

2 Peter 3

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Tape #8231
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Second Peter chapter three as we finish Peter's epistles tonight and then next week we move in to First John.

Peter begins this third chapter by making reference to the whole epistle,

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance (3:1):

The word pure there is better translated, sincere minds. I don't think any of us really have pure minds. But sincere minds. And Peter is seeking to stir up their sincere minds by remembering the things that have been written.

In the first chapter, he told us that "the prophecies came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). But there were also false prophets and last week we saw the signs and the various characteristics of the false prophets. But now he's bringing you back again to the prophecies of the Old Testament scriptures. The things that God has spoken to us about of events, many of them yet future. So "stirring up your sincere minds by way of remembering certain things:"

That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets (3:2),

That is, as we were saying, going back to the Old Testament the words that were spoken by the men of God.

and of the commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour (3:2):

So our Bible is composed of the writings of men, the Old Testament prophets, holy men, spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit and the New Testament written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for reproof and rebuke and correction" (2 Timothy 3:16). So Peter is including the Old Testament plus the writings of the apostles in the New Testament that bring to us our full canon of scripture. "The apostles," he said, "of the Lord and Saviour:"

Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, who are walking after their own lusts (3:3),

In the previous chapter, he spoke of the false prophets who really were, whose god was their belly, so to speak. Who were interested in their own welfare rather than that of the church of God. Now he's talking about these last days when there would be scoffers who again are walking in their own lusts. The reason why people scoff at the scriptures, the reason why they scoff at the word of Jesus Christ and the teaching of Jesus Christ is because they are ruled and controlled by their own lusts.

Jesus said that "God did not send Him into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. And he that believes is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed upon the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men will not come to the light because they loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil" (John 3:17-19).

So because a man is controlled by his own lust and does not want to give up his own lust and desires, he scoffs at the word of Jesus. He scoffs at the idea that God would intervene in the affairs of man. And Peter tells us that in the last days, these scoffers would come.

And they would say, Where is the promise of His coming (3:4)?

One of the things they would be scoffing about would be the promises that Jesus Christ is coming again and their declaration would be that,

all things continue as they were from the beginning (3:4).

That is a tremendous kind of synopsis of the theory of uniformitarianism which is the background for the evolutionary theory. That is that all things continue as they were from the beginning. Nothing really has changed. There is this evolutionary process that has gone on for billions of years and will continue this process for billions of years to come. Nothing really has changed radically. All of the processes that brought life into existence do exist now and all things continue as they were from the beginning. That it has just been one continual progress throughout the long aeons of history.

But Peter says,

They are willingly ignorant of the fact, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished (3:5,6):

They are willingly ignorant, in other words, they don't want to believe that God has intervened in times past in the history of man in bringing judgment upon the earth. And the reference here is probably to the time of Noah. However, there are some Bible commentators who believe that this possibly is a reference to a pre-historic earth.

There is a theory called the Gap Theory that does propose that between Genesis verses one and two, there is an indefinite period of time. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). That was in the beginning. And how long ago that was is a matter of speculation. It could be fifteen billion years. It could be twenty billion years. Whenever it was, in the beginning whenever that was, God created the heavens and the earth. The interesting Hebrew word "Bara" is used for created, which is to bring into existence something out of nothing.

In Hebrews it says, "By faith we believe that the worlds were made by things that are not seen" (Hebrews 11:3). What an interesting statement that is in light of our knowledge now of atomic particles and how that all of the material universe is made up of these invisible atoms. The things which are seen are made out of things which are not seen.

But according to the theory of this Gap between Genesis one and two, which is called the Gap Theory, that in Genesis beginning with verse two of chapter one, you have an account of the re-creation of the earth. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void." They used the translation, the earth became without form and void, "darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved or brooded over the waters" (Genesis 1:1,2). So that the earth was covered with water.

Now if there were not any mountain ranges, the earth would actually be covered with water to a depth of six thousand feet. It is the mountain ranges and all that create the dry land and of course, God said, "Let the

dry land appear” (Genesis 1:9). And God separated the dry land from the waters. So He brought into existence the mountain ranges and the various continents upon the earth.

