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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in 2 Peter

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### 2 Peter 1: 12-21: "Paying Attention to Christ!"

**General idea:** The main theme of Peter's message is stated here, to pay attention to Christ, not to falsehoods. Have you ever wondered about situations you have faced with faith and confidence in the past but now, somehow you have misplaced that confidence or knowledge? Perhaps you once stood firm in your faith in Christ, but the busyness and stresses of life have distracted you. Or perhaps you have started to believe in teachings that tingle your interests and emotions but are not rooted in Scripture. Peter is seeking to point his people back to what they once knew. He reminds them of the significance and relevance of Christ. He also restates to them his authority as an eyewitness and a personal disciple of Jesus Himself. This reminder is to a church that has slipped from truth to what is new and fleeting. We all need reminders from people in our lives who are mentors and good examples, and we need to be on guard against those who seek to derail us from His Word and Truth.

Peter then shifts his focus to his coming departure from this life. He conveys to us that life is short and we must take the initiative to do what we can here and now with what Christ has given to us. We are called to work hard, efficiently, and with meaning concerning His Truth. Peter warns of the power and influence of personal philosophies people have made up for themselves that make us feel good and give us a sense of accomplishment when we "discover" them. What Peter has taught has not been made up. Jesus is real and is Power; He is the real Truth! And, Christ is coming again! The message from Peter and the Prophets was not manmade or clever philosophical wisdom; rather, it came from God Himself. In addition, the Prophets and Apostles as well as science, reason, history, and personal testimonies verify it.

**Vs. 12-15:** The people to whom Peter was writing were being clever with words and arguments in making up their own spurious doctrines. They were confusing others and twisting what Peter had said. Peter shows them his Apostolic testimony, that what he has taught from Christ is real, impacting truth.

- *Remind you/stir you up* was an ancient "moral exhortation" to illustrate that false teachings by manipulative and prideful men have taken a foothold. Peter's theme was that the Word of God, the Gospel, and all teaching must be true to His Word. His congregation should and would have known what was true (Matt. 28:10; Heb. 10:24-25).
- *Tent/in* his body was a colloquialism that meant body. Perhaps Peter was warned by the Spirit that his time was limited. Thus, his point is that time, for all us, is short, but we have hope. The physical nature of our humanity, our

life here on earth, is transitory and temporary. Our real home is Heaven (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:1-4).

- *Make every effort indicates to pay close attention.* This was, conceivably, Peter's last chance to inform his people of what was important. His passion and purpose was not to have a life of laziness or leisure, but be fervent in proclaiming Christ and His Gospel. The questions for us are what are we doing? And, how are our efforts going? We have a purpose! The results are not as important as our obedience to follow and practice His call (John 21:18-19)!
- *Departure* literally means exodus, as in leaving one place for another. Our bodies are corporal, temporal, and temporary; we are not made for this world but for eternity. Peter was not afraid of death, but saw it as a conversion to the next step, which was his eternal life with Christ (Luke 9:31)!

We are called to take the spiritual initiative and be productive! Does God need to stir you up? Are you spiritually lazy or apathetic? Does your Christian activity line up to His revealed truth or is it based on your plans and agenda? Is your teaching from His Word or a counterfeit? Always be willing to know the difference and be willing to repent and seek forgiveness when you are wrong! True Christianity and its practice never retire or become counter-productive (Matthew 28)!

**Vs. 16-21:** Peter had seen the glorious, majestic splendor of Jesus firsthand and he had heard the very voice of God. He had even replicated some of Jesus' miracles. Many say that Peter's confidence came from directly seeing Christ firsthand, but that the full impact did not occur until after Jesus left them bodily and sent His Spirit. Thus, we do not have to have seen Jesus personally to have the same confidence that Peter and Paul had!

- *We.* Peter does not stand alone; he is connected with others and real Truth. He has the witness of the other Apostles, the Law, the testimony of the Prophets, and most importantly, the Spirit. We have all this too, plus the completed cannon of God's most precious Word!
- *Stories/Myths* refers to untrue stories as well as flawed, thoughtless reasoning, philosophical nonsense, mythical ideas, hearsay, and fake wisdom coming from false, misguided, or heretical teachers (1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 4:4).
- *The power.* Christ is glorious; He is a fact in history and in our lives as Believers. We are established by Truth!
- *Coming of Christ.* In the Greek, parousia refers to coming, imminent in its power and approach, but not limited to a timeframe. The point is, He will

return and in incredible, unimaginable power, so be prepared (Matt. 16:27-17:8; 24:27-30; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Pet. 3:4, 12).

- *Eyewitness* refers to Peter's Apostolic testimony and his call and empowerment to proclaim the Truth. Here, Peter is establishing his authority and credentials that show he was with Christ firsthand. Eyewitness accounts and testimonies were not as reliable in ancient courts as they are today. Thus, our faith as a testimony is but one facet among many other factual evidences.
- *Majesty*. Here Peter is referring to the Transfiguration, which literally means to change in form. This was a glimpse into the things to come, the revelation of Jesus' divinity in being fully God. He rarely showed His divinity, but now the disciples could begin to fully comprehend who Jesus was and confirm their faith and what was ahead for them (Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:29; John 1:14; Heb. 1:1-4). Peter uses this as his authentication. Today, we have the Spirit and God's Word as our testimony plus what He is personally doing in us by the Spirit's working in our inner life to transform us (Rom. 8:11; 12:2; Col. 3:18).
- *Majestic Glory/the glory*. This is a Jewish circumlocution (idiom) referring to God's incredible presence used so to not demean, deface, or misuse the sacred, divine name of God.
- *Sacred mountain* refers to the title for Zion. It also refers to Moses on Mount Sinai and other events where God spoke to man on holy mountains (Isa. 2:2-4).
- *Made more certain/something more sure* refers to the Prophetic testimony of the Prophets plus hard evidence. We have a legacy; we do not stand alone. Peter may also be inferring that with the Law, Prophets, and Gospel, we have a better testimony because we have more information and power giving more confidence and hope than the Jews have. This means we have solid proof that no argument or human reason could stand against, unlike the seductive conjecture and pseudo-experiences of the false teachers.
- *Pay attention...you do well/you ought* is an expression to do something with your faith and life!
- *A light shining in a dark place*. The Prophets, and sometimes God's Word today are lights shining in darkness that people may not want to see lest they be convicted by them. And, they are never to be used for personal gain or agendas. Real prophecy and knowledge come from God, not our agendas. The real Prophets of the Old Testament did not seek to be Prophets or to have an audience merely for their own power or glory. Rather, they just obeyed God. God's Word is a Light to the darkness of the world. We are not to seek glory or honor for ourselves. We are only to seek Him and allow His Light to be used in us!

