrogant empire like Assyria. But the Assyrian Empire was even more powerful than Egypt. In fact, Egypt itself had been conquered by Assyria and incorporated into the Assyrian Empire.

In the imagery of chapter 31, Assyria is pictured as a Lebanon cedar—as the cedars of Lebanon were the tallest trees in the Middle East. Great rivers nourished the empire—the Tigris and Euphrates providing Mesopotamia with its fertility of soil and with important commercial traffic routes. Smaller nations, represented as birds and beasts, dwelt in and beneath its boughs. No other “trees,” imperial nations, were like it. Still, this great tree was felled—brought down to “hell” or, in Hebrew, sheol, meaning “the grave” (verses 15-17; compare “death” and “the Pit” in verse 14).

Despite the greatness and power of Assyria, God brought it down by means of the forces of

Babylon. So why did Egypt think that it could now prevail against Babylon? If the Assyrian Empire had fallen to the Babylonians, so would the much weaker Egypt—especially since the Almighty God was behind it.

### **Egypt to Fall Like Other Defeated Nations (Ezekiel 32)**

The next chapter of Ezekiel in time order is not the next one in numerical order. As mentioned before, Ezekiel's arrangement is thematic. The lamentations for Pharaoh and Egypt in chapter 32 have been placed at the end of a whole section of prophecies dealing with Egypt (29-32), part of which we have yet to read.

“The exiles in Babylon had recently learned of Jerusalem's fall when Ezekiel chanted this dirge [in the first half of Ezekiel 32] in March of 585 B.C. Egypt had witnessed the fall of Judah and may have felt proud of her own survival. Ezekiel, however, pictures that great southern land as already dead. God has condemned her, and none of her many gods will be able to help” (Bible Reader's Companion, note on Ezekiel 32:1-16).

The Expositor's Bible Commentary notes: “The lament over Egypt was principally a recapitulation of the judgment messages [already given against Egypt], emphasizing Egypt's false pride and bewailing the fate of judgment. Once again, the double imagery portrayed the Pharaoh's energetic pride but ineffective strength. Hophra was likened to a young lion and a thrashing crocodile that only muddied the streams of the Nile (v. 2; cf. 29:3). The crocodile (Pharaoh) would be captured with a net ([32] v. 3) and hurled on the open field as food for the birds and animals (v. 4). The carnage would be so great that it would fill every ravine and mountain (vv. 5-6). It would be as if a great darkness covered the land (vv. 7-8), demonstrating that Egypt's great sun gods were impotent to help. Cosmic collapse is a common image with earth-shaking events (cf. Joel 2:28; Acts 2). The nations who sang this funeral dirge would be stunned and horrified that Egypt had fallen in their midst ([Ezekiel 32] vv. 9-10)” (note on verses 1-10). Verse 11 shows that the agent of destruction will be the king of Babylon.

Of course, the heavenly signs could be an indication that this prophecy has some application to the future Day of the Lord, especially as Daniel 11:40-43 shows that the end-time Babylonian ruler of the north will invade and plunder Egypt. Nevertheless, as pointed out in the Bible Reading Program comments on Ezekiel 29:1-16, massive calamity was going to come on Egypt around 568 B.C., 17 years after the lamentation of Ezekiel 32. At that time Nebuchadnezzar invaded the country and laid waste to the entire Nile Valley, evidently deporting most of the survivors for a period of 40 years.

In the latter half of Ezekiel 32, given two weeks after the lamentation of the first half, Ezekiel is told to bewail the fact that Egypt will follow other fallen nations to the grave. “This final prophecy, uttered in April of 585 B.C., sums up God's word concerning contemporary Egypt and concludes Ezekiel's messages concerning foreign nations” (Bible Reader's Companion, note on verses 17-32). These other nations have apparently all fallen to Babylon—and so too will Egypt.



It should be noted that though this concludes the prophecies against Egypt in arrangement order, there are two more prophecies regarding Egypt in chronological progression (29:17-30:19). In fact, those two prophecies are the latest dated sections in Ezekiel's book.