So they viewed Genesis one as a re-creation account, rather than original creation. And they believed that prior to this earth becoming wasteful and desolate, that it was probably inhabited by pre-historic man. We’re not talking about necessarily the kind that you see in the evolutionary thing, the long arms and clubs and the brow that’s very forward. But when we say pre-historic, we’re just saying men that existed before the beginning of history. It could have been a very highly civilized earth at that time. That, of course, is all in the theory, what is known as the Gap Theory.

So those who hold to the Gap Theory believe that Peter here is referring to the earth standing out of the water and in the water that the judgment of God at that time was just covering the whole earth with water. It is interesting and poses a geological kind of an enigma of how high in the Himalayas they find fossils of sea shells. How did they get up at those extremely high elevations. If you go up to the south rim of the Grand Canyon, you can see there in the strata, sea shells. They are the bottom kind of ocean life and you can see them at the 7,000 foot level of the south rim of the Grand Canyon. How in the world were the oceans once up that high? There’s a lot of mysteries about our world that we do not yet fully understand but there surely are evidences of cataclysmic upheavals.

There’s a very fascinating book written by Immanuel Velikovsky entitled *Earth in Upheaval*. He takes a lot of these various things that are sort of an enigma to the geologists and points out several interesting things. I was, a couple of weeks ago, back in Atlanta, Georgia, and we stayed in a hotel up on Stone Mountain. I don’t know how many of you are familiar with the Atlanta area but that Stone Mountain is one fascinating bit of geology that you wonder, How in the world and where in the world did this giant stone come from there in the rolling hills around Atlanta? But then you had this giant piece of granite that just juts up there and how and where and all, a real enigma. And throughout the world there are many enigmas that show that the earth has not always been as it presently is. That there have been geological catastrophes in the past. It’s an interesting study and again, I would recommend, if you’re interested in those kind of things, the book *Earth in Upheaval* by Emmanuel Velikovsky.

But Peter speaks of the willing ignorance. Now the interesting thing, because Emmanuel Velikovsky, in his book *Earth in Upheaval* so totally destroys the theory of uniformitarianism that his work came under much criticism by the evolutionists. Because he points out and proves that there have been great cataclysmic changes in the earth’s structure in the past. But these men are “willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.” That an interesting phrase, by the word of God. As we read in the book of Genesis the creation account, we read, “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God then divided the light from the darkness. And God said, Let there be a firmament to divide the waters from above and the waters from below. And it was so. And God said” (Genesis 1:3,4,6). So by the word of God was the earth created.

David in Psalm 33 said, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all of the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth” (Psalm 33:6). This is what is called theologically as divine fiat. That is, the power of God’s word our universe as we see it and know it was spoken into existence by God. How big is your God? How great is your God? The God who is revealed to us in the Bible is able to speak things into existence. Things that did not exist can be spoken into existence by the power of the word of the living God.

They’re willingly ignorant of this, “whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” I believe this is probably a reference to the flood in Noah’s day. How that God brought the flood upon the earth in a judgment against sinful man. “And God looked upon the earth and He saw that the minds of men were totally corrupted. That everyone was doing that which was right in his own eyes and the

imagination of man's heart and his thoughts were only evil continually. And it repented God that He made man. And so God destroyed the earth, preserving Noah and his family (Genesis 6:5-8).

And of course, Peter makes reference of Noah back in chapter two. And so I believe that this is just a further reference to the flood of which the men of science so called are often willingly ignorant. They are unwilling to acknowledge that much of the geology that we see today is better explained by a universal flood than by any other kind of an explanation. But they don't like to acknowledge that there was a universal flood.

The creation of the Grand Canyon. It has now been pretty much accepted and concluded by scientists. In fact, it has been really accepted that that Colorado River could not have formed the canyon in the immensity that you see it today. That actually rather than a small amount of water over billions of years, it was a great amount of water over a short period of time that carved out the Grand Canyon. And all of the scientists know that, the only ones that don't are the kids that are in school that are still being taught that that all happened by the flow of the Colorado River and gradually eating away and eroding until you had the great Grand Canyon there.

