

Study on Books of 2nd Peter
“A Letter Of Warning”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

Chapter 3 - Read 2 Peter 3:1 – 18

Introduction: As we continue this letter of warning in chapter three, the first thing I want us to undeniably understand is, Jesus Christ is coming back. Throughout the centuries, the reality of that wonderful promise has formed the crux of Christian expectation. It is the church's blessed hope, her utmost longing, and the great climax of salvation history, a time of redemption for believers and a time of judgment for God's enemies. It also marks the inauguration of Christ's earthly kingdom, during which the saints will reign with Him in holiness. The hope of bodily resurrection, spiritual reward, and a righteous world system are all tied to Jesus' return. It is no wonder, then, that the early church found tremendous comfort in the second coming. After all, the readers of this epistle had already endured much persecution from outside the church. Now they were experiencing internal turmoil from false teachers. Thus, they longed for the return of their Savior—the Judge who would make all things right.

The hope of Christ's coming was of paramount importance for the early church. In fact, its certainty was so real that first-century believers would greet one another with the term **“maranatha,”** meaning **“Lord, come quickly.”** Instead of being frightened by the possibility, they clung to it as the culmination of everything they believed. Not surprisingly, the New Testament reflects this intense anticipation by referencing Jesus' return, whether directly or indirectly, in every New Testament book except Philemon and 3 John.

Obviously, the devil also recognizes how important this doctrine is to the church. When Christians live in anticipation of Christ's promised return, they demonstrate spiritual zeal and enthusiasm, recognizing that they will soon give an account to their Master. The apostle John wrote about this in **1 Jn. 3:3** and identifies this as a purifying hope. **1 Jn. 3:3 NASB says, “And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” 1 Jn. 3:3 NLT says, “And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.”** But, when believers forget about the second coming and begin focusing instead on the things of this world, they become absorbed in the temporal and grow uninterested and cold toward the eternal. Satan knows that if he can get the church to discount the importance of Christ's return, or even completely deny its reality, he can remove a very significant source of Christian hope and motivation. To that end the devil continually places skeptics and false teachers within the church, men who reject, minimize, or alter

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Jesus' promise. Such skeptics and disbelievers who plague Christendom today were also around in Peter's time. Here in the **2 Pet 3:1 - 10**, Peter begins and responds directly to the false teachers' attacks. First, he considers the fallacious arguments they made against the second coming. Second, he answers those allegations, providing counterarguments which support Christ's return. Finally, he concludes by assuring his readers that, no matter what the heretics / false teachers say, God's future judgment is certain.

2 Pet. 3:1 – 2 “This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, 2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.”

2 Pet. 3:1 – 2 NLT “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.”

- Peter's opening words, **“This is now, beloved, the second letter”**, indicate that the apostle also wrote other letters to this same audience. In fact, this expression is probably an implicit reference to **1 Peter**, his other canonical letter. What we see here is Peter's pastoral heart and genuine concern for his readers is expressed in the opening term **beloved**, which is also used frequently by the apostles Paul and John in their New Testament writings.
- Peter wrote both of his inspired letters in part to remind his readers of certain basic doctrinal and spiritual truths. He says, **“I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder...”** NLT says, **“I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory.”** The expression **“stirring up”** indicates his effort to disturb any complacency and make clear the spiritual urgency with which he warned his audience about false teachers. The apostle actively and aggressively opposed the heretics, hoping to protect his flock from threatening wolves. To do that, he had to alert the sensibilities of those to whom he wrote, revealing the truth to their **“sincere mind by way of reminder.”** Note here that at salvation, the Holy Spirit gives each believer a **sincere mind**, a new understanding that is purified and uncontaminated by the seductive influences of the world and the flesh. By reiterating

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spiritual truths, the apostle armed his readers with a renewed conviction and rebuttal against false teaching.

2 Pet. 3:2 “... that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.”

2 Pet. 3:2 NLT “I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your apostles.”

- Peter’s first reminder concerns the truth of Old Testament Scripture, when he says, **“the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets.”** Peter’s use of the adjective **holy** provided a sharp contrast between the unrighteousness of the false prophets and the righteousness of the true ones. Note that throughout the Old Testament, the **prophets** continually predict God’s future judgment. **Read Isa. 66:15 – 16; Mal. 4:1 – 3** From Isaiah to Malachi, from the beginning of the Old Testament prophets to the end, the theme of God’s final wrath was often called **“the day of the Lord”** and is clearly proclaimed.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 2** the words **“the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by the apostles** refer to the New Testament and its subject, Jesus Christ. Peter here calls them **your apostles** in order to denote the special relationship they had with the church and Jesus Christ.
- As having been noted in the introduction that the focus of **2 Peter 3** is the Lord’s return. Note here that twenty-three of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament explicitly refer to the Lord’s return. The four that do not are **Galatians, Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John**. However, in **Gal. 5:5** it actually does allude to His return when it says, **“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.”** Also in **2 John 8** it speaks of the believer’s future reward, a doctrine that finds its ultimate fulfillment after the second coming. But what we see is, only **Philemon** and **3 John** are completely silent on the subject. Therefore this reveals this is an important subject matter! Out of the two hundred sixty chapters of the New Testament, there are about three hundred instances in which Christ’s apostles make reference to His second coming. In so doing, the apostles proclaimed their great hope as it merely reflected the promise of their Savior. **Read Matt. 16:27** The apostle Paul, for example, repeatedly confirmed his belief in

