

2 PETER CHAPTER 3 – God’s Promise Is Not Slack; The Day Of The Lord: Be Steadfast!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF 2 PETER

- I. INTRODUCTION (1:1–2)
 - A. The author (1:1A)
 - B. The addressees (1:1B)
 - C. The greeting (1:2)
- II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (1:3–21)
 - A. Protection (1:3–4)
 - B. Progression (1:5–11)
 - C. Proclamation (1:12–21)
- III. CAUTION IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (2:1–22)
 - A. Features of the False Teachers (2:1–3)
 - B. Figures OF Old Testament judgment applied to the false teachers (2:4–11)
 - C. Future of the false teachers (2:12–22)
- IV. CONFIDENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (3:1–16)
 - A. Peter’s aim (3:1–2)
 - B. Peter’s admonition (3:3–7)
 - C. Peter’s assurance (3:8–16)
- V. CONCLUSION (3:17–18)

Barbieri, Louis A.. *First & Second Peter- Everyman's Bible Commentary*

Introduction to Second Peter

It is thought that Nero began a brutal persecution of Christians in October of AD 64 (about 30 years after the Jesus’ crucifixion/resurrection) and that this persecution swept through the Roman Empire persecuting Christians and their churches. First Peter was written to encourage these Christians under persecution and was given **to help them maintain a Godly perspective even in the face of severe persecution.**

First Peter deals with problems from the outside. Second Peter was written about a year later, probably in AD 66-67 along the same lines as First Peter, but **deals with problems from the inside.**

Three addition things were coming into the church that he addresses in Second Peter, which were a rise in apostasy and false teaching in the church. Also the fact that Peter knew his time on earth was drawing short. Jesus had told him that he would be faithful to the end and that others would take him where he didn’t want to go. – to be martyred. There is an urgency now to the closeness of eternity.

Chapter 3 As we have seen, Peter knew his days were numbered. And from this final chapter of his last epistle, **it would also seem as though he knew that following his departure, men would prey on the church with false teaching that would stem from a denial of the Second Coming of Christ and of the Rapture of the church**—for in verses 1–9, Peter addresses the subject of the Lord and His delay; and in verses 10–18, he writes of the Lord and His Day.

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS! –Thomas Chisholm – William Runyan – sung by Tom Fettle

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been Thou forever will be.
Refrain:
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth.
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Refrain:
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness! Lord, unto me!*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

2 PETER CHAPTER 3 – God’s Promise Is Not Slack; - The Day of the Lord Will Come

2Pe 3:1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),

2Pe 3:2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

2Pe 3:3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

2Pe 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

2Pe 3:5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 2Pe 3:6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

2Pe 3:7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

v. 1 *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle* - This expression proves that he had written a former epistle, and that it was addressed to the same persons as this. In both which I stir up your pure minds to call to your remembrance important truths which you have before heard, but which you are in danger of forgetting, or from which you are in danger of being turned away by prevailing errors.

v. 2 Peter doesn't put himself in a position of being above the other apostles; he is just one of them. Before he finishes this epistle, he will refer to what Paul had written, which means he includes Paul as an apostle also. He is saying that the things he is going to remind them of had been written about by the other apostles and also had been the subject of the OT prophets.

vs. 3-4 *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, ...* “Things are going on just as they always have,” says the skeptic. But where is this Second Coming everyone keeps talking about?”—little knowing that his very scoffing fulfills Bible prophecy. *walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."* The root of skepticism and cynicism lies in a desire to follow one's flesh and fulfill one's lust. A denial of the return of Jesus allows people to live however they want because it removes accountability to the God who made them and who will return for them. ***Cf. Psalm 2***

Vs. 5-6 *willingly forget ..* There was another time in human history when men scoffed. Day after day, decade upon decade, as Noah constructed a prophetic illustration of gigantic proportion, the laughter of his friends and neighbors accompanied the sounds of his saw and hammer. But eventually, the collapse of the water canopy that surrounded the earth in days of antiquity caused rain to fall, resulting in a world-wide flood—as evidenced to this day not only by geological data, but by its appearance in the written or oral history of virtually every culture. ***Cf. John 3:16-21***

v. 7 *reserved for fire* against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Just as the world was destroyed in the days of Noah, Peter says it will be destroyed again—not by water, but by fire. Let the cartoonists draw their caricatures of prophets of doom. Let the world make its jokes. But you can go to the bank on the fact that just as the world was flooded with water in days of old, it will one day be burned with fire.

