

1:19 *The Prophetic Word Made More Sure*

My Beloved Son.

Augustine: The blessed apostle Peter, with two other disciples of Christ the Lord, James and John, was up the mountain with the Lord himself and heard a voice coming down from heaven saying “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. ³⁰ Listen to him” To remind us of this and draw it to our attention, the same apostle referred to it in his letter and went on to add that all this confirmed the message of the prophets. The voice echoed from heaven, and the prophetic word was thus made more certain. Sermons 43.5.31

The Light of Truth.

Cyril of Alexandria: For those who have died in the faith, the light-bearing lamp has risen and the day dawns, according to the Scriptures, and to them the light of truth is sent, which is the face of the Holy Spirit. Letters 55.6.32

The Light of Scripture.

Hilary of Arles: The light which shone on them was the light of Scripture. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.33

Even Balaam Spoke.

Andreas: The prophets of the New and of the Old Testament spoke in the same Spirit. If it is true that some things were saved to be revealed in the New Testament, it is also true that the prophets of the Old Testament were commanded to be silent about them. For prophets are not what they are merely because of what they say. Their whole being proclaims their calling. Willingly and knowingly they ministered to the word which came to them, for no such word ever came by the will of man. Rather it was conveyed by God to men, and the men who received it ministered to it. Thus even Balaam was commanded to speak what had been given to him, even though he had the power not to say anything if he did not want to. Jonah is another example of the same phenomenon. Catena.34

1:20 *Not One's Own Interpretation*

No Prophecy by the Impulse of Humans.

Hilary of Arles: You must take care when interpreting the Scriptures not to be too greatly fixated upon the places, times and people who wrote them down, as if they were merely human compositions. Rather you ought to rely on the clarity and sufficiency of the Spirit. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.³⁶

No Attempt to Tilt Its Meaning.

Oecumenius: This means that the prophets received their prophecies from God and transmitted what he wanted to say, not what they wanted. They were fully aware that the message had been given to them, and they made no attempt to put their own interpretation on it. If they could not bring themselves to accept what the Spirit had said to them, then they kept their mouths shut, as Jonah did, for example, when he refused to preach to Nineveh, ³⁸ and Balaam also did when he was commanded to say what had been communicated to him. ³⁹ Commentary on 2 Peter.⁴⁰

1:21 *Men Moved by the Holy Spirit*

Faith Will Recognize the Meaning.

Andreas: Peter does not say that the prophets interpreted their own sayings. They were not speaking to themselves but serving the Holy Spirit. What is the interpretation of their words if not the works which Christ revealed when he came? So if anyone wants to understand the words of the prophets properly, let him obtain faith in Jesus Christ, through which he will recognize the divine message. John bore witness before we did. Christ came from heaven, enlightening everyone. Likewise he showed that the power to prophesy is of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostle Paul when he said: "To another [the gift of] prophecy, etc." ⁴¹ So the one who prophesies is undoubtedly speaking with a tongue inspired by the Holy Spirit. Catena.⁴²

Inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Oecumenius: The prophets knew that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, even if they did not always understand the full significance of what they were told. But they were eager to see the outcome of what they did understand, as the Lord himself pointed out. Commentary on 2 Peter.⁴⁴

The Spirit Speaks in Us.

Symeon the New Theologian: You see that it is not I who speak great and extraordinary things to your charity, but the Spirit of God who speaks in us. To this Peter, the chief apostle, bears witness when he says that no prophecy ever came by man, but holy men of God spoke, moved by the Holy Spirit. For though we are insignificant and unworthy, far from all holiness and from the holy men of God, yet we cannot deny the power that has been given to us by God. Discourses 34.5.45

2:1 False Teachers and Their Heresies

Known from Their Conduct.

Didache: Not everyone who speaks in the spirit is a prophet, but only if he follows behaviorally in the path of the Lord. Accordingly, from their conduct the false prophet and the true prophet will be known. Didache 11.8.1

Denying the Master Who Bought Them.

Hilary of Arles: It is typical of false teachers that they cannot accept the full equality of the persons of the Trinity. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.2

False Prophets Arose.

Andreas: Peter says this so that people will not just listen to everyone who claims to be a prophet, without discerning whether they really are or not. He tells them to be careful not to listen to false prophets instead of the true ones. Catena.3

2:2 Many Will Be Led Astray

They Rejected the Baptismal Rule.

Hilary of Arles: They revile the way of truth because they have turned orthodox doctrine into heresy, or because they have rejected the rule given to them at their baptism, or because they have abandoned the way of truth. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.4

The Nicolaitans.

Andreas: The heresy of the Nicolaitans ⁵ had already appeared at that time. Peter says that it was evil in two ways. The Nicolaitans were wrong in their doctrine, and they were also wicked in their behavior. It reminds us of what was said about the Jews: “Because of you my name is blasphemed among the Gentiles.” ⁶ Catena.⁷

Avoid Heresy.