## **1 Peter 5 (Adam Clarke's Commentary Online)**

### Chapter 5

Directions to the elders to feed the flock of God, and not to be lord over God's heritage, that when the chief Shepherd does appear, they may receive a crown of glory, 1-4. The young are to submit themselves to the elder, and to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and cast all their care upon him, 6-7. They should be sober and watchful, because their adversary the devil is continually seeking their destruction, whom they are to resist, steadfast in the faith, 8,9. They are informed that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, 10- 11. Of Silvanus, by whom this epistle was sent, 12. Salutations from the Church at Babylon, 13. The apostolic benediction, 14.

### Notes on Chapter 5

Verse 1. The elders which are among you ?In this place the term elders or presbyters is the name of an office. They were as pastors or shepherds of the flock of God. They were the same as bishops, presidents, teachers and deacons, Acts 14:23; ; 1 Timothy 5:17. And that these were the same as bishops the next verse proves.

Who am also an elder ?A fellow elder; one on a level with yourselves.

A witness of the sufferings of Christ ?He was with Christ in the garden; he was with him when he was apprehended. and he was with him in the high priest's hall.

A partaker of the glory ?He had a right to it through the blood of the Lamb; he had a blessed anticipation of it by the power of the Holy Ghost; and he had the promise from his Lord and Master that he should be with him in heaven, to behold his glory; John 17:21,24.

Verse 2. Feed the flock ?Do not fleece the flock.

Taking the oversight ?Discharging the office of bishops or superintendents. This is another proof that bishop and presbyter were the same order in the apostolic times, though afterwards they were made distinct.

Not by constraint ?The office was laborious and dangerous, especially in these times of persecution; it is no wonder then that even those who were best qualified for the office should strive to excuse themselves with a genuine Nolo episcopari, "I am unwilling to be a bishop."

Not for filthy lucre ?Could the office of a bishop, in those early days, and in the time of persecution, be a lucrative office? Does not the Spirit of God lead the apostle to speak these things rather for posterity than for that time? See Clarke on 1 Timothy 3:3.

But of a ready mind ?Doing all for Christ's sake, and through love.

Verse 3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage ?This is the voice of Peter in his epistle to the Church! According to him there are to be no lords over God's heritage, the bishops and presbyters who are appointed by the head of the Church are to feed the flock, to guide and to defend it, not to fleece and waste it; and they are to look for their reward in another world, and in the approbation of God in their consciences. And in humility, self-abasement, self renunciation, and heavenly-mindedness, they are to be ensamples, types, to the flock, molds of a heavenly form, into which the spirits and lives of the flock may be cast, that they may come out after a perfect pattern. They are in every sense the reverse of this. But we may ask, Do the other Churches, which profess to be reformed from the abominations of the above, keep the advice of the apostle in their eye? Have they pastors according to God's own heart, who feed them with knowledge and understanding? Jeremiah 3:15. Do they feed themselves, and not the flock? Are they lords over the heritage of Christ, ruling with a high eeclesiastico-secular hand, disputing with their flocks about penny-farthing tithes and stipends, rather than contending for the faith once delivered to the saints? Are they heavenly moulds, into which the spirits and conduct of their flocks may be cast? I leave those who are concerned to answer these questions; but I put them, in the name of God, to all the preachers in the land. How many among them properly care for the flock? Even among those reputed evangelical teachers, are there not some who, on their first coming to a parish or a congregation, make it their first business to raise the tithes and the stipends, where, in all good conscience, there was before enough, and more than enough, to provide them and their families with not only the necessaries, but all the conveniences and comforts of life? conveniences and comforts which neither Jesus Christ nor his servant Peter ever enjoyed. And is not the great concern among ministers to seek for those places, parishes, and congregations, where the provision is the most ample, and the work the smallest? Preacher or minister, whosoever thou art, who readest this, apply not the word to thy neighbor, whether he be state-appointed, congregation appointed, or self-appointed; take all to thyself; mutato nomine de TE fabula narratur. See that thy own heart, views, and conduct be right with God; and then proceed to the next verse.

Verse 4. When the chief Shepherd ?That is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 5. Likewise, ye younger probably means here inferiors, or those not in sacred offices; and may be understood as referring to the people at large who are called to obey them that have the rule over them in the Lord. In this sense our Lord, it appears, uses the word, Luke 22:26.

Be subject one to another ?Strive all to serve each other; let the pastors strive to serve the people, and the people the pastors; and let there be no contention, but who shall do most to oblige and profit all the rest.