v. 1 Our best defense against false prophets/teachers is prayerful watchfulness against any teaching that minimizes Jesus Christ. Because God's Word is true, we must pay attention to it and take its message seriously.

v. 2 We should carefully distinguish the various “days” mentioned in the Bible. “The Day of the Lord” is that day of judgment that climaxes with the return of Christ to the earth. “The Day of God” (2Pe_3:12) is the period when God's people enjoy the new heavens and the new earth, when all evil has been judged (1Co_15:28). “The Day of Christ” relates to the coming of Christ for His church (1Co_1:7-9; Phi_1:10; Phi_2:16).

vs. 3-4 We need to be reminded of what God had done in the past, thereby proving that His work is consistent throughout the ages. Peter simply presented evidence that the false teachers deliberately ignored. Believers are in a “win-win” situation, but have this present wonderful window of opportunity to tell others about Jesus!

v. 5 We need to remember that the same God who created the world by His word can also intervene in His world and do whatever He wishes to do! It is His word that made it and that holds it together, and His word is all-powerful. Note that Peter is a Creationist and a believer in a world-wide flood!

v. 6 God has the power to “break in” at any time and accomplish His will. He can send rain from heaven or fire from heaven. We must believe this.

v. 7 The same word that created and sustains the world is now holding it together, stored with fire, being preserved and reserved for that future day of judgment. God promised that there would be no more floods to destroy the world (Gen_9:8-17). The next judgment will be a judgment of fire. Are you aware of Scriptures that speak of the coming of a judgment of fire?

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

2Pe 3:8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The Day Of The Lord:

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

2Pe 3:11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

v. 8 with the Lord one day is as a thousand years ...After addressing the ridicule of the lost concerning the Lord and His delay in verses 1–7, Peter goes on to speak about the restraint of the Lord in verses 8–9—an understanding based upon the fact that the Lord completely transcends time....

v. 9 Note the double action described here: The Lord knows 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. As far as I understand prophecy, Jesus could have come back in 1967, following Israel’s Six Day War, when Jerusalem was at last united. Why didn’t He? If you are among those who didn’t get saved until after 1967, He delayed His coming for you. Although we want the Lord to come back so desperately, we must never forget what this would mean to those who don’t yet know Him. **Cf. Heb. 10:29**

v. 10 But the day of the Lord... After discussing the Lord’s delay, Peter goes on to talk about the Lord’s Day. For prophecy to make sense to you, there are four days you need to know: The Day of Man began in the Garden of Eden when God gave man the privilege, the opportunity to steward this planet (Genesis 2:15). But when Adam and Eve chose to listen to Satan rather than to obey God, the Day of Man became a total, unmitigated disaster characterized by famine and starvation, disease, war, and death. The next day is the Day of Christ (Php. 1:10; 2:16; 2Th. 2:2), which will begin when Jesus appears in the clouds to meet His bride in the air and take us to heaven for a seven-year honeymoon with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:17). **The third day is the Day of the Lord when, beginning with the Tribulation, God will intervene in human affairs** (Joel 2; Revelation 6). Extending through the period of time called the millennium, the Day of the Lord starts dark, but **gets brighter and brighter—just as the Jewish day begins at sundown and works its way to dawn!** The fourth day, seen in verse 12, is the Day of God, which begins after the millennium, when, because heaven and earth have been polluted by the presence of Satan, the present heaven and earth are done away with, replaced by a new heaven and earth.

v. 11 The message of Scripture from cover to cover is that we’re pilgrims and sojourners on this earth. Yes, God can bless us with cars and houses—but we’re not to make them high priorities because they’re just going to burn, dissipate, and dissolve. “Keep your eyes on the big picture,” says Peter. “Look for the coming Day of God.”

