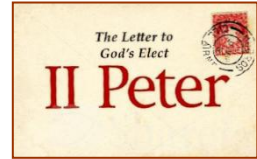


2 Peter 3

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Introduction:

1. In the first chapter, Peter has discussed the cultivation of Christian character.
2. In chapter two, the condemnation of false teachers was set forth.
3. Now in chapter three, he expresses the certainty of our Lord's return.



(3:1) This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory. (2) I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles.

A. This Is Peter's Second Letter

- Peter is writing to the same group of churches that he addressed in his 1 Peter letter. Whatever claims he had made to being an apostle in the first letter also *apply* to this **second letter**.

B. The Letter is to Stimulate The Believer's Thinking

- Even sincere minds need to be **stimulated** at times. The matters relating to God are included.

C. This Letter is to Refresh Their Memories

- Peter brings the weight of God's authority to bear on what to **remember**. God has spoken through the **prophets** of old and the **apostles of the Lord** Jesus. Peter was an **apostle** himself.
- Peter uses the idea of **remembering** several more times in the balance of the book.

- Peter believed in the power of repetition. Some teachers are reluctant to repeat what they have said before.

D. Peter Believed In The Unity of the Scriptures

- First, there were **the holy prophets** of old who foretold the appearance of the Lord.
- Secondly, the Lord came as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and, later, John.
- Thirdly, the message of Jesus was taught by the Twelve **Apostles** of Christ.
- **"Through your apostles"** suggests his readers knew who the **apostles** were by name.

(3) Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. (4) They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created."



A. Scoffers Will Mock

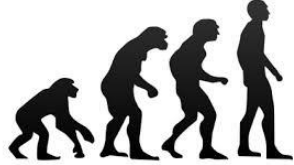
- This warning is very **important** to Peter. Warning against the false has its place in Christian teaching.
- Expect **mockers**. They are motivated by their own desire to sin. Looking for the truth does not fit their agenda.
- **Bruce Oberst** says:
These men are quick to scoff, mimic, and ridicule the Christian, but their own personal lives are rotten to the core! Why? They live for themselves, utterly indifferent to the laws of God.

- While unbelievers may not speak out against the second **coming**, they totally ignore it and live without it in their plans.

B. The Scoffer's Arguments

- Observe that Peter is saying that the world was created. He is endorsing the Genesis account of creation. Some today argue that our world has always been — is eternal.

We have the chief spokesperson for Christ saying that the Genesis chapter one account is true.



- At least these **mockers** and scoffers spoke of a **beginning** to **creation**. Today's mockers deny **creation** altogether and lean on the theory of evolution.
- But their take on history misses a huge event: All things have **not remained** unchanged (uniformitarian view) since the **world was first created** as seen in Peter's next sentence.

(5) They deliberately forget that God made the heavens by the word of His command, and He brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. (6) Then He used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood.

A. Forceable Forgotten

- The Universe was created. It has not always existed, that is, it is not eternal as some believe. **God formed the earth**



out of the **water** that once covered everything.

- **James Smith** writes:

God made the earth by water when he took two steps. First, he separated the waters above from the waters below, thus forming the sky.

Second, he gathered the waters together, thus forming the dry land. Furthermore, it was by water (rain, etc.) that life on earth was sustained.

So Peter's argument is that the earth came into being by a miracle, and it continues to exist, as we know it, through the power of God.

B. God Used Water

- The sense is that by the **word of God** the **heavens** were **formed** and by **the word the earth was destroyed with water**. Both events were cataclysmic rather than uniformitarian. This points to another truth.

(7) And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed.

A. God Will Use Fire

- And by this same **word** of God **reservations** are already in place for a coming **day of judgment**.
- **The present heavens and earth** probably refer to the planet as we see it. It need not refer to the entire universe.

B. The Ungodly Will Be Destroyed

- This judgment will include the **destruction** of mockers and scoffers.
- **Bruce Oberst** defines **destruction**:

Jesus said if a man would put new wine in old skins they would “perish” (*apollurni*). Disappear? Dissolve into non-existence? Go up in a puff of blue smoke leaving no trace behind? No. They were made totally useless for their intended purpose- “ruined.” The same was true of the ancient world. The flood did not cause either the globe itself or the sinful people who dwelt thereon to be annihilated. The people of that age perished — died prematurely and were lost eternally— unable to enter their intended home with God.

(8) But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.

A. Do Not Forget

- The mockers were letting truth **escape** their **notice**, but believers must realize that God is not controlled by our calendars. He acts when He chooses.
- Peter again calls his readers **beloved**. He wants the best for them.

B. God's Time

- Time is not the same to God as it is to man. David said:

For You, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few night hours. (Psalms 90:4)

It is only against the background of eternity that things appear in their true proportions and assume their real value. Being patient is built into this sentence.

(9) The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

A. The Lord Is Being Patient

- There is a difference between **slowness** and **patience**. Don't confuse them.

B. The Lord Wants Everyone To Repent

- The **Lord's patience** waits for more people to come to that change of lifestyle known as **repentance**.
- There have been two arguments set forth guaranteeing a coming judgment:
 - History. Creation and the Flood. (verses 5-7)
 - God's view of time. (verses 8-9)

(10) But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

A. There Will Be A Day Of The Lord

- **The day of the Lord** is the same as the Judgment Day. It will come unannounced, like the coming of a **thief**.

