

The second of the two witnesses is prophecy. Peter calls it more sure word of prophecy. The first witness, the transfiguration, was brilliant light in the glorious, unveiled face of Jesus Christ. The prophecies presented in the Word of God are light as well and are more sure than even Peter's eye witness of the glory of the Lord Jesus. Light shining in a dark, murky place long before the day dawning and the sun rising. The thought of the day dawning and rising sun reminds us of Malachi who in the last words of the Old Testament forecasts the glorious appearing of the Lord to purify, organize and rule His everlasting kingdom.

Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;

Before the dawn and sunrise we often see the morning star (now called the planet Venus) in the dark eastern sky. The brightest object in the night sky other than the moon, it announces the coming dawn. The Lord speaks of Himself as the Morning Star.

Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob,

Matthew 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Revelation 2:25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

*22:16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and **the bright and morning star.** 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

He speaks of the Rapture preceding the dawn and rising of the Sun of Righteousness prophesied in Malachi.

No Old Testament prophets speak of the Rapture for it was not revealed until the Lord has risen from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand. Their subject was the destiny and fate of Israel. Yet even so Peter refers to the day star (morning star) that arises in our hearts not to the physical revelation of Christ in His glorious Kingdom. What does that mean? The hope in the believer's heart for the Lord's return for us before He returns publically to conquer and reign. This event includes all believers living at that instant and all who died in the Lord since Abel. This hope brightens, lightens and preserves our hearts, and encourages us to be shining lights in the surrounding darkness Peter is about to speak of. The prophecies and promises of scripture are

the basis for our hope today.

The nature of these prophecies is described here, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else. They were not spoken by the will of man. The Holy Spirit spoke through men. They were holy men who spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit. Not sinless, but devout godly men counted as holy by God because of their faith and attendance to His word and their meekness in confessing promptly their faults and sinful acts.

Who were these men? They are those whose prophecies are recorded in scripture. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the rest, the authors of the so called minor prophets. They are minor only in that they are generally shorter and more focused than the so called major prophets. The Lord makes no such distinction when speaking of them or quoting them. Prophets whose prophesies are not preserved as separate books include Enoch, Lamech, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha and others. The Lord said the last and greatest of them was John the Baptist. The Lord Himself was a prophet and is especially presented as such in the Gospel according to Mark, Peter's son in the faith. Then there are the New Testament prophets Paul refers to in Romans 16:26 including Mark, Luke, James, Jude and others as well.

None of these men prophesied his own thing, but what God through the Holy Spirit inspired him to write. These are not mere idle daydreams or "pipe dreams" (opium pipes). They are the result of deeply felt interactions between the prophet and God the Spirit. Each is an authentic part of the whole prophetic word of the scriptures. Peter's statement therefore reminds us of the complex interrelationship of the prophecies contained in scripture. None of them were written independently so they cannot be interpreted alone in isolation from all the others. We must read and study the Word as a whole to properly grasp what it is saying. If we pick and choose some scriptures to the exclusion of others we are in danger of being deceived. Self deceived or deceived by others. For as there were false prophets among the people in Old Testament days there are in Christendom today as well. Some may be genuinely self deceived. But many, for whatever reason, have adopted their own agenda, intentionally ignoring clear scripture passages that clearly contradict their teaching. Note it is "among you" they arise. He is not speaking of heathen religions infesting the world outside of Christendom. No, it is arising from within. Paul warns of this as well. Speaking to the Ephesian elders representing one of the most blessed and godly assemblies on record he says:

Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which

the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Peter does not mince words. We would not expect a man like Peter to mince words and he doesn't. He couldn't be any more clear or more specific.

- These are false prophets, Grk. *pseudo prophetes*.
- They are described as false, (spurious) teachers.
- They arise from within Christian circles.
- Their activities are secret, surreptitiously sneaking in error along side the truth.
- They will bring in destructive heresies, surrounding themselves with a following, forming **sects** around certain beliefs, not the whole truth of the Bible.
- They will even go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them. What does that mean? He purchased and paid for all mankind (as well as the whole earth and each of the nations in it) paying the price of His blood. All are now responsible to Him, not only as Creator, but as Owner. They are all His, to dispose of however He pleases. He has graciously offered redemption freely to all. If they refuse His merciful offer of redemption they will die in their sins and perish to an eternity without Christ. If they repent and accept His shed blood as the price of their redemption they are His and can never be judged or lost.
- Their ways are described as "pernicious," destructive.
- Many** professing Christians will follow them, whose lives and thinking will cause the way of truth of the scriptures to be blasphemed. What is taught does not have the power of the inspired word of God and the Holy Spirit. This "Christianity" will simply be ridiculed by unbelieving rationalists. **They** easily see through the meaningless ritual and nebulous teaching put forward by many as representing Christianity on earth. Christ is derided. Proof is in the news stories and articles nowadays.
- They will use "feigned words," false, molded,

deceptive, well-turned words, like the pitch of an unscrupulous sales person.

- The results of their work will be **destruction**:
their own destruction will be **swift, sudden** (when it finally occurs),
their judgement, while delayed, has been **prepared and ready** for ages awaiting any who will not repent but go on in arrogant, prideful rebellion, like Satan, their damnation (judgement) "slumbereth not."
The "delay" is not because the executioner has nodded off. It is **scheduled and sure**.
- They will make merchandise of the saints whom they deceive. They will get rich and powerful as a result of their evil work, at the expense of those they have duped.

Can you think of any like this in the world today?

Have we ever had anyone like that attempt to work in our local assembly? Thankfully, I can't think of any. Lord, save us from that! Over the years I have occasionally seen believers who, when their personal views* are not accepted by those watching the flock, "go underground." They seek to privately spread their views among some who seem more receptive (vulnerable?). This tends to be divisive. Don't do that. Keep your views out in the open. We desperately need one another's check on each other. The Lord has set each of us in local assemblies for a reason.

1Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. {divisions: Gr. schisms}

Philippians 3:16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Don't thwart the Lord's working in us through one another. Sharpen one another.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

By Ronald Canner, May 4, 2005.

* Even when these views were not crucial to fundamental Christian faith, **the act** was heretical, divisive in spirit.