
Into Thy Word Bible Study in 2 Peter

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2 Peter 3: 1-9: "God Promises Christ's Return to us!"

General idea: Peter restates his purpose, and desires to get his people thinking about Christ, not the trends of the day, not the new philosophies, false teachers, or the scoffers. He wants them and us focused upon Christ and the precepts and hope He brings. Our thinking needs to be based on Christ, not what we want or how we think things should be. This takes trust and seeing hope. God wants us to understand that He has real, true substance for us to know and do! We have the responsibility to know this trust and hope and put both into our life and practice them.

Peter then cements his reprimand by showing his people the ultimate hope we have in Christ, that our life is all about Him—what He has done, and what He is yet to do. And, the big *yet to do* is His Second Coming. Yet, in the mist of our great hope there will be great distracters who seek to derail us off His tracks by seeding our fears and unbelief. If a false teacher can't get you to see a variant view of a skewed truth, they will turn and ridicule real truth. Thus, they will get you to laugh at the truth to demean it so you will not take it seriously. Scoffing puts the item being scoffed at down while it lifts up the scoffer. Pride is at the base of this, which is always the way Satan works. They will say, "Do you really believe that? How can you take that seriously?" We are to see where their arguments come from, mainly faulty thinking and conniving agendas causing us to forget God's promises and even His past provisions.

Vs. 1-4: Peter was writing about some of the same root problems, namely, those of forgetting Christ's power and impact. So, he shows them from God's Word. He has apostolic authority and is a principle church leader with the job of giving them instructions. The problem is that the depraved human mind still will refuse to listen, no matter by what means or authority the message is relayed. God's patience with and love for us is so amazing!

- *Second letter.* The first would probably be First Peter. Peter is restating his purpose by reminding them of some essential precepts from our Lord he stated in his last letter (1 Pet. 1:13-2:12).
- *Dear friends* means "loved ones" (1 Pet. 2:11; 4:12). Peter wants us to know for certain that Christ will return!
- *Stimulate you/stir you up.* Peter is seeking to help them remember who they are in Christ and the wonders of Him, not the lusts and desires of the flesh. God wants us to live lives that are worthy of being given grace and to show excellence in our character for His glory, and our contentment in Him.

- *Wholesome thinking* means to have a pure mind, undefiled by the filth of false teachers so we can be better prepared (Matt. 24:42-44; Rom. 12:1-3).
- *Prophets... apostles.* Peter is now identifying the Old Testament prophets with the New Testament Apostles as of equal authority. Both are specially called and used by God to spread His truth. However, this does not apply to us today! What does apply is that whoever is in Christ is now a representative of Christ and has responsibility and His authority to spread His knowledge (2 Cor. 5:20).
- *First of all.* This means "above all," as to call attention to an important issue. The issue is, *there will be a judgment!*
- *Last days/last times* means the "Christian era." It does not necessarily refer that the actual, final days of our existence, as in the *second coming*, are around the corner. Rather, it means the period from the resurrection to His second coming. In other words, the present time. Many have mistaken this term to mean that Jesus is right around the corner. Maybe He is, but for countless generations who have said that, well, they have been wrong and have missed the point (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2).
- *Scoffers* ridicule and make fun of what you do not comprehend or understand. Such behavior only makes the person who scoffs the fool. The Gnostics did not believe in the idea of a judgment because they did not believe in moral accountability. Each one needs the other for either to work. Here, the false teachers were ridiculing the idea that Christ would return, since He had not yet. Also, in Jewish tradition at the time, to ridicule a righteous person was considered evil. They also argued that God neither cares for us nor intervenes in our lives and we should not trust in Him. Just because something has not happened does not mean it will not happen. Many lives, businesses, and opportunities have been destroyed by this feeble way of thinking.
- *Evil desires.* Not being rooted in good thinking will create evil stemming from a lack of accountability or a basis for a morality to be built upon.
- *Coming... He promised/promise of His coming.* Some people in the Early Church thought Jesus was coming right back and thus were teaching that as fact, and the false teachers used their impatience and misunderstandings of what Jesus taught against them. Thus, the false teachers were spreading gossip as they mocked them. Ironically, scoffing is one of the evidences that we are in the *last days*. We must be careful that what we believe and teach is authentic, or others will use our own words against us and perhaps be just in doing so.

- *Fathers died/Ancients... fell asleep* is possibly a reference to the Patriarchs who were venerated with great prestige, and have since passed on to Heaven, or the people who came before them who died, such as Steven and other church leaders or martyrs, appealing to their testimony (John 6:31; Acts 3:13; Heb. 13:7-9).

Peter is calling us to think back to what the Lord has done for us, so we don't forget His grace, His provisions, and His answered prayers and blessings. We are not to be overcome with the struggles of the moment so we do not see how He has brought us through them in the past. We are to refresh our memory in Him.

Vs. 5-9: God is sovereign and in control! God's mighty hand was in the environment and in humanity before the beginning of time, and continues today and on to eternity. He will judge the quick (alive) and the dead (Acts 10:42; 1 Peter 4:5; The Apostolic Creed). He made the universe; He made you for a plan and a purpose. You are no mistake; therefore, you are wanted and have a destiny. Thus, we are called to realize that and not let false teachers, scoffers, and/or connivers distract us from seeing Christ and applying His Lordship to our lives.

