2 Peter 1:19-21 19We also have the completely reliable prophetic word. You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts, 20since we know this above all else: No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone’s own interpretation. 21In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Do we understand what a wonder and marvel it is that we are members of the Christian church, the communion of saints? Here we sit…and I assume that you are sitting here because you believe…why else would you come here? Why else would you gather again and again to give worship and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus, except that you believe and have faith? There is no other reason to be here. You are here because you have believed the Scriptures, believed the eyewitness report of the Apostles and evangelists concerning Jesus Christ who is declared God and Lord in our hearts.

Our faith is not based on some sort of “blind” gullibility. We don’t gather here because of some sort of psychological need, a glitch of our evolutionary ascent. For that matter, I would assert to you that if this were nothing more than some sort of social club, it really is a sad kind of group. We don’t do anything that the world considers good and exciting or even physically beneficial. We actually belong to a group that works hard to suppress our evolutionary instincts and in that regard, takes a lot of the “wild and wooly” fun out of the world. Seriously, if this were just some sort of social club it is a sad and stunted group.

We are actually gathered here because of the truth and reliability of God’s Word. Because it has been made clear to us through the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus and his history is real and factual. How do we know that? Well, because it has been clearly shown throughout the Scripture. Let’s consider some of those facts as we contemplate the words before us today. Our theme will be: **JESUS, GOD’S SON!**

Our text starts out in a very interesting way. This is the Apostle Peter writing, working to give the world the truth and wonder of Jesus. By the way, remember that this is the Peter who at the trial of Jesus, when confronted by some people ended up cursing and swearing He didn’t know who Jesus was. He committed that great sin even after having been warned a number of times he would do it. How does a guy go from absolute cowardice and betrayal and yet end up a confessor of Jesus before the world? Peter tells us how that is possible. Listen to his words.

**16To be sure, we were not following cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the powerful appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when the voice came to him from within the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” 18We heard this voice, which came out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.**

Peter tells us he became a confessor of Jesus, a fearless, public defender and spreader of the message and wonder of Jesus because he was an eyewitness. Now the direct reference of these words are probably the Transfiguration of Jesus but I would submit to you that they go deeper than that. I would submit that these words are a reference to the entire whole of the life of Jesus. Let me show you what I mean.

Take that opening line. Peter is assuring you he is not making up what he knows, more than that, please note that this line does not just speak of what “I” know but rather of what “we” know. Peter is referencing all the disciples, all the faithful believers of Jesus, all the eyewitnesses that there were. And what were they are witness to? Our text calls it: **“the powerful appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ… witness to his majesty.”** I think those words could easily go all the way back to the baptism and calling of Peter and the others as disciples. It is well known that Peter and his colleagues were disciples of John the Baptist. It is most probable that they heard John point to Jesus as the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world and most probable that they were there when John baptized Jesus and the heavens opened, the dove descended and for the first time the voice of God confirmed: **“This is my Son!”** I think that would count for a “powerful appearance.”

It is about 40 days after the baptism of Jesus that Jesus appears at the Galilee shore and causes Peter and his fellow fishermen to make a great and miraculous catch of fish, and this right after the awe and wonder of the miracle of the wedding at Canaan! From that point on Peter and his fellow disciples followed Jesus. They saw the miracles, heard his words, and suspected his majesty in everything they would witness in the next three and a half years or so.

Or go back to the fact that they heard a voice. Peter writes: **For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when the voice came to him from within the Majestic glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ We heard this voice, which came out of heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.”** I do not doubt that this clearly references the event of Transfiguration but can it also be that it references all such events? I suggest that, because the law of God demanded “two or three witnesses” in order to declare something a fact in a courtroom. Is it possible that God follows that same idea of something happening at least two or three times to drive home its reality?

You do know that God speaks from heaven no less than three times? It is true. The first time is the baptism of Jesus. God clearly affirms Jesus as the Son and someone we need to listen to! The second time is at the Transfiguration of Jesus. Again God the Father affirms Jesus is the Son and that he is someone we need to listen to. The third instance occurs on the Tuesday of Holy Week. A group of Greeks had asked Philip to see Jesus. The words that follow, although not expressly stated, I believe to be what Jesus shared with these “gentiles”. It is during this conversation that God once again speaks. In response to Jesus’ words: **“Father, glorify your name,”** Scripture records: **“A voice came from heaven: ‘I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.”** In other words, the witness to the link between Father and Son is even given to these gentiles who had come to see Jesus and that just before the crucifixion!

