

The Practical Importance of Eschatology
2 Peter 3

Introduction

This morning I want to expand on a theme that was included in my sermon last week on Daniel 12. There is a practical importance to the study of eschatology - the study of “last things” or “end times.” A proper understanding of what God has revealed about what will happen in the future should result in living in wisdom by helping to set proper priorities for the present. Biblical prophecy is not only a road map to the future, it is a light that helps us to make sense of the present. Those who are ignorant of Biblical prophecy are not only going into the future without a map, they are also in the dark about how to understand and live in the present. It would be analogous to trying to hike cross country on a moonless night without a flashlight.

Today I want to give you a bright prophetic flashlight to shine on your path of life. Turn to 2 Peter 3. This is my favorite prophetic passage on the end times because Peter is extremely practical in his application of the truths he is revealing. He deals realistically with the mockers that will be part of the last days by pointing out both the Lord’s judgment and patience and then points out the practical application of living in light of the realities of what will come at the culmination of the ages.

The Need for Reminders - 2 Peter 3:1-2

The Apostle Peter is writing about A.D. 66 or 67, a year or so before he died as a martyr during the reign of Nero. He is writing to Jewish and Gentile believers that are scattered around the Roman Empire. In his first letter he sought to prepare them for the persecution that was coming. In this his second letter Peter is concerned that they grow in maturity in order to combat the false teachers that were coming and were already present.

In chapter 1 he issues a call to maturity and holiness by explaining how they were to grow in Christ and their ground of belief in the Scriptures which came as men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. In chapter 2, Peter combats false teachers and their heresy by warning of their danger and future destruction, and also describing their identifying characteristics. In this last chapter Peter turns his attention to the coming of the Day of the Lord giving warning of the mockers in the last days, the destruction of the present heavens and earth, and calling us to maturity in view of His promised return.

Peter begins the chapter by pointing out he is not going to be telling them anything new. *“¹ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. ”*

One of the marks that distinguishes a Biblical church from cults, apostate Christian groups and aberrant sects is the fact that we do not come up with any new doctrine. We teach the same faith as that of the apostles. We have one text of doctrine, the Bible, and we live and die by what it says instead of the musings of men. We also recognize the importance of reminders of what has already been taught. Life gets busy so that our focus can be skewed away from what is actually important, so reminders help us regain a proper focus on Biblical doctrine that we might live godly lives according to it.

Foolish Mockers - 2 Peter 3:3-7

False teachers are evil because they pervert God’s word with falsehoods about God, His plan and His will. The mockers of the last days are evil because they defy God’s word. *³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ 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.”

These are foolish mockers because they are in reality rejecting both God’s revelation of Himself in the Scriptures and the physical evidence in front of their eyes. Their foolishness begins with a rejection of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The prophets such as Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Joel and Zechariah all speak of the coming of the Lord in judgment on the wicked and establishing His kingdom. Jesus spoke of the same thing in Matthew 16, 19, 25 and Mark 14. The Apostles also spoke of this in their writings (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 20:11f; etc.). Do not take the reference to “creation” to mean that is what they believed. Even if these mockers do hold to a “creator being,” it is not the God of the Bible. Philippians 3:18 calls such people enemies of the cross for good reason.

Peter describes the particular philosophy they hold to of believing *“all continues just as it was from the beginning of Creation.”* That is the foundation for evolutionary thought. Everything continues in the same way now as it always has. This idea is usually phrased as, *“the present is the key to the past.”* However, as someone trained extensively in science, I can tell you that statement is not true, for in many areas of science we find that rates have greatly varied over time. That includes not only things such as rates of deposition of geologic materials and the effect of variable weather patterns on local and regional climates, but even the rate of breakdown of radioactive materials varies with heat and pressure.

But there is a bigger issue here and one more easily recognized for these mockers are also forgetful of what has already happened since Creation. Look at verse 5, *“⁵ 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, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.*

They are not ignorant because of a lack of evidence. They are ignorant in their mockery because they refuse to acknowledge the evidence and chose to forget what they already know. The KJV translates this as *“they are willingly ignorant.”* This matches Paul’s statement in Romans 1:18 about those who *“suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”* Of what are they ignorant? The flood of Noah.

