
a *Grace Notes* course

2 Peter

Lesson 5

2 Peter 1:15 to 21

by Dr. Grant C. Richison

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2 Peter*Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 2 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list showing the portion of 2 Peter to be studied in each lesson.

Lesson 1	Introduction; 2 Peter 1:1 to 4
Lesson 2	2 Peter 1 :5 to 6
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2 Peter 1:15

"Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease"

Moreover

Peter repeats himself for emphasis. In spite of his approaching death, he will leave a legacy that cannot be destroyed--Second Peter.

I will be careful to ensure

"Be careful," means to be eager. "Careful" carries the idea of striving earnestly, to bend every effort to do one's best. We have had this word twice in this chapter already (1:5,10). Peter will leave no stone unturned until these believers come to grips with truths about eternity.

Many people have a lot of enthusiasm but they are enthusiastic in a vacuum. Peter's enthusiasm comes from God's Word, not from hype. Peter gets his drive from the content of biblical truth.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

that you always

"Always" refers to a series of occasions. On any occasion that you read Second Peter, you will know apostolic teaching [the New Testament]. Once you get this truth, you will not want to be without it. We need the Bible on any occasion where the need may arise.

have a reminder of these things

The word "have" means to possess the capacity to do something. "Have" means to have and hold, implying lasting possession. Here, Asia Minor Christians and all successive generations of Christians will have a lasting capacity to remember apostolic teaching. Peter's goal is to establish autonomous Christians, not autonomous from God but autonomous from depending on any given leader.

"Remind" means to recall information from memory, but without necessarily implying we have actually forgotten what we know. It carries the idea of to recall, to think about again (1 Thessalonians 2:9; Hebrews 13:7; 2 Peter 3:2). This entire book of Second Peter reminds them of

truths so they can think about it again and again. Here we are nearly 2000 years after the writing of this book and we are still reminded of "these things." As one of the eight or nine writers of the New Testament, Peter writes two of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

Peter wants to guarantee his readers will "always" remember what he taught. That guarantee comes from the Holy Spirit who enables him to write Scripture (1 and 2 Peter). Our guarantee of remembering Peter's teaching comes from the written legacy of these two books. Thus, First and Second Peter are permanent reminders of apostolic teaching.

Principle

Our only accurate source of information about eternity comes from the Bible.

Application

We cannot know anything accurate about death apart from the Bible. Everyone must die (Hebrews 9:27). The only way we can prepare for death and eternity is to accept forgiveness from God by Christ's death for our sins. If we die without Christ, we will be worse off. I plead with you, flee from the wrath to come. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of the Bible for declaring doctrines about eternity.

after my decease

"Decease" is a term for death. Sometime the New Testament translates this term "departure" (Luke 9:31). Other times "decease" translates by the word "exodus." The Greek term comes from two words: road and out. Death is the road out. Here death is the road out of this life and the road into God's kingdom. Death is the departure of the soul and spirit from the body (2 Corinthians 5:8).

"For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart [different Greek word] and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23).

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure [different Greek word] is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6).

Peter here leaves his last will and testament. The doctrines of Second Peter go on as a legacy for all Christians after Peter's death. Truth does not rest in any great leader or pastor. Truth lasts forever (1

Peter 1:23). It is not the man but the message that is important. Men will come and go but the Word of God abides forever.

The great thing a pastor can do for his congregation is to teach them the Word [this is the point of the pastorals: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus]. Other pastoral functions fall into diminishing priority in light of the communication of God's Word. The pastor's real legacy is people who know the Word. No Christian should depend on some scintillating or pleasing personality. We must depend on the Word for the Word lasts forever.

Principle

Our only assurance about eternity comes from the Bible.

Application

Many Christians are apprehensive about eternity. We have faith enough to believe Jesus died for our sins but we do not have faith enough to trust God with our future. We think death is a monster but it is the greatest event to ever happen to a Christian. When we die we meet Jesus and other loved ones who have gone on before us.

We only bury the cocoon. Our body is simply the shell of our person. The person goes on to be with the Lord. We so identify the corpse with the person that we distort the reality of what happens at death. There is nothing in the casket but so many chemicals.

