

The Apostolic Witness (vv.16-18)

What it was not (v.16)

VERSE 16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales (Οὐ γὰρ ἔξακολουθήσαντες σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις [*neg. + conj./declar., gar, for, + aor.act.pt.n.m.p., ἔξακολουθέω, exakoloutheo, follow after; 3X: 2Pet.1:16; 2:2,15, + pf.pass.pt.dat.m.pl., σοφίζω, sophizo, make someone wise, instruct; cleverly thought up; 2X: 2Tim.3:15, + dat.m.p., μῦθος, muthos, myth, fable, legend; 5X: 1Tim.1:4,7; 2Tim.4:4; Ti.1:14*]) **when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*aor.act.ind.1.p., γνωρίζω, gnorizo, make known, + pro.dat.p., su, + def.art.w/acc.f.s., dunamis, power, + conj. + acc.f.s., parousia, coming; shares the article with dunamis, + def.art.w/gen.n.s., kurios, + Iesous + Christos*]), **but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty** (ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος [*conj., alla, but, + aor.dep.pt.n.m.p., ginomai, become, come to be, + n.m.p., ἐπότης, epotes, eyewitness, observer; hapax, + pro./demon.gen.m.s., ekeinos, refers to something relatively remote or absent from the immediate setting, + def.art.w/gen.f.s., μεγαλειότης, megaleiotes, mighty power, majesty; 3X: Lk.9:43; Acts.19:27*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 16

1. Peter now comes to closer grips with his main theme, the Second Advent of Christ.
2. The implementation of the 7 virtues is required, as Christ is coming back as Judge and Ruler.
3. The apostolic presentation of this fact was not along the lines of “cleverly devised tales”.
4. The “we” of the first aorist plural participle refers to the men who communicated epignosis eschatology to the “alpha church”.
5. Those who faithfully and accurately communicated prophecy did so apart from any additions or subtractions.
6. By using the “we”, Peter identifies himself with all who faithfully communicated the particulars related to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
7. So the “we” refers to a broad category of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and Pastor-Teachers.
8. Peter knows that the readers of this letter had heard and followed the true eschatology (doctrine of last things).
9. The inference behind “cleverly devised tales/myths” is that the false teachers were alleging that the doctrines of prophecy taught were an ingenious mythology foisted upon Christians.
10. This inference seems preferable to the one that has Peter attacking the fanciful theorizings of certain false teachers (call them “cleverly devised tales”), thus contrasting the apostolic version of these things.
11. We know from the letter that the coming false teachers would deny the fact of Christ’s return (3:4).
12. What was “made known”, or “revealed”, to believers is the nature of Christ’s Second Advent.

