

PFRS Commentary

2 Peter 3:1-18

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1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),

2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons 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 dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen. (NKJV)

This chapter has caused a lot of confusion among premillennialists. Peter appears to connect the burning of this present earth, and a "new heaven and new earth," with Christ's second coming. He speaks of the "Day of the Lord" coming "as a thief," in which the dissolution of the present earth and heaven will take place. He speaks of a "new heaven and new earth" in which righteousness dwells. This seems to follow immediately on the second coming in Peter's eschatology. Yet, Revelation speaks of a "new heaven and new earth" at the end of the Millennium, placing a 1,000 year interval between the second coming and the "new heaven and new earth."

The typical solution is to claim that the "Day of the Lord" is the entire Millennium. The burning could be said to occur IN the "Day of the Lord" (albeit at its extreme end). But, as we shall see, such a view destroys Peter's whole point, that the Day of the Lord and burning of the earth is threatening the scoffers who say, "where is the promise of His coming?"

When we look at a particular New Testament prophecy, it is important to distinguish whether it is NEW revelation, or whether the author was simply reiterating previous prophecy. Sometimes Paul spoke of NEW revelation, with comments like, "behold, I show you a mystery," etc.. However, Peter was not giving NEW revelation in 2 Peter 3. He certainly gave no hint he was sharing something new. He wrote as though his readers were already familiar with these details. He explicitly said that his purpose for writing these things was to REMIND them of what they already knew especially the words of the Old Testament prophets (cf. 2 Pet. 1:12,13 & 2 Pet. 3:1,2), as well as the command of Christ through the Apostles. Likewise, Peter's comment, "seeing that ye look for such things" (vs. 14) strongly implies that his readers were already looking for a "new heaven and new earth" prior to Peter's writing this epistle. Therefore it would be wise to find similar previous prophecy with which to compare Peter's words, rather than assuming he was speaking of something that was not revealed until three decades later when John wrote Revelation.

I. Verses 1&2 INTRODUCTION

2 Pet 3:1-18

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),

2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

Peter's main point for writing this second epistle was to remind believers of what they already knew:

- The words spoken by the Old Testament Prophets
- The commandment given by Jesus to and through the Apostles.

The "words spoken by the prophets" is in reference to the "Day of the Lord" that Peter explains in verses 10-12. The coming of the Kingdom of God is a central theme in his Epistle. 2 Peter 1:4-11 is exhortation on how to obtain an "abundant entrance" into this Kingdom. In Peter's second sermon in Acts, he spoke particularly of the return of Christ to set up His Millennial Kingdom as having been prophesied by "all the holy prophets since the world began."

Acts 3:21

21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The theme of "all the holy prophets" was the "Day of the Lord," when the earth would be restored to its pristine condition, and Christ would begin to rule over all the earth.

Next Peter said he wanted to remind them of "the commandment" given by Jesus to the Apostles. Of course, Jesus gave many commandments to and through the Apostles. But, notice two things. First, the "commandment" is singular with the definite article, indicating one particular commandment that his readers would immediately identify. Secondly, the disciples were not called "Apostles" until they were sent out to preach. The word "apostle" means one who is sent on a mission (an ambassador). It implies a message and a mission. Peter seems to be zeroing in on THE commandment, the "commission" of Jesus to the disciples, which itself made them "Apostles." That is, the Great Commission. The disciples became "Apostles" when Jesus sent them out on a mission to preach the Gospel.

Some might ask, "What does the Great Commission have to do with the Day of the Lord?" The answer is: Jesus tied the two together in the Olivet Discourse. After the disciples asked Jesus the signs of His coming and the "end of the age," Jesus said the following.

Matt 24:14

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

He also mentioned the "end of the age" in the Great Commission itself.

Matt 28:19-20

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

The one and only thing that withholds the second coming of Jesus Christ is the completion of the Great Commission. The job MUST be finished before Jesus will return. Jesus' coming is NOT imminent until after the Great Commission is complete. The "Day of the Lord," or as Peter puts it in Acts 3:21, "the times of restoration of all things," cannot occur UNTIL we as believers finish carrying the Gospel to all nations. The book of Revelation indicates that there will be believers from every tribe, nation, and people. Therefore, the Gospel must not only go to each country, but to the various tribes in remote places.