They are willingly ignorant. They don't want to believe in the flood because then they would have to believe in the Bible as God's truth.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now (3:7),

No doubt before the flood there was a different kind of a heaven, atmospheric conditions. We are told that there was a water canopy around the earth. That water canopy around the earth would have protected the earth from much of the ultraviolet radiation that we now experience. I was at the doctor this past week and he looked over my back and the skin and all and he saw all these little cancerous or pre-cancerous growths and he carved away and cut a lot of them out. It's just, the time has come to pay for yesterday when I used to go to the beach and surf and lie on my board waiting for the waves to come and all and got all those burns. And now, you're paying for it. The ultraviolet radiation that man was once protected but the water canopy would have been another protection. There is a protection because of the, well the ozone, yeah that's one but the. What is it? Oh I'll think of it. You get old and it just takes time.

But in some of the geological findings, we find the fossils of butterflies that had wingspans that were two or three feet. In some of the fossils, there are ferns that were ninety feet high. The water in the atmosphere, the canopy of water, would have created sort of a universal hot house effect so that you would have great humidity. And of course, we read that before the flood there was no rain, that was, no need of rain because of the tremendous humidity. The moisture in the atmosphere in the water above the firmament from the water below the firmament and thus would have created tremendous ideal growing conditions.

We know that at one time that the south pole was a very tropical region because they have found charcoal deposits 200 feet below the ice. We know that in the north pole regions, the arctic regions, that that was once a tropical area. They have found mammoths perfectly preserved, frozen in the icy tundra. So the change that took place was dramatic, it was more or less instantaneous because some of these mammoths that had the tropical vegetation in their digestive tracts, they were frozen in place while they were eating this tropical vegetation. So there was a dramatic climactic change. And the Bible makes reference to this and it could, of course, be related to the time of the flood and the heavens that then were, were changed. The earth which was then has been changed. But the world that then was being overflowed with water perished. That beautiful ideal kind of earth with the beautiful capacities of producing without deserts, without polar ice and so forth, has perished.

“But the present heavens and earth which are now,”

are being reserved by the same word [that is, the word of God that created them] they are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men (3:7).

As God intervened once with the flood, destroying the men that once inhabited the earth, God will once again intervene in divine judgment against wicked men. But this time it will be with fire. You remember that after the flood God put the rainbow in the sky, a promise to Noah that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. But He will destroy with fire. In Psalm 50:3, David said, “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him” (Psalm 50:3). Isaiah 66:15 said, “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. Malachi wrote, “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and that day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1).

Paul writing to the Thessalonians said, “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). So God’s day of judgment and that’s what Peter is writing about this “day of God’s fiery judgment and the perdition of ungodly men.” The day of judgment and perdition.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, a thousand years as one day (3:8).

When the scoffers come and say, Where is the promise of His coming? It’s been almost 2,000 years since Jesus was here on the earth and promised to come again. Where is the promise of His coming? We’ve seen 2,000 years pass by and He hasn’t come. In the last chapter of the book of Revelation, Jesus said, “Behold, I come quickly” (Revelation 3:11). And look, it’s been two thousand years. That’s not very quick. And so scoffers will come saying, Where is the promise of His coming?

Peter gives us an explanation. He tells us, “Don’t be ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” God exists outside of time. In the eternal realm which is outside of time, you have a whole different measurement. In the eternal realm, there is no time. Again David writing in Psalm 90, or I guess this was Moses writing in Psalm 90, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night” (Psalm 90:4). A watch in the night was a six-hour stint. And a thousand years to God is like a six-hour stint, he says. In Hosea, an interesting passage of scripture in light of a day is as a thousand years, a thousand years as a day, Hosea speaks about the Jews in these last days who will say, “Come and let us return unto the LORD: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight” (Hosea 6:1,2).