- *Morning star* referred to the planet Venus, and was a depiction in Judaism meaning the advent of dawn or a new day or age. This is also a name for Jesus' first coming and messiahship. It also alludes to the kingship of Israel and refers to His second coming (Num. 24:17; Psalm 84:11; Mal. 4:2; Rev. 2:28; 22:16).
- *Rises*, as a sunrise gives a new day light, possibly refers to the future effect of Christ's coming on believers as well as hope for us now. Also, His full revelation will finally be revealed, eliminating all deceptive philosophies and teachings. Allow His Word to shine in your heart (1 Cor. 13:8-12).
- *No prophecy*. Prophetic words from Divine inspiration were never from the prophet's own mind, nor should any teaching in the Church be so. All teaching must be rooted in God's solid precepts. Even with the limits of human vocabulary and understanding, speaking the real truth must be sought with all diligence, as God will protect His truth (1 Cor. 5:13; 7:40; 12:4; 14; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 2:1).
- *Interpretation*. The Catholic Church uses this verse to mean the Bible cannot be read by the common man. Others have taught the Bible must never be interpreted. This is, in fact, what it does not say. Rather, it says we are not to make up things, read into God's Word what is not there, or merely rely on human interpretation or tradition.
- *Spoke from God* meant that God's Word is reliable and authoritative and does not need our extra verbiage, only our application and obedience of it. The authority is God's, not that of the pastor or teacher who gives it commentary, no matter how good or insightful it may be (Dan. 8:15; Zach. 1:9).
- *Carried along by the Holy Spirit*. This is further testimony that the Spirit is the source of the Prophet's prophecy and God's Word, all representing God's instructions, precepts, and authority (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Peter points out that the Prophets preached and wrote to an audience in darkness and despair and who would not be convicted. He feels the same, as his words are shining in the dark. Perhaps, you feel your efforts are the same, but being faithful does not always mean having results. We are all called to be the bright light of His Light shining in us. We are to realize our place and in humility realize He chooses to use our weak verbiage to enthuse and equip others to apply His precepts and call! God is the deliverer; we are the receivers. We are to receive in humbleness. God's Word does not come from us, but it is moved into us by the Holy Spirit and then proclaimed by us! The writers of the Bible were human authors who were used by God. They actively spoke His Word as they recorded. How heinous for us to seek to twist and manipulate His Word for our own agenda!

Our growth in Christ has value! Real, impacting, growing faith requires our diligence. Thus, we are asked to rekindle our Christian growth as an ongoing effort and apply His Truth so our hearts become centered upon Him. Just think what self-control, patience, endurance, godliness, and love would do for you and those close to you (2 Pet. 1: 5-11)! Our failure to obey God will cause us to lose out on so much in life and in eternity. Our diligence to remain faithful and obedient with virtue will help enable others to do so. When we obey God, He will reward us beyond our ability to fathom!

My four year old niece asked me, since Jesus lives in me, does He take a nap? Jesus lives and is to shine in our hearts, and He never naps!

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

**Additional Questions:**

1. Do people have to remind you of important things to do so you do not forget? How important are their reminders to you?
2. Have you ever compared what you had with faith and confidence in the past with what you have today? Have you grown, have you remained the same, or have you taken a backward slide?
3. What would it take for you to recover that confidence or knowledge you once had and grow it further?
4. What can you do to pay more attention to Christ and not to falsehoods or misleading teachings?
5. How have the busyness and stresses of life distracted you from fully following Christ and His call and gifting for you?

6. What are some of the teachings that seem to tingle your interests and emotions or that of others, but are not rooted in Scripture?
7. What does the significance and relevance of Christ mean to you? How can you communicate this with more impact to others?
8. How does knowing that the message from the Word of God and Prophets was not manmade or some clever philosophical wisdom, but rather from God Himself give you hope and confidence to share your faith with others?
9. Can you name some of the reasons for your faith that is attested by science, reason, history, and/or personal testimonies?
10. What is your passion and purpose in life? What are you doing about it, and how are your efforts going? What gets in the way of these? Do they line up with God's precepts? How do laziness and apathy get involved?
11. We are called to take the spiritual initiative and be productive! What does this mean to you? How does God need to stir you up? Are you spiritually lazy or apathetic? Does your Christian activity line up to His revealed truth or is it based on your own plans and agenda? Does the teaching you receive come from His Word or is it a counterfeit?
12. What can your church do to remind its congregation to be on guard against those who seek to derail them from His Word and Truth? How can setting up mentors and good examples in order to help others make your church be more glorious for His Glory? What is needed to make this a reality?