vs. 8-9 God delays the coming of Christ and the great day of fiery judgment because He is long-suffering and wants to give lost sinners the opportunity to be saved. God’s “delay” is actually an indication that He has a plan for this world and that He is working His plan. There should be no question in anybody’s mind whether God wants sinners to be saved. God “is not willing that any should perish”. If God is long suffering and wants to give the lost an opportunity to be saved, what does that mean to us as it relates to the Great Commission? We need to be telling everyone about Jesus!

vs. 10-11 We do not know when it will happen, but we are told what will happen. Man’s great works will also be burned up! All of the things that man boasts about will be destroyed in a moment of time. When sinners stand before the throne of God, they will have nothing to point to as evidence of their greatness. It will all be gone. This is certainly a solemn truth, and we dare not study it in cavalier fashion. In the remaining verses of this letter, Peter will apply this truth to our daily living. We need to pause now and consider: where will I be when God destroys the world? Is what I am living for only destined to go up in an atomic cloud, to vanish forever? Or am I doing the will of God so that my works will glorify Him forever? We must make our decision now — before it is too late. This expectant attitude ought to make a difference in our personal conduct. Other New Testament writers also teach that an eager expectancy of the Lord’s return ought to motivate us to live pure lives. Are we doing that?

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INTERPRETATION

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2Pe 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

2Pe 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Be Steadfast! - Final Words

2Pe 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

v. 12 The flavor of the Greek text is that we don’t look for the Day of God passively, but that we actually have the ability to speed it along. God is sovereign, but in Scripture we see a sovereign God affected and impacted by His people and their cooperation.... Before entering the Promised Land, the children of Israel sent twelve spies to check it out. And because they chose to retreat in fear rather than advance in faith, they were destined to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 13). The children of Israel actually slowed down God’s timetable by forty years. “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed,” Jonah declared. But the people repented, and God chose not to destroy the city (see Jonah 3). Yes, God is sovereign. Yes, God is in control. But He factors in to His sovereign plan the attitudes and cooperation of man. Knowing this, Peter says we can hasten His return. Are you tired of death and disease and depression? Have you had your fill of sadness and sickness and sin? If so, there are two ways you can hurry the day when righteousness will rule the earth. First, the Day of God is hastened by our prayer. In teaching us to pray, Jesus taught us to ask that His kingdom come (Matthew 6:10).

This is precisely what one who heard Him teach that prayer did. At the end of the Book of Revelation, Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly”—to which John responded in prayer, “Even so, Lord, come quickly.” The same is still true. Prayer influences the timing of God—including the coming of the kingdom.

v. 13 Taken from **Isaiah 65:17**, the Hebrew word translated “create” is *bara* and refers to the act of creating something from nothing. The new heavens and new earth are not a remodeled or renovated version of the present. No, they’re brand new. **Cf. Is. 66:22; Rev.20:11; 21:1**

v. 14 We know Jesus is coming back, but there are many who don’t have a peace about His coming because they know they are not spotless and blameless. In Luke 12:37 we hear Jesus saying, “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.” Therefore, if you are simply watching for His coming, if you are tired of this world system’s sin and corruption and want to see the Lord rule and reign at last—it is you the Lord calls blessed.

vs. 12-13 Not only should this expectant attitude make a difference in our conduct, but it should also make a difference in our witness. The phrase looking for and hastening unto can be translated “looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God.” Peter affirms that it is possible for us to hasten the return of Jesus Christ. Two extremes in ministry that we must avoid. One is the attitude that we are “locked into” God’s sovereign plan in such a way that nothing we do will make any difference. The other extreme is to think that God cannot get anything done unless we do it! While God’s sovereign decrees must never become an excuse for laziness, neither must our plans and activities try to take their place. One thing we must do is to pray as Jesus taught us, “Thy kingdom come” (Mat_6:10). It would appear from Rev_5:8 and Rev_8:3-4 that the prayers of God’s people are related in some way to the pouring out of God’s wrath on the nations.

v. 14 An expectant attitude will make a difference when we meet Jesus Christ (2Pe_3:14). It will mean that He will greet us “in peace” and have no charges against us so that we are “ashamed before Him at His coming” (1Jo_2:28). The Judgment Seat of Christ will be a serious event (2Co_5:8-11) as we give an account of our service to Him (Rom_14:10-13). It is better to meet Him “in peace” than for Him to fight against us with His Word! (Rev_2:16). We must be diligent to watch for His return, and to live holy and godly lives, then we will not be afraid or ashamed. We will meet Him “without spot and blameless.” Jesus Christ is “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (1Pe_1:19). We should be careful to follow His example. Peter had warned his readers against the defilement that the apostates bring: “Spots they are and blemishes” (2Pe_2:13). The separated Christian will not permit himself to be “spotted and blemished” by the false teachers! He wants to meet his Lord wearing pure garments. How do we maintain this eager expectancy that leads to holy living? By keeping “His promise” before our hearts (2Pe_3:13).