We know that God has a covenant with the nation of Israel that is not completely fulfilled. The covenant with the nation of Israel was to bring their Messiah. But it was also to bring in the everlasting peace, it was to bring in the kingdom of God. And that has not yet taken place. But the prophecy was divided into sixty-nine sevens and one seven year period separated from the sixty-nine. The sixty-nine seven-year periods were to run between the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah the Prince. And that was fulfilled 483 years after Artaxerxes gave the commandment to Nehemiah to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, Jesus the Messiah came. But God has unfinished business with the nation of Israel. And that will take place during a seven-year cycle which will precede the glorious coming again of Jesus Christ and His thousand-year reign upon the earth.

I am not one who is all worried about the millennial bug. I don't think that that's going to be a catastrophic kind of thing. There will be disturbances, no doubt. There will be problems that will arise. I don't recommend that you go and take your money out of the bank and bury it in a napkin or something. And that you try and store up a year's amount of food. That itself can create a food shortage and a bank failure. But be prudent, be reasonable.

But the real issue to me, and I think there is some merit to it, I'm not really banking on it but I believe there's merit. That God has worked in patterns of six and one. We recognize that throughout the Bible. Six days shalt thou labor and shall do your work. And the seventh day is a day of rest. When a person was sold into slavery, they were to be slaves for six years but the seventh year, they were to be set free. And so God has established this six and one pattern throughout the Bible. And it is interesting that we are coming close to the six thousand years of man's existence upon the earth. Adam was created about six thousand years ago. He was sold into the bondage of sin or sold himself into the bondage of sin about six thousand years ago. And so there is perhaps something to the six and one and it could be, and I don't see how the earth can go on much longer, but I believe that it is quite possible that the seven thousandth or the seventh millennium will be the glorious millennium of peace and rest that will come with the coming of the Messiah.

It is interesting as Hosea writes concerning the Jews in the last days, they will say, "After two days He will revive us." And the interesting thing is that it's been almost two thousand years since the Jews were dispersed by the Romans when Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and so in the third year, after two days, he will revive us and the nation of Israel coming to life after two thousand years existing again as a nation is a very interesting thing. And "in the third day," it says, "we shall live in His sight." That is, in the presence of the Messiah and I believe it could be a reference to the glorious reign of Jesus Christ.

So it is possible, but we don't know days or hours. We don't know exactly the dates and it's foolish to try and speculate on that. But I do believe that we are coming very, very close to the return of Jesus Christ and the establishing of God's kingdom upon the earth. I don't think that our calendar is necessarily correct. Thus, I'm not looking forward to December 31st kind of a thing. This is it. No, because there's too much variances and too many variables here that you can't really set that as a date. I mean, we just said, Hey, January 1st is the beginning of the new year. Well, that isn't true with the Chinese. They have a different date and even the Jews have a different day for their new year. And so we don't know exactly when it is but it's close. Just leave it there. It's close.

So Peter tells us that people make the mistake because they don't realize that with God, there is no time of minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, or even millenniums. "A day is as a thousand years." It's a relative term. "A thousand years is as a day unto the Lord." And then Peter assures us that,

The Lord is not slack concerning His promises (3:9),

Jesus said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Now Peter is telling us "He's not slack concerning His promises." His promises of coming again. His promises of the reign of the Messiah over the earth in righteousness. He's not slack, though it has been a long time, He's not slack concerning His promises. He is faithful. And then Peter gives us the reason why the delay.

He is longsuffering to us and He's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (3:9).

So the reason for the delay is to give an opportunity for more people to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour to be forgiven their sins, and to become a part of the glorious future that God has planned for those

who have chosen to love Him and serve Him. And so Peter tells us that God is just giving extra time for people to come in to the kingdom. But then Peter assures us in verse ten,

That the day of the Lord will come (3:10)

It has been a while. We've been waiting but it will come. It will come, he said,

as a thief in the night (3:10);