2 Peter 1:16

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty"

For we did not follow

Christians do not base their faith on clever stories as the false teachers did (whom Peter attacks in chapter 2). Rather, the Christian faith rests on the historicity of God's revelation.

The Greek word "follow" comes from two words: to follow and out. This intense term conveys the idea of conforming as a follower in a dependent manner. The behavior of this person closely imitates their leader. It carries the idea of

following someone personally to the end (2:2,15). The implication is to comply with some authority. Peter does not follow "fables." "Fables" are not the authority of the New Testament church.

Christians follow their Lord and the Word. The Word of God will protect us and give us inner strength if we learn its principles and apply them to experience.

cunningly devised fables

"Cunningly devised fables" are clever or skillful special knowledge created shrewdly and expertly. We get our English word "sophistication" from the verb "cunningly devised."

We get our English word "myth" from the Greek word for "fable" here. A fable is legendary story about supernatural beings, events or cultural heroes. A fable is a fabrication, a concocted tale to subtly mislead.

These people have special knowledge involving capacity to produce cleverly contrived myths. Peter did not contrive his message. Christianity does not come from human invention.

The Greek tense of "devised" means these tales were formed in the past with the result continuing to the present. These are long standing myths.

Principle

The Bible is based on historical fact, not myths.

Application

Christianity is no myth. It is not a fairy story for children or folklore for adults. Christianity operates on fact, not fiction. It is no religious fairy tale. Neither is Christianity the work of someone's imagination that has no basis in fact. The truth of the Christian faith is closely bound with the historicity of the New Testament.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, under the influence of the Age of Reason (which assumed rationalism as the essential source for truth), a belief system arose to attack Christianity. Some of its methods claimed the Bible was myth. These claims were based more on subjective theological presuppositions than on historical fact. The question of historical fact of Scripture is of little importance to those who deny the truth of Christianity. It is of immense importance to those

who believe in its credibility for the truth of Jesus Christ can only be known from New Testament records. The influence of the New Testament records is tantamount to the influence of His character.

The New Testament is the most trustworthy piece of writing that ever persevered from antiquity. There are greater resources for reconstructing its text than for any document of the classic age. Some papyri go back to the time of the writings of the apostles themselves. By contrast, the dialogues of Plato, the works of the Greek dramatists and the poems of Virgil have come down to us from copies few in number. Some of their manuscripts separate by as much as 1400 years. The oldest manuscript for the Gallic Wars is 900 years after Caesar's time. The two oldest copies of Tacitus' work are dated eight and 10 centuries after his original writings.

The heyday of liberal criticism has passed. With this, many of its advocates face a dilemma in squaring to the demands of objective evidence. Many of them ignore modern archaeological and other evidence. They hang on to their speculative assumptions in the face of facts.

How do we know the authors of Scripture were genuine authors? The Iliad has only 643 manuscripts. Caesar's Gallic Wars has but 10 good manuscripts. However, there are 5,366 Greek New Testament manuscripts; plus 45,000 copies of New Testament texts in papyri, lexicons, dictionaries and the church fathers' writings.

In the New Testament, there are fewer than fifty variant readings of any importance. There is no case where an article of faith is left in question. The Bible is the most reliable historical document in the history of the world. It obviously is not myth!!

God speaks through the Bible (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:31; Romans 1:1,2; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:3,4). Therefore, it is of highest importance that we recognize that the Bible we possess is true and reliable.

when we made known to you

Peter "made known" two things about the Lord Jesus Christ: first, his "power" and secondly, his Second Coming. He made known this information

by revelation, by Scripture, when he first came to teach his readers.

the power

"Power" is inherent power. The Devil is mighty but the Lord Jesus is almighty. The Devil is potent but the Lord Jesus is Omnipotent.

and coming

"Coming" is a technical term for the visit or arrival of a king or some important official. When "power" is associated with the coming of Christ, it connotes the idea of a powerful coming. Jesus will come by virtue of His own power.

Peter views the coming of Christ as important. Many evangelicals today sadly diminish the doctrine of the coming of Christ.

Note this word for "power" in other New Testament passages:

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God'" (Matthew 22:29).

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit is the internal dynamic who enables us to dynamically share Christ. He is the dynamo of the Christian life who enables the child of God to have victory over sin and live a life that is a credit to Christ.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:19-20).

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by

any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10-11).

