

A Study of 2 Peter 3

I. Outline.

1. Peter's purpose in writing (2 Peter 3:1-2).
2. Don't be dissuaded by the scoffers (3-8).
3. The great conflagration (9-10).
4. How then should you live? (11-18).

II. Summary.

What a rich blessing this chapter is to faithful Bible students! One of the greatest concerns that is on the hearts of people everywhere is: "What will happen at the end of time?" This great chapter helps us to understand and know the answer to that great question. Peter first helps us to know that having the truth about end times will not be so easy because there will always be men who scoff at that truth. We need to be firmly in possession of the facts as revealed to us and then we need not to allow anyone to plant doubt in our hearts to lead us to reject the doctrine. Scoffers were saying that there is no coming judgment day because all things are continuing today as they always have. Peter begs to differ with such an idea and reminds us of the days of the flood. By the very same word that resulted in the destruction of those pre-flood heathens, the heavens and earth are kept in store for the final day of judgment (v. 7). In addition, the reckoning of time is different with the Lord than it is with men. Peter points out the great longsuffering of the Lord. BUT, the day of the Lord's judgment will come as a thief in the night. There will be absolutely nothing left of this earth when that day comes—it will be totally destroyed. Hence, Peter asks us, on the basis of the fact that all of this will be destroyed, what manner of persons should you be?

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- 2 Peter 3:1... **PURE MINDS**—"The word rendered pure is often explained tested by the sunlight; but this is very doubtful, ... Others derive it from the root of the verb ειλίσσω, to roll, and explain it as that which is separated or sifted by rolling, as in a sieve. In favor of this etymology is its association in classical Greek with different words meaning unmixed. The word occurs only here and Philippians 1:10. The kindred noun ειλικρίνεα, sincerity, is found 1 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Corinthians 2:17" [Vincent's Word Studies].
- 2 Peter 3:2... **AND OF THE COMMANDMENT OF US THE APOSTLES OF THE LORD AND SAVIOUR**—"As being equally entitled with the prophets to state and enforce the doctrines and duties of religion. It may be observed, that no man would have used this language who did not regard himself and his fellow apostles as inspired, and as on a level with the prophets" [Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible].
- 2 Peter 3:4... **ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY WERE**—"Such an attitude generated from their denial of Calvary (2 Pet 2:1) and their rejection of divine superintendency (according to 2 Pet 3:4 they were affirming that what was, is, and shall forevermore be; that is, there is no divine intervention in the affairs of man). With such attitudes and denials obtaining, it is no marvel that we read of them that they walked 'after their own lusts' (2 Pet 3:3). Living in constant recognition of the Lord's coming constitutes a strong prohibitive against sinning. These castigators shared in the spirit of the Sodomites of Lot's day (Gen 19:14), as well as the scoffers of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's days (Isa 5:19; Jer 17:15). However, the day is coming when the scoffers will become

subjects and the castigators will become confessors (Ph 2:5-11)” [Wendell Winkler, in “II Peter 3 and the Second Coming of Christ, in Premillennialism, True or False, Edited by Wendell Winkler, p. 24].