Jesus mentioned His coming as a thief in the night. He said, "If the good man of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have been watching for him and his house would not have been broken up" (Luke 12:39). And so he tells us to watch and to be ready for we don't know the day or the hour in which He is coming. But it will be "as a thief in the night;"

in the which (3:10)

and in describing and this is describing really the time. Here's the sequence of events as I see it. The next major event from a biblical standpoint will be the Lord coming for His church. Called often, the rapture of the church. And He will catch us up to be with Him in heaven for a period of probably seven years. The seven years in which He deals with the nation of Israel here on the earth. This is the beginning of what the scripture calls the day of the Lord. That is, when the Lord once again will take control and rule. So He catches up His church. We'll be with Him in the heavenly scene and we'll see the events from the heavenly vantage point when God brings His judgment upon the earth. There will be a seven-year period in which man will come to the culmination of his rebellion against God. Once the spiritual influence of the church is taken out, the man of sin, Satan's advocate, will receive the power and authority from Satan and will rule over the world and literally all hell will break loose upon the earth. And the earth will be subjected again to great cataclysmic judgments.

There is a time known as the great tribulation that is described for us by Jesus in Matthew 24. Described for us in Revelation chapters six through eighteen. Then Jesus will come back to the earth with the church. "When Christ, who is our life shall, appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). And He will at that time establish the kingdom of God here on the earth and He will rule and reign over the earth. Psalm 2, "Ask of me, and I'll give you the heathen for thine inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2:8). He talks about how "the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. They've gathered together against the Lord, and His Messiah, but the God that sits in heaven shall laugh: He'll have them in derision" (Psalm 2:1,2,4).

Jesus will reign for a thousand years. We will live and reign with Him, the promise to the church. At the end of that thousand years, Satan will be bound during that thousand years but he will be released for a short period of time. We'll be getting into this in detail in just a few weeks now because we'll soon be in the book of Revelation. But this is just giving you a little taste and then we'll feed you the dinner. That's the appetizer.

But Satan will be released for a short period of time and people will, at that time, some of them align themselves with Satan and it will be his final attempt to overthrow Jesus and that is when Michael will stand up and his armies against Satan and his armies. Michael prevails and Satan is cast into Gehenna where the beast and the false prophet are. And then comes the great white throne judgment of God. And then comes this event that Peter is describing now. Of the dissolving, the disintegrating of the material universe.

In the Bible there are prophecies concerning this. In Isaiah 65:17, the Lord said, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." It is interesting that He uses the Hebrew word Bara, for create. It's the same

Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created." The word Bara is to bring forth something out of nothing. There is another word for create and that is the word, Asah and Asah is to use existing materials to make something. So you could say that this pulpit was created by some craftsman. It isn't that he said, Pulpit be and pulpit was. But he took the wood, he cut it, and he planed it and he cut the miters and he put the thing together. And thus he used though existing materials.

But this God declaring in Isaiah 65, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." And then in Isaiah 66:22, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." In Hebrews 2:5, "For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come [that is, the new world], of which we speak." Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." And so John describes there in 21 the new heaven, the new earth, the new Jerusalem and all.

This earth, this universe is to be obliterated, dissolved. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which,"

the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved (3:10,11),

Listen to these words, interesting. "*The heavens pass away with a great noise, the elements, basic elements, shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved.*" It seems like the material universe made up of atoms is going to just disappear, be dissolved. It will burn up and of course, we know the tremendous energy released when atoms are split. And so God releasing the atoms so that they can respond according to their nature and the protons of the nucleus of every atom being released, pushing out against as the like forces repel, the tremendous destruction and devastation of the material universe. With the material universe being dissolved, Peter said,

what manner then of persons ought we to be in all holy manner of life and godliness (3:11),

Surely this should be a serious contemplation for every child of God. The material universe, all of the works are going to be dissolved, destroyed, burned up. What manner of persons then ought we to be living holy lives, living godly lives. Have you noticed how easy it is to get attached to material things? A new car. A new home. New furniture. It's so easy to get attached to material things.

Several years ago, a fellow came up to me down here in the front and he said, Chuck, I noticed that the car you're driving is getting pretty ratty. You need a new car. I said, Yeah, I know I do. I'm planning to start looking in the paper and getting me another car. And he said, You need to get a new car. I said, Oh, no, no, I don't buy new cars. I buy used cars. I get one with low miles and I let someone else take the beating of the depreciation and I get a good deal on a used car. And he said, No, you don't understand; I said you need a new car. He said I own a car agency and if you'll bring your car in and a pink slip, come in and pick out the car you want and I'll trade you pink slips. So I said, Well, sounds like a good deal. So I went over and went through the book, picked out the car, the model, the color. He said, What accessories do you want on it? I said, Well, what do you think? He said, Put on whatever you want. So I said, Put them all on.

