

Review

In our study of the first ten verses of 2Peter chapter three, Peter reminded us that

2Pet. 3:7 ...the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2Pet. 3:10 ...the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

This should be fresh in our minds as we read Peter's follow-up question...

3:11-12 How Should You Be?

You now have knowledge of the future: the earth will one day be destroyed. But that knowledge isn't simply to file in your brain somewhere. God intends that you use this knowledge. Use it to consider what kind of person you are. Since the earth will be destroyed, what sort of person should you be? Are you that person today?

By saying this, Peter is also reminding us that the kind of person you are depends on you. In today's society, we are taught to blame others for everything. "I'm this way because I'm poor and the government won't help me, I'm this way because people have treated me badly in my life, etc." But who you are today is not your parents' fault, your bosses' fault, the government's fault or society's fault. It is your choice. You can choose joy or you can choose bitterness. You can choose to be godly, or choose criminality. It's your choice.

So what sort of person do you think you should be?

Looking For And Hastening

And let's not merely make those choices based on the fact that the world is coming to an end. Remember: before that happens, Jesus Christ is coming back. The Bible repeatedly reminds us that we're supposed to be looking for that to happen - to watch for the return of Jesus. He Him-

self told us,

Matt. 24:42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

The apostle John said that our choices will affect our response when He does come back:

1John 2:28 ...abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

If we haven't been conducting ourselves in a godly and holy way, we will be ashamed when He returns.

Peter says not just to look for, but also to hasten His coming. Does that mean "speeding it up"? This Greek word can mean that, but another definition is "to desire earnestly." And I think that is what Peter is saying, just as Paul did:

2Tim. 4:8 (NIV) Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

3:13 A New Heavens And Earth

After Jesus has returned and reigned on earth for a thousand years, the Bible tells us that most of mankind will rebel again. The nations will be deceived by Satan. John saw this in Revelation:

Rev. 20:9-11 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Jesus told us that heaven and earth would ultimately be destroyed:

Luke 21:33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words

will not pass away."

This might seem like a real bummer. But in reality, it will be a blessing. So, this isn't a threat from God, it's a promise, because the new one will be far better than the old one. The new earth will be a place of righteousness, quite unlike this one. God said to Isaiah,

Is. 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."

All the horrible stuff that happened on this earth will be forgotten. In Revelation, John described the new creation:

Rev. 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

God will live with us. There'll be no more death, and no more sorrow.

3:14 Be Diligent

Because we're looking for the return of Christ, the destruction of earth, and the creation of a new earth, we should live differently than we have. We should be living every day in our "best behavior." So that when Jesus returns,

- we're not found in turmoil, but in peace.
- That we're not found in defilement, but spotless.
- That we're not being accused of evil, but found blameless.

3:15-16 Paul's Writings Are Scripture

Peter makes reference to the apostle Paul's letters, saying that they are wise, even if some of what he writes is really hard to understand.

Of course, some people were trying to twist what Paul wrote, even as they do today. But Peter says that they always do this to the Word of God, which Paul's letters are. Peter is verifying that Paul's letters are Scripture - they are the Word of God.

Have you ever wondered why some ancient writings were considered Scripture, and others weren't? It's actually a fascinating study. We talked at length about the canon of Scripture and how it was formed in our History and Future of the World study #24. I would refer you to that for more depth.

In this case, we have it on apostolic authority that the 17 epistles Paul wrote were considered Scripture.

3:17-18 Be On Your Guard

So much of Peter's letter was focused on false teachers and how deceptively dangerous they are. And he just can't end it without one final warning: "Be on your guard against them. Don't fall away."

How can you do this? Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

We talked about how to have a "plethora" of grace back in chapter one, verse two: You grow in knowledge - become a student of the Scripture. Fall in love with the Bible and devour it. Devote yourself to finding the treasure that is inside.

2Tim. 2:15 (KJV) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.