

1. **Introduction:** In chapter 2, Peter thoroughly condemned false teachers. Now in chapter 3. he destroys their arguments. The false teachers pretend to be striving for religious accuracy.
  - **2 Peter 3:1-2:** *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, <sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,*
  - Even sincere, well-informed minds need stirring up at times. Peter writes to Christians to stir them up by reminding them to remember both the predictions of the OT prophets and the commands of Jesus that come to them through the apostles.
2. **2 Peter 3:3:** *Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.*
  - Scoffers who don't believe God's Word will inevitably come. They will not carefully follow the way of Christ but will follow their own sinful (against God) desires.
3. **2 Peter 3:4:** They will say, *"Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."*
  - As Peter will show, all things have not continued as they were since the beginning. There have been great instances of God's divine power active in the past.
4. **2 Peter 3:5-7:** *For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, <sup>6</sup> and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. <sup>7</sup> But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*
  - The history of the world, whether viewed from Scripture or from science, reveals great events that changed earth's surface features dramatically. Peter mentions creation and the beginning of the earth. He then reminds that Noah's flood wrought great changes.
5. **2 Peter 3:8:** *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*
  - Duration of time, as we know it, does not apply to God. Time was created when He created the universe. We are bound to the sequence of time, but God is not.
  - The brevity of our life caused us to "be in a hurry." God experiences time so differently that Peter says one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
6. **2 Peter 3:9:** *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

- The second half of this verse (*“but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”*) is frequently used to argue against the doctrine of election.
- To understand the correct meaning it is necessary to examine the verse in context.
- The context, as we have seen, is a description of scoffers who doubt that Jesus will return to judge the world with fire (2 Peter 3:3-7).
- The scoffers look around and say we don’t see any evidence of Jesus coming again to judge the world by fire (3:4). They deliberately ignore the fact that God previously judged and by His Word destroyed the earth with Noah’s flood (3:6).
- Peter says, likewise the present earth and heavens will be destroyed with fire (3:7).
- Peter responds to the implied question of “why is God taking so long?” In (3:8) Peter tells his readers that God is not constrained by the concept of time. It may seem to have been a long wait, but to God it is less than the blink of an eye.
- Then in (3:9) Peter explains why, from our perspective, God has delayed so long. It is God’s mercy that delays His judgment. He waits so that more people will have the opportunity to repent and believe (people must exist before they can be born again).
- In other words, God is not negligently slow. He is patient to allow His plan of redemption reach its maximum number of converts.
- In the verses that follow (3:9) Peter encourages his readers to live godly lives anticipating that Jesus will one day return to judge all and receive His own.
- Much of the confusion about the meaning of this verse arises from the KJV translation that says, *“not willing that any should perish.”*
- *“Not willing”* can be interpreted to mean that God will not allow any to perish. But, at the time the KJV was developed (17<sup>th</sup> century), the meaning of *“willing”* was primarily the idea of desire rather than volition.
- Modern English translations correctly render the phrase as *“not wishing”* (ESV, and NASB) and *“not wanting”* (NIV).
- This verse (3:9) does not contradict the fact that God elects certain individuals to salvation.
- As God does not desire that anyone perish, He does desire that all come to repentance. But God knows not everyone will come to repentance, many will perish (Mt 7:13-14).
- God did not desire that sin enter the world through Adam and Eve’s disobedience, yet He allowed it. He did not desire that Jesus Christ be betrayed, tortured, and nailed to a cross, yet He allowed it.
- Even these dreadful things are incorporated into God’s sovereign plan. God’s electing and drawing of some to salvation through Christ is evidence that God truly does not desire that people perish.

- Without the incarnation, without the life, and death of Christ, all would perish. Without election and effectual calling, all would perish (Jn 6:44; Rm 8:29-30). God does not “desire” that anyone should perish, but many will perish. God has provided for some to not perish.
  - This verse and its context don’t directly address the topic of election. Interpreting “not willing” to mean “does not allow” can and does lead to the false doctrine of universal salvation.
7. **2 Peter 3:10**: *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*
- The “when” of Christ’s second coming is impossible to know. The Day of the Lord will come, and when it comes, it will come like a thief in the night, unexpected and shocking, coming whether we are ready for it or not.
  - What will happen when the Day of the Lord comes? *“The heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed.”* (3:10b NASB)
8. <sup>NASB</sup> **2 Peter 3:11-13**: *Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,<sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!<sup>13</sup> But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.*
- 3:12. *“the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!* (3:12b NASB)
9. **Living in Troubled Times**: This catastrophe will occur with no further warning. Considering the anticipated devastating destruction of earth and its environment, how should we then live?
- God says, there will be a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. What (if anything) can we do that will give us a place in God’s new heaven and earth?
  - The cleansing of the earth has precedent. The world of Noah was purged with water. This time, on the Day of the Lord, the purging will be by fire.
  - The familiar image of the destruction wrought by an intense forest fire gives us a feeble picture of what the Day of the Lord will involve.
  - The heat will be so intense that the elements melt (elements signify the basic building blocks of the world as we perceive it – basic materials of earth, water, and air. All will be wiped clear to make way for new heavens and earth).
  - We are to prepare for that purging by believing God. Through that belief we receive God’s gift of salvation that was earned on our behalf by Jesus.
  - In that way we are caught up “in Christ” and will be with Him and protected by Him through all things including surviving the destruction of earth and heavens on the Day

of the Lord. We will be with Him in the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

10. **2 Peter 3:14**: *Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.*

- Since you anticipate these events, be alert and always prepared for the coming Day of the Lord. Strive to be without moral blemish and at peace with God and His world.

11. **2 Peter 3:15-16**: *And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*

- Scoffers and mockers say that the Lord's seeming delay in coming again implies that He will not come at all. Peter says any apparent delay expresses the Lord's mercy (3:8-9) in giving unbelievers opportunity to come to their senses and believe (3:15).
- In other words, believers can be confident that apparent delays are purposeful and a part of God's overall plan.
- Peter says Paul writes similarly of these matters reminding people that the patience of the Lord is meant to aid salvation. Paul said, ***"God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*** (1 Timothy 2:4)
- Some people twist this and other passages from Paul's letters to mean what they want them to mean in ways that are inconsistent with Paul's gospel message. It is true that some passages in Paul's letters are hard (but not impossible) to understand.
- Deliberately twisting the meaning of Scripture is a sure route to self-destruction.

12. **2 Peter 3:17**: *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*

- You have been alerted beforehand, therefore ***"take care"*** (be on guard) against deliberately distorted messages from false teachers. At first acquaintance, they may seem to be genuine.
- But they bring a false message so camouflaged that it appears like a wolf in sheep's clothing.
- The risk is being carried away with the appealing words of the false prophet to the point of following their lawless errors and falling from your own steadfast practice of the principles given us by Christ.

13. **2 Peter 3:18**: *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

- Rather than be misled by false teachers, diligently practice the ways of our Lord, growing in knowledge of Him and His grace. To God be the glory both in the here and now and in the everlasting life to come. Peter says "AMEN." He has written truth.