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2 Peter 3



By Dan Maines

2 Peter 3

2 Peter 3:1-2

This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of a reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

† Peter reminds them that the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles were all in agreement. The prophets warned of

judgment on Israel, Jesus repeated the warning in His ministry, and the apostles kept telling the church it was about to happen. † The consistency between prophets, Christ, and apostles shows there was one covenantal message from start to finish. This destroys the futurist idea of a "delay." The early church wasn't waiting for something 2,000 years away, but for what was already unfolding in their generation.

2 Peter 3:3-4

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.

† The last days aren't the end of the planet but the last days of the Old Covenant system. Scoffers in Peter's day denied that judgment was coming.

† Josephus wrote that people mocked and ignored warnings right before Jerusalem's destruction, exactly like Peter said they would.

† This mocking spirit was also foretold by Jesus in Matthew 24:48 when the evil slave said, "My master is not coming for a long time." The unbelieving Jews thought their city and temple would stand forever, and even some Christians wavered under persecution.

2 Peter 3:5-6

For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

† Peter recalls the judgment of the ancient world by flood and uses it as a warning that another judgment was approaching, this time upon Israel's covenant world.

† Writers like Philo used world and cosmos to describe Israel's

covenant order.

† The prophets also used flood imagery to describe judgment on nations, such as Isaiah 8:7-8 where the Assyrian invasion is called an "overflowing flood." Peter is not teaching cosmic annihilation but covenantal transition.

2 Peter 3:7

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

† The present heavens and earth was the Mosaic covenant. Isaiah 51:16 and Deuteronomy 32:1 use heaven and earth language for Israel itself. This covenantal world was set apart for fiery destruction, which came in AD 70 when Rome burned the city and temple.

† Josephus described the flames devouring the temple until nothing was left. He said it looked like the whole city was one massive fire.

† Isaiah 34:9-10 spoke of judgment as fire and burning pitch that would not be quenched, imagery Peter echoes here.

2 Peter 3:8-9

But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

† This isn't saying the promise could be thousands of years away. It's saying God's timing is perfect. His patience gave Israel more time to repent.

† Jesus gave the same picture in the parable of the fig tree when the vinedresser asked for one more year before the tree was cut down.

† Paul said the same in Romans 2:4, that God's kindness and patience were meant to lead to repentance. Peter is applying

this directly to his generation, not ours.

2 Peter 3:10

But 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.

† The day of the Lord was covenant judgment, not the end of creation. The elements were the principles of the Old Covenant law, not atoms of the universe. In AD 70 the temple, priesthood, and sacrificial system were burned.

† Tacitus said Jerusalem's destruction was so complete it was as if the city had been erased from existence.

† Paul also used the word "elements" (stoicheia) in Galatians 4:3 and Colossians 2:20 to mean the principles of the law. This proves Peter was speaking of covenantal foundations, not the cosmos.

2 Peter 3:11-12

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 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.

† Because the end of that covenant world was so close, Peter urged them to live holy lives. Their prayers and obedience were part of hastening the day, just as Jesus said the gospel would be preached to all nations before the end came.

† Hebrews 12:27-28 says the things that could be shaken (the Old Covenant) were removed so that the unshakable kingdom would remain. Peter's exhortation ties perfectly with that.

2 Peter 3:13

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens

and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

† This is Isaiah 65-66 fulfilled. The new heavens and earth is the New Covenant order. When the Old Covenant passed away in AD 70, the church entered fully into this new creation where righteousness dwells.

† The promise of the prophets was never about the planet but about a covenantal reality where God's righteousness rules among His people.

2 Peter 3:14-16

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

† Paul also wrote about this transition, especially in 2 Corinthians 5 and Galatians 4. Resurrection and covenant transformation were deep subjects, and they were often twisted then just like they're twisted now.

† Even in the first century, false teachers were corrupting Paul's words, just as many do today by stretching them thousands of years into the future instead of seeing them fulfilled in Christ's generation.

2 Peter 3:17-18

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 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.

† The day of eternity is the New Covenant age, eternal and unshakable. Peter calls them to stay faithful as that age was breaking in through judgment.

† Notice Peter doesn't say "to the end of the world" but "to the day of eternity." Eternity had dawned through Christ's kingdom, replacing the temporary covenantal system that was passing away.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.5.3, 6.8.5 –

<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/>

† Tacitus, Histories 5.13 –

<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Tacitus/>

† Philo of Alexandria – <https://earlyjewishwritings.com/philo.html>

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