Be clothed with humility ?Be ye truly humble; and let your outward garb and conduct be a proof of the humility of your hearts.

Verse 6. Humble yourselves ?Those who submit patiently to the dispensations of God's providence he lifts up; those who lift themselves up, God thrusts down.

If we humble not ourselves under God's grace, he will humble us under his judgments. Those who patiently submit to him, he exalts in due time; if his hand be mighty to depress, it is also mighty to exalt.

Verse 7. Casting all your care Your anxiety, your distracting care, on him, for he careth for you. This is a plain reference to Psalms 55:22: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee. He will bear both thee and thy burden.

Verse 8. Be sober ?Avoid drunkenness of your senses, and drunkenness in your souls; be not overcharged with the concerns of the world.

Be vigilant ?Awake, and keep awake; be always watchful; never be off your guard; your enemies are alert, they are never off theirs.

Your adversary the devil ?This is the reason why ye should be sober and vigilant; ye have an ever active, implacable, subtle enemy to contend with. He walketh about-he has access to you everywhere; he knows your feelings and your propensities, and informs himself of all your circumstances; only God can know more and do more than he, therefore your care must be cast upon God.

As a roaring lion ?Satan tempts under three forms: 1. The subtle serpent; to beguile our senses, pervert our judgment, and enchant our imagination. 2. As an angel of light; to deceive us with false views of spiritual things, refinements in religion, and presumption on the providence and grace of God. 3. As a roaring lion; to bear us down, and destroy us by violent opposition, persecution, and death. Thus he was acting towards the followers of God at Pontus, persecution.

Walketh about ?Traversing the earth; a plain reference to Job 2:2, which see.

Seeking whom he may devour Whom he may gulp down. It is not every one that he can swallow down: those who are sober and vigilant are proof against him, these he MAY NOT swallow down; those who are drunken with the cares of this world, unwatchful, these he MAY swallow down. There is a beauty in this verse, and a striking apposition between the first and last words, which I think have not been noticed: If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, toppers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name you are known in society, or among your fellow sinners. Strong drink is not only the way to the devil, but the devil's way into you; and YE are such as the devil particularly MAY swallow down.

Verse 9. Whom resist ?Stand against him. Though invulnerable, he is not unconquerable: the weakest follower of God can confound and overpower him, if he continue steadfast in the faith believing on the Son of God, and walking uprightly before him. To a soul thus engaged he can do no damage.

The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren ?It is the lot of all the disciples of Christ to suffer persecution.

Verse 10. But the God of all grace ?The Fountain of infinite compassion, mercy, and goodness. Who hath called us ?By the preaching of the Gospel. Unto his eternal glory ?To the infinite felicity of the heavenly state.

By Christ Jesus ?Through the merit of his passion and death, by the influence of his Holy Spirit, by the precepts of his Gospel, and by the splendor of his own example.

After that ye have suffered a while Having suffered a little time; that is, while ye are enduring these persecutions, God will cause all to work together for your good.

Make you perfect ? All these words are read in the future tense by the best MSS. and versions. He will make you perfect. Put you in complete joint as the timbers of a building.

Stablish ? Make you firm in every part; adapt you strongly to each other, so that you may be mutual supports, the whole building being one in the Lord.

Strengthen Cramp and bind every part, so that there shall be no danger of warping, splitting, or falling.

Settle ?Cause all to rest so evenly and firmly upon the best and surest foundation, that ye may grow together to a holy temple in the Lord: in a word, that ye may be complete in all the mind that was in Christ; supported in all your trials and difficulties; strengthened to resist and overcome all your enemies; and after all abide, firmly founded, in the truth of grace. All these phrases are architectural; and the apostle has again in view the fine image which he produced 1 Peter 2:5, where see the notes.

Verse 11. To him ?The God of all grace, be glory-all honor and praise be ascribed, and dominion-the government of heaven, earth, and hell, for ever-through time, and ever-through eternity. Amen-so be it, so let it be, and so it shall be. Amen and Amen!

Verse 12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose ?

Exhorting ?Calling upon you to be faithful, humble, and steady.

And testifying Earnestly witnessing, that it is the true grace-the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ, in which ye stand, and in which ye should persevere to the end.