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Christ’s glorious return throughout his writings in **1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thess. 3:13; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:11 – 16** From Matthew to Revelation, Jesus’ return is reiterated time and time again. Peter understood the weight of this inspired apostolic testimony. As a result, he affirmed the second coming with unwavering confidence.

2 Pet. 3:3 - 4 “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

2 Pet. 3:3 – 4 NLT “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.”

- In their brazen rejection of Christ’s return, the false teachers of Peter’s day began by denying the Word of God. Although they recognized **the promise of His coming**, they simply discounted it as false. Instead of submitting to God’s self-revelation, the false teachers flatly rejected the reality of Jesus’ second coming, and submitted to their own sinful satisfaction, disregarding any thought of future accountability. As a result, they ridiculed those who were righteous, flaunted their own immorality, and foolishly clung to an uniformed worldview. The apostle addressed each of these three factors (their ridicule, immorality, and uniformitarian worldview) for his readers as he unmasked the true motivation of the false teachers’ hearts.
- In the **a-portion of verse 3** it says, **“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking,”** What this reveals and supports is throughout church history, false teachers have commonly tried to intimidate people through disrespectful **mocking** and sarcastic ridicule. In this case, the hope of Jesus’ coming bore the brunt of their **mockery**. Without question, the early church believed Christ’s return was imminent, but at some point some began to doubt. Make no mistake here, time has a way of threatening and challenging a believer’s sense of expectancy when they are consistently being mocked. Apparently, some of the Christians to whom Peter wrote were

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beginning to doubt if Jesus was even coming back at all. They worried that their hope was not as sure as they had first believed.

- Note here we can assume the false teachers, would be quick to capitalize on such doubts and fears and would plant more seeds of doubt by nurturing anxiety. As a first line of defense, Peter urged his readers to **“Know this first of all.”** The phrase **first of all** is not speaking about chronological sequence, but rather about first priority. Before developing his counterarguments, Peter’s primary goal was to warn his readers about the false teachers’ tactics—namely, that they were purposefully denying the return of Christ in order to indulge their own sinful exploits without facing consequences.
- Peter continued with the common New Testament expression **in the last days**, a phrase that refers to the entire time between Christ’s first and second comings. What Peter writes here is all throughout that long period **mockers will come**, seeking to undermine the church’s confidence in Christ’s return. Although Peter used the future tense form of **“will come”** from the word **erchomai**, he was not limiting the mockers’ activities to some far-off future day. Instead, he was indicating the certainty of their presence within the church. There have always been those who mocked the promise of judgment or deliverance, and such blasphemies will continue until the end of redemptive history. To further emphasize the continuation of this, Peter used the repetitive expression **mockers will come with their mocking**.
- In the **b-portion** Peter adds saying, **“following after their own lusts...”** This statement turns us to their reason which is immorality. Whether or not they admit it, immorality is the real reason that false teachers deny the second coming. The word rendered **following after** is a form of the verb **poreuomai**, which literally means **“travel” or “go.”** It denotes a course of conduct or long-term behavior and for false teachers, their lifestyles focus on following after **their own lusts** and sensuality. Thus they deny Christ’s return because they hate the thought of divine justice and want freedom to pursue all kinds of lustful pleasures without any fear of future punishment.

2 Pet. 3:4 “and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

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2 Pet. 3:4 NLT “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.”

