

2 Peter

Sermon preached by Phil Kayset at DCC on 01-24-2021

Introduction

Last week we looked at 1 Peter's theology of suffering and persecution. It's a very important part of a comprehensive worldview. And we saw that one of the good things that comes out of suffering is that it exposes counterfeit Christianity from the real thing. It produces a sifting of tares from wheat; false believers from true believers. Well, this epistle highlights the fact that there was a huge sifting that was already taking place; a huge falling away from the faith in the days of suffering leading up to AD 70.

It's a fairly simple book. It can be divided into three parts. Chapter 1 of the book looks at the foundations of the true faith. And it shows that true Christianity is 100% God-centered. We are not always consistent in being 100% God-centered, but that is Peter's definition of consistent Christianity. Chapter 2 shows the essence of false Christianity - it has drifted from a God-centered perspective into a man-centered faith. And obviously today there are churches that fall all along the continuum between those two examples, and only the Lord knows which ones have completely lost God's favor and which ones have not. But this is a book that is designed to put the fear of God into churches and to make them strive to be as God-centered as possible.

And then in chapter 3 Peter takes one doctrine (eschatology) and shows the difference between a man-centered approach versus a God-centered approach to Christianity on even a doctrine like that.

And every one of these three sections contrasts the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of man; God's will versus man's will; God's glory versus man's glory. So let's dive straight into the book. (Which, by the way, was written a few weeks or months after 1 Peter, probably in the first quarter of AD 66.)

Overview of the book

The foundations of true Christianity all flow from a God-centered faith (1:1-21)

Chapter 1 demonstrates that the essence of the true faith is that it is radically God-centered. This is what distinguishes it from every other religion. Every other religion is man seeking God in some way and meriting God's favor in some way. And even within orthodoxy, there are some compromised forms of Christianity (like Arminianism) that constantly insert man's will, man's opinions, man's laws, man's self-esteem, or some other facet of man's

importance for it's Christianity. But at the heart of true Christianity is the sovereignty of God. The five solas of the Reformation flowed from that God-centered perspective.

True Christianity is initiated by God's sovereign grace (1:1-4)

Well, Peter starts by giving a view of salvation that is Calvinistic to the core. And you might object that using the term "Calvinistic" for 1 Peter 1 is an anachronism. And yes, there is a sense in which it is. But my point is that Calvin did not invent Calvinism. The Reformers did not invent the five solas. The early church held to them.¹ Calvin was simply restoring the doctrines of grace found in the Bible, and taught by the early church fathers such as Arnobius (AD 290), Ephiphanius (AD 390), Brixienis (AD 390), Chrysostom (AD 390), Augustine, the Council of Orange, and so many others.² As Charles Spurgeon pointed out, Calvinism is simply the Gospel. It is a refusal to inject man-centeredness into how we get saved. Both Pelagianism (which is an all-out heresy) and Semi-Pelagianism (which is a mixture of Pelagianism with orthodoxy) are man-centered. By the way, all-out Pelagianism did not start in the fifth century. It arose in the days of the Apostles. And in chapter 2 we will see that it focused upon man's free will, man's choice, man seeking God, and it sought to maintain man's dignity above God's. Peter knows nothing of that. The view of grace that he will articulate in verses 1-4 is so humbling to man's pride that man can take credit for nothing.

What are the first words? "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." As an apostle he didn't speak his own words. He could only speak what Christ told him to speak. And the word "servant" is literally slave. Peter modeled that his life was wrapped up in serving Jesus, not serving himself. He will later show how contrary that attitude is with the self-promoting and exploitive nature of the so-called Christianity in chapter 2. But our salvation is basically unconditional surrender to God. We gladly let him put his feet upon our necks and we declare ourselves to be His slaves. It is only then that He elevates us to the status of sons, daughters, princes, and princesses. He exalts the truly humbled.

I love the masthead of Chapel Library. It says, "Our purpose is to humble the pride of man, exalt the grace of God in salvation, and promote real holiness in heart and life by distributing material from ..." and it lists the Puritans and a bunch of other Calvinists. But Chapel Library has always had the conviction that God's sovereignty humbled man's pride.

¹ See Phillip Kayser, *The Canon of Scripture: A Presuppositional Study* (Omaha, NE: Biblical Blueprints, 2021) <https://leanpub.com/canon-of-scripture/> This gives an extensive documentation that the church of the first millennium was thoroughly Protestant on the five solas.

² Many books have been written to demonstrate that Calvin's views and the five solas are to be found in the early fathers. Here is an incredibly brief introduction: <https://www.apuritansmind.com/arminianism/calvinism-in-the-early-church-the-doctrines-of-grace-taught-by-the-early-church-fathers/>

That is the essence of Christianity. It sees everything in light of the glory of God. Have I repeated myself enough?

So his first words that relate to salvation show that we don't pursue God. Instead, God pursues us. "To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Peter couldn't even take credit for his own faith. The faith that brought him to God was obtained. The word "obtained" is λαγχάνω, and it refers to receiving something by appointment, not by merit. It's a pure gift of God's grace sovereignly bestowed. And the only way we could receive that gift of faith was because *Jesus* earned it through His *own* righteousness. Acts 13:48 takes us even further back to God's choice in eternity past. It says, "as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." Predestination results in faith. It's not the other way around.

Verse 2 is a marvelous promise that our life should exhibit the *continual* overflow of God's grace and peace. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." Even as Christians, we can't take credit for what we do. It's the result of a continual flow of grace from heaven. Even our diligence is made possible by God's grace.

