



Second Peter 3:9

"the Lord is **NOT SLACK**  
concerning His promise,  
as some count slackness  
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ALL SHOULD come to repentance."





## Lesson 8 - 2 Peter 3:1-18

Peter just shared his insights on the dangers and doom of the false teachers and now returns to the heart of his message. He writes to all faithful believers, exhorting them to remember God's words as they look forward with anticipation to the Lord's return.

### **Memory Verse:**

*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. 2 Peter 3:9*

Review this verse often throughout the week. Write it out a couple of times to help you commit it to memory. By week's end, try to notice *how* and *where* you are able to it into practice. Note your results on the last page of your homework.

### **FIRST DAY – 2 PETER 3:1-7**

Begin your study each day with a word of prayer.

Read 2 Peter 3:1–18.

Waiting is one aspect of the Christian life that seems very difficult for most people. It is helpful and beneficial for believers to be engaged in something while we wait. Peter proceeds to tell his readers in chapter 3 that we are not to wait passively, but *actively*, by giving diligence to the way we live. With that thought in mind, he offers the perfect activity—wholesome thinking.

Turning away from the subject of the false teachers, Peter refers to his audience as beloved or dear friends. Returning once again to what is closest to his heart, his purpose is to stimulate believers to think about what awaits them in the future.

1. Keeping in mind the goal of false teachers to make believers think unwholesome thoughts, Peter makes reference (v. 2) to two potential areas of contaminated thinking targeted by false teachers. What are they?

By way of reminder, Peter points to the Old Testament passages in Scripture spoken by the prophets. He tells his readers not to take this lightly, simply because the future has not yet happened. The second area that needs protection from wrong thinking has to do with the “command given by the Lord through the apostles,” referring to the law of Christ.

- a. Repeatedly found in Scripture, what is this command? See John 13:34–35, and 15:12; Romans 13:9–10; James 2:8; 1 Peter 1:22 and 4:8; and 1 John 3:11.

Peter emphasized that “knowing this first” (v. 3)—knowing above all else—we must understand that in the last days scoffers will come.

2. Look up the word *scoffer* and write a definition.

- a. Describe what these individuals are like. v. 3 (See also 2 Peter 2:10). What is their argument? v. 4

Verses 5–7 point out the fact that though the false teachers knew the Old Testament, they deliberately chose to ignore and forget what Scripture says. They denied God’s intervention in past history.

3. What example does Peter use to support his claim of their denial? vv. 5–6

The Bible teaches that the God who created the heavens and the earth is the same God who will one day judge His creation. The One who has the power to create all things also has the power to end them!

- a. Instead of being destroyed by water as in Noah's day, what kind of judgment awaits those upon the earth at the Second Coming? v. 7
- b. Read about the coming judgment in Revelation 19:20 and 20:10–15. What new insight do you gain?

## **SECOND DAY – 2 PETER 3:8-10**

Read 2 Peter 3:8-10.

In light of God's impending judgment, Peter offers reasons for the Lord delaying His return. Knowing that the time left to us is limited, it behooves us to spend it loving those who resist and even oppose the gospel message, in the hope that we can bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

1. What does this perspective reveal to you about the heart of God? vv. 8–9
2. Does His delay in returning mean that He has forgotten His promise? What does it say about His priority?
3. There are only two things in this world that are eternal: God's Word and people. How does this reality help you with your priorities as you await the Lord's coming?
4. What statement does Peter give us about the coming day of the Lord? v. 10
5. The warning Peter uses here was issued by Jesus Himself. What was His emphasis in Matthew 24:36–44?
  - a. What additional insights do you gain from Revelation 3:3 and 16:15a?

- b. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11, how should you as a believer think and act?

The book of 2 Peter is the only one in the New Testament that depicts the world being destroyed by fire (v.10). When we read of the fire of God's judgment in Scripture, it refers to not only its purifying effect, but also its destruction of all that is evil, in preparation of Christ's eternal reign. Peter points to the fact that judgment will come and all those who do not believe will perish.