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2Pe 3:15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

2Pe 3:16 which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

2Pe 3:17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

2Pe 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

v. 15 consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, Peter and Paul had an interesting relationship. In Gal. 2, Paul rebuked Peter for his failure to fellowship with Gentiles when fellow Jews were present. Here, Peter tells us that Paul’s writings are hard to understand. With different callings and different methods—Peter called to primarily minister to Jewish believers, Paul to Gentiles—Peter and Paul illustrate what is to take place in and through the body of Christ as we find both unity and diversity in Him.

v. 16 which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. “*twist*” means “to torture” or “to distort.” Those who twisted Paul’s words were his enemies, the legalists, who accused Paul of telling people to sin in order that grace might abound (*Romans 6:1*). As they also do the rest of the scriptures, unto their own destruction. There are those who contend that it was not until centuries later that the church recognized Peter’s, James’, or Paul’s writings to be inspired. But such is not the case, for in placing Paul’s writings on the same plane as “the other Scriptures,” Peter knew they were equally inspired.

v. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;. While it is true that belief affects behavior, it is equally true that behavior affects belief. For example, the more you study evolution, the more you become aware of its scientific absurdity. But people continue to buy into it because believing they are nothing more than animals allows them to justify their own animal behavior. Peter says, “I know you know the truth. But be careful because if you choose to live in carnality, you will eventually change your theology to justify your sin.” **Cf. 1 Cor. 15:58**

v.18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. Peter closes not by saying, “Grow in devotion,” or, “Grow in zeal,” or “Grow in holiness.” He closes by saying, **“Grow in grace”** because grace is not the starting point. Grace is the only point.

vs. 15-16 We should be most diligent to win the lost! We must be aware of what happens to people who blindly twist the Scriptures? They do it “unto their own destruction.” Since this is the day of salvation, we must be diligent to do all we can to win the lost. We do not know how long the Lord will be “long-suffering” toward this evil world. We must not presume on His grace. We must understand what the Bible teaches about God’s program for this present age, and we must be motivated by a love for the lost (2Co_5:14) and a desire to be pleasing to Him when He returns. The false teachers are multiplying and their pernicious doctrines are infecting the church. We need to resist them, live godly lives, and bear witness of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The time is short!

v. 17“ The word translated “beware” means “be constantly guarding yourself.” Peter’s readers knew the truth, but he warned them that knowledge alone was not sufficient protection. They had to be on their guard; they had to be alert. What special danger did Peter see? That the true believers would be “led away together with the error of the wicked”. He is warning us against breaking down the walls of separation that must stand between the true believers and the false teachers. How can we as believers maintain our steadfastness and avoid being among the “unstable souls” who are easily beguiled and led astray? By growing spiritually, constantly growing. We should not grow “in spurts,” but in a constant experience of development.

v. 18 We must grow “in grace.” This has to do with Christian character traits, the very things Peter wrote about in 2Pe_1:5-7. We were saved by grace (Eph_2:8-9), but grace does not end there! We must also be strengthened by grace (2Ti_2:1-4). God’s grace can enable us to endure suffering (2Co_12:7-10). His grace also helps us to give when giving is difficult (2Co_8:1) and to sing when singing is difficult (Col_3:16). Growing in grace often means experiencing trials and even suffering. We never really experience the grace of God until we are at the end of our own resources. To grow in grace means to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom we receive all the grace that we need (Joh_1:16). When one reviews this important epistle, you cannot help but be struck by the urgency of the message. The apostates are here! They are busy! They are seducing immature Christians! We must be guarding, growing, and glorifying the Lord, making the most of every opportunity to win the lost and strengthen the saved.