

## Perspective of the Lord's Return

1  **Perspective on the Lord's Return**

2 PETER 3:1-16

2  **2 Peter 3**

*Dear friends, this is already the second letter I am writing to you, in both of which I am attempting to stir up your sincere mind by a reminder, to remember the words proclaimed beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, above all knowing this, that in the last days scoffers will come with scoffing, following according to their own desires and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued just as they have been from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that the heavens existed long ago and the earth held together out of water and through water by the word of God, by means of which things the world that existed at that time was destroyed by being inundated with water. But by the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people.*

3  **2 Peter 3**

*Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that one day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. The Lord is not delaying the promise, as some consider slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will disappear with a rushing noise, and the celestial bodies will be destroyed by being burned up, and the earth and the deeds done on it will be disclosed. Because all these things are being destroyed in this way, what sort of people must you be in holy behavior and godliness, while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by being burned up and the celestial bodies will melt as they are consumed by heat!*

4  **2 Peter 3**

*But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness resides. Therefore, dear friends, because you are waiting for these things, make every effort to be found at peace, spotless and unblemished in him. And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our dear brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom that was given to him, as he does also in all his letters, speaking in them about these things, in which there are some things hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, as they also do the rest of the scriptures. (2 Peter 3:1–16, LEB)*

5  **Believers remember the Lord's Return**

2 PETER 3:1-2

6  **Reminders purify our thinking**

- ▶ 3:1. Addressing his readers as Dear friends (*agapētoi*, "beloved, loved ones"; the first of four occurrences in this chapter: vv. 1, 8, 14, 17; cf. Jude 17–18),
- ▶ Peter called this his second letter to this group and said both letters are reminders.
- ▶ Of greater importance, however, is Peter's purpose: to stimulate the readers to wholesome thinking. *As reminders to stimulate you* translates the same Greek words which are rendered to *refresh your memory* in 2 Peter 1:13.

7  **Remember that God hears our thoughts**

- ▶ The phrase *eilikrinē dianoian* (*wholesome thinking*) may also be rendered *sincere mind* or *pure disposition*.
- ▶ The English "sincere" is from the Latin words *sine cera*, "without wax."

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- ▶ Some pottery salesmen would use wax to cover cracks and weak places in pottery. Such a cover-up could be detected only by holding the jug up to the sun to see if any weaknesses were visible.
- ▶ Such a vase was "sun-judged." God wants His people to have sun-judged minds, not those in which their sin spots have been covered over.

8  **Remember the authority of the Word**

- ▶ 3:2. Peter again reminded his readers of the need to remember (cf. 1:12–15).
- ▶ Others, like Peter, referred to the holy prophets (cf. Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; Eph. 3:5), whose words were oracles regarding the day of the Lord and related topics.
  - ▶ *Whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, about which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from earliest times.* (Acts 3:21, LEB)
  - ▶ *(which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit):* (Ephesians 3:5, LEB)
- ▶ The command of our Lord and Savior refers to His teachings, which were then proclaimed by the apostles (cf. Jude 17).
  - ▶ *But you, dear friends, remember the words proclaimed beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,* (Jude 17, LEB)

9  **Remember the authority of Scripture**

- ▶ Peter's linking the prophets and apostles placed them on the same level of authority (cf. Eph. 2:20).
  - ▶ *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,* (Ephesians 2:20, LEB)
  - ▶ Believers do well to recall the writings of both Testaments regarding the Lord's return
- ▶ Only 17 people in the Bible are identified as Apostles
  - ▶ Those claiming apostolic authority today are false teachers

10  **Scoffers laugh at the Lord's return**

2 PETER 3:3-7

11  **Laughing in the last days**

- ▶ Peter understood (3:3) that he and his readers were living in the last days – the period of time between Christ's ascension into heaven and His coming again.
- ▶ Peter says that the most prominent negative reaction ("first of all") would be that of the scoffers – people mocking the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ He said that because they refused to believe in a returning Savior and a coming judgment, their lives would be to fulfill their own evil desires.