And how do we get that grace and peace? Verse 3 says, "as His divine power has given to us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue..." There is nothing good in us that we don't receive from His hand as a pure gift. He gave us life. He gave us godliness. He gave us even the knowledge to know Him. As the hymn writer said,

'Tis not that I did choose thee,
for, Lord, that could not be;
this heart would still refuse thee,
hadst thou not chosen me.

This is so different from the man-centered versions of Christianity that Peter exposes in chapter 2. It was God's glory and virtue that flowed to us, not our glory and virtue that flowed to God. Verse 4 says,

by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

By union with Jesus we are united to God. By the indwelling Holy Spirit, we partake of His nature. Again, God-centered Christianity realizes that God is the Potter and we are the clay. Nothing starts from man. These first four verses really deserve an entire sermon of their own.

True Christianity continues by faith in God's sovereign grace (1:5-9)

But let's move on to the next paragraph (verses 5-9) that deals with our sanctification. Several years ago I gave an extended sermon on these verses, but I will barely summarize them today. These verses indicate that God not only starts, He also continues our walk of sanctification by His grace. What seems strange to some people is that Peter will indicate that every grace comes from God, but that we are to make every effort to receive those

graces. But those are not opposites. You can't pit divine sovereignty against human responsibility. Paul will make the same point in Philippians 2:12-13 where he says,

Phil. 2:12 ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

We can only work out what God has already sovereignly worked in. Or to use Peter's language, we can only diligently use (that's verses 5 and following) what God has already given (verses 1-4). But true Christianity that is wrought by God's grace is always very active. It's one of the ways you can discern the difference between fake Christians and true Christians. True Christians are characterized by verses 5 and following. He says, "But also for this very reason [the reason was verses 1-4] giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue..." etc. The two words used for this diligence in verse 5 are 1) a word that means great effort (σπουδή) and 2) another word that means great cost (ἐπιχορηγέω). By combining the words Peter is indicating that there is no labor too hard and no price too great in pursuing a God-centered and God-honoring life. So are we involved in our sanctification? Yes. Very much so. We are diligently and earnestly working out what God is working in.

Verse 5 says, "But also for this very reason..." For the very reason that everything (including our faith) comes from God, "for this very reason, giving all diligence add..." And how are we to add these things to our life? By faith. The New King James doesn't draw this out quite as well as most other versions do. Other versions have, "*by your faith* add virtue (ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν), and to virtue add knowledge." The faith that God gave as a gift can be exercised diligently to receive virtue, more knowledge, perseverance, and all the other graces that are listed here. In other words, if you are truly saved, you will diligently pursue sanctification.

These are not pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps actions. Instead, faith diligently receives each of these items from heaven every day. As Paul said in Colossians 3, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." But here is the point - if we are adding virtue and each of these other graces *by faith*, we are receiving them from God; we are not providing them from our own resources as Pelagius would insist. Let's go through each grace.

The first grace is faith. I know I'm repeating myself, but verse 1 already said that faith is the first grace that comes from His throne. It is by faith that we receive Christ, escape the corruption of the world, and end up in His kingdom, experience his divine power that gives us everything in the Christians life (that's verses 1-4). But faith is designed by God to keep receiving everything we need from Christ. The just shall live by faith and keep living by faith.

The first thing that faith receives is virtue. The Greek word for virtue indicates a heart that desires to please God and is willing to obey God even before we know what God will ask us. It doesn't hold reservations and say, "I'll obey if I like it, or if I understand it, or if it makes sense to scientists, or if it is comfortable." No. The person with virtue says, "Lord, I am your slave. Tell me what to do and I will delight to do it."

And when we have virtue, then God gives us further knowledge - the next grace. As Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine..." If anyone wants to do His will - there is the virtue - he shall know. When you have virtue, God will give you further knowledge. And it makes sense: Why would God bother to open our eyes further to the Word if we don't have a heart that wants to obey the Word? He only opens the riches of His Word to those who want to do His will; to those who have a virtuous attitude.

The next grace is self-control. The more God opens our eyes to know, the more we will have to exercise self-control to obey it. Why? Because the Bible draws our hearts away from man-centeredness and draws us more and more into God's will. So there is a logical relationship between each of these words that I will not have the time to explain today. But they constitute the antithesis to the ancient and modern compromised Christianity described in chapter 2.

Self-control leads to perseverance. Perseverance leads to godliness. Godliness leads to brotherly kindness. When you have struggled through each of those things, you will be sympathetic with fellow believers rather than judging them. You will be kind to brothers who struggle because you realize that you only got to where you are because of God's sovereign grace. So it makes you gentle with others. And brotherly kindness leads to agape love, which is self-sacrificing love on behalf of others.

Too many Christians don't diligently exercise their faith as verse 5 commands, and therefore they don't grow very much. But verses 8-9 say that you can't stay neutral or static. You are either growing towards God's will or you are backsliding toward a man-centered Christianity. Those are the only options. Let me read verses 8-9.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

It is possible for Christians to take their eyes off of Christ and to once again look back to Sodom like Lot's wife did. That is a sure way to lose the graces that you already have. Losing a Christ-centeredness means losing grace. If any one of these links is missing from our sanctification, the whole sanctification collapses. And verse 9 is one of the scariest warnings in this book - that a true believer who has been cleansed from his old sins can become almost blind (not totally blind, but almost blind) when he persists in any sin and when he refuses to repent. The way out of that spiritual near-sightedness is to by faith recommit yourself to being a man, or woman, or child of virtue and to say, "Lord, I want to do your will no matter how hard it is. I want to please you." And then God will once again open your eyes to know what He wants you to do. When He does that, immediately do it. don't delay; don't rationalize; don't justify ignoring that knowledge. Any time you lack one of the links in this golden chain of sanctification, you will go backwards. And if you go backwards enough, you will become nearsighted. Sanctification is by faith - a *diligent* faith that fights off anything that would keep our eyes off of Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith.

