

2Pet. 3:1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2Pet. 3:2 That ye 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 Saviour:

This is the second letter that Peter has written to this group of believers, a group of believers that is dear to his heart. He wants to wake them up and encourage them to think about:

- 1) the messages spoken by the holy prophets of the past (the Old Testament scriptures)
- 2) the teachings they had received through the ministry of “us the apostles” (Peter and the other disciples specifically chosen by Jesus, including Paul, see verse 15).

As I read through this section again, I thought it was worth emphasizing the importance that Peter placed on being a person who reminds people of the very words of truth. Why did he consider that important?

- “stir up” – to wake fully, arouse
- “pure” – judged by sunlight, tested as genuine, sincere
- “minds” – “deep thought, properly, the faculty (mind or its disposition), by implication, its exercise:— imagination, mind, understanding”

Peter knows that a focus on the truth of God’s Word as stated by the prophets and as expressed by Jesus in His commands to His disciples will keep the mind awake and alert. (Notice how Peter is connecting the words of the old (prophets) and new (apostles) testaments.) When they meditate on God’s Word, they will be able to discern truth and detect the deceit presented by false teachers more readily.

2Pet. 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

2Pet. 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 the creation.

“Knowing this first” – Peter is telling the believers to make note of the following information.

“in the last days” – the time before Jesus comes back as King.

“scoffers” = Those who “show insolent ridicule or mockery; to manifest contempt by derisive acts or language” according to Webster. The Greek also includes the thought of “false teachers.”

What is the lifestyle of these scoffers? They do whatever pleases them according to their sinful desires.

How do they justify themselves? They question the truth of God's word. They don't believe Jesus is coming back as King. Their reasoning—things are no different now than they were in the beginning. Life goes on as usual, and God's truth means nothing.

2Pet. 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

As these scoffers make their excuses, they choose to ignore the fact that our universe and planet earth exist as a result of the word of God. He caused the dry land to appear out of the water.

Genesis 1:6, 9-10 "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters....And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good."

**2Pet. 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
2Pet. 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

These scoffers choose to ignore the fact that the inhabitants of planet earth were once destroyed by a great flood, through the word of God. The heavens and earth are even now maintained by the word of God. The heavens and earth will continue to function as ordained by God until the *day of judgment*. We know this as the white throne judgment at which all those who have rejected God's word, His Son, will be judged. This judgment of the ungodly will be based on God's law and will result in eternal damnation in hell.

Revelation 20:11-12 & 15 "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

God's word never fails.

1Kings 8:56 "...there hath not failed one word of all his good promise..."

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

2Pet. 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Peter reminds the believers that the Lord doesn't reckon time in the same way that we humans reckon time. A thousand years to us is like one day from God's perspective. We would understand that if we could actually grasp the concept of eternity. This same truth is affirmed in the Psalms:

Psalm 90:4 "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

2Pet. 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.

What man might call slow or lack of caring, God calls patient and merciful because He is not willing that any should perish. He is waiting to allow as many as possible to repent and be saved.

This is one of the many verses stating God's desire that all men might be saved.

Ezekiel 18:32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

1 Timothy 2:3-4 "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

I was reading some thoughts again today by one who believes that God has determined who He wants to be saved and who He doesn't. If it is an arbitrary choice of God's will, this verse would be a lie. God cannot lie.

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

“the day of the Lord” – We just read a couple of verses ago that a thousand years to man is like one day to the Lord. The day of the Lord references the wrath of God being poured out on earth preceding the second coming of Jesus to reign on the earth for a thousand years as King. After that thousand years, God is going to make a new heaven and a new earth. This present fallen creation will be burned up.

Revelation 21:1 “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

How is that day going to come? As a thief in the night. A thief is an unexpected intruder. During the last seven years on planet earth before Jesus comes as King, evil will predominate. Few on planet earth will be watching and waiting for Jesus’ return at that time. Though hard for us to imagine considering the wealth of information available today about biblical prophecy, this truth is supported by the Revelation recorded by the Apostle John.

*Revelation 16:13–16 “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. **Behold, I come as a thief.** Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”*

As I read through this section again, it brought to mind some thoughts from my journal on Revelation that I think should be included here.

Because of the decay and wasting away of the heavens and earth caused by the curse of sin, God will destroy the old one by fire and create a new one from its ashes. (At least, that is how I rectify these ideas.) Maybe this will be the same type of creation as occurred in Genesis between the time of Satan’s fall and the creation of earth for mankind. (See notes on Genesis 1.)

There is a verse in Colossians that tells us that God is the glue that holds everything together.

Colossians 1:17 “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Maybe this is a reference to His letting go for a moment only to speak the word to bring it back together as a “new” creation.

2Pet. 3:11 *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*

2Pet. 3:12 *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?*

As we consider the fact that everything associated with heaven and earth as we know it will be dissolved/destroyed, it ought to make us think about the kind of person we ought to be. We ought to be living a life that is holy (morally blameless) and godly. *Piety* was the term referenced in the Greek for *holy*. Webster defines it this way, “Veneration or reverence of the Supreme Being, and love of his character; loving obedience to the will of God, and earnest devotion to his service.”