What is made clear by the words of Peter and the affirmation of the eyewitness accounts of Jesus is that Jesus was unique and special, that Jesus is the Son of God! Not just Peter believed, but all the disciples, and all the other believers with him. All who had been witness to the powerful appearances of Jesus. And yes, I think we could even include the eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. I just read one scholarly work that suggested that the 500 disciples who are recorded as seeing Jesus were all with the disciples and Jesus on the mount of ascension. They not only saw Jesus alive and teaching but then watched Him ascend to heaven in glory and majesty.

Here is what else I can tell you. History affirms that Jesus was a real person. History affirms the many historical and factual instances that surround the life and times of Jesus. History actually affirms the factual nature of the Holy Scripture. But that is actually the very next point of Peter.

After Peter gets you to grasp the eyewitness nature of the history of Jesus, he then makes this important statement: **“We also have the completely and reliable prophetic word.”** With these words Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is also affirming for you and me the historical and accurate record that Holy Scripture is. He especially makes clear the absolute importance of the Word in our lives.

Verse 19 to the end: **“You do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in your hearts.”** The Word is something to be paid attention to. It is a shining lamp, a way of expressing that it is God’s truth and light so needed in this sinful world. This “lamp shining” brings light to your dark world and brings the truth and joy of Jesus into your heart. In other words, the Word, God’s Word, the Bible is the source and cause of faith in Jesus! I would say that is important!

He tells us something else: **“No prophecy of Scripture comes about from someone’s own interpretation.”** Here is where we Lutherans get the very point: *Scripture interprets Scripture.* What you teach from Scripture must agree with every part of Scripture! Scripture cannot contradict itself and if you think it does, it is because you have the wrong understanding of what is said. No man has the right to say, “This is what Scripture says” by picking and choosing bits and pieces of Scripture. It is a complete whole.

Here is one of the reasons that Peter also calls Scripture: **“the completely and reliable prophetic word.”** Look at how many times the New Testament quotes the Old as proof of the God-head, the Messiahship of Jesus! Again, just think of the odds of the Old Testament accurately citing the things like: the virgin birth, born in Bethlehem, the slaughter of children as an event around that birth, the calling out of Egypt, the living in Nazareth, the dying on the cross, that no bones would be broken in his death, the piercing, the dying with criminals, casting lots for his clothing, the burial in a rich man’s tomb and the fact that the tomb would not remain occupied! All of those things are prophecies of the Old Testament brought true in the life of Jesus. Trust me when I say that my list is only a smattering of what proved to be true.

Do you remember what happened on the Day of Resurrection when Jesus was with the two disciples going to Emmaus? They were all bummed about what happened to Jesus and Jesus, walking with them, eventually lead them in a conversation. That fact is recorded this way in Luke 24:25-27. **“He (Jesus) said to them, ‘How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory? Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”** Let that sink in!! Jesus used the Scriptures to proclaim his majesty and marvel as the Christ, the Son of God who has saved the world. Now try and convince me that Scripture is not important!

Let us not forget verse 31 either. It says, **“In fact, no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were being carried along by the Holy Spirit.”** Here is one of the “sedes” or proof passages of God’s Word for verbal inspiration. These are not the words of man alone. These men spoke and wrote exactly what and how God wanted them to write. It is God’s Word. What is amazing to me is how God was able to do this. When you read Matthew, the personality and style of Matthew comes out, yet it is still the Word of God given by the Holy Spirit working in Matthew. The same can be said of every author of the New Testament. Yet they write and do not contradict each other but they form a cohesive whole to help us grasp that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

And that is the point of Scripture. It is not given that we can figure out how to save ourselves, it is given that we grasp that Jesus has saved us. Jesus has made atonement for us. Peter in this section just wants you to grasp that Jesus is God’s Son and the reason he wants you to grasp this is because Jesus is our Savior from sin. Remember this is Peter’s second letter. Listen to what else he writes:

1 Peter 1:3-4 **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. Through faith you are being protected by God’s power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.”** The wonder of Jesus is our salvation, sure and certain because Jesus is God’s Son who rose from the dead. Here is our hope and confidence. Jesus, God’s Son is my Savior! Amen.