

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

2 Peter 01: 16-21

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. This week we'll be reading 2 Peter chapter 1, and today we'll read from verse 16 to verse 21.

The Second Epistle of Peter has only three chapters, and the sections are very simple. Verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter are the introduction, while verses 14 to 18 of the third chapter are the conclusion. Excluding the introduction and conclusion, the Second Epistle of Peter can be divided into three sections. The first section is from verse 3 to verse 15 of chapter 1, and the theme of this section is about the process of growth in life, which means how to partake in the divine nature. This section is Peter's main concern and also the fruit of his lifelong learning and following of the Lord. The second section is from chapter 1, verse 16 to chapter 2, verse 22, which tells us to beware of heresies and false teachers. The third section is from chapter 3, verse 1 to verse 13, which tells us to prepare for the day of the Lord's coming.

We have already read the first section, which focuses on life. We are about to start the second section, which focuses on light. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Therefore, the first and second sections of the Second Epistle of Peter are continuous, discussing the process of growth in life. After the growth of life, one naturally sees more light, and naturally will not doubt or drift with the trends of heresies, nor be deceived by false teachers. With this understanding, we enter the second section.

Today we read verses 16 to 21, which deal with the issue of heresies. When Peter wrote the second epistle, the church had been established for more than 30 years, and some heresies had already infiltrated the church. One of them was about Christ's return in glory, claiming that it was a fabricated myth. The return of Christ is an important pillar of Christian hope. Without the return of Christ, there would be no resurrection. If there is no resurrection, to quote Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:32,

"If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," our hope would be completely in vain. Therefore, Peter dealt with this issue very carefully.

Verse 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."

Peter had previously visited churches and served in them, and he must have mentioned Christ's return to the saints many times, because he is the apostle of hope, and the reason for hope is Christ's return. In his already written First Epistle of Peter, there are many mentions of the revelation of Christ. In this context, Peter said, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ". Here, Peter links power with Christ's return. This is to remind us that Christ's first coming was humble; He came to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. He was to be crucified on the cross to accomplish redemption, and resurrected on the third day, so that people could receive salvation through believing. Jesus' second coming will be powerful and glorious. He is the Lion of Judah. He will come to judge the world and reign as King.

Peter emphasizes that Christ's return is not a cleverly devised myth or falsehood; it is something that will truly happen. Clearly, some false teachers were spreading incorrect doctrines, causing the saints to doubt Christ's return. Therefore, Peter, as a witness, tells the saints that he has personally seen the majesty of the Lord. When Jesus came the first time, although He was the humble Lamb, before going to the cross, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and was transfigured before them, showing great glory and majesty. This event is recorded in Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-12, and Luke 9:29-36. Thus, the occurrence of this event is beyond doubt. Peter viewed the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain as a preview of Jesus' second coming. It was Christ, in His great grace, allowing these three disciples to taste the majesty of His return beforehand. That glorious scene was unforgettable for Peter, and in his final words before his martyrdom, he had

to mention it again. It was the most glorious sight he had ever seen in his life. He felt compelled, as an eyewitness, to tell the saints once more about the glory of Christ's return, which is also the shared hope of all Christians.

Verse 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.”

Here, Peter takes us back to what happened during Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. Let's revisit the events that took place, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, along with Peter. Matthew 17:2 mentions that Jesus was transfigured before them; His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. This is Jesus Christ receiving honor and glory from the Father, causing His face and clothes to shine brightly. At that time, Moses and Elijah also appeared and talked with Jesus. The young Peter was extremely excited and said to Jesus in Matthew 17:4, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." The young Peter was indeed impulsive and straightforward, lacking a proper understanding of Christ, and he placed Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the same level. As a result, a bright cloud covered them, and from the great glory, the Father spoke, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" Peter recalls this event because it was one of the mistakes he made in his youth. He vividly remembers the solemn proclamation of the Father, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased." Peter uses this event to remind the saints once again.

Verse 18: “And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.”

Here Peter says, "We were with Him on the holy mountain." At that time, they had first gone to Caesarea Philippi, and afterward, Jesus likely took the three disciples up Mount Hermon. But Peter calls it the holy mountain—not because Mount

Hermon is inherently holy, but because Jesus revealed His glory as the Son of God there. That mountain became holy because of God's presence. This is similar to Exodus 3:5, where Moses saw the burning bush that was not consumed. Moses was curious and wanted to approach it, but God spoke to him, saying, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." Because God was there, the ground became holy.

Dear brothers and sisters, in your home, you should also have a place where you frequently read the Bible and pray. You should set that place apart as your holy ground, a place where you meet with God. Wherever God's presence is, that place should be set apart as holy. Peter personally testifies that on the holy mountain, he heard the Father's voice coming from heaven.

Verse 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;"

Besides his personal experience as testimony, Peter says there is also the more certain prophetic word. Here we see that Peter truly values God's word. The prophetic word likely refers to the words spoken by the Old Testament prophets. Comparing personal experience with God's word, Peter says the prophetic word is more certain. We should all have the same attitude towards the Bible as Peter did. Peter witnessed Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain, an experience that was truly wonderful and great. We all envy and hope to have such experiences. But Peter says that, in comparison, the prophetic word is more certain. Peter's attitude should indeed make us feel ashamed. How often do we neglect God's word, doubt it, or even ignore it, showing little interest in it? But Peter says this is the more certain prophetic word, like a light shining in a dark place. Christ is the light, and before His return, the world is in darkness. The prophetic word, like a lamp, shines in the darkness.