- *Deliberately forget.* Forgetting or refusing to heed God's Lordship.
- *Formed out of water.* An image of creation when the Lord separated the waters from the sky, and how He is indeed involved in creation and with us (Gen 1:1-10).
- *God's word/word of God* refers to God's ability and authority to command, create, and be Lord. By God's word, the universe was created out of nothing. We were created and saved (Gen. 1:1-30; Psalm 33:6-9; Heb. 11:3).
- *World of that time* means at the time of creation. It refers to history and that God is a God of involvement and action. He is not passive as the deists teach; there is no reason or need to doubt God!
- *Deluged and destroyed/perished* means destroyed by water. God intervenes in history and in our lives. He will judge, as He demonstrated with the Flood (Gen 6-8).
- *By the same word* means "God's divine Word" as in His utterance that creates and commands, referring that God is "all powerful." He repeats the judgment of the flood and the importance of God as the One who is in control and who will judge.
- *Reserved for fire/stored up for fire* refers to an eschatological inferno of fiery, divine judgment, and possibly refers to Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 32:22;

Isa. 65:17; 66:15-22; Mal. 4:1; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7-8; 2 Pet. 2:6).

- *A day is like a thousand years* means God lives outside of space and time and is not governed by our physical or temporal laws of physics or humanity. For God, time is totally relative and in the scope of eternity. This does not necessarily refer to a literal timeline. Rather, it is a figure of speech that God's view and perspective of things is not our view and the converse thereof. This is an aspect of His sovereignty. Also, this is a quote of Psalm 90:4.
- *Slow in keeping/slowness*. We have no knowledge of God's timing! It seems that God is slow to us, but He is in absolute control and we can have patience and trust in Him and His timing. We are impatient with our thinking and expectations, whereas God is patient, allowing His grace and plan to work out. There is no need to make up dates or predict His Second Coming. We are called to be obedient and wait actively in His Word and truth.
- *Patient* means that our God is a long-suffering God. When God delays His judgment, this means He is demonstrating His love, grace, and forbearance for the consummation of His purpose. We are to take comfort in that He is a God of grace and mercy and is patient with us when we do not deserve it. He seeks our repentance and trust. Therefore, we have no need to be impatient or confused or allow the mocking or misleading of others to distract us from His purpose and plan (John 6:39).
- *Repentance*. This does not mean all will be saved. But, all are loved and desire to be saved, but somewhere is our rebellion and sin and God's providence to elect us anyway. God wants us to repent! We are to repent of our indifference and lack of trust in Him (John 10:28-29).

Peter is restating his purpose of being an encourager and, at the same time, is shepherding them. A shepherd protects his sheep. If the sheep run astray, he will do what it takes to keep them safe and put, even if he has to beak their legs so they will not be eaten. A pastor needs to rout out false teachers and discipline those who cause others to stumble. If not, others will fall prey to things that are misleading, counterfeit, and dangerous. We can't just look the other way, hoping all will work out. We have to be *proactive* and engage the enemy, even the ones in our own flock. Of course, we do this in love—but not just with *feelings* of love because we will not feel like loving them and, unless one has a disparaging personality, dispensing discipline will not be a joy. However, we are called to act and to do so within the Fruit of the Spirit and love, carrying a staff to remove the wolves that desire to carry off our flock.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see [Inductive Bible Study](#)):

1. What does this passage say?

2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Has someone ever made a promise to you and then did not follow through with it? How did you feel?
2. Where does your thinking need to be stimulated? How does remembering what our Lord has done for you in the past help strengthen your faith for the future?
3. How important is the “Second Coming” to you concerning how you live your life?
4. Do you realize that most arguments with God come from our faulty thinking and conniving agendas, causing us to forget God’s promises and even His past provisions?
5. What are some of the fears and unbeliefs that you have you heard people say about the Second Coming? How does scoffing put the item being scoffed at down, while lifting up the scoffer?
6. How and why does laughing at a truth demean it, causing us not to take it seriously? Can you give a modern example of someone scoffing about Christianity?
7. What does it mean to be established in your faith? How does keeping your mind in Him enable you to practice His precepts, character, and maturity? What blocks this from happening in you?
8. What happens when we forget about Christ’s power and impact on us? Why is it that some people will refuse to listen to truth, no matter by what means or whose authority the message comes?
9. How does it make you feel and/or strengthen your faith that God intervenes, cares, and He is involved, with the intention of making you for a plan and a purpose? What about the idea that you are no mistake, so therefore, you are

wanted and have a destiny? So, what can you do to put His willingness to infuse and use you into practice? How do we live lives that are worthy of being given grace and excellence in our character for His glory and our contentment in Him?

10. Why do you suppose that many have mistaken the term *last days* to mean that Jesus is right around the corner? Maybe He is; but, do you realize that for countless generations, the people saying that have been wrong and missed the point? What do you think the point is?
11. Have you ever thought that God seems slow? What needs to take place so we can understand that we can have patience and trust in Him and His timing?
12. What do you need to do so to be always thinking about Christ? To be focused upon Christ? How would focusing your mind more on being in Christ help you see the hope He brings? How would it affect your daily life? What is stopping you from doing this?