Jesus Christ's *unexpected*—though predicted—return will bring about the destruction of creation as we know it.

6. What does verse 10 say about the destruction of the following . . .

- a. The heavens –
- b. The elements –
- c. The earth –

The revelation of verse 10 is intended to emphasize that God's final judgment will be absolute and complete—nothing will escape His attention!

In case you have missed the point Peter underscores about the patience of God, take a moment to think about the following questions, recording your thoughts.

- What if the Lord had returned last year—last month—or last week? Would you have been ready to meet Him? How about 5 or 10 years ago? Think of the many that would have missed their opportunity if He was not so long suffering.
- Has God ever failed to keep a promise to *you*? Has He ever been late?
- Have you been expecting Him to fulfill His Word according to *your* time table?
- What have you learned about God's grace and love for *you* through this study?

### **THIRD DAY – 2 PETER 3:11-18**

Read 2 Peter 3:11–18 for review.

Since we know that everything here on earth will be burned up, we should put our attention and efforts into that which will last forever: God's Word and the saving of souls! This understanding should motivate us to periodically take stock of our lives and ensure that we are in pursuit of the things that will bring about lasting results for God's kingdom.

Peter's question, "*What kind of people ought you to be?*" (v. 11), is a rhetorical one. He has previously emphasized that Christians are to live holy lives. Those who are obedient will be in direct contrast to the ungodliness found in the world. Their lives will continue on after the coming destruction. Christians do not need to fear the *day of the Lord*, rather we can look forward to it!

In the closing verses of chapter 3, we again see active cooperation while awaiting the Lord's return. We are to be actively cooperating with God in the salvation of the lost, remaining steadfast in the faith, and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. Scripture does not explain *why* God chooses to use human beings as His instruments of grace, but apparently our willing response has an impact on *the day of the Lord*.

1. According to verse 13, what is every believer looking forward to? Why? Who promised it?
  - a. To understand what Peter means when he speaks about a place where "righteousness dwells," read the account in Revelation 21:1–4 and 22–27. In your own words, write a description of your future home.
  - b. As a believer, you need to be reminded that you are heading toward your eternal home. Your righteous actions now are the fruit of your choice to live a godly life. Soon you'll realize the fullness of your long-awaited reward. What are *you* looking forward to the most? Will you take a moment to thank Him for the home He is preparing for *you*?

#### **FOURTH DAY – 2 PETER 3:11-18 (continued)**

Peter ends his letter by encouraging his readers to apply themselves to practicing righteousness now, in preparation for the coming kingdom. He once again reiterates that believers are not to be passive, but to be diligent as we await His soon coming.

1. What, specifically, does Peter say we are to be diligent in doing? v. 14
  - a. Look back to 1 Peter 1:19, where these same words are used to describe Jesus Christ. Is Peter suggesting that *you* will live a perfect life? What does he mean?
  - b. As you await Christ's return, what are *you* doing to be found without spot and blameless?

In order to be *like Christ*, the catalyst that motivates you to live a godly life is your anticipation of seeing Him. Peter makes his point in these verses by borrowing from the authority of the apostle Paul. He reminds us that Paul has made the same points in his letters and, though some of his writings may be difficult to understand, they are backed by the authority of God.

2. What have the false teachers done with these scriptural teachings? v. 16
3. Knowing their tactics beforehand, what is the warning here for us? v. 17
4. Verse 18 contains the key to remaining steadfast, free from error—what is it?
5. How meaningful is this to you at this point in your life? Please explain.

The Christian life was never meant to be lived standing still. It is a continual process of growth that finds its meaning and focus in the ever-increasing awareness of the person and character of Jesus Christ and His imminent return.

6. Personal: If you were to estimate your growth rate so far, what would you say? On a scale of 1–10, with 10 indicating *all* your effort, how do *you* measure up? Compare your learning of Scripture with your personal application of it.

→ Memory Verse Review: Can you recite your memory verse? Have you been able to put it into practice this week?