

2 Peter 3 Notes

The Coming Of The Lord (3:1-16)

- Peter's purpose in writing (3:1-2).
 - The stated purpose in vs. 1 is almost identical with 1:13. The "words which were spoken before" have reference to the prophetic message with special reference here to the day of the Lord. The "commandment" is a way of referring to the moral demands of the gospel and primarily to the command of love. These prophecies and commands were given to the early Christians by the New Testament prophets and apostles (cf. Ephesians 2:20).
 - In the first letter, Peter's readers had endured persecution from outside the church. Now they were experiencing internal turmoil from false teachers. When Christians live in anticipation of Christ's promised return, they demonstrate spiritual zeal and enthusiasm, recognizing that they will give an account to God.
- The certainty of His coming (3:3-10).
 - The "last days" refer to the entire time between Christ's first and second comings (Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; James 5:3; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18). The "scoffers," or the ones who mock, would walk after their own lusts, similar to the description of the false teachers in the previous chapter. Whether or not they admit it, immorality is the real reason that false teachers deny the second coming. They hate the thought of divine retribution, and want the freedom to pursue all kinds of lustful pleasure. Notice that they were not asking where is the promise, they are asking where is its reality. Mocking the faith of Christians, they support their own position by stating a uniformitarianism that rules out any divine intervention in history.
 - However, they deliberately forget not only the flood but also God's prior activity in creating the world. God shaped the earth between two areas of watery mass (Genesis 1:6-9; cf. Proverbs 8:27-29). On the second day of creation, He collected the upper waters into something like a vapor canopy around the earth, and the lower waters into underground reservoirs, rivers, lakes, and seas. Then, on the third day, He separated the land from the water, allowing dry earth to appear. The "world that then was" does not, of course, refer to the physical earth itself, but to the inhabitants of the earth who were destroyed by water.
 - Peter's reference to a future destruction which will destroy the present heavens and earth is unusual. In the past, God purged the world by water. In the future, God will destroy everything by fire. The

period between the flood and the fire is the period of God's longsuffering, discussed more extensively in vs. 9.

- People view history in terms of days and years, but to God, time is always present tense. A thousand years are but a day to Him (Psalm 90:4). God can count time, but to Him it does not matter because when God makes a promise, it will come to pass.
- God's delay ("slowness" or "tardiness") is gracious; it is not caused by inability or indifference. The mockers argued that God was slow to keep His promise, and evidently some Christians were influenced by this thinking. "Slow" means "delayed," or "late," implying the idea of "loitering." None of this applies to God. He is patient with us (Romans 2:4; 9:22), according to His perfect plan and schedule (cf. 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalm 111:5, 7-8; Isaiah 25:1; Jeremiah 33:14; 2 Corinthians 1:20).
- The condition of salvation, as mentioned here, is repentance. Without repentance, no one would have any desire to confess Jesus or to be baptized. Peter does not give this as the sole condition of salvation. The fact that God wants "all to come to repentance" destroys the tenet of Calvinism which states that God is only interested in the elect.
- Jesus taught that His coming would be unexpected as the coming of a thief (Matthew 24:42-44). Paul taught the same (1 Thessalonians 5:2). His coming the second time will be for salvation (Hebrews 9:28), not to establish an earthly kingdom.
- The word for "great noise" (*hroizedon*) is onomatopoeic which means that its pronunciation suggests its meaning. It means "a whizzing sound of rapid motion through the air like the flight of a bird, thunder, or fierce flame." "Elements" is elsewhere translated "principles" (Hebrews 5:12) and denotes the minute parts or portions of which anything is composed. It represents the component parts of the material world, the basic atomic parts that make up the universe. "Fervent heat" means a violent, consuming heat. God's power will consume everything in the material realm.
- Living in light of His coming (3:11-16).
 - Peter now makes the impending destruction of the universe the ground for a personal challenge to his readers. "Holiness" entails separation from evil and dedication to God. "Godliness" relates to piety and worship.
 - Another part of godly living is an expectation and eager desire of future judgment. The Christian does not dread the judgment. He looks forward to it as the period of the final reward. They have everything to hope for and nothing to fear!

- "New" is such as seen from the aspect of quality, not time. The new heavens and new earth will be free from the curse of sin and will surely be beautiful beyond the wildest expectations of men. There is nothing impure in heaven (Revelation 21:1, 8, 27).
- Peter reminds the saints that they are the loved ones of God. Christians are to make intense efforts to be morally pure. "Be diligent" speaks of an intense effort and is also used in 2 Timothy 2:15, where it is translated "study" in the KJV. In Revelation 2:16, Christ warns the church to repent or He will fight them with the sword of His mouth. Those who are "at peace" with Him have put out of their lives the sins He hates.
- Again, Peter stresses that the purpose of the Lord's "longsuffering" is designed for our salvation. The delay actually represents God's mercy and desire of our salvation.
- "Even as our beloved brother Paul" is significant in the light of Paul's rebuke of Peter (Galatians 2:11-14). Peter was undoubtedly embarrassed by Paul's public admonition; nevertheless, he graciously accepted the rebuke and responded with repentance. His respect for Paul was undiminished.
- Paul's teachings are not impossible to understand. Peter just simply recognized that some are more complex than others. The noun form of "wrest" refers to an instrument of torture. The verb means "to torture, put to the rack, to twist or dislocate the limbs on the rack." It is a uniquely graphic word used to describe the perversion of scripture.
- "Beware" is a military term. "Error" means "a wandering or straying about." The "wicked" man breaks through the restraints of law and gratifies his own lusts. Peter himself knew about falling away, and wanted to spare his beloved readers from the same transgression (Luke 22:32). "Stedfastness" indicates firmness, and it is the opposite of being unstable.

Conclusion (3:17-18)

- The theme of 1 Peter was grace; the theme of 2 Peter is knowledge. Peter sums up both books by admonishing us to grow in grace and in knowledge.
- If Christians do not keep moving forward, they will regress or fall back. As their knowledge and maturity increase, Christians are better prepared to fend off destructive doctrines and spiritual deceptions.