Why do we feel like we are in darkness? Because we lack the prophetic word. The prophetic word is a lamp in a dark place; with the prophetic word, it is like having

a light in the darkness. You can see the light and know how to move forward. However, I believe many saints do not ignore the prophetic word but cannot understand it. They read it but still do not see the light. How can we read the prophetic word to see the light, as if in a dark place? Some churches teach learning to prophesy by simply reciting the words of the Old Testament prophets, thinking this is the prophets speaking today. This is a serious misunderstanding.

Let's see how Peter teaches us to read the prophetic word. Peter says we should pay attention to the prophecy until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Peter means that you should place the prophecy in your heart and meditate on it repeatedly. Our hearts are naturally dark and cannot see the light, hence we do not understand the meaning of the prophets. At this time, we should not be anxious. We need to be quiet before God, set aside our preconceived notions, and wait with an open heart for the illumination of God's word until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts. Then we will understand the words of the prophets.

Originally, the prophets spoke to a dark age, and now the prophets speak to your darkened mind. This is a learning process, and in this process, you should seek various kinds of help. You should read about the history, geography, and background of the time when the prophets spoke, allowing yourself to return to the time and space of the prophets and understand the era they faced. You should also read the insights of different commentators to gain understanding. All this background knowledge is important, but the most crucial aspect is to wait before God and meditate repeatedly, seeing what new light and revelation God may give you through the prophets' words. Keep waiting until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart.

If we regard God's words with such seriousness, God will certainly speak to our hearts again through the words of the prophets. In the New Testament era, we do not need an intermediary; everyone can personally come before God and understand His words, just as it says in Jeremiah 31:33-34 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they

shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Peter tells us to pay attention to the prophetic word until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts. At that time, we will receive light and revelation from God, and we will understand the words of the prophets.

Of course, when Peter speaks of the day dawning and the morning star rising, he is also referring to the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself revealed to His disciples many times that He would return. In Acts 1:11, when Jesus ascended into heaven, two angels in white appeared and said to the onlookers, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." Jesus' return is certain, but when will Jesus come? That day and hour, only the Father knows. The Old Testament prophets also frequently mentioned that Christ would come to judge the world and to reign as King. While reading these prophecies from the Old Testament, we cannot use them to predict exactly when Christ will return. However, when the events unfold—when the day dawns and the morning star appears—we will know and we will no longer be in darkness.

Verse 20: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation."

Peter, on one hand, tells us to pay attention to the prophecies of the prophets, but here he also tells us that we cannot interpret them according to our own desires. In other words, we cannot impose our own meanings onto God's words. Instead, we must set aside ourselves and immerse ourselves in God's words, placing ourselves within the context of the prophets' time and space. We should stand in the position of the prophets to understand their words. Whether we receive some light and revelation or not, we should humbly seek and wait upon God, fearing that we might fall into interpreting the scriptures according to our own desires.

Verse 21: “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but ^[k]holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Peter emphatically tells us that prophecy does not originate from human will; therefore, the source of prophecy is not human, but individuals are moved by the Holy Spirit to speak God's words. The source of prophecy is God Himself. Therefore, to interpret prophecy, one must personally come before God, and each person's reception before God is relatively subjective. In the previous verse, Peter also tells us not to interpret according to our own desires. So, how should we interpret prophecy?

There are two principles. The first principle is in 1 Corinthians 14:32, "And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." The words spoken by God through the prophets will not contradict each other. Therefore, when interpreting prophecy, it must not contradict other prophets' prophecies; this is the first principle. The second principle is in 1 Corinthians 2:13, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." This means to interpret Scripture with Scripture, using God's words to explain God's words. So, when these two principles are put together, you must use God's words to explain God's words without any contradictions. This might be challenging for saints who are just beginning to read the Bible.

Therefore, many people may start with a specific theological framework, which at least ensures there are no contradictions within that framework. However, a common difficulty arises when, over time, individuals begin to prioritize the theological framework over God's word itself. This often occurs with more experienced believers who have become accustomed to interpreting scripture within a particular theological framework. When they encounter scriptures that clearly contradict their theological framework, they may easily distort the scripture to preserve the integrity of their theological framework, which is not ideal. If there really were a theological framework that could perfectly interpret the Bible, then why wouldn't God give this theological framework to people? Wouldn't this be able to avoid many disputes?

However, because God cannot be defined by human theological frameworks, the Bible is presented to us in its current form. The best approach is to initially adopt a framework that suits you while maintaining an open attitude, being willing to be adjusted and corrected. Over time, through a lifetime of learning, we develop our own understanding of God. This understanding does not need to be uniform among believers but is achieved through mutual appreciation and recognition that what we see is only partial. In this way, we will also treasure the insights of others. Until the coming of Jesus Christ, He will unify our understanding of Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank God for giving us time to read the Bible every day. If you have been following along with me for some time, you may be familiar with my interpretation style, which can be seen as a framework. However, we should be reminded not to be rigid; our minds should be open, knowing that God's word is far richer than what we understand. I believe that if you are earnest in studying God's word, He will surely grant you special insights and revelations. You will have your own understanding of God. The gatherings in the church are where every believer showcases their relationship with God, presenting their understanding of Him. Together, we witness the richness of Christ, and each church gathering becomes enriched. Participants can see various insights, and the church can display the beauty of the body of Christ.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Through Peter's reminder, let us once again cherish the words of God in the Bible, the more certain prophecies of the prophets, which are like a lamp shining in the darkness. May every time we read the Bible, we be willing to meditate on Your words repeatedly. Have mercy on us, grant us light, let our hearts see the dawn, see the appearance of the morning star, and let Your word be like a lamp before our feet, guiding us on the path forward. Bless our daily time of reading the Bible. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ.