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By Dan Maines

2 Peter 3

2 Peter 3:1-2

This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of a reminder, to 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 both the prophets and apostles testified of the same coming events.

† This ties the old covenant prophecies to the new covenant fulfillment in Christ.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 53) also emphasized remembering apostolic commands alongside the prophets.

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 things continue just as they were from the beginning of creation."

† Scoffers mocked the promise of Christ's coming, claiming nothing had changed.

† Jude 18 records the same warning about mockers in the last days.

† Josephus (Wars 6.5.2) describes false prophets and scoffers in Jerusalem who ridiculed warnings of judgment before the city's destruction.

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 by being flooded with water.

† Peter uses creation and the flood as reminders of God's word bringing judgment.

† The same God who created by His word also judged by His word.

† Josephus (Antiquities 1.3.1) recounts the flood as history, confirming Peter's reference.

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 people.

† Just as the old world was destroyed by water, the present covenant world of Judaism was reserved for fiery judgment.

† This does not refer to the end of the physical planet but the end of the old covenant system.

† Malachi 4:1 predicted a fiery day of judgment upon the proud and wicked.

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 willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

† God's patience delayed judgment so more could repent.

† This echoes Psalm 90:4, showing God's perspective on time.

† Josephus (Wars 2.20.1) notes the patience God showed to Jerusalem through signs and warnings before its fall.

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 discovered.

† The day of the Lord would come suddenly, like a thief.

† The "heavens" and "elements" refer to the old covenant order, not the physical universe.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 4.18-19) spoke of a coming fiery judgment upon the wicked, paralleling Peter's prophecy.

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!

† Knowing judgment was imminent, believers were called to holiness and godliness.

† To "hasten" the day meant their faithful witness and prayers aligned with God's plan.

† Tacitus (Histories 5.13) wrote of portents of destruction before Jerusalem's fall, echoing Peter's urgency.

2 Peter 3:13

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

† The "new heavens and new earth" refers to the new covenant order established through Christ.

† Isaiah 65:17 promised this new creation, fulfilled in Christ and His kingdom.

† Revelation 21:1 confirmed the same vision of a new covenant world.

2 Peter 3:14

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found spotless and blameless by Him, at peace.

† Believers must live in holiness, awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 30) exhorted the church to be blameless and peaceful, echoing Peter's charge.

2 Peter 3:15-16

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 there are some things that are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do

also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

† Peter affirms Paul's letters as Scripture, showing early recognition of their authority.

† The distortion of Paul's writings paralleled the twisting of other Scriptures.

† Origen later noted that Paul's writings were often misunderstood, confirming Peter's concern.

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 unscrupulous people and lose your own firm commitment, 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 letter closes with a call to vigilance and growth in grace and knowledge.

† True security is found in Christ, not in human teachers or systems.

† Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 3.3) confirmed Peter's letters were widely used in the early church, showing their enduring authority.

How it applies to us today

† 2 Peter 3 reminds us that scoffers and mockers will always challenge God's promises, but His word is sure.

† The fiery judgment came upon the old covenant world, fulfilling prophecy in that generation.

† Today, we live in the promised new heavens and new earth, the covenant of righteousness where Christ reigns.

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

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