12  **Scoffers described**

- ▶ *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.* (2 Peter 2:10)
- ▶ *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.* (Jude 16)
- ▶ *How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.* (Jude 18)

13  **The nature of their mocking**

- ▶ *Where is this return He promised?*
  - ▶ This rests on the principle of uniformitarianism – the view that everything in the cosmos in the

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future will work as it has in the past. This rules out divine intervention in the universal order.

▶ Mockers believe that miracles cannot happen.

▶ But Jesus – born of a virgin and risen from the dead – declared that He would return. One who has already interrupted the natural order of the cosmos will do so again.

14  **John 14:1-3**

▶ *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* (John 14:1–3)

▶ The angels also confirmed this second coming. *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.* (Acts 1:11)

15  **Scoffers think history is on their side**

▶ The scoffers wanted to push their argument as far back as possible. So they referred to our fathers (lit., "the fathers"), that is, Old Testament patriarchs (John 7:22; Acts 3:13; 13:32; Rom. 9:5; 11:28; Heb. 1:1), and to the beginning of Creation.

▶ Since nothing has happened in all this time, mockers reasoned, why expect the Lord's return now?

16  **Peter points out the flaw in their argument**

▶ Peter reminds his readers that the sky was created on the second day of creation (Genesis 1:6-8) and that the earth was originally just water but on the third day God called land to appear from out of the water (Genesis 1:9-10).

▶ Peter asserts that God who is the creator is also God the Judge. In His sovereign will any change in process can occur at any time because he designed and controls these natural processes. He illustrates that with the fact that the world was covered with water in the days of Noah as a sign of God's judgment. That never happened previously and has never happened again since.

17  **Scoffers are deliberately ignorant**

▶ To be ignorant means to ignore something that is true.

▶ Scoffers deliberately put aside God's Word and then complain that God was not doing anything.

▶ Peter asserts the truths of both creation and the universal flood.

▶ *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.* (1 Peter 3:20)

▶ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2 Peter 2:5)

▶

18  **God once destroyed the WORLD but later offered salvation to the same**

▶ *Whereby the world (Greek: kosmos) that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:* (2 Peter 3:6)

▶ The Greek word here refers to the world of people since the planet itself was not destroyed in the Flood

▶ This is consistent with the way that the same word is used in John 3:16

▶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

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▶ *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9)*

19  **Next time by fire...**

- ▶ In the New Testament, Peter is the only author that refers to the future destruction of the world by fire. In the past, the world was destroyed in the Flood by God's word and by water. In the future, it will be destroyed by the same Word and by fire.
- ▶ Right now the earth is on layaway for a future day of judgment. It is reserved – being stored up like a treasure – for fire and kept for judgment.

20  **2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12**

- ▶ *But by the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people. (2 Peter 3:7, LEB)*
- ▶ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will disappear with a rushing noise, and the celestial bodies will be destroyed by being burned up, and the earth and the deeds done on it will be disclosed. (2 Peter 3:10, LEB)*
- ▶ *While waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by being burned up and the celestial bodies will melt as they are consumed by heat! (2 Peter 3:12, LEB)*

21  **Not a new idea**

- ▶ *For look! Yahweh will come in fire, and his chariots like the storm wind, to give back his anger in wrath, and his rebuke in flames of fire. For Yahweh enters into judgment on all flesh with fire and his sword, and those slain by Yahweh shall be many. (Isaiah 66:15–16, LEB)*
- ▶ *"For look! The day is about to come, burning like an oven, and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble. The coming day will consume them," says Yahweh of hosts. "It will not leave behind for them root or branch. (Malachi 4:1, LEB)*
  - ▶ This idea also present in the Dead Sea scrolls at Qumran and other sources written shortly before Christ's birth

22  **What is the Day of the Lord?**

- ▶ "The day of the Lord" (2 Peter 3:10) includes the Tribulation, the Millennium, the great white throne judgment, and the destruction of the present heavens and earth.
  - ▶ At the great white throne after the Millennium, ungodly men (i.e., the wicked dead) will be judged and then thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11–15).
  - ▶ This, as Peter wrote, will be their day of judgment (cf. 2 Peter 2:9) and destruction. After they are cast into fire, the heavens and the earth will be destroyed by fire. God intervened catastrophically before (in the Flood), and He will do so again.