- In the **a-portion** of **verse 4** the text begins with a taunting question asking, **“Where is the promise of His coming?”** What this introduces is a denial of the Lord’s return based on a heretical view of history. To support their misguided view, the false teachers claimed that, **“ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”** Although **the fathers** could refer to the fathers of the Christian faith or to first-generation believers who had died, neither one of those meanings is likely. Rather, in keeping with other New Testament references, it is probably a reference to the Old Testament patriarchs. **Fell asleep** is a New Testament euphemism or synonym for **death** found in **John 11:11; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:51 (Read)**.
- The heretics’ argument was simple. If everything **continues just as it was from the beginning of creation** meaning that the universe is a divinely created but closed, naturalistic system of cause and effect, then divine intervention—including the return of Christ—must be ruled out. This is a posture of deism more than atheism. The scoffers believe there is a God, but they claim he has little to do with daily reality. In particular, they deny that Jesus will return to earth. Note here there is an element of general uniformity in the universe; it is a manifestation of God’s providential care for His creation. After all, if the natural laws and universal processes did not normally function in a consistent manner, chaos would ensue. A biblical view of the universe, then, sees creation as an open system—in which God has ordained a uniform operation of natural causes, but also a universe in which He has intervened and still does intervene. Those who go beyond this advocate a system so rigid as to preclude God’s involvement in history, have foolishly deceived themselves. Like the false teachers of Peter’s day, they deny the promises of Scripture including Christ’s return on the basis of their conveniently devised worldview.

2 Pet. 3:5 – 7 “For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But

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by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”

2 Pet. 3:5 – 7 NLT “They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago 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. **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.”

- The New Testament writers often appealed to Old Testament history to make a point, as did Jesus on several occasions like in **Luke 11:29–32** referencing **Jonah**; and again in **Luke 17:26–32** referencing **Noah**. It should not be surprising that Peter would do the same. In this case, he appealed to Old Testament history to further defend the second coming. Not that **when** the false teachers **maintained** their view of history, they ignored historical facts. The word translated “**escapes their notice**” from the word **lanthanō** actually carries a more negative connotation, expressed better by the **King James** rendering, “**willingly are ignorant of**” or even better in the **NLT** when it says, “**They deliberately forget** “ which reveals the facts they did not merely elude such mockers. What this tells us is, these individuals had purposefully shut their eyes to the truth. They willfully ignored the historical evidence, choosing to disregard the biblical accounts of divine retribution. Because they loved their sin, wanting to live as they pleased, they made conscious decisions not to consider the consequences of their attacks on the teaching of Jesus’ Second coming. As a result of their self-induced blindness, the false teachers discounted two monumental events in history that disprove their views. In the **b-portion** of **verse 5** it reveals the first is the creation when, **by the word of God**, the Lord instantly brought the universe, or **heavens**, into being in **Gen. 1:1**. He needed no preexisting materials and no long periods of time. Although God has always existed, creation marked the beginning of the universe in time and space. Scripture, most notably Genesis 1–2, supports a relatively recent creation and a young earth—one specially created out of nothing in six consecutive, twenty-four-hour days. The phrase **existed long ago** does not imply a creation billions of years old. Several thousand years would certainly have been

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sufficient for Peter’s use of that phrase. The closing clause of **verse 5** reveals as God created the heavens, **the earth was** divinely **formed out of water and by water**. God shaped the earth between two areas of watery mass. The **NLT** translates this

“surrounded by water.” Read **Gen. 1:6 - 10** Genesis 1 reveals on the second day of creation, God collected the upper waters into something like a vapor canopy around the entire 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.

- In **2 Pet. 3:6 - 7** it says, **“... through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”**

What this reveals is **“the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.”**

Peter’s reference here to **world** is not primarily to the physical earth, because the planet itself was not obliterated, but rather to the sinful world order. This will become clearer as we look at **verse 7**. The term **flooded** from **katakluzō**, and where we derive the English word **cataclysm** means **“to flood,” or “inundate,”** implying complete, destructive overflow. The flood, according to Peter, was not merely a natural disaster. It was God’s judgment on the world, appointed by His word and effected through water. The point here is the false teachers of Peter’s time refused to view world history properly. Due to their self-centered self-satisfaction, they provide a classic example of willful ignorance. Like today’s heretical historians, the false teachers deliberately denied both the creation story and the Flood, the two catastrophic events that easily disprove their views. In **Gen. 9:11, 15 (Read)**, note that God promised to never again destroy the earth by means of a universal flood. But that does not mean that He will never again enact global judgment. On the contrary, **verse 7** reveals **“by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire.”** While the pre-Flood world system was drowned by water, the present world system will be consumed by flames. That future judgment, as with the Flood, will come **“by”** the power and authority of **“His word.”** Scripture often associates **fire** with the final judgment. Read **Isa. 66:15–16; 2 Thess. 1:6 - 8**

- Peter’s warning here is clear: God has **kept** the universe **for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men**. Just as in Noah’s time, that final day of judgment will be for

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ungodly men and not for believers. The Lord will deliver His own out of the world before He unleashes His final wrath. **Read Mal. 3:16 - 18**