Scripture is absolute in its proclamation that there was a worldwide flood. The flood account itself is covered in Genesis 7-8. The water came from the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were opened (Genesis 7:11). The water was 15 cubits (about 22 feet) above highest mountains (Genesis 7:19,20) and it stayed that way 150 days (Genesis 7:24 cf 8:5). All land animals & birds except those on Ark perished (Genesis 7:23). This was not a local flood. The flood is cited as an historical event by Isaiah (54:9), the writer of Hebrews (11:7), Peter, and most importantly, Jesus Himself (Matthew 24:37f).

In addition, flood mythologies occur around the world with many of them including the escape of eight people by a boat or other method. The evidence from geology is overwhelming. Here are a few examples. 1) Fossil grave yards that occur around the world - many of which contain multiple types of once living organisms in a small area. The Mazon Creek shale layer, near Chicago, is one example containing 100,000+ specimens and 400+ species including ferns, insects, scorpions, tetrapods, jellyfish, mollusks, crustaceans and fish. Cross strata fossilized trees occur in many places prove rapid deposition of what are now rock layers because the tree would rot or weather away long before slow deposition over thousands of years would cover it. Misplaced geological formations such as the Heart Mountain thrust in Wyoming in which the supposed older rock formation sits on top of the supposed younger one. Inter-bedding of rock formations of supposedly vastly different ages. In the Grand Canyon there is an area of inter-bedding between the Mauv Limestone formation and the Redwall sandstone formation which is supposed to be 170 million years younger, and the Temple Butte formation that is supposed to be between them is missing. There are huge plateaus of sediment thousands of feet thick covering hundreds of thousands of square miles. The Colorado Plateau is over 250,000 square miles and 3-4,000 ft thick. The Tibetan Plateau is about 750,000 square miles. Only a global flood can explain them. If accepting the Genesis flood is difficult for you, then change your thinking by letting God be God and consider what

you would expect to find from a world-wide flood. Then start examining the evidence from that perspective and you will be amazed at what you suddenly recognize.

There is not a lack of evidence. The mockers are willingly ignorant in order to deny the reality that God has judged the world in the past because they do not want to consider future judgment. ⁷ *“But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”*

Peter says that just as the flood was used by God in the days of Noah to destroy the ungodly, a day is coming when the same thing will happen again, except this time it will be by fire instead of flood. The coming judgment by fire is as sure as the flood. With that in mind, it is no wonder that mocking men willingly ignore the evidence for God’s judgment upon mankind by the flood. They must do so in order to ignore being held accountable in the future judgment.

God’s Patience - 2 Peter 3:8-10

While mockers reject the evidence in order to ignore the reality of a future judgement, God’s longsuffering patience can be a struggle for us too as we wait for the Lord’s return. There are a lot of bad things that have happened since Christ’s ascension nearly 2,000 years ago and a lot of bad things continue to happen today. We long for His return to set things right and so we cry out, *“Lord, how long?”* And ask, *“Why haven’t you returned?”* That can leave us who believe in Jesus also subject to wondering about the promise of His return. We were ready for Jesus to return yesterday and we become impatient waiting for tomorrow. That is why Peter addresses the issue of God’s patience in verses 8 & 9 to encourage us to hold fast as we wait for His promised return.

Peter begins with a reminder that the Lord’s relationship to time is not the same as our own. ⁸ *“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 views time differently than we do for we are creatures of time. We come into being at a certain point in time; we live for a certain length of time; we will die at another point in time and then enter eternity. We can only go forward in time and only at a constant rate. We cannot tell what the next point in time will bring until we have entered that point in time, but then it is too late to change what occurred in the moment of time just past. We are caged in by time. It surrounds us and we cannot escape it. The Lord, however, is not bound by time.

The thought here in verse 8 is the same as in Psalm 90:4 from where the statement was derived. Peter is simply showing the transcendent nature of God in relationship to time. The Lord can accomplish in one day what may seem like it should take a thousand years to accomplish. Or he may stretch something out so that it may take a thousand years for something to occur that we would like to have done in one day. Time is relative for the Lord, and He does things in His own timing. He existed prior to time and in fact He created time. He will exist after time is done away with. The past, the present and the future all belong to God. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. He declares in Isaiah 46:8 *“For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”* That last part is just the point Peter is making here. Do not be dismayed or discouraged that the Lord has not returned yet. He will keep His promise in His timing, not our timing. We must rest assured that God will establish His purpose and that God will accomplish His will, even if from our perspective it seems that He is being slow.