23  **Revelation 20:11-15**

- ▶ *And I saw a great white throne and the one who was seated on it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled, and a place was not found for them. And I saw the dead—the great and the small—standing before the throne, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and each one was judged according to their deeds. And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15, LEB)*

24  **God guarantees Jesus' return**

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2 PETER 3:8-9

25  **Reason #1 that Jesus has not yet returned**

- ▶ For those who think that the return of the Lord is slow, Peter offers two reasons
- ▶ Reason #1: Peter encourages his readers to not forget this one thing that is mentioned to us in Psalm 90:4 which Peter quotes here. *For a thousand years in your eyes are like yesterday when it passes, or like a watch in the night.* (Psalm 90:4, LEB)
- ▶ People see time against time; but God sees time against eternity. Time only seems long to us because of our finite perspective. But time seems short to God because of his infinite perspective.

26  **Reason #2 that Jesus has not yet returned**

- ▶ God wants as many people to be saved as possible
  - ▶ *The Lord is not delaying the promise, as some consider slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance.* (2 Peter 3:9, LEB)
  - ▶ Are you not glad for the Lord's patience with you?
- ▶ God's time schedule is modified by His patience – which is a major attribute of the heavenly Father
  - ▶ *Or do you despise the wealth of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?* (Romans 2:4, LEB)

27  **The description of His Return**

2 PETER 3:10-13

28  **2 Peter 3:10-13**

- ▶ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will disappear with a rushing noise, and the celestial bodies will be destroyed by being burned up, and the earth and the deeds done on it will be disclosed. Because all these things are being destroyed in this way, what sort of people must you be in holy behavior and godliness, while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by being burned up and the celestial bodies will melt as they are consumed by heat! But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness resides.* (2 Peter 3:10–13, LEB)

29  **It will be sudden and catastrophic**

- ▶ A thief comes unexpectedly and takes away things of value
- ▶ Jesus also use this simile as did the apostle Paul.
  - ▶ *For you yourselves well know that the day of the Lord is coming in the same way as a thief in the night.* (1 Thessalonians 5:2, LEB)
  - ▶ *Therefore remember how you have received and heard, and observe it, and repent. If therefore you are not on the alert, I will come like a thief, and you will never know at what hour I will come against you.* (Revelation 3:3, LEB)

30  **The accompanying catastrophe**

- ▶ In the catastrophic conflagration at the end of the Millennium, the heavens (the earth's atmosphere and the starry sky, not God's abode) will disappear with a roar, which in some way will involve fire (2 Peter 3:7, 12). T
- ▶ The elements (stoicheia, either stars or material elements with which the universe is made) will be destroyed by fire (and will melt, v. 12), and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare (eurethēsetai).
  - ▶

31  **Matthew 24:42-44**

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► *Therefore be on the alert, because you do not know what day your Lord is coming! But understand this: that if the master of the house had known what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not think he will come.* (Matthew 24:42–44, LEB)

32  **1999 Texas A&M bonfire collapse**33  **The Second Coming is motivational**

- Peter believes that the fact that Jesus is returning to us should motivate us to holy living. The question, *What kind of people ought you to be?* is rhetorical. Just in case someone missed the point, Peter answered it. *You ought to live holy and godly lives.*
- The word holy refers to Christian separation and sanctification – to live a life that seems apart from the world and apart toward God.
- The word godly refers to piety before God the word live is in the present tense meaning that we are to be constantly living in light of the Lord's return. Scoffers constantly question the Lord's coming and therefore lead ungodly lives. But Jesus' followers anticipating His return are to be godly.

34  **Can we speed it up?**

- If the goal of God's waiting is so that more people might be saved, then perhaps we can speed up His Return by leading more people to a relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - Peter seems to indicate that we can "hasten" the day of Jesus' return.
- For sure, we should live in such a way that He finds us in peace with Him and without spot or blemish.
- In 3:12, Peter says that the coming day of Judgment from God marks the end of the Day of the Lord and the start of the Day of God.