2 Pet. 3:8 “But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

2 Pet. 3:8 NLT “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.”

- In **Psalm 90:4** Moses declared, **“For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.”** Peter’s paraphrase from that psalm encouraged his readers to not let **this one fact escape** their **notice** and that is God’s perspective on time is much different than humanity’s. **Read Ps. 102:24 - 27** The amount of earthly time that passes is of no consequence from God’s timeless perspective. A moment is no different from an eon, and eons pass like moments to the eternal God.
- What may seem like a long time to believers, **like a thousand years**, is actually short, **like one day**, in God’s sight. In context, Peter is contending that, while Christ’s return may seem far off to human beings, it is imminent from God’s perspective. Finite people must not restrict an infinite God to their time schedule. The Lord Jesus Christ will return at the *exact* moment determined by God in eternity past. Those who foolishly demand that God operate according to their time frame ignore that He is **Isa. 57:15 NKJ** says, the **“High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity.”** Similarly, those who argue that Christ will not return because He has not yet returned demonstrate the height of foolishness. Beyond the general sense of **a thousand years** meaning a long time as opposed to a **day** meaning a short time, there is also here the specific indication that one thousand years actually lies between the first phase of the day of the Lord at the end of the time of the tribulation and the last phase at the end of the millennial kingdom. At that time the Lord will destroy the universe and create the new heavens and new earth.

2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

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2 Pet. 3:9 NLT “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.”

- Peter’s support for the second coming culminated in an appeal to the character of God. The thrust of his argument is this: The reason Christ’s return is not immediate is because God is patient with sinners. Any waiting is attributable only to God’s gracious grace and longsuffering. It is not that He is indifferent, powerless, or distracted. Instead, it is just the opposite. Because He is merciful, gracious and forbearing, He delays so that sinners might come to repentance. **Read Matt. 9:12 - 13; Luke 15:10; Rom. 2:4**
- Here in the **a-portion** of **verse 9** Peter reminds his readers despite the ridicule of the scoffers, **“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness.”** The word **slow** from **bradunō** means, **“delayed, hesitate, or late,”** implying the idea of **“loitering.”** None of that applies to God; His seeming slowness is not due to lack of ability, forgetfulness, or apathy. In fulfilling **His promise**, God is working everything precisely according to His perfect plan and schedule. That same principle applied to Christ’s first coming. **Gal. 4:4 says, “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”**
- In the **b-portion** of the **verse 9** Peter says, the Lord is not slow **“...but is patient toward you...”** NLT says, **“No, He is being patient for your sake.”** The word **“patient”** use here translates a form of the verb **makrothumeō**. Peter used it here to show that God has a vast capacity for storing up anger and wrath before it spills over in judgment. While that judgment is inescapable and deadly, God’s merciful patience beforehand gives the chosen the opportunity for reconciliation and salvation. His wrath toward the individual sinner is immediately appeased whenever that person repents and believes the gospel. The words **“toward you”** or **“for your sake”** refers both to Peter’s immediate readers and any who will ever come to faith in Jesus Christ. Some have argued that **“you”** implies the salvation of all people, but the immediate context and comments about **“the destruction of ungodly men”** in **2 Pet. 3:7** clearly limits the **“you”** to believers. Let’s not forget in **2 Pet. 1:1, 4** the letter is addressed to **“...those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ....**

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4 ... He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them *you* may become partakers of the divine nature.” From then on, the use of “*you*” is directed at believers. The “*you*” with whom the Lord is patient are therefore the same beloved ones He waits to bring to repentance.

- In the **c-portion** of **verse 9** Peter says, **“The Lord is ... not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”** Those who **perish** or are “**utterly destroyed**” in eternal hell, suffer damnation because they are dead in their sins and refuse God’s offer of salvation in Christ. At the same time, it is clear from Scripture that the Father takes no delight in the death of the lost. **Ezek. 18:32** says, **“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,’ declares the Lord God. ‘Therefore, repent and live.”** Read **Matt. 23:37** In fact, God actually offers salvation to all. Read **Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28; John 3:16; Acts 17:30; 1 Tim. 2:3 - 4**

2 Pet. 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

2 Pet. 3:10 NLT “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.”

- Based on his preceding arguments, Peter confidently asserts that the day of the Lord **will** come and divine judgment will take place. No matter what the false teachers may claim, the evidence against them is overwhelming. In Scripture **the day of the Lord** signifies the extraordinary, miraculous interventions of God in human history for the purpose of judgment, culminating in His final judgment of the wicked on earth and the destruction of the present universe. The Old Testament prophets viewed the final day of the Lord as a day of unparalleled judgment, darkness, and damnation, a day in which the Lord would completely destroy His enemies, vindicate His name, reveal His glory, and establish His kingdom. The New Testament writers also foresaw that day as an awesome and fearful event. According to the book of Revelation, it will transpire in two stages: during the tribulation recorded in **Rev. 6:17** and after the millennium recorded in **Rev. 20:7 - 10**. Afterward, God will establish the new heavens and earth recorded in **Rev. 21:1**. A deeper

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look into the phrase **the day of the Lord** reveals indisputable Old and New Testament references. The Old Testament prophets used the expression to describe both near historical judgments and distant eschatological judgments. **Read Joel 1:15; Amos 5:18 - 20; Zeph. 1:14 - 18; Mal. 4:1** The reference to **the day of the Lord** is also referred to as **“the day of doom”** and **“the day of vengeance.”** The New Testament writers name it a day of **“wrath,” “visitation,”** and **“the great day of God, the Almighty.”** These are horrifying judgments from God rendered because of the world’s overwhelming sinfulness.