Peter explains the Lord’s patience in vs 9, *“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.”*

It is not that the Lord is slow about His promise. He is just being patient with mankind. The actual word here for patience (μακροθυμία / makrothumia) speaks of forbearance. *“To suffer long, to be patient when under provocation by people.”* Peter is essentially saying, “don’t think God is slow about what he is doing, He is just being patient with you!” Your very existence in the present is only because

God is patient, otherwise judgment would have come either before you existed or before you were saved. Then what?

How foolish are the mockers of our day who rail against God saying stupid things like a guy I heard on the radio once who said, *"If God exists, He should prove it. I challenge Him to prove it by striking me dead."* How utterly stupid! Does he really think that his foolish mocking will wear out the patience of God? Yet at the same time, mockers should be careful because God may just strike them dead as He did Korah, Herod, and others as examples to all the rest.

But the Lord's desire is not to strike people dead. Ezekiel 33:11 records the declaration of the Lord God, *"I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."* Peter explains the same thing here. God is *"not willing that any to perish but for all to come to repentance."* The word "willing" here (βούλομαι / boulomai) means to 'desire' to 'intend' to 'want.' This speaks of God's moral will, not His sovereign will. This is what God would like to happen, but He has allowed other factors to determine the outcome. God is not willing that people sin, yet they do, because God has allowed people to choose against Him. God does not desire for men to perish and be tormented in Hell. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 25:41 that Hell was created for the devil and his angels and not man. Yet, people in their sinful desires choose to go there rather than serve God. Part of the eternal destruction that occurs in Hell is being shut out from the presence of God (2 Thess 1:8-9). Men and women go to Hell because they reject God and choose to go their own path, but there is only one path, the straight and narrow path of faith in Jesus Christ, that leads to heaven. As Paul states to the Athenians in Acts 17:30, *"God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent."* But God has allowed man to choose to do otherwise, and so man in his sinfulness does not repent resulting in his damnation.

Every person who has ever come to faith in Christ did so because of God's desire for them to repent in turning from their sin to faith in Jesus Christ. It is God's love for us that gives us hope. *"For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him."* (John 3:16,17).

Every true believer in Christ here today is a testimony to the Lord's patience for our very salvation depends on God's forbearance. Romans 3:25 talks about our salvation being purchased for us by Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. It goes on to say, *"This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed"* God patiently put up with you even while you were provoking Him, and He loved you enough to send His son Jesus to die for you. Paul states it this way in Romans 5:8, *"For God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Don't take it for granted. Praise Him for it because of its blessing to you. Praise Him for it for its continued blessing to others even as we patiently wait for His return.

The Day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:10-13

There is a story that comes out of the Alaskan Gold Rush days. It seems that there was a prospecting party that had penetrated far into the interior of the country when they came upon a miner's cabin. Everything around was as quiet as the grave. Entering the shack, they found the skeletons of two men, and a large quantity of gold. On a rough table was a letter telling of their successful search for the precious metal. In their eagerness to get it, they forgot the early coming of winter in that northern land. Each day, the gold was found in more abundance. One morning, they awoke to find a great snowstorm upon them. For days the tempest raged, cutting off all hope of escape. Their little store of food was soon exhausted, and they lay down and died amidst abounding gold! Their folly was not in finding the gold, but in neglecting to provide against the inevitable winter. We can imagine these two, each day finding more gold and talking with each other about all the things they were going to do with their new found riches while neglecting to make provision for the coming winter. In a real sense, we could say that they were immature. They lacked in either discernment about the signs of the approaching winter, or they

lacked the good sense to do something to prepare for it. Their immaturity lead to their deaths.

There is another season approaching. It is a time that will be unlike anything any of us have ever experienced. A time that will be unlike anything that has ever occurred on earth before. Peter is very emphatic in the next section of the chapter of the fact that the Lord is coming back. Foolish people may scoff or sneer at such a thought, but the Lord is coming back and they will have to face Him. Peter explains the suddenness of the Lord's return, and then what will occur when He returns in verses 10-13.