Oecumenius: Peter says this in order to persuade his hearers to avoid the heresy of the Nicolaitans, who were guilty of a double sin. For not only was their doctrine most ungodly, their lives also were totally obscene. Commentary on 2 Peter.⁹

2:3 False Teaching Brings Its Own Condemnation

Their Destruction.

Hilary of Arles: The destruction of these people comes from none other than the God of Israel, who is never idle or asleep. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.¹⁰

God Foreknew Their Wickedness.

Andreas: They were doing this for money. Excess is sometimes geared toward wickedness and sometimes toward profit, but here the addition of the word exploit makes the meaning clear. They will indeed have their reward, which is death. The phrase “of old” indicates God’s foreknowledge of what they would do. For just as God foresaw who would be good and prepared good things for them in heaven, so he also foresaw who would be evil and prepared the other place for them. Catena.¹¹

2:4 God Did Not Spare the Angels When They Sinned

God Cast Them into Hell.

Pachomius: The angels were in heaven and were thrown into the abyss. But on the other hand, Elijah ¹³ and Enoch ¹⁴ were raised into the kingdom of heaven. Communion 3.25.¹⁵

To Be Kept Until the Judgment.

Augustine: It is a fixed and unchanging religious truth that the devil and his angels are never to return to the life and holiness of the saints. From Scripture we know that God's sentence implies that he dragged them down by infernal ropes to Tartarus and delivered them to be tortured and kept in custody for judgment. They will be received into everlasting fire and there tortured forever and ever. *The City of God* 21.23.16

Committed to Pits of Nether Gloom.

Cyril of Alexandria: When Christ came from heaven, he bound the leaders of the demons in hell. This is clear from the way in which he commanded the spirits, lest they be thrown into the abyss. For he bound some and ordered others to depart, as we can see from sayings like "Look, I have given you power over unclean spirits";¹⁷ "Cast out demons,"¹⁸ and so on. Afterwards, in order to perfect the punishment of those whom he had earlier bound, he cast them into eternal fire.¹⁹ *Catena*.²⁰

God Did Not Spare the Angels.

Hilary of Arles: The angels sinned in three ways, by their pride, by their envy and by their lust. In this verse it is made clear that sin can occur even if it is not done overtly in the flesh. It is obvious that the essence of sin is consent to do evil. *Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter*.²¹

Comparing the Rebellion of Angels and Humans.

Oecumenius: If God did not spare the rebellious angels, who had stood in honor before him because of the immortality of their nature, how much less will he spare mere humans, whom he has created out of perishable matter! *Commentary on 2 Peter*.²³

2:5 God Preserved Noah

A Flood on the Ungodly.

Hilary of Arles: The ungodliness of those who lived in the time from Adam to Noah was what caused the flood. *Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter*.²⁴

God Preserved Noah.

Oecumenius: Noah was spared because he was not led astray by the ungodliness of those who lived before the flood. God honored him because he did what was right. Commentary on 2 Peter.²⁶

2:6 *Sodom and Gomorrah*

One Sin More Disgusting Than Any Other.

Chrysostom: Do you want to know why these things happened? There was one sin which was more wicked and disgusting than any other which those people were committing. It was because of that that God gave them this judgment. Catena.²⁷

An Example to the Ungodly.

Hesychius: Here is proof that all the ungodly will be punished. For Peter goes over the examples of Sodom and Gomorrah so that anyone who sees this will not behave wickedly, knowing that if he does so he will suffer the same kind of punishment as they did. Catena.²⁹

2:7 *Righteous Lot*

God Rescued Lot.

Clement of Rome: By rescuing Lot the Lord made clear that he does not abandon those who hope in him but that he hands those who turn away over to punishment and torture. Letter to the Corinthians 11.1.³¹

It Is Possible to Avoid Doing Evil.

Hesychius: Peter adds the story of Lot to his other examples in order to teach us that it is possible to avoid doing evil and thus to escape from the punishment which they will receive. Catena.³²

2:8 Lot's Distress

Vexed in His Soul.

Severus of Antioch: We need to be clearly convinced that our distress at such evil deeds and our compassion for those who suffer earns the greatest reward with God and guarantees acceptance with him. All the more so, because in the face of what often appears to be an overwhelming, threatening wrath, the mental equilibrium of those who are overcome with grief is lost. This is why Peter wrote about Lot in this way. Catena.³⁴

Lot Refused to Collude.

Oecumenius: Like us, Lot saw and heard many unrighteous things which might have tempted him into doing evil, but when he gave hospitality to the angels and the men of Sodom wanted to take them away and abuse them, Lot refused to give in, in spite of what he would suffer at their hands because of that refusal. Commentary on 2 Peter.³⁵

2:9 The Lord Will Rescue the Godly

Until the Day of Judgment.

Oecumenius: Peter knows that God will deliver the godly from their trials and afflictions and that the ungodly are being preserved only to face their punishment on the day of judgment. Notice how all along he has been using the examples of wicked people in order to reinforce the message that the deliverance of the righteous is foreordained and thereby to comfort those who emulate the righteous by showing that they are much better off than the ungodly. Commentary on 2 Peter.³⁷