If our lives are truly surrendered to God in loving obedience and devotion, then we can eagerly anticipate the coming of the day of God. We will not be concerned regarding the destruction of the heavens and earth because it will not harm us. It will result in our benefit, a new heaven and earth with no taint of sin.

In the days of Noah the earth was given a fresh beginning after purging by water. Following the 1000 year reign of Christ, both the heavens and the earth will be given a fresh beginning after being purged by fire.

2Pet. 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

I think the better translation for nevertheless is *moreover*. Our expectations as believers are according to His (God’s) promise. I like the way Webster defines promise, “a declaration which gives to the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or forbearance of a specified act.” What is His promise? To give us a new heaven and earth that has righteousness as a permanent characteristic.

Isaiah 51:6 “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.”

Isaiah 65:17 "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

2Pet. 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Again, Peter addresses his audience with his heart of love for them. Because of the truths presented in the previous verses, he reminds them to be diligent (eager and earnest in their labor and study) to be ready for Jesus when He comes. They should be:

- in peace – free of agitating passions, of tranquil mind or conscience (Webster summarized)
- without spot – morally unblemished
- blameless – without fault, innocent, guiltless (Webster)

All of these characteristics are a part of the person who is surrendered to God in obedience and devotion. I don't believe we are ever without sin, but we can be sinless before God through the blood of the lamb.

1John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I think this is really a direct reference to our position in Christ. Only "in Christ" are we "in peace" in our relationship to God, "without spot" since we are clothed in His righteousness, and "blameless" or innocent of any accusation that may be brought against us since we have been justified (just as if I'd never sinned).

2Pet. 3:15 And account *that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;*

Peter tells the believers to consider the longsuffering/patience of the Lord as salvation; it allows all those who are going to come to Jesus to come. Peter affirms Paul as a recipient of God's wisdom. He also wrote about God's longsuffering resulting in repentance and salvation.

Romans 2:4 "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

1Timothy 1:16 "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

2Pet. 3:16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

One of the first things that jumps out to me in this verse is that the letters of Paul evidently circulated far beyond their original recipients. Peter is referencing knowledge of the content of all Paul's letters. In those letters Paul addresses some of the same truths that Peter is addressing. Peter also admits that Paul addresses some truths that are hard to understand. (Boy is that reassuring; even Peter admitted it's hard!) Those who are ignorant (lacking knowledge) and unstable (changeable in their opinions) will respond to these "difficult" truths just as they do to all the other scripture, in a way that will result in their eternal damnation.

I think this is an affirmation of the truth of spiritual discernment. Only those who have accepted God's gift of salvation and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them can hope to understand spiritual truth.

1Corinthians 2:11-14 "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Guzik: "Peter reminds us that the Scriptures *can be* twisted. Just because someone quotes the Bible doesn't mean that they teach Biblical truth. It's possible that they twist ... the Scriptures. That is why we should be like the Bereans, who "*searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

Clarke: "I may just add that the verb [twist], which the apostle uses here, signifies to distort, to put to the rack, to torture, to overstretch, and dislocate the limbs; and hence the persons here intended are those who proceed according to no fair plan of interpretation, but force unnatural and sophistical meanings on the word of God."

I think it is also important to note that Peter regards Paul's letters to be scripture.

2Pet. 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Peter states that he is telling them all of this for a reason—so that they will not be deceived by false teachers when they come on the scene. He has spelled out the whole scenario to them. They know what to expect from false teachers. I think the entry for the word “fall” is important:

1601. ejkpi÷ptw ekpipto, *ek-pip´-to*; to drop away; specially, be driven out of one’s course; figuratively, to lose, become inefficient

Peter is saying that if the believer doesn’t stay diligent and awake, he is in danger of being driven off course and becoming inefficient/ineffective. A believer who is steadfast is firmly heading in a specific direction, holding to the truth of God. That same believer cannot rest on his laurels or go on cruise control. To stay the course and be effective in service for the Savior one must be diligent, eager, and continually striving to imitate Jesus and obey His word.

2Pet. 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

As he closes, Peter encourages his friends to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What is grace? The divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life. How does one grow in grace?

- By imitating Jesus.

John 1:17 “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

- By using words meant to edify and encourage.

Colossians 4:6 “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

- By serving God and others with faith and love.

1Timothy 1:14 “And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

- By refusing to allow bitterness to take root in you.

Hebrews 12:15 “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

- By serving God with reverence and godly fear.

Hebrews 12:28 "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

- By being humble.

James 4:6 "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

1Peter 5:5 "...for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

- By gaining more knowledge about God and His Son, Jesus.

2Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

How does one grow in the knowledge of the Lord? Through the study of the word of God and the teaching of His Spirit.

Psalms 119:18 "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

1Peter 2:2 "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

2Timothy 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

John 14:26 "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

As he closes, Peter gives praise to the Lord recognizing that He is, always has been, and always will be the only one worthy of worship and praise.

Amen/truly/verily/so be it.