True Christianity perseveres by being reminded of God's sovereign grace (1:10-15)

In the next section we see that true Christianity perseveres by being reminded of God's sovereign grace over and over again through the rest of our lives. Peter keeps using words of reminder. Let's read verses 10-15. "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure." Let me stop there for a moment. What does it mean to make your calling and election sure? Wasn't election before the foundation of the world? Wasn't it settled and done? Yes it was. Wasn't calling the first act of the Holy Spirit on your soul before you responded? Yes it was. Making sure of it does not mean you are making it happen. That's a man-centered, Arminian approach. Making sure of it is gaining assurance of it. How can you be sure you are elect? By believing and continuing to grow by faith. The non-elect will not do so. How do you have assurance that the Spirit of God has called you into His kingdom? In the same way, by believing and persevering in a faith that daily receives everything from Christ. The Holy Spirit does not give assurance of salvation to those who shift their focus from God to man. Why would He? Continuing to read:

2Pet. 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

There is so much in there that I can't comment on, but I will say that our whole life we will need to be reminded to live by grace and keep a God-centered Christianity. Peter doesn't want the tug of the flesh to make us man-centered.

As a side-note, Peter says that he will soon die. If he was executed in Rome as many think, it had to be before AD 68. If he was executed in Jerusalem (as I believe), it could have happened any time between AD 66 and AD 70.

True Christianity is founded upon God's Word alone (1:16-21)

God's Word versus man's traditions (v. 16a)

Peter ends this chapter on true God-centered Christianity by pointing out that true Christianity is founded upon God's inspired, inerrant, and prophetic Word alone. He says in verse 16, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables..." He is here contrasting the true faith with Judaism. True Christianity has nothing of man or man's opinions mixed in. Judaism was the opposite. It was simply the dialectical opinions of various rabbis, scribes, and fathers. And just as Jesus utterly rejected those traditions, Peter rejects them 100% as well.

So the first part of verse 16 castigates Christians who look to man rather than to the Bible as their source of truth. Well, this is a rebuke to most modern evangelical Christianity which has abandoned the Reformation principle of Sola Scriptura. Even Reformed people sometimes embrace evolutionism, psychology, sociology, humanistic anthropology, and

other so-called sources of truth and then impose their already preset paradigms upon the Bible. That is no different in principle than the man-centered Christianity of chapter 2. Maybe they haven't gone as far as the Christians of chapter 2 went, but it is still man-centered rather than Bible centered. So Peter's first point with regard to God's Word is that true Christianity does not follow the traditions of man. It follows the Word. "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables..."

God's Word takes on God's characteristics of honor and glory (vv. 16b-18)

Second, true Christianity passes on God's Words alone. You cannot be God-centered without being Bible-centered. Peter continues:

2Pet. 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

The apostles received the Word of God directly in their prophetic vision. And they communicated that vision when they wrote the Gospels. And these prophecies (whether heard, spoken, or written) constituted God Himself speaking.

God's prophetic Word is absolutely certain (v. 19a)

Verse 19 says, "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed..." The word for "confirmed" is βέβαιος, and means absolute certainty. Prophecy is not an "I think so." Even the oral prophecy that Peter referred to in verses 17-18 is equivalent to the oral prophecies of Old Testament prophets in verse 21, when "holy men of God *spoke* as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." So whether seen, spoken, or written, all true prophecy is inerrant, infallible, and absolutely certain. It is βέβαιος.

And here's the point that he will emphasize several times in the next chapter. False Christianity obscures the certainty of God's Words in myriad ways. For example, evangelical feminism writes entire books to try to prove that what Paul and Peter wrote about women does not really mean what it seems to mean. Seminary professors write book after book, and invent theory after theory on why Genesis 1 does not really mean what it seems to mean. There are 20 theories that seek to insert billions of years into what an obvious reading says is six days. And we say with Peter, "No. When God said that He made the universe in six days, it is certain, infallible, and true, and we refuse to be dissuaded by man-centered arguments of man-centered Christians. Peter is pushing us to true Christianity; to Sola Scriptura Christianity; to consistent Christianity."

God's prophetic Word has the power to bring light out of darkness (v. 19b)

Verse 19 goes on to say that true Christians will use God's Word and have the confidence that it really does miraculously bring light out of darkness into even the most hardened souls - Saul of Tarsus being one example. There is power in the Word of God. It says, "which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts..." Now obviously there is a gradual progress that is

hinted at the by the word “dawns.” We don’t become consistent Christians overnight. None of us do. But that’s the goal - to have the light of the Bible transform every thought and lead every thought captive to Christ.

I have talked to Christian politicians in Nebraska who refuse to bring God’s Word to bear on politics, thinking that natural law is enough. But it is only God’s Word that can beat down all opposition because it is God Himself speaking. The question is, “Does the church have confidence in God’s Word? Are we Word-centered in all of life?” If not, we are automatically man-centered in at least *those* other areas of life. The moment we abandon applying the Scriptures to various areas of life, we are sliding down the road to the kind of compromised Christianity that chapter 2 talks about. We may still be fairly orthodox and may be saved, but we are sliding on a bad trajectory. And the modern Evangelical church is already going faster and faster down this trajectory of chapter 2 man-centeredness because they have lost confidence that God’s Word is relevant to transform our every thought.