So he sent the order back to the factory and about seven weeks later, he called and he said, Your car has been delivered. I've had it detailed. Come on over with your pink slip and your keys with your old car and we'll trade. So I went over and when I went in to his agency, I saw the car. It was parked there next to the front door and a bunch of guys were standing around looking at it because it was sharp. It was made special

from the factory and it was just a good looking car. And the guys were standing around and I thought, Ha, ha, ha, that's mine. Nice, oh, that's beautiful. So we went in to the office and I took in my pink slip. He did the papers and all and so he came on out and sort of in a ceremonious way, gave me the keys. Here you are, Pastor Chuck. Nice.

First time I ever had a car with that smell and it was mine. That new car smell. Never had that before. But this was exciting. And as I started out of the driveway, I saw cars driving past and they would take that second look because this was a real looker. Yeah, this is mine. And all the way to the grocery store I was just praising the Lord thinking, Lord, You're so good, You're so wonderful! Never had a new car in my life. Oh, this is so beautiful. Oh Lord, such luxury. All of these push buttons. Oh Lord, this is so nice! You're so good! Love You, Lord, I love You, Lord!

Kay needed a couple of items from the grocery store so as I was pushing the cart through the store, again I was just saying, Oh Lord, You're so good. I love You. This is so nice. Until I came out and as I started to get in, I noticed that there was a ding in the door there on the driver's side. Some careless, inconsiderate, stupid nincompoop had opened the car door next to me and had put this ding in my brand new car. I'm not even home yet. I was so upset. I got down to see if maybe there might be a little paint chip, the color. Maybe the car is still here in the parking lot and if I can catch the person who did it, I'll teach him a thing or two. Oh, I was angry.

All the way home from the grocery store, I was saying, I hate people. I hate life. Have to live in this rotten world with all these stinking people. Are so careless and inconsiderate and all. The joy was gone. It didn't last long. When I got home, Chuck Jr. was there. He's visiting with his mom and he said, Did you get your new car, Dad? I said, Yeah. He said, Let me see. And I toss him the keys and he went out and he started playing with all the buttons and everything else. He was standing there looking, he said, Wow, Dad, this is a beauty. And then he saw the ding, he said, Uh-oh, Dad, what's this? I said, Can you believe, Chuck, when I was parked out there at the Alpha Beta market, some dirty, rotten, inconsiderate person opened their car door and put that oh, and I started getting into it and he said, Oh Dad, it's going to burn. I said, Thank you, Chuck. I really needed that. And I was serious. I needed that. It's so easy to get attached to material things.

But you know, material things can bring you joy but they can also bring you a lot of misery. A lot of anger. When we start putting value in the things that are material. "What manner of persons ought we to be in holy manner of living and godliness."

As we look for and hasten the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat (3:12)?

Isaiah said, "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly" (Isaiah 24:19). He said, "And all the host of heaven will be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isaiah 34:4). God said, "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (Isaiah 13:13). "What manner of persons ought we to be?" We ought to be living godly lives and holy lives, "as we look for the coming of the day of our Lord."

We should live in anticipation of the coming of the Lord. "Unto them that look for Him," the Bible says, "shall He appear the second time apart from sin" (Hebrews 9:28). The question is, Are we really looking for the Lord? Are we living in the consciousness that these material things are soon going to burn? And thus put my value in things that are spiritual, not in things of the material world.

Paul said, The present scheme of things is rapidly passing away. Therefore, let your every contact with the world be as light as possible. Keep a light touch. Don't get deeply involved in the material things. They're going to pass.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise (3:13),

That is, the promise of His coming. The thing that sustains us in this day in which we live. "According to the promise,"

we look for new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (3:13).

There is coming one day a new heaven, a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness and that is all that will dwell there. Throughout eternity, dwelling in the righteousness and in the presence of God.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you might be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless (3:14).