After the resurrection, the disciples wanted to know if the Day of the Lord was imminent. They asked Jesus if He was now going to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Notice Jesus' reply.

Acts 1:6-8

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus was referring them back to His Olivet Discourse and the Great Commission. Again He was implying that the end of the age would not come UNTIL they had preached the Gospel to all nations.

In the introduction to this chapter, Peter has reminded us that:

- The "Day of the Lord" is coming (our future hope)
- We must complete the Great Commission before it will come (the reason for the apparent delay)

The rest of the chapter expands on these two points.

II. Verses 3-7 THE APPARENT DELAY

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

*5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,
6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.
7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

In these verses, Peter began to deal with the apparent delay in Christ's return. In the last days scoffers will arise who deny the second coming. This passage is remarkable because it seems to anticipate that the second coming was still some considerable distance away. Here he speaks of the "last days" as being in the future, or at least the scoffers were considered future. In his earlier use of the term "last days" on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was quoting Joel's prophecy of the coming of the "Day of the Lord." Peter used the term "last days" to refer to the interval of time in which we live, when God's Spirit is being poured out on all flesh. This time would end (according to Peter and Joel) with the coming of the "Day of the Lord."

Acts 2:16-21

16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Peter seems to interpret Joel as saying that the "last days" include the entire period of time from Pentecost until the "Day of the Lord." And the "Day of the Lord" comes AFTER the cosmic signs (which are after the tribulation - cf. Matt. 24:29-31). Note the connection to the salvation of the lost in this interim, as in 2 Pet. 3. However, in 2 Peter 3, Peter seems to have used "last days" in a more narrow way, referring to the very last of the "last days" just prior to the coming of the Lord.

In verses 4-7, Peter explained the reasoning of the scoffers. All things appear to be continuing without judgment by the creator since the beginning. Therefore, no judgment is coming. But, Peter pointed out the fallacy in this kind of thinking. The "old world" perished by God's judgment of sin. The long interim between

creation and the flood was only made possible by God's longsuffering nature, and His compassion, in withholding His judgment. God is gracious and merciful, and allows ample time to repent, not to mention the continuous preaching of Noah over a 100 year period. But, His judgment is swift, sure, and total.

Pay particular attention to Peter's graphic language regarding the destruction of the earth in the flood. He was speaking in hyperbole here, not literal language. "The world that then existed perished," said Peter. And he referred to the present age as a different "earth" and "heaven" (vs. 7). Peter was implying that from Noah's perspective, after the flood there was a "new heaven and new earth." Was the whole earth and heaven destroyed by the flood? No. Only the breathing creatures were destroyed. Yet, Peter's words clearly imply total destruction of the old world, and a new heaven and new earth after the flood. Verse 7 then projects this same model of judgment to a future day. "But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The new heaven and new earth after Noah is similarly being preserved for a future day of judgment, a day that will overtake these scoffers. It is a day of fire and the vengeance of Almighty God, and will again be followed by a "new heaven and new earth."

Verse 7 is crucial to understanding verses 10-12 which speak of the destruction of the earth by fire. While some pre-millennialists place this at the end of the Millennium, such an interpretation destroys Peter's whole point, that this day of fire and judgment will indeed overtake the scoffers who deny the second coming of Christ. The burning of the earth on the "Day of the Lord" in verses 10-12 is the very day Peter claims will overtake these scoffers by surprise. Therefore, the purging by fire is at the end of this age, not at the end of the Millennium. It occurs at the second coming.

III. Verses 8 & 9 THE REASON FOR THE DELAY

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Here Peter elaborated on the reason for the delay. First, he reminded them that time is not an issue with God. When the Bible told first century Christians that Jesus is coming soon, and instructed them to be watching for His coming, it is not a contradiction even though two millennia have passed. With God, two thousand years are but a couple of days. Peter seems here to anticipate the very long interval of time that has transpired without Christ's return. This chapter is

the answer to the preterists who insist that such terminology as "behold I come quickly" etc. requires that Jesus already came in some non-literal way in the first century.

Verse 9 explains further the connection to the Great Commission. Notice the reason Christ seems to be slow in returning is His "longsuffering." But, longsuffering to whom? While the Lord is not willing that any perish, His "longsuffering" is directed toward US, not to the lost. Is Peter saying that believers might be lost? No! He is saying that God is patient with US to complete the Great Commission, to preach the Gospel to all the nations so that many from every tribe and nation whom God loves will not perish! Peter places the responsibility squarely (albeit gently) on the shoulders of Christians. Corporately, we are the ones who delay or hasten the coming of Christ, the Day of the Lord, and the destruction of the wicked.