Peter is using the doctrine of the Second Coming as the basis for establishing true criteria for truth. Since the Second Coming did not happen during Peter's day, this makes Peter's point more dramatic. Peter is going beyond personal experience. Truth is more real to him than experience. If there is a conflict between your experience and the Word, the Word should be the deciding factor for determining truth. If there is a conflict between your experience and God's Word, your experience is wrong.

Principle

The Word of God is the only true basis for the evaluation of our experience.

Application

Some people do not have the ability to evaluate their experiences. They cannot do it because they do not have principles of Scripture to measure their experiences. We all have a tendency to over-estimate our personal experience and under-estimate the principles of God's Word. We will never know whether we are right or wrong without something to measure whether we are or not. We must have criteria to measure our experiences. God gives us an absolute criterion in His Word.

How do we determine what six inches is? First, we must know what an inch is. You say, "Well, someone says it is 'so' long and someone else says it is 'that' long." Which person is right? If I say six inches is equivalent to three feet and am dogmatic that it is, how are you going to prove me wrong? I have made up my mind. Don't confuse me with the facts. How do you know that an inch is an inch?

We must find a ruler, an established and commonly accepted standard [worldwide] for determining how long an inch is. In biblical parlance, our ruler is God's Word. God's Word is from eternity and operates on eternal and absolute norms.

After we decide to use the ruler, we have to know how to use it. We cannot measure an inch by the end of the ruler. We must turn it sideways and use it as it was designed to be used. Many people distort the Bible by fallacies such as pretexting [taking a verse out of its context]. These people

have the right standard but they do not know how to use it. The best way to understand the Bible is to examine it verse by verse in its historical, grammatical, cultural and contextual context. If we do this, we will not scramble Scripture. Another distortion in understanding the Bible is the error of interpolation [imposing one's own view on a passage of Scripture].

of our Lord Jesus Christ

This is the seventh time Peter mentions Jesus' name in this chapter. The Holy Spirit loves to exalt the Lord Jesus. The

Holy Spirit says more about the Lord Jesus than He does about Himself.

Principle

We should exalt the Lord Jesus with our lives.

Application

We should take a lesson from the Holy Spirit's exaltation of the Lord Jesus. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to magnify the Lord Jesus.

We cannot make too much of the Lord Jesus. The better we know Him, the more we love Him. The more we love a person the more we will do for him or her. If you don't love them very much then you will not do much for them. People can tell what we think of them by what we do for them. We can talk about loving the Lord Jesus but until we show it in what we do for Him, it is just talk. When we do something for someone because we love him or her, we do not count it a chore. We count it a blessing.

but were eyewitnesses

The "but" here is a term of strong contrast. There is a contrast between some subjective observation and exposure to the facts. Peter, James and John actually observed Jesus transfigured on the Mount of Olives.

The word "were" means to become something that you were not before. They were not eyewitnesses before the transfiguration but the three observers of the transfiguration became eyewitnesses. They looked on at the transfiguration of Jesus into His millennial glory. Peter, James and John had a

foretaste of the coming of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 16:28-17:2).

An "eyewitness" is one who watches or observes as an overseer. These are people who have personally seen an event and thus have first-hand knowledge and can attest to the occurrence of an event.

This is the only occurrence of "eyewitness" in the New Testament. The Christian faith is credible because of historical facts, not stories. The Christian faith requires "eyewitnesses" who can corroborate those facts. Peter defends the doctrine of future things on the historicity of the Mount of Transfiguration.

of His majesty

"Majesty" is a state of greatness or importance. Jesus was prominent and important to Peter's thinking. "Majesty" means far more than "Majesty." This word carries the idea of magnificent glory.

"Majesty" can mean the manifestation of great or, mighty power. Here "majesty" refers to the splendor and magnificence of Jesus' transfiguration of great grandeur and sublimity. Peter, James and John witnessed Jesus' majestic appearance. Jesus is His majesty, King Jesus.

"His majesty" could never be used of Isaiah or John. We only use the term "majesty" of the Lord Jesus. We never say, "His majesty Peter or Paul." We do say, "His majesty, King Jesus, King of the world to come and the Sovereign King of the Universe."

"And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did..." (Luke 9:43).