God’s prophetic Word does not originate in man and is not clouded by man’s weakness (vv. 20-21)

The last point that Peter makes about the prophetic Word is that it does not originate in man and is not clouded by man’s weakness. It is inspired, inerrant, infallible, and just as trustworthy as God Himself if He was talking to you face-to-face in Person. Peter says,

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Notice that Peter doesn’t *only* apply this concept to Scripture or written prophecy. He also applies it to *spoken* prophecy. This is one of many verses that shows that New Testament prophecy is no different than Old Testament prophecy.

But let’s think first of the written prophetic Scriptures. What does he mean by saying that no portion of Scripture is of any private interpretation. Let me illustrate with evangelicals who say the opposite. Feminist Christians will say that Paul interpreted God’s revelation through a human sieve of chauvinism and so didn’t completely receive God’s Word. It was a little bit clouded. They claim it was God’s Word mixed with man’s ideas. For example, one pastor here in Omaha told me that when Paul received the vision of the Macedonian call, Paul’s chauvinism made him think that it was a man calling him to Macedonia, when in reality it was Lydia (according to him). But this verse shows that viewpoint to be heresy. It says that no prophecy has any private interpretation involved in its origin. And verse 21 applies the same principle to all oral prophecies. He says that prophecies of any sort never came by the will of man.

To say the opposite (as Wayne Grudem does) is to begin the slippery slope into the man-centered Christianity of chapter 2. Why? Because (as Grudem admits) it is mixing man’s ideas with God’s Words and calling them prophecy. In fact, chapter 2 starts with this same issue of prophecy and shows how important it is to see all true prophecy as inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, certain, and 100% from God, utterly unmixed with anything of man. The charismatic movement really needs to quit calling their guidance prophecy. It unwittingly undermines this one foundation of true God-centered Christianity.

I don't doubt that God's Spirit is sometimes leading and guiding some of them, but they do not have prophecy. Peter is quite clear that "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." By the way, I don't treat Wayne Grudem as a false Christian like the people in chapter 2 were. He is valiantly trying to bring the charismatics back away from a man-centered perspective. But he has started on a wrong footing. That's the point. His attempt to rescue them from a man-centered Christianity is doomed from the start because he has a false view of prophecy.

Man-centered Christianity can so easily end up denying all the foundations of the faith (2:1-22)

But let's go to chapter 2 and look next at how a man-centered Christianity can slide so far from the faith that it will eventually abandon *all* the fundamentals of a God-centered Christianity. It doesn't start by abandoning them all, or they wouldn't have been members of apostolic churches. But that is the eventual trajectory of any form of man-centeredness in our Christianity. And all of us probably have some man-centeredness. We are not consistent.

It had replaced God's inerrant word with man's teachings (v. 1a)

Since he ended chapter 1 with a proper view of prophecy, he begins chapter 2 with the subject of false prophecy. Peter says, "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you..." In the Old Testament God defined a false prophet as one who brought words that God did not give him and yet claimed that God did. Well, these false teachers are parallel in that they are teaching words that God did not give them. Neither the Old Testament false prophets nor the New Testament false teachers bring the people God's inerrant word. They mix it with other ideas.

This is the thing to watch out for in a pastor. If he can spend an entire sermon giving his opinions and rarely backing up what he says from Scripture, you already have a pastor-centered ministry rather than a Word-centered ministry. I listened to one famous preacher who read the Bible and then proceeded to preach for half an hour without a single reference to his text or any other text in the Bible. There was not one verse in his entire sermon. He used his office and his fame to get across his opinion. Now, it happened to be a correct opinion, but he was not modeling a Word-centered ministry. Though a good man, that man was on a slippery slope to a man-centered Christianity. This is what cults do. Virtually every cult gives an illusion of standing for the Bible, but their true authority is the men or women leaders of the cult.

It tolerated deviation from historic doctrine (v. 1b)

The second danger signal is that these teachers deviated from historic doctrine. Verse 1 goes on to say, "even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies..." The word for heresy means sectarian teaching that deviates from the biblical tradition. The last two decades have seen a flurry of new doctrines that have never been taught by the church of the past. And that is one of 10 signs of a cult - that it believes the entire church is apostate and they make an abrupt break with historic creeds

and confessions. Now, they give the illusion of being biblical on that because they correctly show that creeds and councils can err (which they can), and they proceed to speak against the arrogance of creeds (which is going too far). The irony is that they engage in the arrogance of individualism.

It embraced a false Christology (v. 1c)

A third danger signal is that they embraced a false Christology (in other words, a false doctrine of Jesus). This almost always happens in cults. He doesn't amplify on exactly how they denied Jesus, but the use of the word δεσπότης for "Lord" may indicate that they denied the need to submit to his Lordship. If so, this would be parallel to the antinomian Carnal Christian theory that says you can accept Jesus as Savior without accepting Him as Lord. When I was a kid I was puzzled with the zeal with which one man in our congregation over and over denied the need to accept Jesus as Lord and denied the law. He kept saying, "We are not under law. We are under grace." It turned out later, he had been molesting the boys in the church. No wonder he didn't want to be reminded of the law.

But commentaries point out that there are many many ways people can deviate from an orthodox view of Jesus. I have run across numerous so-called evangelical pastors who hold to heretical views of God or Christ. Several Full Preterists have denied that the body Jesus showed to His disciples in Luke 24 was His real resurrection body. Which, when you think about it, really involves Jesus in deceit in Luke 24 on their theory. And they deny that was His real body because that body had flesh and bones. In the early church, there were at least 8 denials of Christ's true nature. Let me list them so that you can learn from history.

