

# SECOND PETER

## Chapter 3

*The Day of the Lord Will Come*

**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, 2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, 3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 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.” 5 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, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 7 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. 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. 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. 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. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! 13 But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

**3:1** *beloved*. Or “Loved ones” (see vv. 8,14,17; 1Pe 2:11; 4:12). (CSB)

Shows Peter’s close relationship with his readers and also his concern. It is a love born of Christ’s love for His people. (TLSB)

*second letter*.† The first letter may have been 1 Peter, though there is some reason to doubt this identification. For example, 1 Peter cannot be very accurately described as a reminder. Also cf. 1:16 with 1Pe 1:12. (CSB)

*reminder*. See 1:12–13, 15. (CSB)

Cf 1:12–15. Peter’s purpose is to arouse the people and to urge them not to neglect their faith but to remain in their understanding of what a true Christian life is. (TLSB)

**3:2** *holy prophets*. OT personages. (CSB)

Cf 1:19. OT Scriptures, which confirm the entire apostolic witness of Christ. (TLSB)

*your apostles*. Peter places the OT prophets and the NT apostles on an equal plane. Both are vehicles of God’s sacred truth. Peter, being one of the apostles, can speak with knowledge and authority as a representative of the apostolic group. (CSB)

Peter is placing the apostolic teaching on the same level as the OT. Both are the inspired Word of God. “A brief and succinct Confession was prepared from God’s Word—the most holy writings of the prophets and apostles” (*Concordia*, Preface 2). (TLSB)

**3:3** *First of all*. The Greek for this expression is used in 1:20 (“above all”) to call attention to a matter of great importance. (CSB)

*last days*. An expression that refers to the whole period introduced by Christ’s first coming. These days are last in comparison to OT days, which were preliminary and preparatory. Also, the Christian era is the time of the beginnings of prophetic fulfillment. (CSB)

*scoffing following*. Perhaps the same false teachers described in ch. 2 (e.g., they follow their own evil desires; cf. 2:10, 18–19). In ch. 3, however, the emphasis is on Christ’s return. These people may have been early Gnostics who resisted the idea of a time of judgment and moral accountability. (CSB)

The behavior of cynical unbelief goes hand in hand with self-indulgence and mockery of God’s work in the creation of the world. (TLSB)

**3:4** *promise of His coming?* The Lord’s promised return for the final judgment. (TLSB)

*Ever since our fathers fell asleep*. Either the first Christians to die after Christ’s death and resurrection (e.g., Stephen, James the brother of John, and other early Christian leaders who had died; cf. Heb 13:7) or the OT patriarchs. (CSB)

The first Christian generation, some of whom (e.g., Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, James the Just) had already suffered martyrdom by the time this Letter was written. (TLSB)

*all things are continuing*. Their argument against Christ’s return was: Since it has not occurred up to this time, it will never occur. That nature is not subject to divine intervention, they say, has been proved by observation (1) of the period since the fathers died—perhaps 30 years—and (2) of the period since creation. (CSB)

The assertion of scoffers that God’s promise is not reliable and that the regularity and continuity of the created order has not and cannot be interrupted by divine events such as Christ’s second coming. (TLSB)

**3:5** *they deliberately overlook*. Ignoring the flood as a divine intervention was not an oversight; it was deliberate. They did not want to face up to the fallacy in their argument. (CSB)

Scoffers overlook the fact that by the Word of God the heavens came into existence long ago out of nothing. (TLSB)

*word of God*. Of command, such as “Let there be light” (Ge 1:3). (CSB)

The heavens and earth came into being, exist now, and are preserved only because God has so commanded and ordered all things. The heavens and earth are preserved through the Word of God alone. (TLSB)

*earth was formed out of water and through water.* See Ge 1:6–10, where the waters on earth were separated from the atmospheric waters of the heavens, and the mountains then appeared, causing the earthly waters to be gathered into oceans. (CSB)

Refers to the creation account in Gn 1. (TLSB)

**3:6** *these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.*† Peter points out the fallacy of the scoffers’ argument. There has been a divine intervention since the time of creation, namely, the flood. The term “world” may refer to the earth or, more probably, to the world of people (cf. Jn 3:16). All the people except Noah and his family were overcome by the flood and perished. (CSB)

God’s sending of the great flood proves that God will intervene in time. (TLSB)

**3:7** *By the same word.* The word of God that brought the world into existence (v. 5) and that brought watery destruction on the wicked of Noah’s day will bring fiery destruction on the world that exists today and on its wicked people. (CSB)

God’s Word created and preserves creation. That same Word will be the means by which He will bring about creation’s destruction. (TLSB)

*stored up for fire.* Fire is frequently used in the OT as a symbol of God’s punitive and destructive wrath, sometimes in connection with His final judgment (e.g., Zep 1:18; 3:8; Mal 4:1). (TLSB)