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.”* This is an expansion of verse 7 but with an emphasis on the suddenness of the Lord's return - *like a thief*. Paul used the same phrase in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, but the thought really traces back to Jesus' statements in Matthew 24:42-44. *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think.”*

The idea here is that the Lord's return will occur suddenly, like when a thief strikes in the night. It is sudden, fast, happening quickly and without warning. However, we lose the expectation that should be there because complacency replaces anticipatory patient waiting. We mentally assent that He will come some day, but not now, not today.

There is a story of a preacher in Scotland named “McCheyne” who once said to some of his friends, “Do you think Christ will come tonight?” One after another they said, “I think not.” When all had given this answer, he solemnly repeated the verse, *“The Son of Man will come at an hour you think not.”*

Scripture teaches the imminent return of Christ. That means we should live in anticipation that He could come back any day at any time, for as James 5:9 describes it, He *“is standing right at the door.”* He could come back today, even before I finish this sermon, and no Christian has anything planned that could be better than being with Christ. Jesus will return suddenly at a time you don't think it will happen like a thief in the night. Are you ready for His return?

What will happen then? In verse 10 Peter jumps from the beginning of the day of the Lord which is marked by Jesus' return to the end of it at the culmination of the ages when *“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.”* In verse 12 Peter repeats a third time his warning about God's future judgment in *“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!”*

Contrary to the belief system of Jehovah Witnesses and other cults, this earth is not going to last forever. It is going to be destroyed by fire. Jesus said in Matthew 24:34 that *“heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”* Jesus did not say heaven and earth “could” or “may” or “might” pass away. He said they “will” pass away. Revelation 21:1 states, *“And 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.”*

Peter states that the heavens will *“pass away with a roar”* (v 10) and that *“the heavens will be destroyed by burning”* (v 12). The term for the heavens to *“pass away”* (παρέρχομαι / parerchomai) is the same as used to refer to people that *“pass away.”* The time of their life on earth has passed by. The time of the existence of the present heavens will end and they will be destroyed by fire (v 12). When the Day of the Lord comes, it will culminate when what we now know as the heavens will be destroyed and they will no longer exist as we know them.

A similar thing will happen to the earth and its works, i.e., what it produces, will also be destroyed. Literally here they are *“burned up,”* consumed by fire. Peter describes this as *“the elements will be destroyed with intense heat”* in verse 10 and then emphasizes the point again in verse 12 adding that they will actually *“melt.”* The day of the Lord culminates in true, God made, global warming. The elemental principles of which the earth is made are going to be destroyed by the heat with temperatures

so hot that they are going to “become liquid” - melt! Nuclear physics has demonstrated the reality of this situation. The earth is ready for consumption by fire.

Peter’s language is clear that the day of the Lord is going to be a time of judgment. It is that judgment that the mockers want to ignore and why they refuse to believe the evidence for Noah's flood. They are desperate to reject the fact that God will judge again as He has in the past. But that is also the reason for Peter's strong warning here. The day of the Lord will come! Don't be complacent because of the Lord's great patience! Get ready for Him! He is coming back! Be prepared!

Living in Light of the Day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:11-18

Peter poses the question in v. 11-12, *“¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² 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! ”*

If the things of this world are going to burn, what effect should that have on the way you live your life? What kind of character should you have and be developing?

A. How important is the pursuit of material possessions? What difference does it make if you get the big house, expensive furnishings, luxury cars, the big bank account, the latest electronic gadgets, the fancy china, etc.? All of it is going to burn!

B. What eternal benefit is gained from a position of power or prestige by working your way up the corporate ladder or becoming important in society or your social group ? All corporations and societies are going to end when the earth is destroyed.

C. Is trying to earn fame worth the effort? Do the honors and accolades given by men have any real value? Even if you make a name for yourself and you earn a spot in the history books, all those books will eventually burn. Then what of your prestige? Even more importantly, will the honor given to you by ungodly people have any sway with God?

Peter’s statements are based on the truth of who Jesus Christ is and the assurance that His promises will be fulfilled. This is not only the promise that Jesus will return, but also the promise of the good things that will also occur then. Verse 13 states, *“But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”* Peter's call to maturity is very pragmatic. It is the only logical and practical response. The reality is that all of the things of this earth are temporary at best for it and all that is in it will burn up. We should be preparing ourselves for the new heavens and new earth that are to come.

