

In this letter we have seen Peter's earnest desire to see his readers mature in their faith. He warned them that there were false teachers that denied the Lord's return to judge the earth. The second chapter was all about the character and tactics of these false teachers. In denying the judgment to come, they enticed new believers to return to the enslaving sins of their past.

In chapter three Peter returns to the certainty of the Second Coming. Just as the prophecies of the first coming had come to pass, so those concerning the second would be fulfilled as well. Jesus is the Son of God in Psalm 2, and He will come to reward everyone according to what they have done. (Revelation 22:12) The voice of God on the Mountain of Transfiguration confirmed that when the voice of God referred to Jesus as His beloved Son.

The prophets of old warned the Israelites that the Day of the Lord, which is the Second Coming, would not be a day that they should look forward to with some kind of joyful expectation. (Isaiah 13:6; Amos 5:18) They said this because the nation was given over to sin and that day would be a day of God's justice poured out on them.

Born again believers can look forward to that day, for we have been reconciled to God through Jesus' blood that was shed in our place. (Romans 5:9) It has been

almost three thousand years since the prophets' warnings, but we must understand that the Day of the Lord will come, and it will end in the judgment of the living and the dead. Those people that first heard the prophets' warning are still waiting for that day in another realm. (Luke 16:22-23)

Peter begins the chapter by saying, *<sup>1</sup> This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, <sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,* Skeptics that want to attribute this letter to someone using Peter's name would be implying that someone is quite devious. He clearly says it is the second letter, and that he was on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Both of the letters from Peter remind us to pay attention to the predictions of the prophets and Jesus' commands that came to us through the Apostles. (Jude 17) Numerous times in that first letter Peter encouraged his readers to do good and expect the world to mock, accuse, and even cause them to suffer. (1Peter 3:14; 4:4-5) Numerous times he reminded them that the Lord would return and that we should live in the light of that fact. (1Peter 4:13)

We need to have our sincere minds stirred up by way of reminder too. The

**Commented [notes5]: Luke 16:22-23 (ESV)**  
<sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, <sup>23</sup> and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

**Commented [notes1]: Revelation 22:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.

**Commented [notes6]: Jude 1:17 (ESV)**  
<sup>17</sup> But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Commented [notes2]: Isaiah 13:6 (ESV)**  
<sup>6</sup> Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

**Commented [notes3]: Amos 5:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

**Commented [notes7]: 1 Peter 3:14 (ESV)**  
<sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

**Commented [notes8]: 1 Peter 4:4-5 (ESV)**  
<sup>4</sup> With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup> but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

**Commented [notes9]: 1 Peter 4:13 (ESV)**  
<sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

**Commented [notes4]: Romans 5:9 (ESV)**  
<sup>9</sup> Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

daily grind can get numbing. It is not that we don't believe or that we aren't sincere about our faith. But we get into a routine of life and go through the motions and lose the passion that at any moment we might be standing before our Savior, face to face. We should be continually pushing forward in our spiritual growth so that we don't find ourselves without fruit, enslaved again to our former lusts, when Jesus returns. Make your calling and election sure so that you will receive that rich welcome into the eternal kingdom. That was Peter's advice in chapter one. (1:10-11) It is easy to be a mediocre Christian. We have so many distractions in our modern world. **Mediocrity is a path to a backslidden state.**

Our goal at Wayside is to disciple those who are willing into a life of increasing spiritual growth. We want to encourage you to go deeper with Jesus, to be more sold out, more ready to obey the Spirit, more knowledgeable about His word, walking in the fruits of the Spirit. We want to concentrate more on discipleship, helping one another grow in grace. If any of you would like someone to meet with you regularly to help you in your spiritual growth, please let one of the elders know and we will try to match you up with a compatible person of the same gender to challenge and encourage you.

If you have been established in the Lord and are beginning to understand his Word, then you should be looking for someone to disciple. You will learn from one another. Even the Apostle Paul said he would be encouraged by the faith of the church in Rome. (Romans 1:12) We

can always learn from another regardless of our stage of growth in Christ. It helps so much to have someone ask you what you are learning and how you are growing. Just to hear someone else's trials and victories encourages us. And isn't that what we should be doing if we love one another? (Hebrews 10:24-25)

There are more than enough churches that just offer you a product to meet your temporary need. We have more than enough Christian entertainment. There is nothing wrong with that, but **Jesus called us to be disciples that die to ourselves to follow Him each day.** (Matthew 16:24)

We want every one that has made this their church home to make their calling and election sure. We know that spiritual growth and the resulting fruit will naturally flow from a life that is in the vine. (John 15:5)

So we will be doing what Peter is doing here, stirring you up by way of reminder. Are you growing in Christ? Are you in the Word? Do you have someone that you can share your spiritual journey with, someone who you can challenge and who will challenge you? Or are you satisfied with beautiful Red Rocks and this world's entertainment? Lord, stir us up!

