

CONQUERING THROUGH CONFLICT

A Study of 2 Peter

STUDY THREE

Be Sure of Your Source

2 Peter 1:12–21

Finding God's message is not some cosmic guessing game. God has given us His Word in written form in the Bible.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

DESPERATE to find answers to life's important questions, people will sometimes trust anyone who claims to possess the truth. The churches that Peter addressed in 2 Peter were infiltrated by persuasive teachers who were probably intelligent, well-educated, and likeable. Yet, they themselves were deceived as well as deceptive, leading others into the same dangerous errors.

Peter wasn't the only apostle concerned about vulnerable Christians. Paul warned his readers about people who "try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth" (Ephesians 4:14). Like Peter, Paul sought to anchor Christians to God's Word so they wouldn't "be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching" (4:14).

Today's shady influencers are equally skilled at tricking people into believing anything that sounds good or feels right. It's not uncommon for even Christians to dabble in praying to deceased relatives, wearing crystals for "positive energy," or calling on the universe for help.

Why do people do this? Why are the masses eager to follow the latest guru or some expert with secret knowledge? Primarily because of our deep longing for truth. Peter points us to a single authoritative source of truth, and in *this* source we can be sure.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Do you long for insight regarding your relationships, purpose, well-being, or future? Bring this desire for truth to the Lord in prayer.

Father, every day, I hear people pitching “secrets” to happiness. Lead me to Your truth, the solid rock on which I can build my life with confidence. Thank You for lighting my way with Scripture. Illumine my mind and speak to my heart through Your Word. In Jesus’ name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Knowing he would die soon, Peter wrote 2 Peter as a memorial that would stand long after his death. He opened by stating the source of his authority: “This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1). Available to all believers are God’s power and promises which enable us to share in God’s “divine nature and escape the world’s corruption” (1:4).

The seven virtues he told us to add to our faith in [1:5–6](#) mirror God’s character and were perfectly modeled by Christ. We bear good fruit when we exhibit these virtues, and we show that we really are “among those God has called and chosen” (1:10)—unlike the false teachers who bore rotten fruit and who displayed vices more than virtues.

No doubt, Peter recalled Jesus’ warning about false prophets who would come as “ravenous wolves” in “sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15 NASB). These wolves viciously attacked Peter’s credibility, accusing him of fabricating myths—the very thing they were doing.

In [2 Peter 1:12–21](#), Peter fended off their attacks with a defense of the deity of Christ and the authority and inspiration of Scripture. Let’s take a closer look at Peter’s masterful argument.



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Observation: Truth and Scripture

Read this passage, watching for key phrases such as “standing firm in the truth” (1:12), “we saw . . . with our own eyes” (1:16), “we have even greater confidence” (1:19), and “they spoke from God” (1:21). Observing the Scriptures shouldn’t be done in a hurry. Stroll. Don’t rush. Look for concepts that *repeat* for emphasis, note *metaphors*, and watch for *transitions*.

What the Truth Is and Isn’t—2 Peter 1:12–18

The transition word, *therefore*, in 2 Peter 1:12 is a bridge from what Peter has said to what he is about to say. What are “these things” that Peter refers to?

How did Peter know he would die soon, according to 1:13–15? How did Peter refer to death? What repeating concepts do you observe?



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What God has revealed in His Word is true. Being God’s children, we should establish ourselves in His Word, confident that it is not a book of legends or myths. According to [2 Peter 1:16–18](#), what proof did Peter offer that he taught the truth about Christ? Write down the key words that support his claim.

At Jesus’ transfiguration, Peter witnessed Jesus’ appearance “transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light” (Matthew 17:2). He saw the “majestic splendor” of Christ (2 Peter 1:16) and heard “the majestic glory”—that is, God declaring Jesus as His “dearly loved Son” (1:17). Peter saw it with his own eyes and heard it with his own ears. This was no myth!

Peter heard God’s voice in the presence of God the Son. On that mountain, God spoke His Word. Peter said, “I was there.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Confidence We Have in the Scriptures—2 Peter 1:19–21

In [2 Peter 1:19–21](#), Peter segues from God’s revelation on the mountain to the revelation of God’s truth in the Scriptures. What transition word do you see? How did Peter trace the line of *authority* in the Scriptures from the prophets to God ([1:19–20](#))?



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What metaphors did Peter use in 2 Peter 1:19? To what do they refer?

How did Peter explain the *inspiration* of Scripture—the means God used to communicate through humans (2 Peter 1:21)?

When you direct your life to the Scriptures and draw your information from the Scriptures, you will have objective, reliable truth to live by. No one has ever said to me, “Because I relied on the Word of God, I wound up in error.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Interpretation: You Can Trust the Bible

Wolves in sheep's clothing still attack the credibility of the Bible. These modern-day false teachers say that after Jesus' death, His disciples made up tales about Jesus to keep His legacy alive. They say that the actual Jesus never claimed to be God, performed miracles, or rose from the dead.

Thankfully, Peter's eyewitness testimony about Jesus and his defense of the inspiration of the Bible remain pure and trustworthy after all the mud-throwing. Read Pastor Chuck Swindoll's online article, "[Why You Can Have Confidence in the Bible](#)" at [insight.org](#), and write down a few points in the space below.

What does it mean that the writers of Scripture "were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21)?



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How are the words of Scripture “like a lamp shining in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19)? What assurance does this image give you?

What future hope was Peter pointing to when he wrote “until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts” (1:19)?

Even highly intelligent men and women in our universities live in the murky waters of uncertainty about spiritual things. The Bible is authoritative, and we do well to pay attention to it. Let the light in! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Comparing Scripture to Scripture

Correlation is comparing Scripture passages to validate and deepen our interpretation. Scripture never contradicts itself, and it is its own best interpreter. So we should always view Scripture in light of the whole and never lift verses out of the biblical context.

Compare [2 Peter 1:20–21](#) with [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#). What additional insight regarding the inspiration and benefits of Scripture do you find?

God directed the writing of His Word. No wonder His Book is the sure, authoritative, inspired source of truth. No wonder the adversary is so determined to assault it and to encourage us to read the “stars” rather than read the Book. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Concluding Reminders

Let's sum up Peter's teaching into two convictions to remember on our search for truth.

When we turn to God's Word, we are consulting the most reliable source of truth. There's nothing better, nothing clearer, nothing more trustworthy than the Scriptures.

When we make other sources equal to or more reliable than Scripture, we soon fall into error. Beliefs and values direct thoughts and actions. God's truth makes us flourish, not flounder.



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In our pluralistic society, people pick and choose their favorite teaching from a smorgasbord of religions and philosophies. How can you know what to believe? Write down some guidelines based on your study of 2 Peter 1:12–21.

What attacks on the authority of Scripture have you heard? How does Peter's testimony and defense help you fend off these attacks?

What is your final authority in life? Peter urges you to stand firm in the Scriptures. Its words are the lamp shining in the darkness. The writers of the Bible spoke from God and wrote the truth about Christ, the Morning Star, who should always be our guide.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, Your Word alone is perfect and trustworthy, right and pure. Your Word is the lamp that guides my way and leads me to Jesus, the light of the world. Jesus' words are a solid foundation on which to build my life, my hope, and my future. Guide me with Your counsel and lead me to glory. In Jesus' name, amen.



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