Verse 13. The Church that is at Babylon ?After considering all that has been said by learned men and critics on this place, I am quite of opinion that the apostle does not mean Babylon in Egypt, nor Jerusalem, nor Rome as figurative Babylon, but the ancient celebrated Babylon in Assyria, which was, as Dr. Benson observes, the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews.

Elected together with you Fellow elect, or elected jointly with you. Probably meaning that they, and the believers at Babylon, received the Gospel about the same time. On the election of those to whom Peter wrote, See Clarke on 1 Peter 1:2.

And-Marcus my son. ?This is supposed to be the same person who is mentioned Acts 12:12, and who is known by the name of John Mark; he was sister's son to Barnabas, Colossians 4:10, his mother's name was Mary, and he is the same who wrote the gospel that goes under his name. He is called here Peter's son, i.e. according to the faith, Peter having been probably the means of his conversion. This is very likely, as Peter seems to have been intimate at his mother's house. See the account, Acts 12:6-17.

Verse 14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.

Peace be with you all ?May all prosperity, spiritual and temporal, be with all that are in Christ Jesus-that are truly converted to him, and live in his Spirit obedient to his will.

Amen. ?

I SHALL sum up the contents of this chapter in the words of a good commentator: "Because the knowledge and good behavior of the people depend, in a great measure, upon the kind of instruction which they receive from their teachers, the apostle in this chapter addressed the elders, that is, the bishops, pastors, rulers, and deacons among the brethren of Pontus, 1 Peter 5:1, exhorting the bishops in particular to feed the flock of God committed to their care faithfully, and to exercise their episcopal office, not as by constraint, but willingly; not from the love of gain, but from love to their Master and to the flock, 1 Peter 5:2; and not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be patterns of humility and disinterestedness to the people, 1 Peter 5:3. This exhortation to bishops to feed Christ's flock was given with much propriety by Peter, who had himself been appointed by Christ to feed his lambs and his sheep. Next, because the faithful performance of the bishop's office was, in that age, attended with great difficulty and danger, the apostle, to encourage the bishops, assured them that; when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, 1 Peter 5:4. The distinguished reward which Christ is to bestow on those who have suffered for his sake being a favorite topic with our apostle, he introduces it often in this epistle.

"Having thus exhorted the pastors, the apostle turned his discourse to the people, charging them to be subject to their elders, and to one another; that is, to be of a teachable disposition, and to receive instruction from every one capable of giving it, and to do all the duties which they could to each other, according to their different stations and relations, 1 Peter 5:5. But especially to be subject to God, by humbly submitting themselves to the judgments which were coming upon them, that God might exalt them in due time, 1 Peter 5:6. Casting all their anxious care on God, because he cared for them, 1 Peter 5:7. And to watch against the devil, who went about as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy them by instigating the wicked to persecute them, and drive them into apostasy, 1 Peter 5:8. But they were to resist that terrible enemy by steadfastness in the faith, and not to think themselves hardly dealt with when persecuted, knowing that their brethren everywhere were exposed to the same temptations of the devil, 1 Peter 5:9. In the meantime, to give them all the assistance in his power, the apostle prayed earnestly to God to stablish and strengthen them, 1 Peter 5:10. And ended his prayer with a doxology to God, expressive of his supreme dominion over the universe, and all the things it contains.

"The apostle informed the brethren of Pontus that he had sent this letter to them by Silvanus, whom he praised for his fidelity to Christ, 1 Peter 5:12. Then, giving them the salutation of the Church in Babylon, where it seems he was when he wrote this letter, he added the salutation of Mark, whom he called his son, either because he had converted him, or on account of the great attachment which Mark bore to him, 1 Peter 5:13. And having desired them to salute one another, he concluded with giving them his apostolical benediction, 1 Peter 5:14."

## **2 Peter 1**

### Chapter 1

The apostolical address, and the persons to whom the epistle was sent described by the state into which God had called, and in which he had placed, them, 1-4. What graces they should

possess in order to be fruitful in the knowledge of God, 5-8. The miserable state of those who either have not these graces, or have fallen from them, 9. Believers should give diligence to make their calling and election sure, 10,11. The apostle's intimations of his speedy dissolution, and his wish to confirm and establish those Churches in the true faith, 12-15. The certainty of the Gospel, and the convincing evidence which the apostle had of its truth from being present at the transfiguration, by which the word of prophecy was made more sure, 16-19. How the prophecies came, and their nature, 20,21.