*<sup>3</sup> knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.* He is referring to some of those he spoke of earlier. They deny that there is a day of judgment. They secretly teach others to compromise with the flesh. They blaspheme the church when they see

**Commented [notes12]: Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Commented [notes10]: 2 Peter 1:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

<sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Commented [notes13]: Matthew 16:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

**Commented [notes14]: John 15:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

**Commented [notes11]: Romans 1:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

believers backslide and do what they teach.

*<sup>4</sup> They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."*

It's that steady state theory that we spoke of a few weeks ago. "Nothing is ever going to change. You aren't going to die. Judgment isn't coming. Enjoy yourself. There are no consequences. Christians have been talking about Jesus coming back for 2000 years," they say.

Fell asleep is a term that meant death. (John 11:11-14) Some people are unaware of the use of the term in the first century and think that our soul sleeps until the resurrection. When we die we are in the Lord's presence. (Philippians 1:23) The scoffers say that since the patriarchs died nothing has changed. In fact they say that since God created the earth nothing has changed. "So just sit back and relax. Don't get all worked up," they tell us.

Several weeks ago we went over how fragile life is. From volcanoes, to hurricanes, to tidal waves and earthquakes, we live on a very precarious planet. Wars and disease can decimate mankind in a short amount of time. How many countries have been overthrown just in the past few years? Syria is about to be transformed for better or for worse. North Korea and Iran threaten with atomic weapons. "All things continue as they were" is a hard sell today.

Not only have things constantly been in a state of change in the physical realm, but

the most dramatic change of all occurred when Jesus was incarnated in the womb of Mary.

God entered space and time, and nothing has been the same. The value mankind places on human life was dramatically altered by Christianity. Education has been advanced. Mercy ministries cover the globe. Care for the poor has dramatically changed. Cannibalism and slavery have all but ended. From art to prisons to governments, nearly everything has been changed because of the life of one peasant in Israel who was brutally executed on a cross.

But the greatest change of all is the peace man has with God through the man, Jesus. (Romans 5:1) Animal sacrifices are a thing of the past because He paid the ultimate price. Guilt is expunged through His atoning work. (Isaiah 53:10) Man no longer needs to wonder if he will ever be acceptable to God. All one need do is accept what Jesus did in our place. (Acts 16:31)

The life of gratitude that results from receiving His mercy has also had dramatic effects in the world. Christians give and volunteer at a far greater rate than any other group on the planet.

All things have not continued as they were in the physical realm or the spiritual realm. The scoffers are willfully ignorant. They believe what they want to believe and deliberately ignore the facts. *<sup>5</sup> For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, <sup>6</sup> and*

**Commented [notes15]: John 11:11-14 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him."<sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."<sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died,

**Commented [notes17]: Romans 5:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Commented [notes16]: Philippians 1:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

**Commented [notes18]: Isaiah 53:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

**Commented [notes19]: Acts 16:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

*that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.* The earth was very different at the time of creation. Water covered the surface and was also in the atmosphere. (Genesis 1:6-7) Water once again covered the earth in the great flood.

Did you know that 95% of cultures have a flood story? Scoffers usually make a big deal over ancient stories, but they don't like the flood story because it reminds them that the grace of God will not put up with sin forever. (Genesis 6:3) There comes a time, when the anguish of man becomes so great as the consequence of sin compounds, that God must act. There was already one cataclysmic event, a universal judgment. God will do it again but not with water. (Genesis 9:11)

*<sup>7</sup> But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.* There is a day of judgment and it will be with fire. The conservationists have tried to keep logging at a minimum and the result has been a huge increase in fuel for massive forest fires. In a similar way, mankind is stacking up evil for the Day of Judgment. The fuel pile of evil continues to grow greater and greater.

Fire purifies. Some of the metal objects for the temple could be purified by passing them through fire. (Numbers 31:23) God will purge the earth with fire during the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 8:7; 16:8) John the Baptist said that Jesus had come to bring a baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11) Fire

in that expression is a metaphor for God's cleansing work in our lives as He consumes the things in our life that are ungodly.