1. Docetism denied that Christ was truly man. Well, He can't be our Savior if that is the case.
2. Arianism denied that Christ was truly God. Again, that eviscerates His ability to be our Mediator and Savior.
3. Apollinarianism denied that Christ had a human soul and mind. I've run across several evangelical pastors who hold to the same heresy today.
4. Nestorianism denied that Christ was only one person
5. Eutychianism denied that Christ had two distinct natures
6. Monothelism denied that Jesus had a human will.
7. Patripassionism (also called Monarchism) denied that Jesus was distinct from the Father as a Person.
8. Pelagianism said that salvation was possible without Christ's sacrifice or grace. He said that though Christ's help was good, it was not essential.

The point is that the church needs to always be vigilant against novel Christologies.

It's destructive teachings became popular (v. 2)

Next is a sociological factor of engendering blind loyalty to a preacher. These teachers knew how to make their destructive doctrines become popular. Verse 2 says,

And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

They are self-serving and exploitive (v. 3a)

We can't go through every verse in this chapter, but verse 3 certainly describes a lot of massively wealthy Christian teachers today. It says, "By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words..." They do this by promising healing, wealth, and other forms of success *if you invest in their ministry*. A large number of mega-church ministries today are led by self-serving exploitive teachers who spout heresy after heresy. Evangelicals love T.D. Jakes, but he doesn't even worship the same God that we do. People don't realize that he is a Modalist, not a Trinitarian. Rob Bell (is an emerging church heretic), Greg Boyd (is an Open Theist heretic who worships a different God, yet Evangelicals love him), Joel Osteen and so many others fit into this category.

They aren't bothered by the thought of judgment (vv. 3b-9)

And many of them don't seem to be at all bothered by the fact that they are doomed to judgment. Many actually deny that God brings judgment. Their consciences are seared. They have failed to learn from the numerous judgments God outlined in the Bible. They insist that their God is love and wouldn't hurt a fly. Look at verses 3 and following and you will see that God hurts much more than just flies:

2 Peter 2:3b - for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)— 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

Oh, there is so much in that passage we can't get into. But you need to be nervous when a teacher denies hell, or denies God's judgments in history. Peter warns us to watch out. I had one pastor tell me that he didn't believe in the God of the Old Testament, who was too judgmental - who killed the Canaanites. He believed in the God of the New Testament. I read to him from Revelation and asked him if there was anything in the Old Testament that matched vengeance in that book. And he then told me that he had doubts about the God of the New Testament. I asked him where he got his conceptions of God, and he said that he got personal charismatic revelation of who God is. And he was accepted as a preacher in a charismatic evangelical church.

Their character is self-destructive (vv. 10-17)

Verses 10-17 go on to say that their character is self-destructive, but they don't get it.

10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. 12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

When we get to Jude I will show how the similar laundry list that Jude gives is actually very encouraging. Though heretics may dominate for a while, they cannot deliver what they promise and eventually people will realize that they are wells without water. Several sermons could be preached on that section. Martin Selbrede recently wrote a marvelous blog on just one phrase related to reviling.³ Wow! What a convicting article. But we need to hurry on.

Their claims are not consistent with Scripture (vv. 18-22)

Next, Peter says that their claims are not consistent with Scripture. Verses 18-22.

2Pet. 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

He is not talking about losing salvation. He's not talking about a sheep becoming a sow. The false teachers may be washed, but they were always still sows and dogs, not sheep.

Just one comment: how many modern mega church leaders have been caught with prostitutes, or other forms of adultery, or even homosexual encounters? How many are materialists, prideful, self-centered, and even deceptive? This whole chapter is an incredible laundry list of issues that we see in the modern church. We won't have time to get into them in this overview, but they constitute the antithesis of the true God-centered Christianity that Jesus and the apostles set forth.

³ <https://chalcedon.edu/magazine/revilers-or-reconstructionists>

First century views on eschatology become a case study (3:1-18)

But now we come to Peter's case study in chapter 3. He takes one of the numerous doctrines that these false teachers were promoting to show *how* they twist words. These false teachers were teaching that there would be no end to history and that the promise of final judgment would not happen.

Proof that this is talking about kingdom progress to the end of time and not simply to AD 70

Of course, that is debated nowadays too, isn't it? Is 2 Peter 3 talking about the end of history or is it talking about AD 70 when the Old Covenant ended? Full Preterists say it is AD 70. Of course, they aren't the only ones - John Owen said it was AD 70 as well. He was wrong. I have read and re-read this chapter 100s of times and simply cannot see how that can be. Let me explain why I think that this chapter is talking about Christ's kingdom growing non-stop till the end of history when Christ will come back and usher in the final stage of the kingdom.

Let me first of all explain why full preterists think this is AD 70. They say that the Greek word for "elements" in verse 10 ("the elements will melt with a fervent heat") can be translated as elementary principles or presuppositions - which is true; it can. It's not the only definition, but it can. I don't see how presuppositions can be melted, but Oh, well. Let's assume they are correct. Why is it that they only apply the elementary principles to Judaism? Are those the only presuppositions that Jesus will replace? No. His goal in history is to take every man-centered thought captive, and put every enemy under his feet, and even redeem the physical universe. So even if you took the word "elements" as presuppositions, that didn't happen in AD 70. Non-Christocentric presuppositions continue to be propounded to this day, including the heresy of Talmudism. The reality is that the Greek word refers to any foundational elements; foundational elements of thought and foundational elements of physics. There will be nothing left of thought, works, or even the physical creation that will remain untouched by Christ's grace.