They were all amazed at the majesty of God as Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. Jesus is the magnificent Son of God. No one compares to God's precious Son.

Peter, James and John at the Mount of Transfiguration [Mount Olivet] saw with their own eyes as the Lord was transfigured before them into a foretaste of His millennial glory. The experience on the mount then was a sneak preview of the Second Coming (Mark 8:34-9:13). This was a bona fide experience of historical fact. What a

thrill it would have been to be there! It was a great privilege for Peter, James and John to see the future millennium unveil before their eyes. Thirty-two years later Peter spoke of it in this Second epistle. He now declares that the event has to do with Christ's coming again.

The trio on the Mount said in effect, "You can't fool us. This was no hallucination or optical illusion. This was real. We actually saw Jesus transfigured before our eyes."

Who had the temerity to break into the scene between the Father and Son on the Mount of Transfiguration? Not James. Not John. But Peter, the author of this epistle. He was a person with a lot of nerve. Peter even offered a plan when Moses and Elijah arrived on the scene. He wanted to build three tents for the guests! He wanted to make a permanent home on the Mount of Olives!

Peter did not get a chance to finish his plan. Rather God broke in. The cross must come before the crown. Peter was out of line. Jesus and Old Testament prophets taught many times that the cross must come before the crown.

Peter interrupted God; then God interrupted Peter. In fact, Peter probably would still be talking if God did not interrupt him! God made the point that Jesus is part of the course for fulfilling His plan. He must die for the sins of the world.

Principle

The Christian regards Jesus Christ as His Majesty, King Jesus.

Application

One day Jesus will be King Jesus, King of the World. Do you give Jesus that distinction in your life? Is He King over your values?

2 Peter 1:17

"For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'"

Peter's desire is for his readers to see beyond the first coming of Christ to His Second Coming. He gives a running commentary on the Mount of Olives transfiguration experience. The Transfiguration was a foretaste of Christ's coming.

For He received from God the Father

The name "God the Father" is important for it distinguishes God the Father from God the Son. God the Son is as much God as God the Father.

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (John 6:27).

"Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)" (Galatians 1:1).

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

"Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (2 John 3).

All three members of the Trinity are equally God. They are one in essence. There are not three Gods but three persons in one being. There is only one being that is everywhere present, all knowing and all-powerful.

honor and glory

"Honor" means highest value. God highly values Jesus in his humanity. "Glory" means to manifest excellence. Jesus' body was transfigured right before the eyes of Peter, James and John and they saw his manifest excellence.

God gives honor and glory to His Son. That is who God honors. God the Father loves to honor God the Son.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

when such a voice came to Him

The "when" here is the Mount of Transfiguration experience on the Mount of Olives.

from the Excellent Glory:

"Excellent glory" is a greater glory. This excellent glory reflects greater glory on Jesus Christ.

'This is My beloved Son'

"Beloved" means one who is loved. Jesus, the Son, is the object of God's special affection. He is the object of God's particular love and cherishing. He is the only one of this class (Matthew 3:17).

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13).

'in whom I am well pleased.'

God the Father made this statement that he was "well pleased" of God the Son twice, once when he was baptized (Matthew 3:17) and once when he was transfigured (Matthew 17:2).

When God the Father thinks of Jesus Christ, He is pleased. He takes pleasure in Jesus Christ. He has good thoughts about Jesus for He is pleased with Him. He is pleased with the Son because His Son became a foreign missionary to a tiny planet called earth in time and space. He came from a place of peace and blessedness to a place of crime, treachery, sin and devastation.

"He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

Because of His coming, forgiveness is possible. That forgiveness extends "... as far as the curse is found" as the Christmas carol says.

Principle

God the Father has special love for and is pleased with His Son.

Application

The Father never had any trouble with His Son. No parent on earth can say that. We often hear someone say, "I never had a minute's trouble with my child." But we take that statement with a grain of salt. We all have had trouble with our children. There was a time when I felt I knew more than my father did. As I grew older, I began to realize he was smarter than I'd thought he was.

2 Peter 1:18

"And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain"

And we heard this voice

Peter appeals to the transfiguration to give testimony that he, James and John were "eyewitnesses" of Jesus' future coming and that He possesses "honor and glory" from God to claim His Kingdom. They caught a "preview" of Christ's coming.