#### Notes on Chapter 1

Verse 1. Simon Peter ?Symeon, is the reading of almost all the versions, and of all the most important MSS. And this is the more remarkable, as the surname of Peter occurs upwards of seventy times in the New Testament, and is invariably read, Simon, except here, and in Acts 15:14, where James gives him the name of Symeon. Of all the versions, only the Armenian and Vulgate have Simon. But the edit. princ., and several of my own MSS. of the Vulgate, write Symon; and Wiclif has Symont.

A servant Employed in his Master's work.

And an apostle ?Commissioned immediately by Jesus Christ himself to preach to the Gentiles, and to write these epistles for the edification of the Church. As the writer was an apostle, the epistle is therefore necessarily canonical. All the MSS. agree in the title apostle; and of the versions, only the Syriac omits it.

Precious faith Valuable faith; faith worth a great price, and faith which cost a great price. The word precious is used in the low religious phraseology for dear, comfortable, delightful, but how much is the dignity of the subject let down by expressions and meanings more proper for the nursery than for the noble science of salvation! It is necessary however to state, that the word precious literally signifies valuable, of great price, costly; and was not used in that low sense in which it is now employed when our translation was made. That faith must be of infinite value, the grace of which Christ purchased by his blood; and it must be of infinite value also when it is the very instrument by which the soul is saved unto eternal life.

With us ?God having given to you-believing Gentiles, the same faith and salvation which he had given to us-believing Jews.

Through the righteousness of God ?Through his method of bringing a lost world, both Jews and Gentiles, to salvation by Jesus Christ; through his gracious impartiality, providing for Gentiles as well as Jews. See the notes on Romans 3:21-26.

Of God and our Savior Jesus Christ ?This is not a proper translation of the original, which is literally, Of our God and Savior Jesus Christ; and this reading, which is indicated in the margin, should have been received into the text; and it is an absolute proof that Peter calls Jesus Christ GOD, even in the properest sense of the word, with the article prefixed. It is no evidence against this doctrine that one MS. of little authority, and the Syriac and two Arabic versions have, Lord, instead of, God, as all other MSS. and versions agree in the other reading, as well as the fathers. See in Griesbach.

Verse 2. Grace ?God's favor; peace-the effects of that favor in the communication of spiritual and temporal blessings.

Through the knowledge of God By the acknowledging of God, and of Jesus our Lord. For those who acknowledge him in all their ways, he will direct their steps. Those who know Christ; and do not acknowledge him before men, can get no multiplication of grace and peace.

Verse 3. As his Divine power ?His power, which no power can resist, because it is Divine. Hath given unto us Hath endowed us with the gifts; or, hath gifted us, as Dr. Macknight translates it, who observes that it refers to the gifts which the Holy Spirit communicated to the apostles, to enable them to bring men to life and godliness; which were, 1. A complete knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel. 2. Power to preach and defend their doctrines in suitable language, which their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist. 3. Wisdom to direct them how to behave in all cases, where and when to labor; and the matter suitable to all different cases, and every variety of persons. 4. Miraculous powers, so that on all proper and necessary occasions they could work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrines and mission.

By life and godliness we may understand, 1. a godly life; or, 2. eternal life as the end, and godliness the way to it; or, 3. what was essentially necessary for the present life, food, raiment, they were in a suffering state, and most probably many of them strangers in those places, one can scarcely say that they had all things that pertained to life; and yet so had God worked in their behalf, that none of them perished, either through lack of food or raiment. And as to what was necessary for godliness, they had that from the Gospel ministry, which it appears was still continued among them, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were not withdrawn; and what was farther necessary in the way of personal caution, comfort, and instruction, was supplied by means of these two epistles.

That hath called us to glory and virtue ?To virtue or courage as the means; and glory-the kingdom of heaven, as the end. This is the way in which these words are commonly understood, and this sense is plain enough, but the construction is harsh. Others have translated, by his glorious benignity, a Hebraism for and read the whole verse thus: God by his own power hath bestowed on us everything necessary for a happy life and godliness, having called us to the knowledge of himself, by his own infinite goodness. It is certain that the word, which we translate virtue or courage, is used, 1 Peter 2:9, to express the perfection of the Divine nature: That ye may show forth the virtues or PERFECTIONS, of him who hath called you from darkness into his marvelous light.