Second, I fail to see how the holiness of Christians in verses 11-13 hastened the day of Jerusalem's fall. If it did, then Jerusalem shouldn't have fallen since the church as a whole slid into what is known as the Great Apostasy. There was only a tiny remnant left that was faithful to God. On the other hand, our faithful holiness and dominion does indeed move earth to its final goal of being filled with righteousness (as verse 13 promises). Our righteousness contributes to that goal.

Third, I fail to see how AD 70 brought in *everything* of verse 13. Look at verse 13: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." The promise of a new heavens and new earth in Isaiah actually started to be fulfilled with Christ (especially His resurrection), but that is AD 30, not 70. And advancements were made in AD 70, but not everything in those chapters was fulfilled in AD 70. Isaiah's passages promise the Christianization of the world, a world filled with righteousness, every nation submitting to God's laws, the end of all war, people living long lives, animals becoming more docile, and God's shalom pervading the earth. And Isaiah

prophesies that all of that will then be *followed* by a judgment where all the reprobate will burn forever (Isaiah 66:24) and then the new heavens and new earth will continue forever without any reprobate (Isaiah 66:22-24). That simply did not happen in AD 70. Yet that is the goal of history - full knowledge of the Lord and full righteousness by His grace.

Fourth, it is very arbitrary for full preterists to give a different definition to heavens and earth in verses 10-13 than they do in verses 4-8. Peter defines his terms and uses them consistently. Verse 5 speaks of the heavens and earth made in Genesis 1:1. That is not Judaism or the Old Covenant (though some heretical Full Preterists do claim that Genesis 1-2 has nothing whatsoever to do with the creation of the physical universe. They say it is just apocalyptic language to describe the setting up of the Old Covenant. They admit that its the same language as 2 Peter, so that forces them to take both passages as not about creation.). The problem is, they are using the Gnostic hermeneutics of the apocalyptic Jewish writers. The Bible knows nothing of Gnostic Apocalyptic hermeneutics, and Genesis 1:1 is talking about a literal heavens and earth.

Likewise, verse 6 speaks of the earth perishing in Noah's flood. Which earth perished in Noah's flood? Not the Old Covenant. It was the literal planet.

Then verse 7 refers to the *same* heavens and earth that he had just been referring to, saying, "But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." He is not talking there about preserving the Old Covenant till AD 70, or preserving Israel till AD 70. He's talking about preserving the planet and universe until all sin and sinners are dealt with on the final day of history. It is not until all the non-elect are resurrected for judgment on the final day of history that this heavens and earth will face the fires of purification. Earth will not be annihilated. It will stand forever. Instead, it will be purified. Nothing in this universe is exempt from the redemption and restoration of Christ's atonement.

But another proof has to do with the timing indicators. None of them point to AD 70. They all point to the end of history. Verse 8 says that it will take thousands of years, and won't be soon. Verse 9 reiterates that it will be a long delay and says that it can't happen until the last elect person is saved. The last elect person was not saved in AD 70. And then he reiterates this refining of the heavens and earth in verse 10. All of history is aiming toward the reversal of every aspect of the curse of Adam's fall. This includes sins being progressively put away (v. 11), the world being filled with righteousness (v. 13), and the heavens being refined by fire (v. 12). Christ's redemption cannot leave anything untouched.

There are a lot more proofs, but these should be sufficient to show that Ken Gentry is absolutely correct when he says that this *must* be referring to the final day of history, not AD 70.

Peter presents two eschatologies: a false eschatology that says this world will never change and a true eschatology that says that everything will change

So in this chapter Peter is presenting two eschatologies. There is a false eschatology that says that this world has never changed and will never change. It is a pessimistic eschatology that robs people of hope. That is Satan's goal to rob you of hope. Then there is

the eschatology of hope that I just outlined. This eschatology of hope leaves no square inch of this universe outside of a God-centered and Christ-grounded purpose. After all, God says in the Old Testament that He made a covenant with the moon, sun, stars, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things on the ground (see Jer. 31:31-40; Hos. 2:18; Ezek. 34:25). Creation and New Creation are book ends of the same physical universe. To say otherwise is to reduce the Gospel to a Gnostic escapism.

Our eschatology is based on God's Word (vv. 1-2)

Let's go to the beginning of chapter 3 and see how Peter argues this. In verses 1-2 Peter reminds them that his eschatology is based upon the Scriptures that went before - namely, the Old Testament and the writings of the apostles and prophets. He says,

2Pet. 3:1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

Where does Full Preterism go for their method of interpretation? Not to the Scriptures, as Peter did. Over and over in their books they insist that you can't understand these Scriptures unless you use the worldview of the Apocalyptic writings of the Jews. In our Revelation series we saw that those apocalyptic writings were written by Christ-hating Gnostic Jews. Like Peter, we get our hermeneutics from the Bible and from the bible alone. In fact, I plan to do a video series and a textbook on hermeneutics to illustrate how imitating the exegesis used by Old Testament prophets interpreting earlier prophets and Jesus and the apostle interpreting earlier Scriptures we have all that we need to know how to interpret the rest of the Bible. Our eschatology (like everything else) must flow from the Bible, not from Talmudic Apocalypticism.

The eschatology of the "last days" false teachers was based on human experience (vv. 3-4)

Contrast this with the eschatology of the last-days-Talmudists that Peter was writing against. They looked around them with newspaper exegesis and because they didn't see ground for optimism, they denied that Christ would come or that history would end. Theological liberals today do much the same. Look at verses 3-4.

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days [Full Preterists are correct that the last days were the days leading up to AD 70], walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

They looked around them and all they saw was continuity; sameness. So they conclude that sameness will be true for the future. It's a fallacy of logic, but it is certainly not Biblical.