God's voice was "heard." Tie hearing of this verse with "eyewitnesses" of verse 16. Peter, James and John both heard and saw. People have every reason to receive the testimony of Scripture because the Bible is based on facts and true history. These three actually and personally experienced the Mount of Transfiguration incident.

"But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:27).

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life--the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us--that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:1-4).

which came from heaven

Heaven is the seat of God's presence. But we know precious little about heaven. The Bible presents heaven as a celestial abode.

In common language, "heaven" simply meant the sky, the space above the earth. The word "heaven" may simply mean the vault of heaven, the sky. Ancient people viewed heaven in this sense as a concave hemisphere resting on the verge of earth. The stars were fixed on this. This was also the seat of the gods, "Heavengate," which the Hours lifted and put down like a trapdoor.

The Bible uses "heaven" for both the "sky" (Acts 2:5; Hebrews 11:12; Matthew 24:31) and the abode of God. Primarily though, heaven is where God lives and governs. Paul talks about "the third heaven." This is also the abode of God (2 Corinthians 12:2).

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2).

when we were with Him on the holy mountain

The "holy mountain" is the Mount of Olives where Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured before them. Peter, James and John there saw the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' Messiahship.

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.' Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 16:27-28; 17:1-2).

Principle

Christians meet the great hope of heaven in Jesus Christ.

Application

Are you interested in heaven? The Bible offers only two alternatives where people go after death: heaven or hell. Would you like to go to heaven?

Going to heaven has nothing to do with church membership. You cannot go to heaven by joining a church. Neither can you go to heaven by good works (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5).

Whether we go to heaven depends on our relationship to Jesus Christ. If we trust that He died for our personal sins, that He did all of the suffering that was necessary to suffer for our sins. If you come to Christ you will be heaven-born and heaven-bound.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born

again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

2 Peter 1:19

"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts"

And so

Peter now continues to explain the implication of his Mount of Transfiguration experience. He draws an even more convincing documentation of truth than the transfiguration.

we have the prophetic word confirmed

The Word of God is surer than an apostolic witness of the account of Mount of Transfiguration. Our faith primarily rests in what God says, not what we experience.

The "prophetic word" pertains to inspired utterances – prophetic meaning, "of the prophets." In other words, this is Old Testament Scripture.

"But now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:26-27).

"Confirmed" means firm, permanent. "Confirmed" also comes to mean reliable, dependable, certain. These are people with a firm faith because what they believe in is altogether reliable. We can rely and depend upon the Scriptures because they are trustworthy.

Principle

We can trust God's Word more than we can trust our own senses.

Application

We can trust the empirical evidence of the trio seeing the transfiguration. We can trust even more the message of the prophets: the Word of God. The issue here is certainty. Scriptures are known to be true by the apostles; they are certain (Hebrews 2:2). There has been a process of verification by the apostles and they confirmed the Bible to be true.

which you do well to heed

"Heed" has to do with the Christian's seriousness toward Scripture. Search the Scripture so you can apply principle to experience. We want to mold and fashion our lives according to the Bible.

"To heed" means literally to turn one's mind to. It can mean to hold to, to be in a continuous state of readiness to learn of any future danger, need, or error, and to respond appropriately. We need to pay attention to, to keep on the lookout for, to be alert for, to be on one's guard against neglecting God's Word for our souls.

Principle

We need to guard our souls against neglecting God's Word.

Application

Since "heed" conveys the idea of paying attention to something or someone so as to be alert or on notice, God too wants us to pay close attention to the Word of God. If we do not occupy ourselves with and apply ourselves to God's Word, it will not have the desired effect on our lives. Do we have devotion to the Word (1 Timothy 4:13)?

"Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14).

as a light that shines

"Shines" means to give light. The Word is a bright light in the darkness of this world. It brings everything to light and makes it appear as it truly is.

Light dispels darkness. When Jesus comes, He will dispel the darkness of our world. This world is a place of moral squalor. Jesus enlightens darkened minds.

The Christian is in the process of growing his knowledge.

"But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

in a dark place

"Dark" pertains not only to darkness itself, but it also carries the idea of being dirty and miserable. Light shines in miserable places, in degraded places.