IV. Verses 10-14 THE DAY OF THE LORD

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons 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 dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

Here, Peter finally arrived at the climax of His Epistle. Remember, his terminology regarding the flood was total destruction of the earth, followed by a new heaven and new earth. Here he used precisely the same type of hyperbole to describe the day of destruction of the scoffers by fire. While the KJV/NKJV says the earth will be "burned up," the NIV says it will be "laid bare." In either case, Peter was not saying that the earth will be totally destroyed any more than it was totally destroyed by the flood. Rather, he was borrowing some Old Testament terminology where purging fire and destruction accompanies the second coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord.

Again, remember what Peter said in verses 1,2 that he was REMINDING them of what they already knew from the Old Testament prophets. That they were already familiar with this is also evident in his comments that his readers were presently looking for a "new heaven and new earth" in vss 13,14. This strongly

implies Peter was relying heavily on Old Testament prophecy, and was NOT giving new revelation previously unknown to his readers. He was encouraging them toward certain spiritual goals based on their present knowledge and anticipation of these things. Therefore, to properly understand his words, we need to carefully consider the Old Testament passage Peter had in mind, and no doubt his readers also immediately identified.

There are quite a few Old Testament passages that refer to the coming "Day of the Lord." These passages speak of the earth continuing after Christ's coming, albeit altered geographically. [Joel 3:9-17, Zech 14]. However, there is one passage that uses the exact terminology Peter used, referring to a "new heaven and new earth."

Isa 65:11-66:24

11 "But you are those who forsake the LORD, who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table for Gad, and who furnish a drink offering for Meni.

12 Therefore I will number you for the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear, but did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight."

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed;

14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and wail for grief of spirit.

15 You shall leave your name as a curse to My chosen; for the Lord GOD will slay you, and call His servants by another name;

16 So that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My eyes.

*17 "For behold, I create **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH**; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.*

18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

24 "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the LORD.

CHAPTER 66

1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?

2 For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

3 "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; he who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations,

4 So will I choose their delusions, and bring their fears on them; because, when I called, no one answered, when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before My eyes, and chose that in which I do not delight."

5 Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: "Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy.' But they shall be ashamed."

6 The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, who fully repays His enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child.

8 Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.

9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God.

10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;

11 That you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory."

12 For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then you shall feed; on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees.

13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

14 When you see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like grass; the hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants, and His indignation to His enemies.

15 **For behold, the LORD will come with fire** and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.

16 For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

17 "Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together," says the LORD.

18 "For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory.

19 "I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles.

20 "Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.

21 "And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites," says the LORD.

22 "For as **THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH** which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain.

23 And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

It is evident from this passage that Isaiah sees an earthly kingdom after Messiah returns to judge WITH FIRE. Isaiah calls this earthly kingdom, after the earth is purged by the fire of the Lord, the "new heaven and new earth." Clearly, the PRESENT city of Jerusalem will remain. There are other definite allusions to this prophecy in the New Testament. Particularly, 66:7-13 was referenced by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, when He spoke of "the beginning of birth pains" and "great tribulation (travail)."

We know that the present planet Earth will never be destroyed. David said the foundations of the earth will last forever (Psalm 104:5). Isaiah's and Peter's point was that man's works will be purged from the surface of the earth (vs. 10).

Based on all these considerations, it is my opinion that Peter was referring to the beginning of the Millennium (and Isaiah 65 & 66 in particular) when he spoke of the "new heaven and new earth." The elements melting is a hyperbolic description of the "Day of the Lord" mentioned by the prophets. This world system will come to an end and be replaced by the Kingdom of God on this planet that has been purged by the fire of God.

It is also quite likely that Joel 2 describes the actual process of this burning on the Day of the Lord. It is not a complete destruction of the entire planet.

Joel 2:1-11

1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand:

2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is like the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; surely nothing shall escape them.

4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like swift steeds, so they run.

5 With a noise like chariots over mountaintops they leap, like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, like a strong people set in battle array.

6 Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color.