Their pessimistic eschatology led them to live for themselves (v. 3)

And this denial of judgment not only led to a denial of progress in history; it also led them to live for themselves. Verse 3 says that the reason for their denial of judgment is that they wanted to justify their immorality. I found it interesting that though Aldous Huxley frequently declared that he was an atheist because the facts forced him to that conclusion,

in one of his more honest moments he admitted that he denied God and judgment because he wanted to live in sin. In his book, *Ends and Means*, he said,

I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had not; and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning for this world is not concerned exclusively with the problem of pure physics; he is also concerned to prove there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to... For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.⁴

Though these first century teachers may not have been that blunt, Peter says that they were driven by the same reason. Their immorality led them to a man-centered version of Christianity. It was easier.

Their pessimistic eschatology led them to deny any reversal of history (v. 4)

Next, their pessimistic eschatology led them to deny any reversal of history. Verse 4:

and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

Peter refutes their pessimistic eschatology

Obviously this was a revisionist view of history. And Peter refutes it with seven arguments.

Even in the Old Covenant there were radical reversals in history (v. 5-6)

In verses 5-6 he points out that even in the Old Testament there were at least two examples of miraculous actions in history that were universally applied.

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

The word for "forget" is not the best translation. You can make the same point with that translation, but the literal rendering makes the meaning more pungent. The dictionary says that it literally means to avoid, hide, or conceal the meaning of something. These apocalyptic teachers did the same thing that some of the modern Full Preterists do. They made Genesis 1 and Genesis 6-8 mean something different than what it seems to mean. They are hiding or concealing the true meaning.

Let me explain by looking at each of the two things that these teachers hid or obscured through their weird teaching. Verse 5 deals with the creation of all things in Genesis 1. One translation words it this way: "But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water." That's a summary of the first verses of Genesis 1. How did the false teachers obscure the meaning of Genesis 1? The exact same way that Timothy Martin, Jeffrey Vaughn and a bunch of other Full Preterists do. By making everything in Genesis 1 apocalyptic symbolic language

⁴ Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means: An Inquiry into the Nature of Ideals* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 315-316.

describing Israel and God's covenant with them. This heresy is spreading like wildfire among Full Preterists. It amounts to a total denial of the creation of the universe out of nothing. It is an unbiblical hermeneutics. And it receives Peter's rebuke here.

The second thing that these false teachers obscured was the universal flood. Verse 6 says, "By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed." These false teachers had a hard time believing that, so they treated it as symbolism. Very convenient. Well, this is exactly what Timothy Martin does in his book, *Beyond Creation: How Preterism Refutes a Global Flood*. It is a willful and deceitful hiding or obscuring of the obvious meaning of Genesis 6-8 by making it nothing but symbolism of doctrine.

Here's the irony, these modern false teachers have gotten their hermeneutics from the ancient Jewish gnostic false teachers - the same gnostics that Peter refutes. And then they have the audacity to hide not only those chapters in Genesis, but to also hide what Peter is saying in this chapter by interpreting it the same way. They say that Genesis 1 deals with the beginning of the Old Covenant and its temple and 2 Peter 3 deals with the ending of the Old Covenant and its temple in AD 70. I have very little patience with such exegesis. Take the text at face value or stop pretending to believe the Bible.

Now, not all Full Preterists buy into that nonsense in Genesis 1, but they still interpret 2 Peter 3 as being the ending of the Old Covenant and the destruction of Jerusalem by fire. But if that was the case, Peter wasn't using his strongest arguments. Think about it. If (as I believe) Peter was trying to prove a *universal* and *miraculous* purifying of all things by fire (something that the gnostic Jews definitely had a hard time believing), then it would make perfect sense to appeal to the two previous *universal* and *miraculous* events that God engaged in. But those are the two events that these false teachers obscured with their so-called apocalyptic language.

But if (as Full Preterists insist) Peter is simply trying to convince them that *Jerusalem* would be destroyed soon by the Romans, what bearing does creation and flood have to his argument? None. It would be much easier to refer those Jews to the previous destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. My interpretation fits Peter's flow of argument much better.

The same physical world that was flooded will itself be changed/redeemed (v. 7)

Peter's next argument for Christ not destroying the world yet is that He is preserving it for something. He says in verse 7, "By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." Full Preterists say that heavens and earth refers to the temple, not to the universe. But context is king, and Peter has *already defined his words in verses 5 and 6*. So in verse 7 Peter says that the same physical world that was flooded, and the same heavens and earth that God created in Genesis 1, is being preserved until nothing that was affected by the Fall is left. All unrighteousness will be removed by removing all unrighteous people from it. That didn't happen in AD 70. But the final goal will be reached before history ends and before the final stage of the kingdom endures for eternity.

But this can't happen anytime soon (v. 8)

Anyway, in verse 8 he makes clear that this is not going to happen soon. "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." God has lots of time on his hands. Unlike the destruction of Jerusalem, which the apostles consistently said would be soon, was near, and was at hand, this judgment conjures up images of thousands of years. Why? Because it *will* be thousands of years later. If the war was to start the same year 2 Peter was written (AD 66 - and it did), and if Jerusalem and temple were to be destroyed within four years, it makes no sense to even introduce the concept of thousands of years. Keep in mind that it is *contemporary* false teachers that Peter was dealing with.