*destruction of the ungodly.* As with the flood, when God judged and destroyed the wicked but saved Noah and his family, so the end of the world will be a time of judgment on the ungodly and a time of deliverance for the faithful. Luther: “When the Last Day breaks all of a sudden, in one moment there will be nothing but fire. Everything in heaven and on earth will be reduced to powder and ashes. Everything must be changed by fire, just as the water changed everything at the time of the Flood. Because God let what took place at that time be a sign, therefore the fire shall be the sign that He will not lie” (AE 30:195). (TLSB)

**3:8-14** The pastor will recall that the canonicity of 2 Peter was questioned in the early church and the debate still goes on. (Buls)

Franzmann: While the place of the first letter of Peter in the canon has always been an assured one, the second letter is decidedly an antilegomenon, with the weakest historical attestation of any book in the New Testament . . . Origen (AD 185 to 254) is aware of the fact that its place in the canon is in dispute . . . The authenticity of the second letter was questioned even in the early church and is denied by the great majority of scholars today. . . But the Second Letter of Peter is designed to maintain hope pure and strong in men whose hope is threatened by false teaching and is in danger of being weakened by doubt. . . The church has been strengthened for battle and heartened in its hope by the living words of this letter, words which are as clear and sure as the history of the letter is dark and uncertain. (Buls)

2 Peter does not teach anything that is not found elsewhere in Scripture. We should be content to consider this book truly canonical. (Buls)

The repetition of individual words in this chapter is truly remarkable. Read the entire chapter marking the repeated words, notice the effectiveness of the repetition. (Buls)

Verses 1-7 give us the situation in which the Christian finds himself in this world. There will be unbelieving scoffers. They will contend that there will not be an end of this world simply because it has not yet come. These scoffers deny two great truths: (Buls)

1. that the universe was created by the Word of God but the world was destroyed by the flood; and,
2. that by the same Word of God the universe is being kept for its final judgment and dissolution.

The denial of God's creation out of nothing is very prevalent in our time. And the denial of the final judgment and destruction of the universe is also very prevalent. People live as if they were going to live forever with impunity. God's Word is completely disregarded. (Buls)

**3:8** *do not overlook* – If people in Peter's day thought that God would never return (if indeed He was ever there in the first place), how much more hardened and apathetic are the people of today with two thousand more years of getting comfortable with their "nothing will happen" mentality. (PBC)

"But" contrasts verses 5-7 with 8-9. Literally the first part of this verse reads "but let not this one thing escape your notice." The one thing which the scoffers overlook is an attribute of God. The beloved should not forget that their Lord is the eternal God. (Buls)

Bengel: He does not so fully reply to the mockers as he instructs the faithful. (Buls)

Franzmann: To speak of 'delay' in connection with the Lord's coming is to impose human standards on the Lord, to try to fit Him into categories which are not His. (Buls)

*a thousand years are like a day.* Cf. Ps 90:4. God does not view time as humans do. He stands above time, with the result that when time is seen in the light of eternity, an age appears no longer than one short day, and a day seems no shorter than a long age. Since time is purely relative with God, he waits patiently while human beings stew with impatience. (CSB)

Peter refers to Psalm 90:4, an ancient prayer of Moses. It is important to recognize that Peter is not saying a thousand years and a day are the same. Nor is he providing a numerical formula for predicting the day of Christ's return, as some have suggested. He says that to the Lord one is "like" the other. Since God is eternal, what seems to us to be long time is not very long at all to Him. (TLSB)

TEV gets at the meaning of this verse: "There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same." Peter is not quoting Psalm 90:4 which reads: "For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by" NASB. (Buls)

Bigg: St. Peter is not quoting, but drawing an inference from, the Psalm . . . . What St. Peter wishes is to contrast the eternity of God with the impatience of human expectations. (Buls)

Bengel: Moses describes God's eternity somewhat more absolutely; Peter, in its relation to the last day, and to men looking for this. (Buls)

Old Concordia Bible with Notes: What he has determined to accomplish a thousand years hence, is just as sure as if he had determined to accomplish it tomorrow. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Our time does not affect him, nor does our measurement fit into His calendar . . . . The space of a thousand years it to Him but a moment. (Buls)

Time began in Genesis 1. It will end on the last day (Revelation 10:6). We are bound to time. God is not. (Buls)

Lenski: His relation to time must never be confused with our relation to time. . . . Peter does not say 'A single day IS a thousand years and a thousand years ARE a single day.' . . . Both are really the same with the Lord; neither hampers nor helps him. (Buls)

This verse looms large as a basis for two false doctrines: (Buls)

1. The evolutionists and their sympathizers have used this passage as a basis for interpreting the word 'day' in Genesis 1 as a thousand years or a long age; and,
2. The chiliasts (millennialists) have used this verse for their interpretation of the thousand years of Revelation 20.