- 2 Peter 3:6... **WORLD THAT THEN WAS, BEING OVERFLOWED WITH WATER, PERISHED**—“Had these scoffers considered the dreadful vengeance with which God swept away a whole world of ungodly men at once, surely they would not have scoffed at his threatening an equally terrible judgment” [Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary].
- 2 Peter 3:8... **AS A THOUSAND YEARS**—“...lapse of time between the promise and the realization is not to be interpreted as meaning that God will not fulfill his commitments and discharge his threatenings. ... The meaning is that the passing of time does not affect the promises and threatenings of God. Whether it be a day or a thousand years between the time of the promise and the reward, the threatening and the retribution, God will perform it” [Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on 2 Peter, pp. 184-85].
- 2 Peter 3:9... **BUT IS LONGSUFFERING TO USWARD**—Cf., 2 Pet 3:15; Ex 34:6-7; Nehemiah 9:30; Ps 86:15; Isa 30:18; 48:9; Joel 2:13; Rom 2:4; 9:22; 1 Tm 1:16; 1 Pet 3:20.
- 2 Peter 3:10... **AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT**—“Paul used this figure of the thief’s sudden coming (1 Thess. 5:2); the apostle John used it twice (Rev. 3:3, 16:15); but it was Christ who first used it (Matt. 24:43)” [James Burton Coffman’s Commentaries]. shall melt with fervent heat—“Thus, Peter is affirming that in the catastrophic conflagration the constituent portions and parts of the earth’s system will return to their original state of nothingness. Be it also observed, that ‘shall melt’ is futuristic or prophetic present in tense, indicating a certain fulfillment! Comprehend it, who can?” [Wendell Winkler, in “II Peter 3 and the Second Coming of Christ,” in *Premillennialism, True or False*, Edited by Wendell Winkler, p. 29]. shall be burned up—“David Brown says of the word *katakasetai*, ‘shall be burned down;’ the Latins would say *exuretur*, ‘shall be burned out,’ while we say, ‘shall be burned up;’ the idea of complete consumption being alike conveyed by all these forms of expression. The word is translated ‘shall be utterly burned’ in Revelation 18:8. II Peter 3 does not teach the doctrine of a renovated earth” [Ibid].
- 2 Peter 3:11... **WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS**—“Since we have no abiding home on this earth and seek one beyond, we should live in a state of preparation” [B.W. Johnson, *The People’s New Testament*].
- 2 Peter 3:13... **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH**—“From a careful consideration of the matters set forth in the foregoing passage, these facts seem clear: (a) The present heavens and earth serve as a figure of the heavens and earth to follow. (b) The words ‘heavens and earth’ are not intended to embrace all of God’s material universe, but only that portion where his people dwell. (c) In the ante type, this limitation must be understood, and the words ‘new heaven and earth’ must then be regarded as a designation of where his people dwell, and not a detailed description of the future abode. (d) Heaven is the final abode of the people of God. (e) Therefore, the phrase ‘new heavens and earth’ must be understood as a designation for heaven !” [Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on 2 Peter, pp. 189].
- 2 Peter 3:15... **THE LONGSUFFERING OF OUR LORD IS SALVATION**—“That God’s long suffering is designed to promote salvation” [B.W. Johnson, *The People’s New Testament*]. ...even as our beloved brother Paul...--“Important considerations which follow from this are: (1) The destruction which results is due, not to the scripture or its writers, but to its improper handling by men. (2) The passage does not teach that all scripture is difficult of understanding and should not be read. (3) It does not lend support to the view that man needs an infallible interpreter of the scriptures. (4) What is taught is that some scripture is hard to understand and that evil men utilize such for ungodly purposes. (5) The lesson, by implication, is that we should be on guard against any interpretation contrary to the general teaching of the Bible. It is clear that Paul’s writings were then generally accepted as scripture, and that Peter, another inspired man, so regarded them” [Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on 2 Peter, p. 192].

