

2 Peter 3 Judgment

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
Peter (Petros) is often called the “rock” (petra), in this case *two* rocks = **2 PETER**
2. The CHAPTER:
The *number* of uncovered eyes = **CHAPTER 3**
3. The THEME:
The eyes look upward with excited expectation to the *judgment* coming with the rays of light. = **JUDGMENT**

2 PETER 3: BACKGROUND

Several years had passed since Peter had written his first letter. In it, he had encouraged the young church to stand firm against external enemies.

Things had changed. The enemy was now within the church. False prophets taught errors. One of the effects of false teachings was careless conduct in the lives of the members. Many no longer looked forward to the return of Christ.

Peter fervently warned his readers to avoid false teaching. He asserted that Christ was not lax regarding his promise to return. He reminded them that God did not operate on a human timetable; but surely, he would come. He cited evidence to show that God's patience did not tarry forever: the fallen angels and the flood of Noah's day.

The warning was accompanied by an admonition to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If their faith was to remain true and free from error, it must be alive. Such growth in faith would be accompanied by a godly life. If they believed the Lord was going to return, they would lead lives of excited, joyful anticipation and expectation.

The second coming of Christ will be spectacular. His first coming was humble and almost unnoticed. Not the second coming! He will come in all his majesty. The heavens will not be able to contain his majesty and glory. And all will know and see! Even the dead will rise to behold him. Every person who has ever lived or will live will appear before his throne.

All Christians await the trumpet call.

Come, quickly, Lord!

KEY VERSES OF 2 PETER 3

Verses 3-4

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

Unbelievers ridicule the promised return of Christ.

Verses 5-6

But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word, the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters, also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

Many today deny that God, who created the world, judged it with a universal flood.

Verse 7

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

God will judge the world again. The earth will be destroyed. Sin and everything infected by sin will perish.

Verse 8

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

Time is relative with God. Time as we know it is earthly, a part of God’s creation. From the perspective of eternity—God’s perspective—a day is like a thousand years.

Verse 9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

The reason for god’s delay: mercy!

Verse 10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Judgment and destruction *will* come. It will be *unexpected* by the world.

Verses 11-12a, 14

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

If you believe in Christ, then live as though you do.

Verses 12b-13

That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

The theme changes to a reminder of the hope and glory to come.

Verses 15-16

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Paul and Peter have the same message: Salvation in Jesus Christ.

Verse 17

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on our guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

Beware! Only in Christ, are you in a secure position regarding the day of judgment.

Verse 18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Grow!

THOUGHTS ON JUDGMENT

Day 1

A universal law of nature: All living things must grow to stay alive. There are no exceptions. It's true of fish, elephants, dandelions, babies, weeds, etc. it is also true of faith. Scripture constantly admonishes us to grow. Peter urges his readers to grow so that their faith will be strong and alive at the Lord's coming (2 Peter 3:18). (See Key chapter booklets *John 15: Growth* and *Romans 6: New Life*).

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False teachers are everywhere. The most dangerous are those from within the church who appear to be brothers (Matthew 7:15).

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It's good to watch where you are walking. But those who truly expect the Lord's return will have their eyes spiritually heavenward.

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After Pentecost, the unreliable Peter became the determined Peter.

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God is a righteous and fair judge. Those who try to get to heaven by their works will be judged according to God's perfect law. Fairly and righteously, they will be damned because they have not kept the Law perfectly. Since they reject Christ's forgiveness for their sins, they will be eternally lost.

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The return of Christ rings joy to the believer.

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On Judgment Day, only the unbelievers will be horrified in fear. (See Luke 23:30; Revelation 6: 15-17).

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Luke 21:28: When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. For the believer, Judgment Day will be the day of deliverance.

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Time is part of our human condition. From a human point of view, salvation and Judgment Day are closer now than yesterday (Romans 13:11).

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Day 2

The Revelation of John speaks frequently about Judgment Day (Revelation 1:7; 6:12-7:17; 11: 18-19; 14:14-20; 16:17-21; 19:11-21; 20:7-22:21).

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Our bodies will also be saved with our souls and spirits as total units, total people. But, our resurrected bodies will have no sin; they will be glorified (1 Corinthians 15: 42-44). (See the Key Chapter booklets *John 14: Heaven* and *1 Corinthians 15: Resurrection*).

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Scripture teaches only two locations for people after judgment: Heaven (paradise) or hell. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus also teaches this (Luke 16: 19-31). See Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1).

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Jude, a small Epistle of only 25 verses, parallels much of Peter's thought.

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In disgust over those who forsake their faith and turn away from Christ, Peter compares their situation with two proverbs: A dog eating its own vomit; a sow wallowing in its filth (2 Peter 2:22).

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The same ones who claim there will be no Judgment Day also reject that God *created* the world. It's no wonder! Those who reject Judgment Day also reject the flood. It's no wonder! (2 Peter 3: 5-6).

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God promised he would not again destroy the earth by a flood. In the coming judgment it will be purged by fire (2 Peter 3:7).