Both false doctrines are a clear violation of simple rules of interpretation. (Buls)

**3:9** *not slow* - *ou bradunei*, “not slow,” and *bradutēta*, “slowness,” but *makrothumei*, “patient.” Some are confused and make an accusation about the slowness of the day. Slowness is not a synonym of patience; it is contrasted with patience. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

Who are the “some”? Here is a helpful comment from Lenski: “These ‘some’ are not the mockers (vv 3–4) who claim that all this talk about the Parousia is nothing, these are some of the Christians who will be disturbed by these mockers. Since the Parousia has not yet come, and since time keeps going on, ‘some’ who are unable to account for this ever-increasing delay and who let what verse 8 states escape them get uneasy and think that the mockers are perhaps right in claiming that there is nothing to this whole promise of Christ’s return. Peter furnishes the correct answer: God uses time so as to serve his purposes of grace” (R .C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of The Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966], 345). The Lord has every right to choose revenge, to make the unrepentant pay and suffer and die. More than the timeless nature of God is revealed in this verse; the heart of God is revealed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

Just as there is certainty to the infinite patience of God, there is also certainty to the promise of the Day of the Lord. It will come. Bishop Giertz offers this: “Christ will come again. We have His word on that. But what’s taking Him so long? . . . The kingdom should break through and come in all its glory. What’s holding it back? Peter answers: God’s patience. God doesn’t want anyone to perish” (Bo Giertz, trans. by Richard Wood with Bror Erickson, *To Live with Christ* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008], 738). For God’s great desire is that all men will be saved (1 Tim 2:3–4), for Christ died for all (2 Cor 5:14–15) so that the Father might reconcile all to himself through his Son (2 Cor 5:19). (See also 2 Pet 3:15a: “And count the patience of our Lord as salvation.”) God does not desire that his creation *apolesthai*, (“perish”), but that many

more should reach *metanoian* ("repentance"). Note also the contrast between some[one] (*tinas*) and all (*pantas*). God literally "makes room" (*chōrēsai*) and prepares room (Jn 14:2–3) so that all should have room (and time) for a change of mind. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

Note that the Majority text reads an article before "Lord." In any case in this verse Peter surely is speaking about Jesus as Lord. We think immediately of Hebrews 13:8 where the attribute of eternity is attributed to the incarnate Christ. (Buls)

"Keep his promise" means "the Lord does not hold back from the promise, from fulfilling it." (Buls)

Old Concordia Bible with Notes: (The promise) of a future judgment when he will save his people and destroy their enemies. (Buls)

It is wider in application than the word in verse 13.

He had many people in Asia Minor to call to faith. And the only reason the world has lasted this long is that God still has people to gather into His church. Let His patience arouse in not apathy but evangelism! (PBC)

Stoeckhardt: What some men call slowness is longsuffering and patience on God's part. (Buls)

Franzmann: The question of the time of His coming fades into insignificance, look at 11, 12, 15. (Buls)

JB renders this verse: "The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow." That gives a wider application than Lenski allows. By the way, note the utter importance of "repent," the very lifeblood of a Christian. Bigg quotes Augustine: "God is patient because He is eternal." Is maybe God delaying the Parousia because of my sloppy repentance? Lord have mercy on me! (Buls)

*reach repentance* – Repentance leading to faith and salvation is the issue for the Lord, not times or timing. He is patient, wanting all to come to salvation. Repentance consists of contrition (godly sorrow over one's sins) and faith (trusting in the divine promise of forgiveness through faith in Christ). "God, who has called us, is faithful. So when He has begun the good work in us, He will also preserve it to the end and perfect it, if we ourselves do not turn from Him, but firmly hold on to the work begun to the end. He has promised His grace for this very purpose" (FC SD XI 32). (TLSB)

Bengel: The promise will be fulfilled whatever mockers may prate. (Buls)

Lenski: The 'some' are not the mockers, who claim that all this talk about the Parousia is nothing; these are some of the Christians who will be disturbed by these coming mockers. . . . 'Some' get uneasy and think that perhaps the mockers are right in claiming that there is nothing to this whole promise of Christ's return. (Buls)

But the application is wider than Lenski allows. It seems to cover the mockers also. "As if delay sprang from impotence or unwillingness to perform." They merely "consider," They do not believe. They impute slackness, negligence, sloppiness to God because He waits so long before

executing His threatened judgments. "But," (untranslated) before "he is patient with you" divides the false thought of this verse from the correct through. note that the majority text reads "toward us" not "toward you." (Buls)

In this verse we have the same truth as is clearly stated in 1 Timothy 2:4. The *Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord* uses verse 9 four times in the article on *Election*. See Tappert 621.28 and 32 and 629.81; 630.84. God's serious desire that all be saved must not be overlooked in the discussion of Election. The second "but" in this verse does not distinguish false from true doctrine but contrasts the two sides of God's will toward all men. (Buls)

**3:10** *day of the Lord*. The Last Day, when the Lord returns to judge the ungodly and to redeem the faithful. (TLSB)

This earth, though outwardly as beautiful as Sodom, is doomed. At a time known only to God, He will intervene suddenly, massively, destructively in the universe. (PBC)