- Peter goes on to describe the day of the Lord as arriving **“like a thief”**, meaning that it will be unexpected, without warning, and disastrous for the unprepared. The apostle Paul used the same comparison when he wrote to the Thessalonians in **1 Thess. 5:2 saying, “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”** With the culmination of the final phase of the day of the Lord, **“the heavens will pass away with a roar”** like a universal upheaval that Jesus Himself predicted in His Olivet Discourse in **Matt 24:35** which says, **“Heaven and earth will pass away.”** The term **“Heavens”** here refers to the visible, physical universe of interstellar and intergalactic space. Like Christ, Peter foresaw the disintegration of the entire universe in an instant **“uncreation,”** not by any naturalistic scenario, but solely by God’s omnipotent intervention. The term **“roar”** is a word that sounds like what it means. It speaks of **“a rushing sound,”** or **“a loud noise,”** and also means the whizzing, crackling sounds that objects emit as fire consumes them. On that future day, the noise from the disintegrating atoms of the universe will be deafening, unlike anything mortals have ever heard before.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 10** Peter continues and expands on his earlier statement from **2 Pet. 3:7** and says here, **“the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”** The word **elements** from **stoicheia** literally means **“ones in a row,”** as in letters of the alphabet or numbers. When used in reference to the physical world, it describes the basic atomic components that make up the universe. Peter here says the **intense heat** will be so powerful that **the earth and its works will be burned up.** God’s power will consume everything in the material realm, the entire physical earth, with its civilizations, ecosystems, and natural resources, and the surrounding celestial universe.

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- At the moment, mockers may ridicule and false teachers may scoff. But their disparaging comments and outright insults are only short-lived. One day, Christ will return and God’s judgment will be displayed, a fact that is guaranteed by His promise and undergirded by His power. After He returns, the entire present universe will cease to exist. It will be replaced by a completely new heaven and earth where the righteous will live with God forever. **Read Rev. 22:5** However, the unrighteous on the other hand, will face the eternal consequences of their sin. **Read Rev. 20:10 – 15** In light of all this, believers are to wait with eager expectation. After all, Jesus Christ is coming again, and His return is right on schedule.

2 Pet. 3:11 “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...”

2 Pet. 3:11 NLT “Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live,”

- One day—in the relatively near future—this universe will be utterly destroyed. Under the weight of God’s consuming wrath, in final retribution, it will melt away in a final holocaust of unimaginable intensity. For God’s enemies, that future judgment will be an inescapable nightmare. But for God’s children, it will mean the fulfillment of the Christian’s hope, a dream come true, ushering in the dawn of Christ’s rule on earth, followed by the creation of a new heavens and a new earth. And for God Himself, it will mark His total triumph over all who oppose Him, including the final destruction of death and the complete eradication of sin.
- In this final section Peter exhorts to his readers to anticipate the Christ’s return and respond rightly to His return and final judgment. After all, their daily conduct needed to be consistent with their hope as they considered the reality of divine reward and the promise of eternal glory. The phrase in the **a-portion of verse 11, “Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way”** refer back to the previous verses found in **verse 7 - 10**, in which it gives the prediction of this universe’s obliteration. / However, the Greek participle **luomenōn** is actually in the present tense and means **“being destroyed”** instead of future **“will be destroyed.”** Peter here teaches until everything is ultimately replaced by a glorious eternal state, he defines **“what sort of people ought his readers to be.”** In English this assertion sounds like a question, but it is actually an exclamation of

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astonishment—a rhetorical device that does not expect a response. The phrase **“what sort of people”** translates the unique Greek term **potapous**, which could also be rendered **“how astonishingly excellent you ought to be.”** In light of God’s promised judgment, Peter challenged his readers to live in keeping with their Christian hope, allowing their anticipation of Christ’s return to impact their daily behavior. As aliens and pilgrims, believers are not part of the world’s system. Therefore we are to live in view of the eternal blessings we will receive when Jesus Christ is finally revealed in all His glory. Paul give us a similar charge in **2 Cor. 5:9 – 10, Eph. 4:1 Read** As Peter drew the practical implications of future truths, he exhorted his readers to live worthy lives, characterized by both **“holy conduct”** speaking of **external actions** and **behavior** and **“godliness”** speaking of **internal heart attitudes** and **reverence**.