We can do more than shout against the darkness. We can shine a light in it. Our light shines wonderfully in dark places. People can see by contrast. The more our society becomes morally depraved, the clearer the contrast to the light. Someone who is dressed in a clean clothes stands out among those whose clothes are stained with filth and dirt.

until the day dawns

"Dawns" means to shine through.

and the morning star

We get the English word "phosphorus" from the Greek term for "morning star." Literally, "morning star" means light-bringer or light-bearer. The "morning star" bears and gives light. The eye gives light to the mind. The morning star is conspicuous and thus illumines our minds. Until Jesus comes again, darkness will prevail.

rises in your hearts

"Rises" comes from two Greek words: through and shine. Thus, "rises" means to shine through with special reference to the dawn. This is the breaking of daylight upon the darkness of the night. When Jesus comes, He will break into the darkness of this world. He will break through time and space. It will be light when Jesus comes.

Principle

We have enough of God's Word to thoroughly love the Lord Jesus.

Application

Peter lived with Jesus for three years. Jesus rebuked, corrected and commended Peter during that period. Yet, Jesus became more real to Peter because of Peter's personal experience with Him.

But do not say "If I lived when Jesus lived I would love Him better. I would not have done some of the dumb things spiritually that I have done." Because you would not be any different than you are right now. You have enough of the Word to

love Him thoroughly. You would be no different than you are right now.

2 Peter 1:20

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation"

This section of Second Peter deals with Scripture itself. No book in the world is as valuable as the Bible. God's Word is indispensable because it only tells us the truth about God, Christ, sin and eternity.

Knowing this first

Invariably, what God asks us to know, we do not know. God wants us to know the subject of this verse "first." God wants us to know something about divine inspiration above everything else. When we interpret Scripture, we need to begin with the principle that God inspired the Bible, not men. This is paramount.

Peter's opponents denied the divine origin of Scripture. They claimed that their writings came from visions, signs and dreams. These prophecies came from themselves, from their own origin. But Peter says that the apostolic writings came from God, not a human author.

that no prophecy of Scripture

"Prophecy" here is the message of a prophet.

"Scripture" means writing. Peter here refers to the Old Testament and the writings of the New Testament written to this point.

"Scripture" is singular. The Word of God is one single unit. It does not contradict itself. Some verses are difficult to understand. We must interpret these verses in light of other passages dealing with that subject.

Also, we should interpret unclear passages of Scripture in the light of clear passages. If a passage is crystal-clear, that portion of the Bible will help us interpret the unclear portions. God is the Author of all of Scripture and He makes no mistakes. He used human authors to write His Book and they wrote in different times and different places. Many lived centuries apart from one another yet all sixty-six books fit together as one.

Principle

The Bible is one in its teaching.

Application

It is a dangerous practice to pick certain verses out of their context to establish a doctrine. We understand each verse in the light of its context. Otherwise, we risk distorting the meaning of that passage and then operating on incorrect information. This is much like misleading advertising. Misleading advertising misrepresents its product.

Verse-by-verse Bible exposition saves us from this problem. By taking each verse successively and all of its words, we can come to a true meaning of Scripture. This also presumes that we interpret the Bible in the time in which it was written and to whom and on what occasion it was written. It is also of great advantage to know the original languages in which the Bible was written. This is the way to discover what God truly says. We must always be careful not to make the Bible say what we want it to mean.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

is of any private interpretation

The word "private" means one's own. A prophet cannot speak his own message. Scripture does not come from the prophet himself. The Scriptures did not come from human origin. Scripture is not the human author's "own thing." The Bible is reliable because of its source. Scripture is reliable because God is reliable.

The word "interpretation" means unloosing, solving or explanation. Metaphorically, it means "interpretation." The word can mean the conveying or uttering of a divine proclamation and therefore carries the idea of "produce" or "bring forth." Scripture does not come from the human author's explanation of things. It is not a concoction of their own thinking.

The word "is" means to become something that it was not previously. This probably means that the prophets did not originate Scripture. The Holy Spirit originates Scripture, not human authors. He

gives the Bible by revelation. This passage is not talking about the interpretation of the Bible but the origin of the Bible. God used human authors to write the Bible but it does not teach their human ideas.