*will come* - *Hēzei*, "Will come." The verb leads the sentence. Though we don't speak this way, the placement in Greek helps us see the emphatic and certain nature of this verb. The prophets spoke boldly of the Day of the Lord. John the Baptizer declares its imminent reality. Peter writes of its future certainty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

Verses 8-9 stress the fact that the day of the Lord will truly come according to His promise and purpose. Verse 10 tells us how that day will come. Verses 11-13 linger on the "how" but are already a bridge to the exhortation. The verbs are in the first person plural. Verse 14 is purely hortatory or parenetic. The verb is in the second person plural. All our version, except AAT, follow the paragraphing in the Nestle-Aland XXVI Greek text. (Buls)

Note the prominent and emphatic position of the verb. Note the "but" in all but the AAT translation. "But there will come the day of the Lord as a thief." "Despite the fact that the Lord delays the Parousia for the sake of men's repentance, nonetheless it will come, and what's more it will come as a thief." (Buls)

Bigg: There will be no time for repentance then. This is the essential point on which the wise teacher will dwell. (Buls)

By the way, the terms "the day of the Lord," "the day of God," "the day of Christ," "The day of the Son of Man" are used synonymously in Scriptures. Look at verses 7, 10, and 12. The words "in the night" are most likely imported from 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Jesus used the comparison with a thief at Matthew 24:43 and Luke 12:39. (Buls)

Franzmann: Jesus cut off all attempts at calculating the time of His return, Matthew 24:43. It is echoed by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and John in Revelation 3:3; 16:15. (Buls)

*like a thief*. Suddenly and unexpectedly. (CSB)

Emphasizes the surprise people will experience at His coming (cf Mk. 13:36; Lk. 24:36; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). (TLSB)

To unbelievers that day will come like a thief's attack. It seems as if thieves just seem to know when to steal. Their act of theft is always unexpected, always a cruel shock, and by the time we find out, it is too late to prevent it. It leaves us feeling helpless and angry. (PBC)

For believing Christians, however, that day will come not like a thief, dreadful and shocking. It will be like a beloved father who finally comes home from a lengthy business trip, bursting suddenly through the door, arms wide open to hug his children, pockets bulging with treats. His children's hearts will be filled not with terror but delight. (PBC)

*The heavens will pass away with a roar.* Apocalyptic language, common to books like Daniel and Revelation. Due to the figurative nature of such writings, we must not expect complete literalism but recognize it as an attempt to describe the indescribable, a task as impossible as it would have been for a first-century writer to describe the phenomena of our atomic age. What may be referred to is the destruction of the atmospheric heavens with a great rushing sound (see v. 12). (CSB)

The heavens will pass away with great force and speed. (TLSB)

There are four descriptive verbals in this verse: *pareleusontai* ("pass away"), *kausoumena* ("burned up"), *luthēsetai* ("dissolved" or "disintegrate"), and *heurethēsetai* ("exposed"). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

*Hroizēdon* ("roar") modifies *pareleusontai*. This descriptive adverb is one of the fifty-four hapax legomena in 2 Peter. The word is onomatopoeic; it suggests a hissing or crackling sound. *Hroizēdon* could express the whizzing sound of rapid motion through the air, the thrumming of a bird's wings, the rattle and hiss of a snake, or the whirr of an arrow in flight (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, vol 2 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 435). Don't just see a fire here; listen to its noise! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

"Roar" is defined by Rienecker-Rogers thus: "with a hissing or crackling sound. The word is onomatopoeic, expressing the whizzing sound produced by rapid motion through the air and was used of shrill rushing sounds, the hissing of a snake, the whirr of a bird's wings, the hurtling sound of an arrow and is then used for the rushing movement itself of the accompanying crash or roar. Here probably the roaring of flame is meant." (Buls)

*heavenly bodies.* Refers either to the heavenly bodies or to the physical elements—in the first century, such things as earth, air, fire and water; in today's more precise scientific terminology, hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, etc. (CSB)

"Heavens," as always, causes much discussion. Because of its proximity to "elements" and because it is distinguished from "earth" many feel that it means the heavenly bodies. Thus Bigg, Bengel, Alford, Plumptre, Green, and TEV. Not so Lenski. In any case the words denote a sudden, universal conflagration and dissolution. The "heavens," "elements," and "earth" denote the things which God Himself created. But the "and everything in it" denote the things man has made. (Buls)

This doesn't refer to the elements of the periodic table, which of course was unknown in the 60s A.D., but rather to the ordered structure of the universe. Everything will be taken apart everything above (the heavens) and everything below (the earth). Everything that seems so permanent – oceans and mountain ranges – and everything we thought we could depend on – the sun's radiant light and the food chain – will be dismantled. (PBC)