The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that all of our works would be tested by fire on the Day of Judgment. The works that were not wrought in God will be consumed like wood, hay and stubble. But that which has been done through God will last like precious metals and stones. (1Corinthians 3:12-13)

The last judgment was by water, but the next one will be by fire. What a reminder to get serious about doing what lasts. What lasts is that which is directed by the Spirit of God coming through a life that is growing in Christ and surrendered to Him. You may have heard the expression, "Only one life will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." But that is not Scriptural. Jesus told those who said they did many things in His name that He never knew them. (Matthew 7:22-23) **Only what's done by Christ will last!** It's only when the Spirit of God moves us to do God's will that we are effective in an eternal way.

The unrepentant sinner has nothing but ungodliness and the day of fire will be catastrophic. The person growing in Christ will find the fire only cleans off any stubble that is left after a life dedicated to God's glory. The fire will reveal the precious stones and gold that resulted from a faithful life of cooperation with the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 25:23)

*<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as*

**Commented [notes20]: Genesis 1:6-7 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

<sup>7</sup> And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

**Commented [notes27]: 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw -

<sup>13</sup> each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

**Commented [notes21]: Genesis 6:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."

**Commented [notes22]: Genesis 9:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

**Commented [notes28]: Matthew 7:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

<sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

**Commented [notes23]: Numbers 31:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean. Nevertheless, it shall also be purified with the water for impurity. And whatever cannot stand the fire, you shall pass through the water.

**Commented [notes24]: Revelation 8:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> The first angel blew his trumpet, and there followed hail and fire, mixed with blood, and these were thrown upon the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

**Commented [notes25]: Revelation 16:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.

**Commented [notes29]: Matthew 25:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

**Commented [notes26]: Matthew 3:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

*a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* Yes, it has only been a couple days with the Lord since Jesus died and rose and ascended into heaven. Scoffers can make fun of our beliefs, but we know that with a timeless God it has been but a short time. If Jesus was to come tomorrow and we asked Him why He waited so long to return, He might ask us why two days is such a long time. He lives in the eternal now. But there is one reason why He has delayed His return.

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* He loves the world. He is patient. He doesn't want anyone to die without first accepting His gift of eternal life. (John 1:12) And so with each generation He waits. I believe the final days will be so evil that there will be only a final few that will allow His grace into their hearts. When that last one enters the Kingdom, there will no longer be a need for patience. All that will be left is a great need for justice, for the great cleansing. (Isaiah 4:4)

**It is the great heart of God that does not wish that any perish.** That is why He sent Jesus. (Ezekiel 18:23) He is the one solution for all mankind, the only One that can take all our sins and set us free from the guilt that burdens us. He doesn't want you to perish. He doesn't want your life to be only worthless stubble fit for the fire. His desire is for you to take that first step toward a new life. That step is repentance. (Acts 2:38) It is a complete change in the way we think. (Romans

12:2) It is to recognize our great need for forgiveness. It is to see that living for self is not only selfish but destructive. (Romans 6:16) This new way of thinking sees the commands of Jesus as life and peace, given for our good, and the best possible choice we could make.

We are living in the last days. The choice has always been the same, to live for self or to live for God. The voice of the scoffers may be getting louder. The false teachers may be more abundant, but that all just confirms this word from Peter is truer now than ever. The fire is coming. Have you made your calling and election sure? Are you working on things that last? Have you allowed the Lord to change the way you see life, so that you have an eternal perspective on each day?

The Lord is incredibly patient, but there will be a day when it is no longer necessary. He will be just, and evil will be judged. Everyone's sin will be dealt with on the cross of Jesus or on the Day of the Lord. We all must choose.

#### Questions

- 1 What has Peter been telling us in the previous chapters?
- 2 Why is he stirring the readers up?
- 3 Where does mediocrity lead?
- 4 Do you have a growth partner?
- 5 Do you realize how precarious life is?
- 6 What is the biggest change the world has seen?
- 7 Why don't scoffers believe?
- 8 Why should we expect judgment?
- 9 How will God cleanse the earth?
- 10 How will God test our works?
- 11 What will last?
- 12 Why has Christ not come?

#### Commented [notes34]: Romans 12:2 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

#### Commented [notes35]: Romans 6:16 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

#### Commented [notes30]: John 1:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

#### Commented [notes31]: Isaiah 4:4 (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire.

#### Commented [notes32]: Ezekiel 18:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

#### Commented [notes33]: Acts 2:38 (ESV)

<sup>38</sup> And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.