- The mandate to his readers to live in light of the second coming is woven of seven distinct threads revealed throughout the closing verses and reveals: an eternal perspective, internal peace, practical purity, faithful proclamation, doctrinal perceptiveness, spiritual progress, and continual praise.

2 Pet. 3:12 – 13 “... looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

2 Pet. 3:12 – 13 NLT “... 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. 13 But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness.”

- If believers are **“... looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, such eager anticipation precludes being worried about it or afraid of it. Instead, as Paul wrote to Titus, in **Titus 2:13** believers will be joyfully **“looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”**
- The words **“looking for”** here expresses an attitude of expectancy, an outlook on life that watchfully waits for the Lord’s arrival. Peter also uses the word **“hastening”** which

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strengthens that concept of looking for and can be expressed as to hurry. So what we see here is, rather than fearing the world's impending demise, Christians long for it, knowing they have everything to hope for and nothing to fear from the Father who loves us. **Read 1 John 4:18** Just like Paul in **1 Cor. 16:22**, we can readily say **maranatha**, “**Lord, come!**” The words “**the coming**” in **verse 12** translates the familiar term **parousia**, which literally means “**the presence.**” In the New Testament it does not primarily describe a place or event. Instead, the term emphasizes the personal, bodily arrival of Jesus Christ. The “**day of God**” refers to the eternal state when God will have permanently subdued all of His enemies. While Christians are certainly eager **for the day of God**, their attitude toward the turmoil that precedes it is more sober. The Apostle John's vision experience, in which he ate the little book and found it sweet to taste but bitter to swallow in **Rev. 10:9 - 10**, dramatically illustrates those dual feelings. The little book represents the coming judgment—**sweet to believers** because of the **day of God**, but **bitter** because of the “**day of the Lord.**”

- In the **b-portion of verse 12** it says, “**because of which**”, referring to the **day of God**, indicates that certain other events must first take place in order for it to occur. In preparation for that day, Peter reiterated that God will destroy the present, sin-cursed universe: “**the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!**” There are several passages in the book of Revelation which, although describing tribulation events one thousand years earlier, offer vivid previews of the kind of power God will display at the final destruction: **Rev. 8:7–11; Rev. 16:17 – 21; Rev. 18:8 – 10** Following the final destruction of the universe, the day of God will arrive, and this corrupted world system will be forever abolished.

2 Pet. 3:13 “But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

- The words, “**But according to His promise**”, that new day will showcase a **new heavens and a new earth**, meaning that God will create an entirely new universe. The word rendered **new** from **kainos** means, “**new in quality, different, or unlike anything previously known.**” Thus the new heavens and earth will be far more than merely new in time or chronology; the final clause of **verse 13** reveals they will also be new in character—a realm **in which righteousness dwells**. The word **dwells** from the Greek

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word **katoikeō** means “**to settle down and be at home,**” or “**to take up permanent, comfortable residence.**” What this reveals is in God’s new order, righteousness will enjoy a permanent, perfect existence. The apostle John further described that wonder of the new universe. **Read Rev. 21:1–4, 22 – 27** On the basis of all that God has in store for us the believer, we ought to live in constant expectation—always looking for Christ’s return and continually viewing everything in this life in light of our eternal destiny.

2 Pet. 3:14 “Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,”

2 Pet. 3:14 NLT “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.”

- As those who **look for these things**—the day of God, the new heavens and earth, the eternal state, and the glorious everlasting kingdom—faithful believers are commanded and motivated to live in a way that reflects internal peace with regard to their eternal perspective. This requires them to “**be diligent**” so that when Christ returns they will “**be found by Him in peace.**” “**Be diligent**” means to **be ready for His return.** What Peter has taught here in this section is don’t be drifting but be **growing** and be **grounded.** The phrase “**to be found**” is a sobering reminder that no one will be able to hide from Christ when He returns. He will overlook nothing, but like **1 Cor. 4:5** says, “**will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts.**”
- The words “... **to be found by Him in peace...**” are some profound words. The word “**peace**” used here from **eirēnē** refers to having a saving relationship with God and therefore being at **peace with Him** when he returns. Note that the apostle addressed his readers as **beloved**, which indicates they were Christians. In this context, **peace** primarily refers to **the true peace of mind** that accompanies a confident faith in the Lord. It is an echo of Paul’s admonition to the Philippians in **Phil. 4:6 – 7** when it says, “**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And THE PEACE of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**” Peter here is speaking about the kind of **peace** that banishes both earthly worries and cosmic

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fears—a **peace** that comes from knowing for certain that one’s sins are forgiven. No matter how terrible things become as human history moves toward final destruction, believers who live in hope have the **settled peace** sustained by what the Lord has planned for those who love Him.