*burned up. kausomena* was used as a medical expression to describe “feverish heat.” As Peter uses the word, it may suggest a conflagration arising from internal heat. The middle two verbs might be understood in this sense: “Being burnt up—or melted—the ‘heavenly bodies’ will dissolve.” (But see the note under v 12 on *stoicheia*.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

*earth ... be exposed.* Either the earth and its contents will disappear and not be seen anymore, or the earth and all man’s works will appear before God’s judgment seat. (CSB)

To the fire of God’s judgment. God will refine and purify them as the “new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13). Luther: “This life amounts to eating, drinking, sleeping, digesting, begetting children, etc. Here everything goes by number: hours, days, and years in succession. Now when you want to look at the life to come, you must erase the course of this life from your mind. You dare not think that you can measure it as this life is measured. There everything will be one day, one hour, one moment: (AE 30:196). (TLSB)

Kretzmann: All the mighty and magnificent structures of man's hands, the immense cities with their proud skyscrapers, the great ships and all conveyances which the ingenuity of man has devised for used in the sea, on land, in the air, all the wonderful works of art which are exhibited with such self-satisfaction; they all will perish by fire in the destruction of the last day. (Buls)

Even the most beautiful Renaissance works of art and the exquisite music of Bach are to be used now only to glorify God. THEY WILL PERISH ON THE LAST DAY. (Buls)

The final verb in verse 10 is very difficult. There are three variant readings: "will be burned" (Codex A, Lenski, KJV, NKJV, RSV, JB, NASB. Another is "will disappear." Thus TEV. But the most difficult is that found in Nestle-Aland Greek text "will be found." Thus NIV, AAT, Rienecker, and Franzmann. (Buls)

Franzmann: The best attested text is the very difficult 'will be found,' which may mean that THE EARTH AND THE WORKS of man that both adorn and disfigure the earth will be exposed to the fire of God's judgment, be refined and purified, and emerge as God's 'new heavens and new earth' (13). The universe will pass through fearful convulsions (DISSOLVED, 10 'melt,'12) as Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:29. But God's goal for His creation, over which He once spoke His 'very good' (Genesis 1:3; 1 Timothy 4:4), is not extinction but restoration and transfiguration. (Buls)

What are *ta erga* (“the works”)? Whose works? Theirs? Ours? Mine? Yours? There are homiletical possibilities here to proclaim God’s word of Law. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

Peter was probably remembering Jesus’ own words of warning and preparation from Tuesday of Holy Week. The disciples had been babbling away about the timeless beauty of the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus gave this solemn prophecy: “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: if owner of the house had known at what the time of the night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also

must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him” (Matthew 24:29, 42-44) (PBC)

The Greek says literally “the earth and all the works in it.” Those works surely are God’s and a stunned humanity will behold the outward and inward wonders of God’s ordered structure. But those works to be laid bare will also be the things people have done. “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). Yes, God’s eyes are universal enough to see the works of billions of people, His memory is big enough to keep them all straight, and His mind is sharp enough to evaluate them. (PBC)

**3:11-18** The Lord’s delay in returning is actually a matter of urgency for the Church, which He has called to spread the Gospel of repentance and salvation. (TLSB)

**3:11** *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved.* The transitory nature of the material universe ought to make a difference in one’s system of values and one’s priorities. The result should be lives of holiness (separated from sin and to God) and godliness (devoted to the worship and service of God). Cf. Mt 25:13; 1Th 5:6, 8, 11; 2Pe 1:13–16. (CSB)

Luther: “Since you know that everything must pass away, both heaven and earth, consider how completely you must be prepared with a saintly and godly life and conduct to meet this Day” (AE 30:197). (TLSB)

Note that a subparagraph begins here. We touched on this matter in verse 10. The first four words in Greek are a genitive absolute. Most versions begin with the word "since," making it causal. For the second time the dissolution of all of creation is mentioned. The version take it either as "dissolved" or "destroyed." (Buls)

Franzmann: This is the center of gravity in all the New Testament teaching of last things from John the Baptist and Jesus onward. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Three times the Apostle Peter asserts that the heavens and the earth and all the works on earth, and even the elements, out of which all things are made (atoms), will be destroyed by fire. Does it follow from this that the world will sink back into nothing, as was taught by the dogmaticians of the seventeenth century? It does not. It says here that the elements will be dissolved by fire. That means that that which burns is dissolved into atoms. Peter does not say that the substance of heaven and earth is annihilated and turned back into nothing. All that he claims is that the present form of the world shall be totally destroyed. (Buls)

*what sort of people ought you to be* – What difference does this foreknowledge of judgment day make in our daily lives? Peter is blunt. He calls on people who are washed, justified, sanctified, and filled with the Spirit’s power and gifts to “live holy and godly lives...be.. spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him. (PBC)

The New Testament is constantly saying: "be ready, be faithful, be watchful" Sanctification does not save us. It is the *fruit* of justification. Sanctification means to take justification seriously. It is God's way of preparing us for eternity. The last five words of this verse are a prepositional phrase denoting manner "in holy conduct and godliness." (Buls)