Verse 4. Whereby are given unto us ?By his own glorious power he hath freely given unto us exceeding great and invaluable promises. The Jews were distinguished in a very particular manner by the promises which they received from God; the promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets. God promised to be their God; to protect, support, and save them; to give them what was emphatically called the promised land; and to cause the Messiah to spring from their race.

That by these ye might be partakers ?The object of all God's promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to the image of God, which he had lost. This, indeed, is the sum and substance of Christ. We have partaken of an earthly, sensual, and devilish nature; the design of God by Christ is to remove this, and to make us partakers of the Divine nature; and save us from all the corruption in principle and fact which is in the world; the source of which is lust,

irregular, unreasonable, inordinate, and impure desire; desire to have, to do, and to be, what God has prohibited, and what would be ruinous and destructive to us were the desire to be granted.

Lust, or irregular, impure desire, is the source whence all the corruption which is in the world springs. Lust conceives and brings forth sin; sin is finished or brought into act, and then brings forth death. This destructive principle is to be rooted out; and love to God and man is to be implanted in its place. This is every believers privilege; God has promised to purify our hearts by faith; and that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life; that here we are to be delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, and have even "the thoughts of our hearts so cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name." This blessing may be expected by those who are continually escaping, flying from, the corruption that is in the world and in themselves. God purifies no heart in which sin is indulged. Get pardon through the blood of the Lamb; feel your need of being purified in heart; seek that with all your soul; plead the exceeding great and invaluable promises that refer to this point; abhor your inward self; abstain from every appearance of evil; flee from self and sin to God; and the very God of peace will sanctify you through body, soul, and spirit, make you burning and shining lights here below, (a proof that he can save to the uttermost ail that come to him by Christ,) and afterwards, having guided you by his counsel through life, will receive you into his eternal glory.

Verse 5. And beside this ?Notwithstanding what God hath done for you, in order that ye may not receive the grace of God in vain;

Giving all diligence ?Furnishing all earnestness and activity: the original is very emphatic.

Add to your faith ? Lead up hand in hand.

Your faith-That faith in Jesus by which ye have been led to embrace the whole Gospel, and by which ye have the evidence of things unseen.

Virtue Courage or fortitude, to enable you to profess the faith before men, in these times of persecution.

Knowledge ?True wisdom, by which your faith will be increased, and your courage directed, and preserved from degenerating into rashness.

Verse 6. Temperance ?A proper and limited use of all earthly enjoyments, keeping every sense under proper restraints, and never permitting the animal part to subjugate the rational.

Patience ?Bearing all trials and difficulties with an even mind, enduring in all, and persevering through all.

Godliness ?Piety towards God; a deep, reverential, religious fear; not only worshipping God with every becoming outward act, but adoring, loving, and magnifying him in the heart: a disposition indispensably necessary to salvation, but exceedingly rare among professors.

Verse 7. Brotherly kindness ? Love of the brotherhood-the strongest attachment to Christ's flock; feeling each as a member of your own body.

Charity Love to the whole human race, even to your persecutors: love to God and the brethren they had; love to all mankind they must also have. True religion is neither selfish nor insulated;



where the love of God is, bigotry cannot exist. Narrow, selfish people, and people of a party, who scarcely have any hope of the salvation of those who do not believe as they believe, and who do not follow with them, have scarcely any religion, though in their own apprehension none is so truly orthodox or religious as themselves.

Verse 8. For if these things be in you and abound ?If ye possess all these graces, and they increase and abound in your souls, they will make-show, you to be neither, idle, nor, unfruitful, in the acknowledgment of our Lord Jesus Christ. The common translation is here very unhappy: barren and unfruitful certainly convey the same ideas; but idle or inactive, which is the proper sense of, takes away this tautology, and restores the sense. The graces already mentioned by the apostle are in themselves active principles; he who was possessed of them, and had them abounding in him, could not be inactive; and he who is not inactive in the way of life must be fruitful. I may add, that he who is thus active, and consequently fruitful, will ever be ready at all hazard to acknowledge his Lord and Savior, by whom he has been brought into this state of salvation.