35  **The Day of God**

- 2 Peter 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? (2 Peter 3:12)
- This old cosmic system will then give way to a new heaven and a new earth and this is what believers are looking forward to (cf. vv. 12, 14).
  - The new heaven and new earth, given by the promise of God, will finally be the home or dwelling place of righteousness (lit., "in which righteousness dwells permanently").
  - It will be the home of righteousness because the Righteous One will be there (Jer. 23:5–7; 33:16; Dan. 9:24; Rev. 21:1, 8, 27). What a contrast this will be to the world's unrighteousness!

36  **Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:16**

- *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* (Jeremiah 23:5–6, KJV 1900)
- *In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.* (Jeremiah 33:16, KJV 1900)

37  **Behavior is changed by Jesus' return**

2 PETER 3:14-16

38  **2 Peter 3:14-16**

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► *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.* (Jeremiah 33:14–16, KJV 1900)

39  **Our behavior is linked to our expectation of Jesus' return**

- Because Jesus is coming again, we are to be holy and godly and to make every effort to maintain a good reputation before God and men. To be blameless means without moral defect – like a sacrificial animal was to be without blemish.
- We all sin, but we can easily be cleansed again by asking God to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness that should be our consistent practice.
- *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* (2 Peter 1:4)

40  **A patient reminder of God's patience (3:15)**

- Remember that the Lord's patience is because of His desire that people come to salvation. God is not procrastinating on the return of Christ but demonstrating his patience. We now have time to repent but that will not be so when the day of judgment comes.
- The Lord's patience should lead us toward repentance which is the same point the apostle Paul made. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* (Romans 2:4, KJV 1900)

41  **Put aside any grudges**

- In 3:15, Peter refers to Paul as "our dear brother." Essentially, he is referring to Paul as someone who is beloved.
- Years before, the apostle Paul had severely rebuked Peter for some hypocrisy that he showed. But this rebuke did not sever their love and respect for one another. I am sure the rebuke hurt at the time, but Peter is not holding any grudges and he no doubt think the apostle Paul for the correction.

42  **Galatians 2:11-14**

► *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was condemned. For before certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles, but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he was afraid of those who were of the circumcision, and the rest of the Jews also joined in this hypocrisy with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with them in their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not being straightforward with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of them all, "If you, although you are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you try to compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"* (Galatians 2:11–14, LEB)

43  **Handle God's Word carefully**

- Peter said that Paul wrote about the same thing in all of his letters.
- Though Paul wrote with wisdom, Peter admits that some of what Paul said was hard to understand.
  - The Greek word used here sometimes applied in Greek literature to oracles that were ambiguous or obscure.
  - Peter considers himself an unlearned man and may have found some of Paul's statements difficult. But Peter studied the Scriptures to understand them.
  - Peter knew that those who were unstable pervert and distort what Paul had said from the meaning of his original words. But this was to be expected since this is how they handled the

other scriptures.

44  **Be careful how you handle the dynamite**

▶ *...As he does also in all his letters, speaking in them about these things, in which there are some things hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable distort to their own destruction, as they also do the rest of the scriptures. (2 Peter 3:16, LEB)*

▶ God's word is powerful – like dynamite. Just as mishandling and explosive can cause great damage, mishandling the Word of God is even more damaging.

▶ Peter's endorsement of the apostle Paul's writings, shows that he regarded those as being on an equal level with the other scriptures.

45  **A farewell**

46  **You already know the truth**

▶ Peter reminds his readers that they know the truth and that he has reminded them of the truth.

▶ Therefore they are to be aware (imperative verb) so that they are not led away with the air of wicked and false teachers and fall away from their steadfast obedience to Jesus Christ.

▶ Instead they are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. The only way to grow in grace is by increasing our knowledge of God's word.

▶ This growth is to be continual (present imperative verb) by ever deepening your relationship with Jesus Christ.

▶ Struggling believers are those who do not spend time in God's word and they forget that they were cleansed by their past sins (1:9).

47  **Where are you in your spiritual walk?**

▶ Would you admit today that you need to spend more time in God's Word?

▶ Do you spend more time reading other things than you do the Bible?

▶ Would you commit today grow in grace of Jesus Christ by gaining greater knowledge of the Bible and of its author?

▶ Peter ends this book by giving praise and glory both now and forever the Lord Jesus Christ – once more affirming that Jesus Christ is God.

▶ May the final salutation of our lives one of praising the Lord both in word and in deed.