

**TITLE: OPPORTUNITY STILL KNOCKS!**

**TEXT: 2 PETER 3**

**THESIS:** Judgment day will be the end of all opportunities to be saved. So live in such a way that you will be prepared for that day!

**INTRO:** In chapter 1, Peter referenced “exceeding great and precious promises” (v. 4). Now he gives two specific promises in chapter 3. **1)** Judgment day will come (Universe destroyed & Christ’s return), and **2)** Faithful Christians will have a new home in Heaven (the new heavens and earth). This is near the end of Peter’s life (1:14), so he is earnestly begging these Christians to stay strong!

**I. PROMISE – JUDGMENT & DESTRUCTION (v. 1-10):**

- A. (v. 1-2) Remember! Here again Peter stirs up their minds by reminding them (1:12-15). This is so they won’t forget & fall (3:17). (v. 2) He tells them to remember the words of the OT prophets (1:19-21) and the NT apostles (1:16-18). Why? Because of mockers!
- B. (v. 3-4) Mockers in the last days (now -Acts 2:16-17); walking...lusts (evil desires). They live how they want; they attack Christianity. “Where is the promise of his coming?” He’s not really coming! “All things continue...” (no Divine intervention).
- C. (v. 5-10) The response
  - 1. (v. 5-7) God’s Power
    - a. The word of God brought the Creation (v. 5). The scoffers are willingly (want, desire) ignorant (unaware). God *was* involved in Creation. The earth is in the water & out of the water. Probably a ref to **Gen 1:6-9** - the waters divided. *There was a beginning, & there will be an end.*
    - b. The word of God brought the flood (v. 6). God *was* involved in the flood (the scoffers are willfully ignorant of this). This was a major event on the earth. It destroyed all but 8 people & changed many things about the earth, atmosphere, etc.
    - c. The word of God holds back final judgment & destruction (v. 7). God *could* destroy them at any time, but is waiting. The heavens & earth are being kept currently, but *will be* destroyed w/fire on the day of judgment & destruction of the ungodly. \*Notice that Peter’s answer as to when Christ will come again is when the heavens & earth will be destroyed with fire. There is no room here for an earthly reign of Christ (cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18). There is no second chance after this life!
  - 2. (v. 8-9) God’s Patience
    - a. (v. 8) Don’t be ignorant (unaware), like the scoffers, that with God one day = 1000 years (& vice versa). This is not a time code or a formula for understanding prophecies. Remember, we must know the context!!
    - b. (v. 9) Here he explains v. 8. The Lord isn’t slack (slow, delayed) concerning His promise, as we might consider slackness.
      - If I don’t keep a promise within a few days, my sincerity will be questioned. I might be trying to get out of having to do it. However, God is not bound by time! He promised a child to Abraham & Sarah (took 25 years); land of Canaan (took 400 years); the Messiah (took 2000 years). God keeps his promises! But He does it in *His* time, not ours.
      - So why is he waiting? He waits because of love & patience. The fulfillment of this promised return of Christ means destruction of the world, and the end of any possibility to repent and be saved!
  - 3. (v. 10) God’s Promise
    - a. This day of judgment & destruction of ungodly people will come as a thief in the night – when you don’t expect it!
    - b. The heavens (atmosphere, universe) will pass away with a great noise. This won’t be a secret (**1 Thess 4:16**)!
    - c. The elements (rudiments, basic building blocks of the earth) shall melt with fervent heat (burned up)!
    - d. The earth and the works therein shall be burned up (consumed wholly)!  
There will be nothing left of the Creation (the entire Universe)! This happens at Christ’s return, so he cannot reign here!

**II. PREPARATION – GODLINESS & KNOWLEDGE (v. 11-18):**

- A. (v. 11-13) Motivation
  - 1. (v. 11) Fear Motivation: Learn from these things! How ought (necessity) you to be – in holy (pure) behavior & godliness...
  - 2. (v. 12-13) Reward Motivation: Looking for (anticipating) and hastening unto (eagerly awaiting) this day of God! You can’t do this without holiness & godliness! Even then, there must be a good reason to eagerly await such a day of destruction! Why then? Because we look for (same word as in v. 12 - anticipate) new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Peter isn’t saying there’ll be a *literal* new heavens & earth.  
\*Isa 65:17 & 66:22 speak of a new heavens & new earth, referencing the coming church (the kingdom; home of God’s people). So here, the new heavens & new earth will be Heaven, the final home of the church (**1 Cor 15:24**).
- B. (v. 14-18) Final exhortations & reminders
  - (v. 14) Seeing that ye look for these things (he’s talking to Christians who are established in the truth –1:12), be diligent (1:5,10) to be found in peace, without spot, & blameless. These are somewhat generic; he has already given specific Christian qualities (1:5-7).
  - (v. 15) And, as Paul has also said, the longsuffering (patience, forbearance, slow to wrath) of God = salvation (explained in v. 9). **Rom 2:4** – the forbearance of God leads to repentance; Gal, Eph, & Col are written to churches in Asia Minor (1 Pet 1:1).
  - (v. 16) Paul often speaks of God’s forbearance, and His desire for all men to be saved (**Col 1:21; 1 Tim 2:4**).
  - (v. 17) Beware (be on guard), so you won’t be led away with the error of the wicked and fall from (“ekipto” – to fall from or out of”) your own steadfastness. Could there be a clearer verse that refutes O.S.A.S.?
  - (v. 18) How to beware lest ye fall: Grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. Both these are done by reading & studying God’s Word regularly...by putting this as your #1 priority. If you’re needing a reason/motivation to do this, what else could Peter say?

**CONCLUSION:** Peter says a lot about the end of the world in this chapter. But he never told us *when* it would happen. This is because he didn’t know (Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32). But he did know what Jesus had said about it, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Mt 24:42). “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (24:44; 25:13). None of us know when the day will come that God will completely destroy the Universe, judging each person, and taking the church to Heaven. All we can do is live our lives in the ways that He has commanded, so we can be ready at whatever time He returns! Look back at the characteristics of 1:5-7 and make a commitment to strive to excel in those areas.