In verse 14 Peter answers his earlier question of what sort of people we ought to be in view of the coming destruction of the Earth. *“Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.”* Because we are looking forward to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness dwells we should want to prepare for it now by developing our character to be in peace, to be spotless (unstained by sinful pursuits of the world), and to be blameless (free from guilt). Doesn't it just make common sense to prepare for that future eternal life rather than giving so much of our attention to the things of this life which are just going to burn up? Yes, you will still need to work to earn a living, but the kind of work and the manner in which you work are to have a different focus. Fame, fortune and building your own kingdom are in the end empty pursuits of vanity. Life is short, will soon be past, only what is done for Christ will last.

Peter’s call is to develop a Godly character in preparation for the coming of the new heavens and earth, but in verses 15-18 he also calls for the continued development of our understanding of what God is doing in the present. *¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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,¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Christian maturity requires understanding. Understanding of the truth including that the Lord is patient and long suffering. He restrains Himself and does not hastily revenge the wrongs He suffers at the hands of men. We must consider this and regard it as to our benefit and those around us for because of it we can be saved.

Scripture teaches us understanding and Peter affirms here that Paul’s epistles are also part of the Holy Scriptures (vs 16) and that he is only saying the same things as Paul. Peter also recognizes that some of Paul’s writings are hard to understand, but hard is not impossible. It just means there must be diligent study and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Christian maturity also requires understanding in order to be careful of false teachers. Peter again warns about false teachers whom he describes as distorting the Scriptures because they are untaught and unstable. “Distort” here (στρεβλόω / strebloō) is an interesting word. It was used to refer to torturing someone, to “twist them.” Figuratively it means to pervert, to torture, twist, distort language to a false sense or meaning. Christian maturity requires that we be careful of such unprincipled men or we could be carried away by the error of their false teaching. We stand in danger of having our thoughts twisted from the truth and falling into the same error as these uneducated, deluded men who operate outside of godly principles.

The foundation of all Christian maturity is understanding Jesus Christ. Back in chapter 1, Peter said that God has already given the Christian everything he or she needs concerning life and godliness through the “*true knowledge*” of Jesus. Do you want to grow as a Christian? Then the starting point is knowing and growing in Jesus Christ. Peter concludes his instruction in verse 18 with that same theme by calling us to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*” It is the only reasonable thing to do in view of what the future holds for this present world and the coming of new heavens and a new earth, but more importantly, that is the only way to fulfill the purpose of all things, which is how Peter ends his letter. *To Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) [be] the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

I pray each one here will take heed to Peter’s message.

Out of This Life - by Edgar A. Guest

Out of this life I shall never take, Things of silver and gold I make.

All that I cherish & hoard away, After I leave, on the earth must stay

Though I have toiled for a painting rare, To hang on my wall, I must leave it there.

Though I call it mine and I boast its worth, I must give it up when I quit the earth.

All that I gather and all that I keep, I must leave behind when I fall asleep.

And I wonder often what I shall own, In that other life, when I pass alone.

What shall they find and what shall they see, In the soul that answers the call for me?

Shall the great Judge learn when my task is through, That the spirit had gathered some riches, too?

Or shall at the last it be mine to find, That all I had worked for I'd left behind?

To that I will add: *And all that you leave will be just be a pyre, Which will then melt in God’s consuming fire*

Sermon Notes - 11/19/2023
THE PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF ESCHATOLOGY - 2 Peter 3

Introduction

A proper understanding of Biblical prophecy should result in wisdom by setting proper priorities

The Need for Reminders - 2 Peter 3:1-2

Peter's letter is an encouragement to maturity in order to combat false teachers current and future

Chapter 1 is a call to maturity & holiness by explaining their ground of belief & how to grow in Christ

Chapter 2 is an exposure of the dangers of false teachers and how to recognize them

Chapter 3 warns of mockery in the last days, the coming Day of the Lord & a call to mature, godly living

A Biblical church teaches people of what has already been taught in the Scriptures - not new doctrine

Foolish Mockers - 2 Peter 3:3-7

Foolish mockers reject both God's revelation and the physical evidence before their eyes

