

# Day 193, 2 Peter 3

by David Servant

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*Peter emphasizes the importance of being holy and ready for the coming of the Lord, warning against false teachers and the danger of false teaching.*

**Topics:** "End Time Prophecy", "Christian Holiness"

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## Description

David Servant delves into the stark contrast between the emphasis of the New Testament epistles by Peter, Paul, James, John, and Jude, and the teachings prevalent in contemporary 'Christian' culture, highlighting the dangers of straying from the true message of Scripture. Peter's primary concern was the holiness and readiness of believers for the Lord's return, warning against being led astray by false teachings and the danger of falling from steadfastness. He also emphasizes God's historical judgment and mercy, pointing to a future renewal of the earth. Peter stresses the importance of repentance, holiness, and obedience in hastening the day of God and the return of Christ.

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## Transcript

When reading the New Testament epistles, I am often struck by the stark contrast between what was emphasized by Peter, Paul, James, John and Jude, and what is emphasized in contemporary "Christian" culture, specifically in churches, "Christian" bookstores, and on "Christian" television. These are often at polar opposites from Scripture, making them not just sub-Christian but anti-Christian.

Today I find myself thinking about that contrast once again. Clearly, Peter's greatest concern was that his readers be holy and ready for the coming of the Lord. He was also concerned that they be on their guard "lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men" they "fall from [their] own steadfastness" (3:17). Yet so many teachers in the modern church do not share Peter's concern, convinced that it is impossible for the saved to forfeit eternal life for any reason. In fact, rather than warning their flocks of this danger of which Scripture speaks repeatedly, they assure them that such a thing could never occur. Worse, holiness is equated to legalism and contrary to the gospel of grace! May God help us!

Peter was also concerned that after he and the other apostles had died, believers who remained would begin to wonder if they had been hoaxed, especially as mockers questioned why Jesus still had not returned (3:2-4). So Peter reminds us that it was God who created everything long ago, and it was God who once destroyed the world by a flood.

Some speculate that Peter, when writing of the earth that "was formed out of water and by water" (3:5), was not speaking of the time of Noah's flood, but of an earlier flood in which God's judgment was poured out upon an pre-Adamic creation, the aftermath of which is described in Genesis 1:2:

And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

This view is embraced by those who theorize that there is a gap of perhaps millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, which then makes allowance for an earth that is much older than a few thousand years, which is what one might conclude from the more standard reading of the book of Genesis.

Regardless of which interpretation is correct, God has historically demonstrated His wrath against the entire world in the past, and He has also historically demonstrated His mercy with a new beginning for the world. That same wrath and mercy will be demonstrated once again, yet with one difference. The next time, "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" (3:10). Afterwards, however, true to historical precedent, God will renew what He has destroyed. There will be "new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (3:12).

Knowing this, according to Peter, should motivate us to be holy (3:11). In fact, he even states that we can hasten "the coming of the day of God" (3:12), implying that our obedience can affect the timing of Christ's return. Contrasted with this, Peter tells us that one reason Jesus has been so slow to return is because He is "not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (3:9). So the reason it has taken Jesus so long to return is not because He is slow, but because He is lovingly patient, giving rebels more time to repent before their doom is forever sealed.

According to Peter, even in his day people were twisting Paul's writings (3:16), so it shouldn't surprise us to witness the same thing today. Some who distort Paul's words do it "to their own destruction" (3:16), and Peter warns his readers to guard themselves against such teachers, lest they "fall from [their] own steadfastness" (3:17). Giving heed to false teaching can be spiritually deadly. Beware of the multitudes of pastors and teachers today who distort Paul's writings about salvation by grace, all to their own destruction and the destruction of their hearers. Paul's gospel was a call to repentance and holiness.

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