Human authors of Scripture did not put their own spin on Scriptures. The Bible is not man's ideas about God.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

The word "any" means "no" -- not even one. Every single Scripture came from God and not men. No Scripture springs from the mind of the human author. No single passage of Scripture stands by itself. It must be understood in its context. The Bible also needs to be understood as a whole. We must understand doctrine in light of all of Scripture's teaching. We call this "theology." We cannot take passages we do not like and ignore them. We must include the entire body of truth from God to form a proper theology. This will deliver us from error.

Every passage of Scripture has one interpretation but many applications. If we give the idea that an application is an interpretation, we misrepresent what God says.

Principle

The source of Scripture is God.

Application

Our senses deceive us at times. "I thought I saw Sue. It looked like her but it was a look-a-like." "I thought I heard a burglar but it was a mouse. I could have sworn that there was someone in the kitchen. I came downstairs with my baseball bat." Our senses can fool us but the Word of God does not fool us if we interpret it in its context.

No single church has the right to possess the exclusive right to interpret the Bible. If a single church had this right, then individuals would not have responsibility to understand Scripture. If we accept what a given church teaches blindly, then we place ourselves at risk.

Each of us must take responsibility to understand the Word for ourselves. Every Christian has the Scripture and the Holy Spirit to help him

understand the Bible for himself. The issue is not what your church or pastor teaches, but what the Word teaches. What does the Bible teach?

2 Peter 1:21

"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"

For prophecy never came by the will of man

Note that this verse begins with a word of explanation – "for." The previous verse explained that Scriptures did not come from a human source but a divine source.

Scripture does not originate with man. He does not originate the Bible. The human author received God's ideas. Scripture comes by divine inspiration. The Bible is not man's idea. The Bible originates with God. Revelation comes from God to man.

Religion is man's ideas about God. That is why religion does not have the answer.

but holy men of God

If the Bible did not come by man's will, how did it come? By "holy men of God." Approximately thirty different men wrote the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. About eight men wrote the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. God used holy [set apart] men to write Scripture.

These men were not automatons or robots. They used their own personality and vocabulary to write Scripture. The Holy Spirit, however, guarded them from error as they wrote Scripture. He superintended each word they wrote. Therefore, the authors of Scripture made no mistakes. We have the Bible exactly as God intended for us to have it. We can place our confidence in Scripture.

"Holy men of God" are Old and New Testament authors like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John and Paul. God picked certain men to communicate the Bible.

spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

"But" implies a strong contrast. In contrast to human beings originating Scripture, the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of Scripture.

"Moved" means to carry. The book of Acts uses "moved" for wind carrying a ship (27:15, 17). The

Holy Spirit so guided the human author that he wrote without error. That is why Scripture is certain. Therefore, we can trust Scripture because it is the very words of God.

This word "moved" translates "upholds" and "bearing" in Hebrews:

"Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

"Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13).

The idea is to carry. The Holy Spirit upholds or bears the writers of Scripture as they write Scripture. The writers of Scripture wrote better than they knew. That is why the Bible is not full of fables.

The Holy Spirit governed the human author as he was in the process of writing Scripture (2 Peter 3:16). The human author was aware of the content that he wrote, but the Holy Spirit "carried" him. The Holy Spirit originates Scripture.

The Holy Spirit so supernaturally superintended Scripture writers that without circumventing their intelligence, their personal literary style or personality, He enabled them to record Scripture with perfect accuracy. Human authors were not automatons or robots who acted like a computer when they wrote Scripture.

Principle

We have a trustworthy Bible because of the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of Scripture.

Application

The Bible is the unabridged revelation of the thoughts of an omniscient God.

God put everything that we need to know about Him in writing. Scripture is the only inspired book on earth. Other books may be profound and insightful but God did not inspire these writings. Only the Bible is inspired because the Holy Spirit wrote Scripture.

No single church has the exclusive right to interpret the Bible. If a single church had this right, then no single individual would have

responsibility to understand Scripture for himself. If we blindly accept what a given church teaches we place ourselves at risk. Each of us must take responsibility to understand the Word for ourselves.

Every Christian has the Scripture and the Holy Spirit to help him understand the Bible for himself. The issue is not what your church teaches

but what the Word teaches. It is not what your preacher teaches but what the Bible teaches. What does the Bible teach? We place our explicit faith in the Bible.