This can't happen until the last elect person is saved (v. 9)

And in verse 9 he explains the reason for being slow and delaying the fulfillment of this promise for thousands of years. It's not the same conception of slowness that these false teachers attribute to God. It says, "The Lord is not slack [or slow] concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." The Lord *is* slow, or longsuffering. The word for "longsuffering" means to wait through a long delay (μακροθυμέω). But He is *not* slow the way these false teachers think. There is a reason for His slowness - "that all should come to repentance." Who does the "all" refer to? To the "us" in the previous clause - all of us; all of the the elect. God is not willing to allow any of His elect to perish. When the last elect person is saved, history will end. But the word μακροθυμέω implies a long delay.

History cannot be finished until the earth is filled with righteousness (v. 13) and every vestige of the sin-cursed universe is changed and restored (vv. 10,12,13), and our godly conduct hastens that day (vv. 11-12).

His next argument is given in verses 10-13. God is not just waiting for the elect to all get saved. He is also waiting for the world to be filled with righteousness. Verse 13 gives the goal of history: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth *in which righteousness dwells.*" ** Let's break that verse apart. The word "look" is προσδοκάω, and means to have expectation. We are expecting changes in this world. Though Christ did begin the process of making all things new in His resurrection, AD 70 did not fulfill the many promises of peace, prosperity, righteousness, and a converted world. History cannot end until God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. But that history will* end can be seen from verse 10:*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." To apply that to the temple does not work. It's the same heavens that were created in Genesis 1 that will have something happen to them with a great noise. I don't like the translation, "pass away." The BDAG dictionary gives as one of the definitions of the Greek word translated as "pass away," as "to pass through" or to "go through." The world and stars won't be ended. They will pass through fire. They will still be there after the fire. But it will be purified by fire and that purification process will usher in the final stage of the kingdom when no sinners will be in this new heavens and new earth that Christ is already gradually developing from AD

30 till the end of time. And why is fire needed? To remove every visible reminder of sin and the curse. There will be no dinosaur bones left. There will be no buried idols or occult symbols left. Christ's kingdom is destined to remove every vestige of sin.

Since our faithfulness advances God's goal of a completely redeemed creation (v. 14a), we must be diligent to promote the righteousness (v. 14b) and slowly advancing salvation (v. 15a) that Paul and the rest of the Scriptures speak about (vv. 15b-16), though the false teachers deny it (v. 16b)

Peter's next argument is that since our faithfulness advances God's goal of a completely redeemed creation, we must be diligent in pursuing righteousness and advancing the salvation of the world, just as Paul and the rest of the Scriptures prophesied would happen. Starting to read at verse 14.

2Pet. 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

There is a ton of information in that little paragraph, but the key point Peter is hammering home is parallel to what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15. After promising that all enemies would be put under Christ's feet, and that Jesus would not come back until the world was Christianized and everything was reconciled to Him, Paul ends 1 Corinthians 15 by pointing to the final resurrection and the last enemy being destroyed, and then says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." An AD 70 interpretation simply does not do justice to the flow of Peter's entire argument. Instead, it falls into the same problems that the Jewish teachers taught in the first century.

In light of God's goal for planet earth, we should beware of false views (v. 17), be steadfast (v. 17), and grow in grace and knowledge so that all glory goes to God in history and in eternity (v. 18).

Well, Peter concludes his epistle by arguing that in light of God's goal for planet earth, we should beware of any false views (verse 17), we should be steadfast ourselves (verse 17), and we should grow in grace and knowledge so that all glory goes to God in history and in eternity (verse 18). Let me read verses 17-18.

2Pet. 3:17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

And I say, Amen and Amen. Let's pray.

Appendix A - Gentry's view of 2 Peter 3

(2) Peter's audience (including us!) should expect mockers who scoff at Christ's promised second advent due to the long wait associated with it (2Pe 3:3-4, 9). This waiting continues to our very day, and thus is truly long. Despite the trials coming soon (2:9),

Peter warns that it may be thousands of years before Christ's return: "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (3:8). This fits well with Christ's "already/not yet" teaching elsewhere — as when he contrasts the short time until the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 23:36; 24:34) with the long time until the second advent and the end of history (Mt 25:5, 14).

- (3) The Lord's longsuffering is due to a process that will take a long time. Nevertheless, they must understand that despite the long delay: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness [braduteta], but is longsuffering [makrothumei] toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9 NKJV). They must "account that the longsuffering [makrathumian] of our Lord is salvation" (3:15a). This process of calling "all" to "repentance" spans the entire inter-advental era and is still continuing to our very day. This "slowness" (bradutes, v 9) of Christ's second advent is so that the postmillennial kingdom victory might continue to grow unto full fruition. This comports well with the slow growth of the kingdom like a mustard seed (Mt 13:31–32) and with the necessity of "all the days [palas tas hemeras]" for accomplishing the Great Commission (Mt 28:20).

Peter expressly refers to the material creation order: "from the beginning of creation" (2Pe 3:4; cf. Ge 1:1); "by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water" (3:5; cf. Ge 1:2, 9); "the heavens and the earth which now exist" (3:7). Thus, he defines the "heavens and earth" to which he refers and which God will replace with a "new heaven and a new earth" (3:10, 13). He is not contemplating the destruction of the old Jewish order in AD 70, but the material heavens and the earth at the second advent.

The language describing earth's destruction seems to go beyond apocalyptic imagery and prophetic hyperbole. The detailed language refers to the actual end-time consummation: "the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2Pe 3:10). "The heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat" (3:12). In the apocalyptic-symbolic passages thought to parallel 2 Peter 3 we find time frame factors and cultural limitations. Furthermore, this destruction terminology does not appear in Isaiah 65:17ff, from where the phrase "new heavens and new earth" derives. Ken Gentry, <https://postmillennialworldview.com/2019/01/01/consummate-new-creation-in-peter-2/>