13. The phrase “the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” is yet another example of the Granville Sharp rule (one def. art. serves both nouns).
14. Jesus Christ’s coming will certainly feature power.
15. The specifics are to be found in the prophetic writings of the Old and New Testaments.
16. The details are found in the books and verses of the Old and New Testaments.
17. The correct prophetic scheme is attained by correctly dividing the Scripture.
18. This is not an easy task but is doable.
19. The prophetic scheme laid down in Scripture is not the product of fabrication and collusion by the writers of the Bible.
20. It is the product of God the HS revealing the future to selected men (see vv.20,21).
21. Furthermore, the understanding of the correct prophetic scheme is accomplished by the IHS toward those who are genuine seekers (Jn.16:13,14).
22. The words “but we were eyewitness of His majesty” refers to those who eyewitnessed the transfiguration (Mt.17:1-8).
23. So the “we” of this phrase is considerably narrower in scope than the “we” of “we did not follow...”.
24. The “we” here refers to Peter, James, and John.
25. James died a martyr at the very outset of the Church Age (Acts.12:2), leaving Peter and John as the only living eyewitnesses of the transfiguration.
26. Verses 17,18 make it clear that the “majesty” Peter speaks of is that of the transfiguration and not Christ’s post-resurrection appearances.
27. The noun “eyewitness” (n.m.p.) is a hapax.
28. The corresponding verb ἐποπτεύω (*epopteuo*) occurs only in 1Pet.2:12 and 3:2.
29. Is this yet another indirect indication of common authorship?
30. It connotes an attentive onlooker or observer of a phenomenon.
31. The noun was used in the mystery cults of the time of higher-grade initiates who had been admitted to the spectacle of the sacred cult objects. (e.g., Plutarch).
32. The general sense of “spectator” is the idea in the present context.
33. Jesus’ “majesty” was momentarily put on display on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. Tabor, 10 miles SE of Nazareth).
34. The glory of His inner deity burst through His body and clothing so that “His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light”.
35. Moses and Elijah (two witnesses of the Trib.) made a special appearance and conversed with Jesus (they, of course, had never met the Messiah!).
36. The whole episode was designed to mimic the Second Advent.
37. This is the doctrine that is the object of special attack by the false teachers.
38. Peter categorically denies that neither he nor the others who have taught the doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are charlatans who have schemed to mislead Christians.
39. The conjunction “but” (*alla*) serves to contrast with what he and the true teachers of doctrine are not, and what some from among their number eyewitnessed.
40. Peter not only, over the course of his ministry, “made known” the character of Jesus’ Second Advent, but he was an “eyewitness” to an event that was designed to be a harbinger of the Second Coming.
41. That event was the transfiguration.
42. Peter isn’t trying to impress anyone with his credentials, but is simply reporting a historical reality that he happened to be privy to (he and only two other witnesses).
43. The content of Peter’s sensory experience is described here as simply “His majesty”.

44. Jesus' majesty is based on the reality of the hypostatic union and His glorification.
 45. "His majesty" is unsurpassed.

Eyewitness Authentication at the Transfiguration (vv.17,18)

VERSE 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father (λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν [*conj., gar, + aor.act.pt.n.m.s., lambano, receive, + prep., para, from, w/gen.m.s., theos, + gen.m.s., pater, + acc.f.s., time, honor, + conj. + acc.f.s., doxa, glory*]), **such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory** (φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιῶσδε ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης [*gen./reference f.s., phone, sound, voice; "utterance", + aor.pass.pt.gen.f.s., φέρω, phero, bear, carry; "was made", + pro.dat.m.s., autos, "to Him", + adj./demonstr.gen.f.s., τοιῶσδε, toiosde, of such a kind; IX + prep., hupo, w/def.art.w/adj.gen.f.s., μεγαλοπρεπής, megaloprepes, majestic; IX + gen.f.s., doxa, glory*]), **"This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased** (οὗτός ἐστιν Ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου εἰς ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα [*pro./demonstr.n.m.s., houtos, this, + pres.act.ind.3.s., eimi, + def.art.w/n.m.s., huios, son, + pro.gen.m.s., ego; "My", + def.art.w/adj.n.m.s., agapetos, beloved, dear, + pro.gen.m.s., ego, "My", + prep.w/pro./rel.acc.m.s., hos, whom, + pro.n.m.s., ego, "I", + aor.act.ind.1.p.s., εὐδοκέω, eudokeo, be pleased; take delight in; cp. Mt.3:17; Mk.1:11; Lk.3:22 {Christ's baptism}; Mt.17:5 {transfiguration}}*])" –

VERSE 18 and we ourselves heard this utterance (καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν [*conj. + pro.n.m.p., ego, "we", + aor.act.ind.1.p., akouo, hear, + pro./demonstr.acc.f.s., houtos, this, + def.art.w/acc.f.s., phone, voice*]) **made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain** (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐνεχθείσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει [*prep.w/abl.m.s., ouranos, heaven, + aor.pass.pt.acc.f.s., φέρω, phero, bring, carry; at 2Pet.1:13,17,21; 2:11; also 1Pet.1:13; "made", + pres.act.pt.n.m.p., eimi, "when we were", + prep.w/pro.dat.m.s., autos, "with Him", + prep.w/def.art.w/adj.loc.nt.s., hagios, holy, + loc.nt.s., horos, mountain*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 17-18

1. In these two verses Peter elaborates on the event in the life of Christ on earth that was designed to validate in no uncertain terms the doctrine of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
2. Peter now specifies the occasion when he and his two companions had this unique experience some 33 years earlier.
3. It was the occasion when Jesus "received honor and glory from God the Father".
4. In what form did that distinction on that occasion manifest itself?