- V. **Lessons & Applications.** [These lessons all come from Wendell Winkler, in “II Peter 3 and the Second Coming of Christ,” in *Premillennialism, True or False*, Edited by Wendell Winkler, pp., 31-32].
1. **Be informed.** Be not ignorant of this one thing (2 Pet 3:8). Thus, we must be Bible-desiring, Bible-reading, Bible-studying, Bible-memorizing, and Bible-teaching people.
 2. **Be holy.** In all holy conversation (2 Pet 3:11). Thus, we are to be a set-apart people, sanctified for the master’s use.
 3. **Be godly.** And godliness (2 Pet 3:11). We must resemble our Father! Christ must be seen in us (Gal 2:20). We must have the mind of Christ (Ph 2:5). Christ is to be the copy (example) after which we pattern our lives (1 Pet 2:21-22).
 4. **Be expectant.** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ... look for a new heavens and a new earth ... seeing that you look for such things (2 Pet 3:12-14). “Looking for” in verse 12 suggests “waiting for,” “expecting.” The word is used of Joseph who “waited for the kingdom of God” (Mk 15:43). Too, it is used of Cornelius who “waited for” Peter and the others (Acts 10:24). The early Christians desired so very much the coming of the Lord that they even prayed, O Lord, come (1 Cor 16:22)! We must avoid attachment to this world, and ungodly conduct, which will militate against us earnestly desiring the coming of our Saviour. The “hasting unto” of verse 12 means “earnestly desiring.”
 5. **Be diligent.** Seeing that you look for such things, be diligent (2 Pet 3:14). Diligence is the antithesis of neglect.
 6. **Be peaceable.** That ye may be found of him in peace (2 Pet 3:14). We must so live as to be found of him in peace with God (Col 3:15; Isa 59:1-2) and with mankind (Mt 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Eph 4:3).
 7. **Be pure.** Without spot (2 Pet 3:14). Such an exhortation was in direct contrast with Peter’s description of the false teachers of his day, Spots they are and blemishes (2 Pet 2:13). Furthermore, the exhortation to be pure is extremely interesting in light of the fact that Peter links the denial of the second coming of Christ with moral laxity in 2 Peter 3:3. Scoffing and sin, laughing and lust, and mockery and moral laxity go hand-in-hand. Christians are to be pure in thought, word, deed, life, and doctrine.
 8. **Be blameless.** And blameless (2 Pet 3:14). Blamelessness is the happy consequence of being pure. We are to so live that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us (Titus 2:8). We are so to live as to give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully (1 Tim 5:14).
 9. **Be cautious.** Seeing you know these things before, beware let ye also... (2 Pet 3:17). Repetitiously the scriptures exhort, TAKE HEED, and BE NOT DECEIVED. Thus, we are to be constantly watchful, cautious, on guard, and careful.
 10. **Be steadfast.** Lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness (2 Pet 3:17). The early disciples continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). Paul exhorts, Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58).
 11. **Be growing.** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18). In his previous epistle, Peter had stated, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (1 Pet 2:2). Growth is the motto of the world. It is grow or die. This is true individually and congregationally. “Which is true in my case?” is a question all should seriously ponder.

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ It is possible to grow in both grace and knowledge.
02. _____ Peter talked about stirring in this epistle.

03. _____ The description of destruction in this chapter leaves room for a renovated earth.
04. _____ The promise of God will be kept.
05. _____ God wants some men lost.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ As part of the description Peter gave of the “new heavens and a new earth,” he included that this dwells there: (a) God; (b) angels; (c) righteousness.
07. _____ Peter talks about apostles giving: (a) advice; (b) commandments; (c) suggestions.
08. _____ The longsuffering of the Lord should lead to: (a) happiness; (b) repentance; (c) reward.
09. _____ Peter advises us to be found of the Lord in: (a) peace; (b) without spot; (c) blameless; (d) all of these.
10. _____ Peter mentions which fellow-apostle in this chapter: (a) James; (b) John; (c) Andrew; (d) Paul.

Fill in the Blanks

11. Regarding time, to the Lord, one day is as a _____.
12. Peter speaks to Christians and compliments them by saying they have _____ minds.
13. Peter makes it known in this chapter that it is possible to _____ from your own _____.
14. The type of “conversation,” or behavior that Peter recommends is _____.
15. Paul wrote _____ things that were _____ to be understood.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to 2 Peter 2 Questions... **01**—False (15); **02**—True (20); **03**—True (1); **04**—True (13); **05**—True (6); **06**—b (3); **07**—a (19); **08**—b (5); **09**—c (11); **10**—c (9); **11**—covetousness, merchandise (3); **12**—Adultery, sin (14); **13**—preacher, righteousness (5); **14**—just (7); **15**—True (22).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. –DRL

D H I L P I H Y W A T E R
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 Y A I N O S A V I O U R F
 F E L G M O V G L B O T H
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| ALSO | AWAY | BEING | BELOVED | BOTH |
| COME | EARTH | EPISTLE | FIRE | HEAVENS |
| HOLY | IGNORANT | KNOW | LONGSUFFERING | LOOK |
| LORD | MINDS | PERISH | PROMISE | SAVIOUR |
| SEEING | SLACK | SOME | THEN | THING |
| THOUSAND | WATER | WILLING | WORD | YEARS |

IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

Will you please consider answering these three SIMPLE questions based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...