Bengel: Peter talks about conduct as regards human affairs, godliness as regards divine things. (Buls)

Rienecker: In the context the words hint that great things are expected of the readers. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The thoughts and minds of the Christians are under no circumstances to cling to the things of this world . . . Our conduct should be holy and unblamable, that our behavior at all times should express true godliness and reverence of His holy will. (Buls)

*Potapous dei*, “what sort of people ought . . .” Is this an imperative or an encouragement/exhortation? God’s Advent people are not scoffers; they do not waffle with uncertainty. Perhaps we could preach this: “As the redeemed people of God, waiting for the Day of the Lord, how, then, should we live . . . and as what kind of people?” (Vv 13 and 14 provide answers!) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

**3:12** *waiting for* – Preparing for and earnestly desiring the salvation which will be given to God’s people. (Concordia Bible)

This verse continues the thought begun in verse 11. Verses 11-12 constitute one sentence. The word "expecting" can mean either "causing to come early" or "being zealous about." It is amazing how almost all of our versions, in one way or another, prefer the former translation, NKJV, RSV, and NASB have "hastening the coming." TEV reads "do your best to make it come soon." NIV has "speed its coming." Likewise AAT. We prefer Rienecker-Rogers explanation "to be eager for." (Buls)

Franzmann: Preparing for and earnestly desiring the salvation which will be given to God's people. (Buls)

Lenski: One may expect and yet not be eager regarding what he expects; here also eagerness is to fill the hearts. (Buls)

*the day of God*. Apparently synonymous with “the day of the Lord” (v. 10) since it is characterized by the same kind of events. Cf. Rev 16:14. (CSB)

*hastening*. That day may be hastened by God’s people as they speed up the accomplishment of his purposes. Since he is waiting for all who will come to repentance (v. 9), the sooner believers bring others to the Savior the sooner that day will dawn (cf. Ac 3:19–20). Prayer also serves to hasten the day (Mt 6:10), as does holy living (v. 11). (CSB)

God has determined the day of our Lord’s return (Acts 17:31), but from a human perspective, we hasten the Lord’s coming as we pray, “Your Kingdom come” and “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Mt. 6:10; Rev. 22:20). (TLSB)

Bengel: He who eagerly desires, presses the matter itself, if possible to a speedy accomplishment. . . . God grants TO MEN many thousand days; one, the last, is the great day OF GOD himself. (Buls)

*Prosdokōntas kai speudontas*, “waiting for and hastening.” We are called to eager and expectant awaiting. A possible translation of the participles would be “expecting and being eager for . . .” or “being eagerly expectant of . . .” And how do we “hasten” the final appearing of Christ? Luther, as we know, would say that we are doing so when we pray, “Thy kingdom come.” Yet, “The

coming of God's kingdom to us' takes place in two ways: first, it comes here, in time, through the Word and faith, and second, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation. Now, we ask for both of these things: that it may come to those who are not yet in it and that, by daily growth here and in eternal life hereafter, it may come to us who have attained it" (Robert Kolb, Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000], 447:53). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

*heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. Stoicheia*, "elements," rendered as "heavenly bodies" in ESV (also in v 10). What are these? Some interpreters suggest these are the atoms out of which everything is made. Others suggest that the *stoicheia* are the works of man (note also *ta erga* in v 10) in contrast to the works of the Creator God. This is certain: the structure of creation will be consumed and reconstructed. Once all creation was purified by water (vv 6–7; 1 Pet 3:20); now all creation will be set on fire (*puroumenoi*). The Day of the Lord will bring pyrotechnics no one has ever imagined! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

The day of the Lord itself will be the cause of the fiery dissolution of all things. In this verse Peter mentions only heavens and elements. These words and those which follow are a variation on verse 10. But we agree with Franzmann who interprets "elements" here as "the various parts of which the world is composed." (Buls)

Kretzmann: The present heavens and present earth will pass away, not in utter destruction, but to be changed into a new form of existence. (Buls)

**3:13** *his promise*. New heavens and a new earth are promised by Isaiah (65:17; 66:22). This promise is confirmed by Rev 21:1. (CSB)

Here faith confesses in the first person plural, in keeping with God's promises found in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22. The objects are placed first for emphasis. Note the chiasmic arrangement of adjectives and nouns. The phrase is adverbial denoting correspondence. In verse 9 we had the promise of the Parousia. Here it's the promise of eternal life. (Buls)