Verse 9. But he that lacketh these things ?He, whether Jew or Gentile, who professes to have FAITH in God, and has not added to that FAITH fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and universal love; is blind-his understanding is darkened, and cannot see afar off, shutting his eyes against the light, winking, not able to look truth in the face, nor to behold that God whom he once knew was reconciled to him: and thus it appears he is wilfully blind, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins-has at last, through his non improvement of the grace which he received from God, his faith ceasing to work by love, lost the evidence of things not seen; for, having grieved the Holy Spirit by not showing forth the virtues of him who called him into his marvelous light, he has lost the testimony of his sonship; and then, darkness and hardness having taken place of light and filial confidence, he first calls all his former experience into doubt, and questions whether he has not put enthusiasm in the place of religion. By these means his darkness and hardness increase, his memory becomes indistinct and confused, till at length he forgets the work of God on his soul, next denies it, and at last asserts that the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins, is impossible, and that no man can be saved from sin in this life. Indeed, some go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them; to renounce Jesus Christ as having made atonement for them; and finish their career of apostasy by utterly denying his Godhead. Many cases of this kind have I known; and they are all the consequence of believers not continuing to be workers together with God, after they had experienced his pardoning love.

Reader, see that the light that is in thee become not darkness; for if it do, how great a darkness!

Verse 10. Wherefore ?Seeing the danger of apostasy, and the fearful end of them who obey not the Gospel, and thus receive the grace of God in vain; give all diligence, hasten, be deeply careful, labor with the most intense purpose of soul.

To make your calling ?From deep Gentile darkness into the marvelous light of the Gospel. And election ?Your being chosen, in consequence of obeying the heavenly calling, to be the people and Church of God.

Sure Firm, solid. For your calling to believe the Gospel, and your election to be members, will be ultimately unprofitable to you, unless you hold fast what you have received by adding to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance,

For if ye do these things ?If ye be careful and diligent to work out your own salvation, through the grace which ye have already received from God; ye shall never fall, ye shall at no time stumble or fall; Romans 11:11, where the same word is used, and as apostates do, and lose their peace and salvation. We find, therefore, that they who do not these things shall fall; and thus we see that there is nothing absolute and unconditional in their election.

Verse 11. For so an entrance shall be ministered ?If ye give diligence; and do not fall, an abundant, free, honorable, and triumphant entrance shall be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom. There seems to be here an allusion to the triumphs granted by the Romans to their generals who had distinguished themselves by putting an end to a war, or doing some signal military service to the state.

Verse 12. Wherefore I will not be negligent ?He had already written one epistle, this is the second; and probably he meditated more should he be spared. He plainly saw that there was no way of entering into eternal life but that which he described from the 5th to the 10th verse; 2 Peter 1:5-10 and although they knew and were established in the present truth, yet he saw it necessary to bring these things frequently to their recollection.

Verse 13. As long as I am in this tabernacle ?By tabernacle we are to understand his body; and hence several of the versions have, body, instead of, tabernacle. Peter's mode of speaking is very remarkable: as long as I AM in this tabernacle, so then the body was not Peter, but Peter dwelt in that body. Is not this a proof that Peter believed his soul to be very distinct from his body? As a man's house is the place where he dwells, so the body is the house where the soul dwells.

Verse 14. Knowing that shortly I must put off ?Peter plainly refers to the conversation between our Lord and himself, related John 21:18,19. And it is likely that he had now a particular intimation that he was shortly to seal the truth with his blood. But as our Lord told him that his death would take place when he should be old, being aged now he might on this ground fairly suppose that his departure was at hand.

Verse 15. Moreover, I will endeavor And is not this endeavor seen in these two epistles? By leaving these among them, even after his decease, they had these things always in remembrance.

After my decease ?After my going out, i.e. of his tabernacle. The real Peter was not open to the eye, nor palpable to the touch; he was concealed in that tabernacle vulgarly supposed to be Peter.

Verse 16. Cunningly devised fables ?It is probable that he means those cunningly devised fables among the heathens, concerning the appearance of their gods on earth in human form. And to gain the greater credit to these fables, the priests and statesmen instituted what they called the mysteries of the gods, in which the fabulous appearance of the gods was represented in mystic shows. But one particular show none but the fully initiated were permitted to behold; hence they were entitled, beholders. This show was probably some resplendent image of the god, imitating life, which, by its glory, dazzled the eyes of the beholders, while their ears were ravished by hymns sung in its praise; to this it was natural enough for Peter to allude, when speaking about the transfiguration of Christ.

