

International Bible Lessons Commentary
2 Peter 1:1-21

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, May 12, 2013

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 12, 2013**, is from **2 Peter 1:2-15, 20, 21**; verses 1 and 16-19 are also included below. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**. The weekly **International Bible Lesson** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **The Oklahoman** newspaper.

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2 Peter 1:1-21

(2 Peter 1:1) Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

An apostle is one who is chosen and sent by someone else to represent them. Jesus called some of His disciples “apostles,” because He wanted them to represent Him and the truths He taught as His servants when they served His Church in the world. Everyone in the Church shares a precious faith; a precious faith made possible because Jesus Christ lived a righteous life on earth and died for the forgiveness of our sins. His death on the cross upholds the righteousness of God when God forgives sinners who come to live by faith in Jesus Christ. Peter wrote specifically that Jesus Christ is both our God and Savior. He is the One who saves us from the consequences of our sins, and through faith in Him and trust in His word, He also helps us live in righteousness each day. He saves us from committing sins and shows us the way of escape when we struggle against temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

(2 Peter 1:2) May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Knowing the true God and the truth about God, knowing and obeying Jesus Christ as our Lord, will give us abundant peace of mind and spirit. We need to personally follow our Lord Jesus Christ daily, instead of simply thinking about Jesus as seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven where He reigns over all the earth. God's abundant grace has made and makes our knowledge of God and His will possible, along with the power to obey Him each day.

(2 Peter 1:3) His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

God created everything that exists and God holds everything in existence that continues to exist. The divine power upholding creation gives us everything we need for mental, physical, and spiritual life, and also all that we need for a moral transformation and a life of godliness. We can live godly through knowing Jesus Christ as our Savior and through knowing and doing His will as our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we lived ungodly in the past or still engage in ungodly behaviors under the power of temptations, it is our fault and no fault of God's, for He has given us all we need to live a godly life through knowing Jesus

Christ as our Lord and Savior. Because Jesus is good in all ways, He has called us to follow Him; when we follow Him, our goodness will bring Him glory and influence others to trust in Him as their Lord and Savior too.

(2 Peter 1:4) Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.

Through the righteousness, grace, glory, and goodness of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ has given us great and precious promises. By trusting in Jesus Christ and His promises, we can live godly in this life. By His power and through our knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, we can gain the victory over all temptations; furthermore, our past ways of sinful living as slaves of sin can be overcome and we can be freed from slavery to sin by the Holy Spirit who indwells believers. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we participate in the divine nature — we do not become divine — we participate in the divine life of God and fulfill His purposes.

(2 Peter 1:5) For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge,

Faith in Jesus Christ should mark the beginning of Christ-like living. Christian faith should lead to following Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, which sometimes requires great effort and struggles; however, Jesus Christ gives us the power we need to make the effort when we prayerfully trust in Him and increase our knowledge of Him through the study of His word, the truth, the Holy Scriptures.

Sanctification is a process of growth made possible as we trust more and more in Jesus Christ as both our Lord and Savior. Christian faith and a sincere desire to live according to God's standards of goodness should lead us to seek greater knowledge of God and His will in the Bible so we can live better to please God.

(2 Peter 1:6) and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness,

We begin with faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Truly knowing Jesus Christ as He is, as God the Son, Lord, and Savior should inspire us to live and act with goodness. To do this at all times, we need to increase our knowledge of Jesus and His will. Once we know what to do we must fight against our old ways of living, which will involve self-control and endurance throughout our lives moment-by-moment. Choosing to practice self-control whenever tempted will lead to the ability to endure and overcome more powerful temptations to live for self instead of for God our

Savior. Living for God in Jesus Christ no matter what the consequences will lead to the daily practice of godliness instead of the daily practice of our old sinful habits or the development of new sinful habits.

(2 Peter 1:7) and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.

Some who have a false understanding of godliness and of themselves can develop a sense of self-satisfaction and mistakenly think they are better than others. Therefore, true godliness should lead us to have affection and concern for one another, especially in the Church. The root and fruit of all the steps Peter listed is love for Jesus Christ, a divine love that should result in love for everyone — neighbor, friend, and enemy according to the Scriptures. Mutual affection and love will open the door for believers to help one another as they struggle against sin to develop the virtues of self-control, endurance, and godliness.

(2 Peter 1:8) For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Considering the Christian virtues that Peter listed in his letter can help us evaluate how well we are living the Christ-like life. Practicing these virtues should increase in intensity and consistency as we personally commit ourselves to following Jesus Christ at all

times. With these virtues can we be truly effective in serving Jesus Christ. If our knowledge of Jesus Christ does not bear good fruit, the reason may be our immoral behavior or a lack of godliness that requires repentance and a return to faith in Jesus Christ or a beginning of true faith in Jesus Christ.

(2 Peter 1:9) For anyone who lacks these things is short-sighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins.

When Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross, He made forgiveness for sins and cleansing from sin possible through true faith in Him. Through faith in Jesus Christ, our past sins are forgiven; we are cleansed from sin; we know peace with God and experience peace within ourselves. If we do not pursue godliness and grow spiritually in the virtues Peter listed in this letter, we lack understanding and do not know the truth of Christianity. Our cleansing from past sins by Jesus Christ should not lead to our practicing new sins; but instead, to newness of life and godliness in Christ Jesus.

(2 Peter 1:10) Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble.