5. Verse 17 tells us that it was the words spoken to Jesus by His Father that constituted the “honor and glory”.
6. It was not the radiance of His person, but the words spoken “by the Majestic Glory” that brought “honor and glory” to Christ.
7. There are two aorist participles in v.17.
8. The first is translated “when He received”, or literally, “having received”.
9. The second is “was made”, or literally, is “having been made”, or “brought forth from”.
10. The verb is φέρω, to bear or carry.
11. The action of the two participles is contemporaneous.
12. A possible translation: “For having received honor and glory from God the Father when such an utterance was transmitted to Him from the Majestic Glory”.
13. The communication, or “utterance” according to the Gospel accounts, was from the “bright cloud that overshadowed” those assembled (Mt.17:5).
14. All three synoptic gospels record this event (Mt.17:1-7; Mk.9:2-8; Lk.9:28-36).
15. The cloud symbolized “the majestic glory”.
16. This expression occurs only here in the N.T., but is used of God in the O.T. (cp. Ex.15:6,11; Job.37:4; Pss.8:1,10; 29:4; Isa.33:21; 63:1).
17. So “glory” is personified.
18. The adjective “majestic” (μεγαλοπρεπής) refers to something that is way beyond the ordinary, as in the word sublime.
19. His glory refers to His divine attributes.
20. On three separate occasions over the course of Jesus’ public ministry God the Father pronounced (spoke audibly) in the presence of witnesses to His Son.
21. The first occasion was at Christ’s baptism (Mt.3:17; 17:5 and Jn.12:28).
22. All three occasions were a declaration of Jesus’ fitness for the work He came to accomplish.
23. It authenticated His sinless life and His unimpeachable teaching.
24. The terms “Beloved” and “well-pleased” are echoed from the Messianic prophecy of Isa.42:1-4.
25. Isaiah 42:1 is echoed in Mt.3:17 and 17:5.
26. Peter omits the words “listen to Him”, which were a part of what the Father said on that occasion.
27. Peter also omits mention of the presence of Moses and Elijah.
28. The words “and we ourselves” refer, of course, to Peter, James, and John.
29. The highlight of the happening was the words spoken by God the Father.
30. The words “the holy mountain” refers to Mt. Tabor.
31. Mt. Tabor towers over the region and is more reasonably accessible than a climb to the top of Mt. Hermon.
32. Mt. Tabor overlooks the Jezreel Valley of which the valley of Megiddo is the northwestern part.
33. Mt. Tabor is about 10 miles SW of Nazareth and rises 1843 ft. above sea level.
34. From the summit one has a lovely view in all directions.
35. To the NW the higher parts of the city of Nazareth are visible.
36. At the foot of the mountain to the south is the valley of Jezreel.
37. Mt. Tabor is visible from the Megiddo mound (SW from Tabor).
38. This valley is the scene of the great battle of Armageddon (cf. Joel.3:14).
39. Megiddo was an Israelite city in the Jezreel Plain.
40. Megiddo was one of the most strategic points in Palestine and many crucial battles took place in its vicinity (ancient and modern).

41. What a fitting place the top of Mt. Tabor was for Jesus to draw attention to the future glory of His Second Coming.
42. It is called “the holy mountain” because of what happened there that day in the life of Christ.
43. Just as Mount Sinai is forever holy because of what happened there in the 15th century BC (Ex.3:5).
44. The epithet “holy” was used of any place where God revealed Himself in a special way in O.T. times.
45. Peter uses the incident to emphasize his authoritative knowledge of the historical Jesus (and to thereby rebut the false teachers’ talks about “myths”), to stress the solidarity between Jesus’ ministry and the apostolic message regarding the doctrine of the Second Advent.
46. Jesus’ action on the occasion of the transfiguration was a positive pledge of the future coming in glory which certain false teachers scoffed at.