These are all in response to seeing that all these things are going to be dissolved. What manner of persons ought we to be? And he's telling us the manner of persons we ought to be. We ought to be a person that's looking for the coming of the Lord. Living a godly, holy life. Diligent in the things of the Lord. Living in the grace of God and in the righteousness of Jesus Christ "without spot and blameless." And then he tells us again,

Account the longsuffering of our Lord as salvation (3:15);

In other words, when Jesus said to John, "Behold, I come quickly." John said, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." And that's been my prayer. As I look at the world in which we live, I pray, Lord, come quickly. Let's get this over with. Let's get the show on the road. Sort of like John the Baptist when he was anticipating Jesus to overthrow the Romans. He got a little edgy and impatient there in jail. He sent his disciples to Jesus and they said, John wants to know, Are you the One we're looking for or shall we start looking for someone else? In other words, John was saying, Alright, get the show on the road. Get the Romans out of here. Get me out of jail kind of a thing. And sometimes I think we have that same kind of feeling. Lord, let's get things going.

But realize that "this longsuffering of God is salvation." God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." James tells us that the husbandman is waiting for the complete fruit of harvest and has long patience for it" (James 5:7). So account that "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation,"

even as our beloved brother Paul also concerning the wisdom that was given unto him hath written unto you (3:15);

He recognizes the writings of Paul. Calls him a beloved brother and he has written according to the revelation that God has given to him.

And also in all of his letters, he is speaking in them of these things; which are some of them hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable have twisted, as they do also other scriptures, to their own destruction (3:16).

Probably referring to Paul's teachings on the grace of God which people have a tendency sometimes to twist. The grace of God is probably one of the most glorious subjects in the New Testament. But remember,

Paul himself writing of the grace of God said, “Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound” (Romans 5:20). “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! Perish the thought! How can we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein” (Romans 6:1,2)?

But you see, some people were twisting Paul’s teachings on grace. “Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.” They were twisting that saying, Let’s go ahead and sin freely that grace might abound. Paul says, No, no, perish the thought! Wrong, wrong! So Peter makes mention of how people were guilty of twisting scriptures to their own destruction. There are many people today who are still doing that. They’re twisting the scriptures, really to their own destruction. Be careful about twisting scriptures and getting a false assurance by twisting the scriptures. Thinking that your case is sort of not covered by what God is saying. Somehow you have an exception. Somehow God has made a difference with you. And it doesn’t really apply to your situation. That is often done as people are twisting, wresting the scriptures out of their context and twisting them for their own destruction.

Ye therefore, beloved (3:17),

Notice how many times he’s using this word beloved. That’s James’ word but Peter’s using it now. “Ye therefore, beloved,”

seeing that you know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness (3:17).

“Be steadfast, unmovable,” we are exhorted, “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Be careful that you’re not moved from that place of steadfastness in Christ. But rather,

Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (3:18).

That’s our purpose of taking you through the Bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. That you might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So actually here tonight, we’re fulfilling this final little exhortation of Peter as we are here tonight, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Father, we thank You tonight for the opportunity of studying Your word. Thank You, Lord, for giving us Your word. And Lord, there are several exhortations here in this passage. Several things that You speak to us about. And may we be diligent in keeping now the word. Lord, we pray that we might indeed keep our eyes on the things that are eternal and not to get caught up, Lord, in the material things of this world. But using them but not abusing, keeping a light touch. Ready, Lord, at any moment to leave it to be burned that we might be with You in the eternal kingdom of God. Lord, we thank You for the blessed hope that we have. As we wait for the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And how we long, Lord, for that day to come when we will be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. And suddenly in Your presence, beholding You face to face. Lord, may Your kingdom come and may Your will be done here on earth even as it is in heaven. We long for Your kingdom and we long, Lord, for the righteousness of Your kingdom. That You might rule and reign in righteousness over the world, even as You do over our lives tonight. Make us, Lord, Your witnesses. Give us power and help us to be everything You would have us to be. Help us to live, Lord, as You would have us to live. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.