Verse 17. For he received honor and glory ?In his transfiguration our Lord received from the Father honor in the voice or declaration which said, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted. And he received glory, when, penetrated with, and involved in, that excellent glory, the fashion of his countenance was altered, for his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white and glistening, exceeding white like snow; which most glorious and preternatural appearance was a confirmation of the supernatural voice, as the voice was of this preternatural appearance: and thus his Messiahship was attested in the most complete and convincing manner.

Verse 18. And this voice-we heard ?That is, himself, James, and John heard it, and saw this glory; for these only were the, beholders, on the holy mount. It is worthy of remark that our blessed Lord, who came to give a new law to mankind, appeared on this holy mount with splendor and great glory, as God did when he came on the holy mount, Sinai, to give the old law to Moses. And when the voice came from the excellent glory, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted; hear him: the authority of the old law was taken away. Neither Moses nor Elijah, the law nor the prophets, must tabernacle among men, as teaching the whole way of salvation, and affording the means of eternal life; these things they had pointed out, but these things they did not contain; yet the fulfilment of their types and predictions rendered their declarations more firm and incontestable.

Verse 19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy ?We have the prophetic doctrine more firm or more confirmed; for in this sense the word is used in several places in the New Testament. See 1 Corinthians 1:6: Even as the testimony of Christ, was CONFIRMED, among you. 2 Corinthians 1:21: Now he which stablisheth us, who CONFIRMETH US. Colossians 2:7: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, CONFIRMED in the faith. Hebrews 2:3: How shall we escape if we neglect great salvation, which was CONFIRMED to us. Hebrews 6:16: And an oath, for CONFIRMATION. This is the literal sense of the passage in question; and this sense removes that ambiguity from the text which has given rise to so many different interpretations. Taken according to the common translation, it seems to say that prophecy is a surer evidence of Divine revelation than miracles; and so it has been understood. The meaning of the apostle appears to be this: The law and the prophets have spoken concerning Jesus Christ, and Isaiah has particularly pointed him out in these words: Behold my servant whom I uphold, my CHOSEN IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH; I have put my Spirit upon him, and

he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS out of the prison house, Isaiah 42:1,7. Now both at his baptism, ; Matthew 3:17, and at his transfiguration, Jesus Christ was declared to be this chosen person, God's only Son, the beloved One in WHOM HE DELIGHTED. The voice, therefore, from heaven, and the miraculous transfiguration of his person, have confirmed the prophetic doctrine concerning him. And to this doctrine, thus confirmed, ye do well to take heed; for it is that light that shines in the dark place-in the Gentile world, as well as among the Jews; giving light to them that sit in darkness, and bringing the prisoners out of the prison house: and this ye must continue to do till the day of his second, last, and most glorious appearing to judge the world comes; and the day star, this light-bringer, arise in your hearts-manifest himself to your eternal consolation. Or perhaps the latter clause of the verse might be thus understood: The prophecies concerning Jesus, which have been so signally confirmed to us on the holy mount, have always been as a light shining in a dark place, from the time of their delivery to the time in which the bright day of Gospel light and salvation dawned forth, and the Son of righteousness has arisen in our souls, with healing in his rays. And to this all who waited for Christ's appearing have taken heed.

Verse 20. Knowing this first ?Considering this as a first principle, that no prophecy of the Scripture, whether that referred to above, or any other, is of any private interpretation-proceeds from the prophet's own knowledge or invention, or was the offspring of calculation or conjecture. The word, signifies also impetus, impulse; and probably this is the best sense here; not by the mere private impulse of his own mind.

Verse 21. For the prophecy came not in old time ?That is, in any former time, by the will of man-by a man's own searching, conjecture, or calculation; but holy men of God-persons separated from the world, and devoted to God's service, spake, moved by the Holy Spirit. So far were they from inventing these prophetic declarations concerning Christ, or any future event, that they were, carried away, out of themselves and out of the whole region, as it were, of human knowledge and conjecture, by the Holy Spirit, who, without their knowing anything of the matter, dictated to them what to speak, and what to write; and so far above their knowledge were the words of the prophecy, that they did not even know the intent of those words, but searched what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.  
See 1 Peter 1:11,12, and the notes there.