Their philosophy of consistency from Creation is the same as Evolution's "the present is the key to the past"

Mockers are forgetful - "willingly ignorant" - of the destruction of the world by the flood of Noah's time

Scripture is clear the flood was worldwide and it is cited as an historical event by Isaiah, Peter & Jesus

Geologic evidence for the flood abounds - fossil graveyards, cross strata fossils, misplaced features, plateaus

They ignore the evidence of God's past judgment in order to ignore the warning of God's future judgment

God's Patience - 2 Peter 3:8-10

Even Christians can wonder why God has delayed Jesus' promised return for so long

A) The Lord views time differently for He transcends the time-space continuum in which we are trapped

God will keep His promises in His timing and not that of men

B) God is extremely patient and longsuffering allowing ample time for people to repent

The Lord's desire is for people to repent from their wickedness instead of dying in their sin (Ezekiel 33:11)

God has given man volition, and man in his corrupted nature chooses sin & selfishness and rejects God

The path to Heaven requires repentance in order to believe Christ

God's love for sinful man gives us hope (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8), & His patience arises from that love

The Day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:10-13

The foolish scoff & sneer at the warnings of the coming Day of the Lord, but they do so at their own peril

There is an emphasis on the suddenness of the coming of Day of the Lord - "like a thief"

Scripture teaches the imminent return of Christ - He could return any day at any time. He is "at the door"

Peter jumps from the start of the Day of the Lord to its culmination in preparation for new heavens & earth

The present heavens & earth will be destroyed by fire: 2 Peter 3:10,12, Matthew 24:34, Revelation 21:1

The present earth will be consumed by fire with the very elements melting - 2 Peter 3:10, 12

The Day of the Lord will be a time of God's judgment - so heed Peter's warning & be prepared!

Living in Light of the Day of the Lord - 2 Peter 3:11-18

If the things of this world are going to burn, what effect should that have on the way you live your life?

- A. How important is the pursuit of material possessions?
- B. What eternal benefit is gained from a position of power or prestige?
- C. Is striving for fame worth the effort?

The Day of the Lord culminates in new heavens & a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13)

Peter's call to godly maturity is pragmatic for this earth is temporary & will burn, so prepare for the new one

Prepare for eternity by developing a godly character of being in peace, spotless & blameless in the present

Christian maturity requires understanding of truth including the Lord's longsuffering patience with sinners

Peter affirms that Paul's writings are also Scripture - though hard to understand at times (but not impossible)

Christian maturity also requires understanding the Scriptures in order to be on guard against false teachers

The foundation of all Christian maturity is understanding Jesus - grow in the grace & knowledge of Christ

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down the scripture references and look them up later 2) Count how many times the "Lord," "God" or "Jesus" is mentioned 3) Discuss with your parents what will happen at the end of the ages and how that can help you make wise decisions for your life.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. How can Biblical prophecy be a "light that helps us to make sense of the present"? When did Peter write 2 Peter and what is the purpose of this letter? What distinguishes a Biblical church from a cult in its approach to doctrine? What do the mockers of the last days mock? What is the tie between the mockers belief that "*all continues just as it was from the beginning of Creation*" and modern evolutionary philosophy? What Scriptures recount or cite the worldwide flood of the day of Noah as historical fact? What physical evidence is there for a worldwide flood? Why do the mockers willingly ignore the Scriptural and physical evidence of the Flood? What is the Lord's relationship to time? Why has the Lord delayed His return for so long? Why is the Lord so patient with sinful man? Does God take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Why or why not? What is the Lord's desire - moral will? Why is that not carried out? How do we know that the Day of the Lord will come suddenly? What event marks the beginning of the Day of the Lord? Why does Peter jump all the way to the culmination of the Day of the Lord and skip all the events in between? Why do we believe the return of Jesus is imminent? What will happen to the current heavens and earth? What will happen after that? How should a wise person react in the present to knowing these events will happen in the future? What does Peter say your reaction should be? How does that knowledge affect your view of the importance of the following: Pursuit of material possessions? The benefit gained from positions of power or prestige? The quest for fame? Why does Peter say to *regard the patience of the Lord as salvation*? What does Peter say about the writings of Paul? How do false teachers lead people astray? How do you guard against that?