7 They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war; every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks. 8 They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column. Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down.

9 They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief. 10 The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.

11 The LORD gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

Here we have the angelic army of the Lord playing an active part in the purging of the earth by fire on the Day of the Lord. Zechariah 14 describes the fate of the wicked on this day, saying that their flesh will consume away while they are still standing on their feet!

One more Old Testament passage deserves note, which shows people still present on this earth after the burning on the "Day of the Lord."

Mal 4:1-3

1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.

3 You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts.

Do not overlook Peter's comment in verse 12 that we as Christians are "*hastening the coming of the Day of God.*" How? By being busy with the Great Commission, of course!

Within this section, Peter reminds us of the purifying effect of eschatology on the life of the believer. It is through "looking for these things" that we are motivated to conduct ourselves in a holy and pure way, while we anticipate the coming of Christ for us. Peter's comment about being found "without spot and blameless" is in reference to the bride's preparation to meet her groom (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2, Rev. 19:7). Notice that our "being found" in this condition implies that we will be present on earth when the "Day of the Lord" comes. (Note: the "Day of the Lord" and the "Day of God" are used interchangeably. See Rev. 16:14 for the only other use of the term "Day of God" in Scripture.)

V. Verses 15-18 CONCLUSION

15 and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation-- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Note the connection between the "longsuffering" of the Lord and the "salvation" of the lost, again pointing us toward the Great Commission.

Peter's reference to Paul and His epistles is particularly helpful here. This passage shows that Peter endorsed Paul's teaching, and has substantial ramifications regarding dispensationalism. It also implies that Peter was actually writing to Gentiles, since Paul's Epistles were written to Gentiles and Peter was addressing the same people. Notice also that Peter said Paul wrote of "these things" in all of His Epistles. In verses 11 & 14, Peter spoke of "these things" in the context of the coming "Day of the Lord" (in which Christ will return to earth). So, "these things" in verse 16 must still be referring to the coming day of Christ's return, in fire and judgment on the wicked, and to rescue believers. I must point out here, for those who believe this passage refers to the events accompanying the end of the Millennium, that Paul never mentioned "those things" in ANY of His Epistles! But, Paul definitely spoke of Christ's coming at the end of this age in ALL of His Epistles. There can be no doubt then that Peter's rather hyperbolic description of the Day of the Lord is indeed the day of Christ's return at the end of this age. Here is one of Paul's references to this day of fire and judgment. Like Peter, he also indicates our deliverance on the very same day the wicked are destroyed by fire! In both passages we have the rescuing of Christians at the same coming of Christ which destroys the wicked by fire.

11 Thess 1:5-10

*5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;
6 since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you,*

7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,

8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

Paul also used precisely the same terminology regarding the "Day of the Lord." Both Peter and Paul were borrowing from Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:42,43). Peter said "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (vs. 10). Paul said exactly the same thing in reference to the second coming.

1Thes 5:2-6

2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

Basically, Paul wrote the Day of the Lord will overtake the wicked "as a thief in the night." But, it will NOT overtake believers "as a thief" who are watching! Those who heed the warnings will be ready to meet the Lord in the air at His coming. This is precisely what Peter was teaching. The wicked scoff, and will be overtaken unexpectedly by the day of fiery judgment. But wise believers are watching, preparing to be found "without spot," and are "hastening" the coming of that day by their obedience to the Great Commission.

Verse 17 is a final warning against falling short. In chapter 2, Peter warned of the false prophets who seduce believers away from the faith, just as Jesus and Paul warned that many believers would fall away in the days before Jesus' coming (cf. Matt. 24:9-13 & 2 Thes. 2:1-3). We should see this warning by Peter as the consequence of ignoring his earlier exhortation at the beginning of this Epistle, regarding how we might assure our abundant entrance into Christ's Kingdom.

2 Pet 1:2-11

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (KJV)

Notice the theme in this Epistle is the preparation of believers to have an abundant entrance into Christ's coming Kingdom. Chapter two warns of the pitfalls along the way that have and will bring ruin to many believers. Chapter three deals with the eschatology of Christ's coming Kingdom and its role in encouraging us to be found in Him without spot and blameless, as well as motivating us to complete our task of world evangelism. We as Christians can hasten the coming of the Day of the Lord. But we need to be ready to meet Him when He comes.