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God is eternal. With him, time is relative. He has no beginning, no end (2 Peter 3:8). Do not assume things on earth must continue to run their course. In a twinkling of an eye, God can accomplish what may normally take thousands of years. God converts some slowly, some rapidly. It's all his doing. He will also choose when he will interrupt time and come again. Do not assume courses of action must be complete first. He can come any time. Everything he said he would do before Judgment Day has been done; only those things that will happen on Judgment Day itself remain to be done. He can come anytime. It will be when he is least expected (2 Peter 3:10).

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Day 3

The Lord's return is near, and we are admonished to be aware of the signs (Luke 12: 54-56). But it is stupid to try to predict the exact time (as so many have erroneously done in the past). Even Jesus said that the exact time of his return is unknown to all but the Father (Luke 12: 35-46; Matthew 24: 36-51).

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Perhaps the best known of all the warnings given by our Lord is the parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25: 1-13).

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Since we expect Christ's return, our lives will be marked by a struggle to overcome Satan and sin and by a growth in holiness of life (2 Peter 3:14; see also 1 Peter 2:2).

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Christ prayed that his followers would live in peace and unity (John 17). He also said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35). Peter urges the same lifestyle by saying, "The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4: 7-8).

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It's not too surprising to see and hear the church ridiculed today by unbelievers. There were disbelievers and scoffers already in the first century. Many were *within* the organized church. Both the prophets and Jesus warned they would appear.

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If your life is not lived for Christ, it will be self-indulgent, sensual.

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Pigs have a way of encouraging others to join them in wallowing in the mud. Misery loves company. Some unbelievers quip, "If I go to hell, I'll sure have a lot of company." For sure, hell will be crowded. But there will be no comfort in numbers. The essence of hell is separation from God and resulting sorrow. Hell is the total absence of all love, sharing, and togetherness—there will be no comfort of any sort. Drowning people take no comfort in observing that others are drowning with them.

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This present world will be destroyed because of the corruption of sin. Upon Christ's return, we will live with him in eternal bliss—free from sin.

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Other important Scripture passages that deal with the Day of the Lord are Matthew 24-25; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-5:11; and 2 Thessalonians 2. Scripture describes the last days as beginning with the first coming of Christ (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2) and being fulfilled or consummated at his second coming.

Day 4

Books such as Hal Lindsey and C.C. Carlson's *The Late Great Planet Earth* and Tim LaHaye's *Beginning of the End* are filled with subjective interpretations of the details leading up to the end of the world: i.e., the next world war, who the opponents will be, what the outcome will be, where it will be geographically fought, the role of Israel, Russia, etc. Such books could mislead people to believe that Christ will not come until all of these "historical interpretations" have been met. How unfortunate! They give a false security—a feeling that people have more *time* to repent than they may have. The truth is, Christ could come today. He can come anytime. Nothing has to happen before his return that has not already happened.

The church's history is filled with those who have erroneously tried to apply end time prophecies to specific countries at specific times in history.

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Peter is not trying to produce fear in the believer. His goal is to restore joy and hope. It is the *unbelievers* and the unrepentant sinners who will say to the mountains, "fall on us", as they try to escape God's judgment (Luke 23:30). (See Hebrews 2:3).

Believers, waiting in anticipation and expectation for the Lord's return, will *rejoice* at his coming. Jesus said, "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

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It's interesting that some people, who do not expect the return of Christ, are yet preoccupied with the predictions of Nostradamus, a 16th-century physician and astrologer, who also predicted the end.

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As Judgment Day approaches, many people will be misled (2 Timothy 3: 1-9). But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3: 14-15).

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Those who teach that people will have a second chance after Christ's coming are clearly denying what the Scriptures say. Some who teach the rapture hold out this false hope. The parable of the 10 virgins clearly warns that after Christ's second coming it will be too late to repent (Matthew 25: 10-12). (See Hebrews 9:27).

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Judgment Day will be evident to everyone. We will all appear before him (Revelation 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:10). If you have to ask, “is it him?” you know it isn’t! If it were him, you would know. *Everyone* will know. (See Matthew 24:26; John 5:28-29)

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Day 5

Ignorance about Christ’s return does not make one innocent. God’s judgment is on all those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior. (See Key Chapter booklet *Romans 8: Salvation*). However, the judgment of God will be more severe on those who had an opportunity to believe and yet rejected him.

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Those who are alive when Judgment Day comes will not die but will be instantly transformed into their glorified (free from sin) bodies. (See key Chapter booklet *1 Corinthians 15: Resurrection*).

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All things will be destroyed. Why, then, do we persistently pursue and accumulate things (Matthew 6: 19-21)?

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On Judgment Day, believers will not be judged regarding sin. For believers, all sin has been washed away in the blood of Christ. The evidence of our good works will be presented to verify that our faith was genuine.

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Troublemakers within the church usually divide God’s people by adding peripheral requirements to faith and thus multiply confusion.

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Don’t be fooled by the fact that judgment does not always *immediately* follow the commission of a sin. In mercy, God waits for us to repent. Read Scripture’s warnings against carelessly misunderstanding God’s mercy: Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7 and Romans 11:21.

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