*new heavens and a new earth* – Ushered in when Christ returns. Paradise will be regained as all the ruin and frustration with which man's sin has disfigured God's good world will have passed away. Cf Romans 8:19-22. Luther: "That will be a broad and beautiful heaven and a joyful earth, much more beautiful and joyful than Paradise was. There were no stinging nettles or prickly thorns and thistles or noxious creatures, worms and vermin in Paradise, but lovely and noble roses and aromatic creatures. All the trees in the garden were lovely to behold and good to eat... Then no sins or unrighteousness will dwell on earth, no homicide or murder, no hate or envy, but perfect righteousness, love and friendship. Now righteousness and infidelity dwell on earth; from this we should realize what we have lost through Adam's fall and our sin and learn to long and yearn for the restoration and renewal of the creation and for the liberty of the children of God" (AE 12:121). (TLSB)

Franzmann: 'Heavens and earth' indicate the continuity of the world to come with God's first creation, our world. The otherness of the coming world is expressed by 'new,' a word characteristic of the new quality of all that pertains to the world to come. Look at Matthew 26:29; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24; Hebrews 10:10; Revelation 2:17; 3:12; 5:9; 14:3; 21:1-2,5; for the whole expression look at Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1. *Righteousness dwells* in the world to come God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. All the ruin and frustration with which man's sin has disfigured God's good work will have passed away, look at Romans 8:19-22. (Buls)

Lenski: The question is raised as to whether this universe shall be annihilated, and a new heaven and earth shall be created *ex nihilo*. To answer it one must not stop with passages like Psalm 102:26; Isaiah 51:6; Jeremiah 34:4; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Hebrews 1:11; Revelation 20:11. Include also Romans 8:19-22; 1 Corinthians 7:31; Revelation 21:1-5. The heavens and the earth shall be renovated, renewed, purified, made perfect. There shall be no further separation between earth and the abode of God; they shall be one at last. Besides Revelation 21:1-5 read the whole of Revelation 21:10-27, and close with Hebrews 11:10. (Buls)

*kainous* . . . *kainēn*, “new.” The first word is a key word. (Note also the wonderful chiasm in this phrasing.) Peter writes deliberately: *neos* means “new” in sequence or in existence; *kainēn* means “new” in quality when placed against the old. “New” is a great theme of the salvation story. Is 43:18–19a: “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing.” Ezek 36:26a: “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.” Rev 21:5a: “Behold, I am making all things new” (*kaina poiō panta*). 2 Cor 5:17a: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (*kainē ktisis*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

What is the “new thing” that God is doing? And that God will do on the Last Day? How will he make a “new heavens and a new earth”? He will do so by restoring to its original glory his “very good” creation (Gen 1:31a), setting it free from its bondage to sin (Rom 8:21), purifying and then uniting heaven and earth as one eternal place. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

These new heavens and new earth are the place *en hois dikaiosunē katoikei* (“in which righteousness dwells”). Note the alliteration in the Greek of this phrase. The promise is this: a real existence in a real place. But the greatest reality is that righteousness dwells here. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

*in which righteousness dwells*. Righteousness will dwell there as a permanent resident. Cf. Isa 11:4–5; 45:8; Da 9:24. (CSB)

“Righteousness” is very dear to a Christian. It is that reconciling gift of God in Jesus Christ which is the very antithesis the condition of man and the whole universe ever since the fall. (Buls)

There will be no more sin, evil, violence, war, cruelty, crime, and jails. The second half of Isaiah chapter 65 is a poetic description of how wonderful life with God will be. “the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more” (verse 19). Jesus Christ has done far more than to just bring us back to the Garden of Eden, back where Adam and Eve started. Once we enter the new heaven and earth, there will be no more satanic testing and tempting. (PBC)

Revelation 21:27, “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

**3:1–13** Knowing that this world will not last, we are to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Mt 6:33). Sadly, we are often distracted by “the cares of the world” (Mt 13:22). Despite our many failures, the Lord graciously works through Word and Sacrament to forgive our sins and to renew us in the faith. He will preserve us unto the end. • O Lord, keep me with Jesus Christ in the one true faith, that I may wait for the coming of the day of the Lord, when You will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Final Words*

**14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 15 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, 16 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. 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. 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.**

**3:14** *therefore* – "So then," in view of all that's been said in this chapter. In 2 Peter 2:13 the willful sinners are called "spots and blemishes." We are reminded of the righteousness mentioned in the previous verse. Who are these "dear friends?" Look at Matthew 25:34-40. They are those who live now in daily repentance. Such people produce the fruits of the Spirit and fight sin. (Buls)

*without a spot or blemish.* Cf. 1Pe 1:19, where the same two words are applied to Christ. (CSB)

Cf 1 Peter 1:19. Christians are to make every effort to conform to the character of Christ. These efforts do not gain salvation (Jesus has already accomplished that), but they do bear witness to His amazing grace toward all people. (TLSB)

*Aspiloi kai amōmētoi*, "without spot or blemish." Both words have the alpha prefix of negation. It perhaps works best to translate them "spotless and blemish-free" (or "unblemished"). (See also Eph 5:27; Gal 3:26–27; Rev 7:13–14; Mt 22:11–12.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

*at peace*† Believers have peace with God as a result of being justified through faith (Ro 5:1). (CSB)