- In the final words of **verse 14** it reveals in sharp contrast to the false teachers, who were “**stains and blemishes**” based on **2 Pet. 2:13**, Peter exhorted his readers to be “**spotless and blameless.**” This says Christians are to demonstrate practical purity. The word “**spotless**” from **aspilos** can denote **Christian character**, the kind of people believers are to really be. Then the word **blameless** speaks of and denotes **Christian reputation**, the **kind of righteous** and **virtuous** people God has made us to be and others perceive believers to be. However, there are some who are neither, and others who publicly appear **blameless**, but whose private lives are actually far from **spotless**. Like modern-day Pharisees, they work hard on looking good, but fail to truly cultivate a heart of righteousness. Although outwardly they maintain an honorable reputation, they do so only by hypocritically hiding their unrepented sin. In contrast, Peter exhorted his readers to be both **spotless and blameless**. As genuine believers, he commanded them to manifest the highest levels of integrity and personal holiness. When the watching world observes their godly behavior, the **blameless** reputation of such Christians serves as an essential testimony to the transforming hope in the gospel. **Read Ps. 15:1 – 5**
- For believers, then, the promise of Christ’s return serves as a powerful incentive for holy living. After all, future accountability and heavenly reward are compelling motivations, encouraging believers to continually forsake sin and diligently practice the means of grace.

2 Pet. 3:15 – 16 “... and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

2 Pet. 3:15 – 16 NLT “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

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gave him— 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.”

- Without question, Peter wanted his audience to wait eagerly for Christ’s return. At the same time, he did not want them to grow idle or detach themselves from society, being so consumed with thoughts of the future that they forgot about their compelling spiritual responsibilities in the present. God’s judgment had not yet come; His wrath had not yet been poured out. There was still time to proclaim the good news to the lost. Thus, Peter reminded his readers to continue in the ministry of reconciliation, seeking to reach others with the life-giving truth of the gospel. As noted in **2 Pet. 3:8 - 9**, the **Lord** delays His return in order to save the remainder of His elect. Thus, Christians should **regard** God’s **patience** with joy, knowing that He is daily adding to His family until it is complete. In **Luke 15:11 - 32**, Jesus effectively illustrated the reality of God’s merciful patience toward sinners in the parable of the prodigal son. The story tells of a rebellious son who abandoned his family for a life of immorality and dissipation. For a long time he wasted his opportunity, passing up the privilege to serve his father. But one day he came to his senses, repented of his sinful lifestyle, and returned home. Instead of being rejected or disowned by his father—or received reluctantly—the father embraced the son with love and compassion. That father pictures God who responds to penitent sinners with mercy and grace—lavishly, joyously, and generously poured out on those who repent and come to Him in faith. And all heaven rejoices, as described by the feast the father had in honor of his son.
- When Christians anticipate the day of God, which for them will mean eternal blessing, they should also remember the day of the Lord, which for the lost will mean eternal punishment. With that in mind, the opportunity of God’s current **patience** should only heighten the church’s evangelistic zeal.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 15** the phrase **just as also**, Peter here references a similar warnings that the apostle Paul had given about false teaching. Peter graciously spoke of his fellow apostle as **our beloved brother Paul**, underscoring their common life and mission. As the two foremost leaders of the early church, Peter and Paul were certainly

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well-aware of each other's ministry. In fact, both had been present at the pivotal Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, and both had ministered with Silas. More than twenty years earlier, Peter had even been confronted by Paul when he wrongly refused to eat with Gentile Christians. As a primary spokesman for the early church, 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.

- Here Peter appeals to Paul's inspired letters for support—reminding his readers to reject the false teachers and remember what Paul **wrote to** them, **according to the wisdom given him**. Interestingly, Peter does not specify a particular Pauline letter or letters. Instead, he gives a general endorsement for Paul's inspired writings, demonstrating the divine origin of the revelation given to Paul.
- In the **a-portion** of **2 Pet. 3:16** Peter's reference to **all** of Paul's **letters** suggests Peter's audience was familiar with much of Paul's correspondence. Because Paul was **speaking in** his letters **of these** same **things** namely, eschatological events, therefore it makes sense that Peter would cite Paul's works here. However, in Paul's writings about the day of the Lord, the return of Christ, and the glories of eternity, Peter acknowledged there **“are some things hard to understand”**, such as the rapture of the church, the return of Christ in judgment, and the glories of heaven. The words rendered **“hard to understand”** from the word **dusnoētos** carries the idea of **“difficult to interpret.”** In using this term, Peter was not implying that Paul's teachings are impossible to understand. He is simply recognizing that some of them are more complex than others, especially prophetic revelation.
- In the **b-portion** of **2 Pet. 3:16** the words **“which the untaught and unstable distort** namely here speaks of the false teachers who **misrepresent** what Paul taught about the future. The word **untaught** denotes a **lack of information**, while **unstable** speaks of a **vacillating spiritual character**. To term **distort** here vividly pictures how the false teachers manipulated certain prophetic issues, twisting them to confuse and deceive the undiscerning. Such distortion even continues today regarding prophetic revelation.
- In the final clause of **verse 16** it reveals not surprisingly, the false teachers did not stop with prophecy, but also **distorted the rest of the Scriptures**. This we can speak of a