When you say, “I am a Christian,” truly knowing what that statement means through study of what the Bible

teaches, you confirm that God in Christ has called and elected you to live in His family of followers. By the way you believe, speak, and behave with godliness day by day, you confirm that indeed God did call and elect you and you were not mistaken in your thinking.

When you seek daily to confirm your faith in Jesus Christ by your study of the Bible and by your actions, you will not stumble into sin or fall away from true faith.

(2 Peter 1:11) For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

Jesus said good trees produce good fruit. He cleanses us and empowers us to live godly and bear good fruit. Jesus makes us good so we can bear good fruit that will bless others and nourish them physically, morally, and spiritually as needed. By our choosing to live and serve God's way according to the Scriptures, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will find joy in giving us what He has promised us in heaven and on earth after He comes again.

(2 Peter 1:12) Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, though you know them already and are established in the truth that has come to you.

We can build up or establish our life in Jesus Christ and the good news that we have received regarding

Him as our Lord and Savior. To do so, we need to keep reminding ourselves of the truths upon which we have built our lives as followers of Jesus Christ. We remind ourselves through the continuous study of the Scriptures and doing what they teach. Bible teachers and preachers have the duty to remind their students and listeners of what they already know from the Bible.

(2 Peter 1:13) I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory,

Preachers and teachers of the Bible refresh the memory of the followers of Christ who listen to them. The Bible is the written foundation upon which we must establish our lives in faithfulness to Jesus Christ and the godliness that leads to effective and fruitful service to Jesus Christ and others. As we mature, our memory may fade, so we need to keep refreshing our memory of the Scriptures with regular habits of reading and study of the Bible.

(2 Peter 1:14) since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Peter knew he would die as a martyr, because Jesus Christ had told him so. In prison, he knew his time to die was near; so, he dictated his letters at every opportunity. Sylvanus took dictation from both Peter and Paul. From Peter's letters we learn that Peter did

not focus on all he could get out of life before he died; rather, he focused on all he could do to serve Jesus Christ and the Church before he died.

(2 Peter 1:15) And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Peter's readers (including those of us today) could more easily recall what he taught if he wrote down or dictated his teachings in a letter. He wanted believers to remember facts that would help them live godly each day and give them reasons to rejoice as they neared death — some of his readers would suffer and die as martyrs too (including some of his readers of today). Before he died, Peter wrote what he thought believers most needed to learn from all of his teachings, as the Holy Spirit inspired him.

(2 Peter 1:16) For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Cleverly devised myths are of demonic or human origin. They are designed to mislead people — perhaps to make them feel good about themselves and the future — but these myths are false. The apostles taught what they actually saw and experienced of Jesus Christ. They saw Jesus Christ exercise His

divine power in many ways and they saw His Majesty in the way He treated others in love.

(2 Peter 1:17) For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Some of Jesus’ disciples heard the Father speak to Him and they saw the Holy Spirit descend as a dove when John baptized Jesus. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain and they heard the voice of God the Father telling them to listen to Jesus. Peter wanted his readers to listen to Jesus too, because the apostles knew the power and majesty of Jesus Christ.

(2 Peter 1:18) We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

Not only had they seen the power of Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God, but they had also heard the voice of God the Father confirming Jesus’ divine and holy nature. Furthermore, they saw the Holy Spirit come as a flame of fire on the day of Pentecost, and they knew His presence in their hearts. Peter and all the apostles could give evidence as eyewitnesses to the divine character and nature of the God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

(2 Peter 1:19) So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

The prophetic message included the Hebrew Scriptures which we call the Old Testament. The Hebrew Scriptures were fully confirmed for the apostles by what they saw Jesus do and heard Him say. Therefore, the followers of Jesus Christ need to be attentive to the teachings of the whole Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible shines the light in our dark world, showing us how to walk and keeping us from stumbling in the darkness. If we will believe in Jesus Christ as the Bible reveals Him, the Spirit of Christ will indwell our hearts and we will know the Spirit is His Spirit. As the Holy Spirit shines the light, we must always interpret the Old Testament in terms of its fulfillment by Jesus Christ.

(2 Peter 1:20) First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

The prophecies of the Old Testament and the prophets and apostles who wrote the New Testament were inspired to write the truth and protected from writing errors by the Holy Spirit, Who inspired them for the sake of their readers, so their readers could

know and trust in the Bible and live according to the truth. Interpreters of the Scriptures need to pray for the Holy Spirit to help them understand and teach the Bible truly and clearly as God intends, rather than teach the Bible according to their own ideas and limited human understanding.

(2 Peter 1:21) because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

No one should try to interpret the Bible without praying for the Holy Spirit to help them understand and interpret the Bible correctly. No one should try to use their “human will” to interpret the Scriptures to move people in the way they want them to move for either “good” or selfish reasons. We must pray for the Holy Spirit to teach us the Bible. We must pray for the Holy Spirit to help us teach the Bible God’s way and not our way. Though the Bible may not answer all of our questions, the Bible is divinely inspired and infallible truth that teaches us all we need to know in order to live godly in Christ Jesus. We always need to pray that our Bible study and interpretation is blessed and inspired by God to achieve His will and purposes.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Do you think churches today emphasize godliness as much as Peter did in his letters?
2. What reason does Peter give for the corruption that is in the world? Give some examples.
3. What does Peter say we need to do in addition to having faith?
4. Give some reasons for or examples of people who are “ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8).
5. From where did the scriptures and true prophecies come?

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