Christians are to make every effort to conform to the character of Christ. These efforts so not gain salvation (Jesus has already accomplished that), but they do bear witness to His amazing grace toward all people. (TLSB)

The dative *autōi* is translated "by him" and is followed by *heurethēnai en eirēnēi* ("be found in peace"). We suggest reading this gracious truth as "in him." It is a gift. It is from outside of us. So, "Be found in him spotless and unblemished and in peace." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part1)

**3:15** *the patience of our Lord as alvation.* God is forbearing; He delays and does not judge at once. If God were not patient, all would be destroyed. Think of how patiently the Lord works with each believer, forgiving him and picking him up each time he falls. (TLSB)

*our beloved brother Paul.* Peter expresses warmth in his reference to Paul. The unity of teaching and purpose that governed their relationship, abundantly attested in Paul's letters and the book of Acts, is confirmed here by Peter. It has been suggested that what Paul wrote to the recipients of 2 Peter may have been a copy of Romans, which was sent to the churches as a circular letter (cf. Ro 16:4; see Introduction to Romans: Recipients; see also note on 1Pe 1:1). (CSB)

Indication that both Peter and his readers hold Paul in high regard and consider him a true friend in Christ. Peter makes a point of affirming that both he and Paul are united in doctrine and in their opposition to the false teachers. (TLSB)

**3:16** *as he does in all his letters*. Peter may be referring in general to the exhortations to holy living in vv. 11–14, which parallel many passages in Paul’s writings. (CSB)

*things ... hard to understand*. Paul’s Epistles, which may indeed be challenging even for the faithful to understand. The unscrupulous twist them to mean that those justified may continue to live in sin, since sinning results in further opportunities for God’s grace to be demonstrated (cf Rm 3:5–8; 6:1). (TLSB)

*ignorant and unstable people*. The ignorant are simply the unlearned who have not been taught basic apostolic teaching and thus may be easily led astray (cf. 2:14). (CSB)

Paul himself complains that some have maliciously misinterpreted his bold language on the free grace of God (cf Rm 3:8; 6:1), and it is probable that the false teachers of 2Pt 2 are alluded to here for doing the same thing (cf 2:12, 17). (TLSB)

*other Scriptures*. Peter placed Paul’s writings on the same level of authority as the God-breathed writings of the OT (see 1:21; 2Ti 3:16). (CSB)

Explicitly linked by Peter to Paul’s inspired Letters. The Early Christian Church recognized that the inspired writings of the apostles were on a par with the OT. E.g., Paul quotes Jesus’ words recorded in Lk 10:7 and equates them with the authority of the OT (1Tm 5:18). (TLSB)

**3:17** *knowing this beforehand*. That false teachers are coming (cf. ch. 2). (CSB)

Peter charges his “beloved” friends to be aware of the truth and be on guard, lest they fall away from faith because of false doctrine. The only sure way to remain on guard in the stability of salvation is to remain in all of God’s Word. In a sense, the entire Letter has been focused on this subject. (TLSB)

**3:18** *grow in ... knowledge*. Peter concludes by again stressing knowledge (see 1:2–3 and notes; see also 1:5), probably as an antidote to the false teachers who boasted in their esoteric knowledge. (CSB)

Accomplished as believers keep themselves fortified in and by God’s Word, so that they will not fall a way. Peter has come full circle; he began the Letter by speaking of grace and knowledge. (TLSB)

The present tense of the imperative word “grow” warrants the translation “continually grow,” since the believers already have these gifts. (CC)

*glory both now and to the day of eternity*. That which belongs to the Lord and Savior alone, not to any prophet or apostle. These believers were, like all believers, servants of our great God and Savior. Jesus is glorified and honored whenever believers witness to His grace with their words and actions. Luther: “This teaching is not learned all at once, nor can it be understood speculatively. It must be learned by daily use and exercise amid the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh, amid despair, distrust, and innumerable other horrible things. And without

these exercises it cannot be kept. Foolish people, therefore, are taken in. After reading one or more pages of Holy Scriptures and hearing maybe one sermon, they think they have already learned this teaching [of Christianity] completely. They can see that in other lesser arts we do not immediately become masters. Much less can it happen in this greatest teaching of all, that we immediately trust in God from the heart and despise all the perils of the world, death, and the devil. These things cannot be learned in one day, but practice and immense exercise and a singular gift of God are required” (AE 12:248). (TLSB)

**3:14–18** Our Lord’s patience is essential to our salvation in the sense that He is giving us time to repent. Do we use the time allotted to us to take sin and salvation seriously, or do we neglect our worship and prayers and our Lord’s gracious call to repent? Make daily repentance part of your life. The patient Lord is ever working through Word and Sacrament to restore fallen sinners and to strengthen them in the stability of their salvation. • O Lord, come to me, and strengthen me through Your Word, that I may grow in Your grace and knowledge and proclaim Your glory forever. Amen. (TLSB)