B. The Elements Will Disappear

- **James Smith** describes it this way:

The heavens refers to what we call sky or atmosphere. Great noise is an adverb with a hissing or crackling sound in Greek. The word is *onomatopoeic*, expressing the whizzing sound produced by rapid motion through the air. It is then used for the rushing movement itself or the accompanying crash or roar. Here probably the roaring of flame is meant.

- Some writers believe the entire universe is included, others just the earth and its atmosphere as we know it.
- A nuclear explosion could meet the requirements of Peter's sentence. Or a volcanic eruption.



(11) Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, (12) looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, He will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames.

A. We Must Live Holy And Godly Lives

- The reality of such a destruction teaches believers to be **holy** and **godly**. No room for arguing with **God**.
- If believers live as they should, the judgment day is **hurried along**. This suggests that outreach will run its course and God will close the door of the ark.
- This will be a big bang that is not a theory of scientists. It will be very real and final for the planet.

B. We Must Look Forward To That Day

- James Smith points out that we have been fireproofed by the blood of Christ. That day of destruction will be for believers a final chapter in our redemption.

- Our beautiful homes, our lovely gardens, our fashionable clothing, and our state-of-the-art automobiles will be dissolved. How foolish then to make these material possessions our primary focus and concern in life.

(13) But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth He has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

A. There Will Be New Heavens and Earth

- **A new heaven and earth** were promised by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah:

"Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore. (Isaiah 65:17)

"As surely as My new heavens and earth will remain, so will you always be My people, with a name that will never disappear," says the LORD. (Isaiah 66:22)

So the idea of a **new heavens and earth** is not **new** or confined to the New Testament books.

- This new creation will be a physically and morally clean place. We are getting ready for it during our years on the present earth. Believers are in training for our new inheritance where there will be no pain and no tears.

B. There Will Be A World Filled With Righteousness

- **Albert Barnes** writes:

This will be in strong contrast with what has occurred on earth. The history of this world has been almost entirely a history of sin - of its nature, developments, results. There have been no

perfectly holy beings on the earth, except the Saviour, and the angels who have occasionally visited it. There has been no perfectly holy place - city, village, hamlet; no perfectly holy community. But the future world, in strong contrast with this, will be perfectly pure, and will be a fair illustration of what religion in its perfect form will do.

(14) And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in His sight. (15) And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him —

A. Live A Peaceful Life While Waiting

- Christians are to be **waiting** for this relocation to a better place. So our present task is to get as ready as possible.
- While here, believers are to be people of **peace**, living the best lives we can.

B. Remember While Waiting

- **The patience of the Lord** is not to be confused with slowness or even carelessness. It means **salvation** to some. When the Lord appears, the day of grace and salvation will be over.
- **James Smith** writes about Paul and Peter:

They shared the same associates (Silas and Mark). These words imply that Paul was well known and respected among the Christians to whom Peter was writing.

(16) speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. And this will result in their destruction.

A. Some Of Paul's Letters Are Hard To Understand

- Paul had written 13 **letters** and these believers had access to some or all of them. Peter and Paul were on the same page.
- Some of Paul's writings take extraordinary study. They are **hard to understand**. It is misuse of Paul's writings that allows the "saved by faith alone" heresy to flourish today. These false teachers conclude that baptism for remission of sins is not part of the salvation process. This undercuts the very core of a person's salvation. Paul's teaching about *grace* was twisted to justify continuing in sin (Romans 6). Likewise, Paul's teaching about *freedom* in Christ was twisted to redirect saints back to the world.
- Note that Peter, the first apostle (Matthew 10:2) and chief spokesman for the 12 apostles, is saying that Paul's writings are **Scripture** and equal to the Old Testament.

B. A Canon Was Forming

- While the formal canon of Scriptures was settled several centuries later, the canon was forming when Peter wrote right here.
 - Peter is the leader and spokesman of the Twelve. Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit so all Twelve would speak the truth.

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not

He will speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13)

Peter wrote two epistles and the Gospel of Mark is mostly Peter's experience with Jesus. Now we have three books in the canon.

- Peter has just endorsed Paul's writings, so now we have Peter's three books plus Paul's 13, making 16 books.

Paul endorsed two books by Luke, his traveling companion, so the total is 18. That is two-thirds of the New Testament. This was in an age where the church also had living prophets.

Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. (Ephesians 2:20)

How is the church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets? Because of the spoken word of these men in their own age and finalized in the written Scriptures that have been passed to all following ages. The Scriptures contain the work of both apostles and prophets.

(17) I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends. Be on guard so that you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing. (18) Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.

A. Be On Your Guard

- Peter had invested much in these believers and he wanted them to be **on guard** against being carried away by the **errors of wicked people**.
- The false teachers would make them **lose** their **own secure footing**. There is not the slightest hint that once a person is saved, they can't be lost.

B. Grow

- Instead of going downhill with unprincipled men, they are to grow **in the grace and knowledge of our Lord**. Believers are to know and show more of the Lord each year.

C. Give All Credit to Jesus

- When results come in the lives of believers, give the glory to Jesus. It wasn't just personal determination, it was the Spirit of God working in the saved.