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number of biblical teachings on God’s law, repentance, justification, salvation, grace and sanctification. These false teachers were distorters of God’s truth.

- The fact that Peter placed Paul’s writings on a par with the **rest of the Scriptures** clearly affirms that Paul wrote divinely inspired truth. The word translated **Scriptures** is **graphas**, from the verb **graphō** and means “**to write**” occurs about one hundred eighty times in the New Testament, of which half refer to the Bible, “**the written word.**” The noun **graphē** is used about fifty times, exclusively of Scripture and inclusive of the Old Testament and the New Testament, as this reference makes clear. Peter here writes that by their distorting of **the Scriptures**, these false teachers were simultaneously securing **their own destruction**, as well as the spiritual demise of their followers.

2 Pet. 3:17 “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness...”

2 Pet. 3:17 NLT “You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people and lose your own secure footing.”

- Peter reminds his **beloved** readers “**you already know these things.**” So he says, **be on guard** against the error of such **unprincipled men**, so you are not carried away. **Read Phil. 3:2** The word **unprincipled** from **athesmōn** literally speaks of those, “**without law or custom,**” and came to mean “**morally corrupt**” representing the essential character trait of spiritual deceivers.
- In keeping with Peter’s warning, as believers we must **not** allow ourselves to be **carried away** by the unscriptural lies of false teachers. Rather, we must be alert and discerning lest we will **fall from** our **own steadfastness**. The word **steadfastness** indicates **firmness**, or **firm footing**; it is the very **opposite of being unstable**. Peter’s concern was not that his readers would fall from salvation, but that they **might slip from doctrinal stability** and **lose their confidence in the truth**. For that reason, he urged them to **be spiritually perceptive, or discerning**, so that their eternal reward would not be diminished.

2 Pet. 3:18 “... but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

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2 Pet. 3:18 NLT “Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

- Here Peter writes instead of falling prey to the schemes of false teachers, he encourages his readers to **pursue Christlikeness** and **spiritual growth**. Peter teaches here the goal of every believer should be **spiritual progress**. **Read Eph. 4:14 – 16**
- Peter says, “... **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**” The word “**grow**” from **auxanō** means “**to advance, or increase in the sphere of.**” Peter writes believers are to **grow in grace** through the **knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. It is because of His **grace**, God forgives the sins of His children. We in turn are to feed on Scripture and commune with Christ, thereby increasing in our **knowledge of Him**. **Read 1 Peter 2:2** As our **knowledge and maturity increases as Christians**, we will be better prepared to fend off destructive doctrines and spiritual deceptions.
- In the closing clause of the **a-portion** of **verse 18** it is important to note that Peter designated Jesus as both **Lord and Savior**. What this reveals is as believers pursue a deeper understanding of the fullness of Christ’s person, both in His saving work and His lordship, He will provide us with the doctrinal stability we need to avoid being misled.

2 Pet. 3:18b “To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

- Finally in the **b-portion** of **verse 18** Peter closes his letter with a doxology, calling believers to continually worship and adore God. Believers are to give **Him all the glory, both now**, in the **present**, and **in eternity**. Clearly the pronoun **Him** refers back to **Christ** and is a sure affirmation of His deity and equality with God. After all, the Old Testament declares that divine **glory** belongs to God alone in **Isa. 42:8** when it says, “**I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.**” Yet in various places the Gospels also attribute that same glory to Jesus Christ such as in **John 1:14** when it says, “**And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**” The only possible conclusion, then, is that Christ is worthy of the Father’s glory *because* He Himself is God. **Read John 5:23** Peter began this epistle with an affirmation of Christ’s deity in **2 Pet.1:1**, and he now ends with the same.

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- In conclusion, having **reassured his readers of the certainty of Christ’s return** in **2 Pet. 3:1 - 10**, Peter concluded with an **exhortation to live this life in light of that reality** here in **2 Pet. 3:11 - 18**. What is striking Paul echoed the same sentiments in **Col. 3:1 – 4 (Read)**