

Within the Word

A Study of 2 Peter 3

A Note from Kathy

As I write this study guide, it is nearly the end of 2015. I am asking God to direct me in all He has planned for the New Year ahead. God has not called His children to sit and merely wait for His return, but to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him. Let's keep this in mind, as we study this chapter.

Observation

1. In verse 1, we find Peter's purpose for writing this letter. The word "stimulate" or "stir up" is the Greek word *Diegeiro*, which means to wake up or arouse from a natural sleep. Consider this for a few moments. Who are the author's intended recipient's, believers or the world in general? Read Ephesians 2 below, it will help you build Scripture on Scripture. Believers have been given new life in Christ Jesus. It is the gift of God to all who place their faith in him. What are some of the obstacles Peter mentions that we will face as followers of Jesus?

Ephesians 2:1, 4-5

¹As for you, you were dead (Gr. Nekros – the spiritual condition of the unsaved) in your transgressions and sins ... ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive (Gr. Suzoopoieo – quickened, to make alive, of spiritual life) with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.

2. What type of thinking does Peter desire believers to have? Practically speaking, what will that look like? Read the verse below to help with your answer.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

3. According to 2 Peter 3:2, who were the two sources of spiritual leaders instrumental in leading these people in the words and commands of God?
4. In verse 3-4, Peter warns of scoffers that will show up among them. What will these scoffers say that reveals the truth about them?

5. Peter tells us that it is not that these men have not been exposed to the truth. What is their real problem?
6. What two events did Peter point to that these scoffers intentionally reject?
7. We are now living in the “last days,” which is the time from Jesus’ ascension to the day of his return. No one knows the day or the time of his return, but he is coming. And when he does, there will be a day of judgment unlike anything the world has seen before. According to verse 7, what will be the instrument of God’s judgment?
8. The passing of time does not hold the same importance to God that it does to mankind. What interesting fact do you see concerning God’s perspective on time?
9. In spite of the fact that God does not consider time the way we do, what do we know concerning the day of the Lord?
10. We are supposed to be busy storing up treasure in heaven. This world will not last forever, so it is fruitless to spend our lives storing up treasure here. How are believers instructed to live, as we look forward to the day of God?
11. Since believers have been instructed to look forward to the day of the Lord, what ought we be busy doing? Read Philippians 4:6-7, before writing your answer.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

12. The Apostle Paul had written many letters in his day, and they would have been copied and passed around for all believers to read and glean instructions from. Some of the things Paul shared were hard to understand, especially considering the conditions in which they lived. There were those who would twist and distort his teaching, leading some down a false path. Peter reminds believers of this, and calls them to be on guard. What else are they called to do? This is true for every Christian who carries His name today.

13. What is the purpose of God's patience? What is the benefit of His delay? What is the believer's spiritual responsibility, while waiting for His return?

Application

Please do not answer the Application questions with a mere yes or no. Write your thoughts for each question, so that you will be better prepared to discuss it with your small group.

1. Peter's purpose for writing these believers is to stimulate them to wholesome thinking. The next step is theirs alone. Name some of the people God is presently using to inspire and enhance your faith? I hope you come up with a very long list.
2. Have you ever considered the debt of gratitude believers owe to the prophets and the apostles? What have these men done that enables our walk of faith?
3. Are scoffers, those who ridicule and mock and deceive, living among us today? What is their motivation? Who or what rules their heart? Are they any different than the scoffers of Jesus' day?
4. Peter said the scoffers of his day were attempting to cast doubt on Jesus' return, based on how long it had been. They suggested that everything would be the same as it had always been. Is this still being taught today?
5. Did you find verses 8-9 to be a great comfort? If so, why?
6. Even though no one knows the day or hour of Christ's return, what is the one truth believers hold concerning this day? What change will His return bring with it?

7. Turn your page over, and draw a line the length of the page. Using the events listed below, place each event in order to create a timeline, starting with eternity before creation and ending with eternity after the final judgment of God.

- Eternity before creation
- Flood
- Day of Christ's return
- 400 years of silence (refers to the time between the Old Testament and New Testament, during which God did not speak to the Jewish people)
- Creation
- Man & woman (Adam and Eve)
- Jesus Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension
- Prophets
- Sin's entrance into the world
- Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)
- Last days
- Final judgment of God
- Eternity after the judgment

8. What are some specific things believers are to focus on, in light of all we have seen in this chapter?

9. The phrase "En Garde" is used to warn a fencer (a swordsman) to assume the position preparatory to a match. We have been forewarned about the things to come. What are we as followers of Christ to be busy doing before his return? What kind of people should we be? In what ways are we to be different from the world we live in?

10. Having taken our stance as believers, what are we instructed to do? How are we to face each day of waiting? What is our attitude to be? How are we to align our thinking with our Lord? Using verse 18, write a couple of sentences explaining how this is a self-perpetuating circle of faith and obedience.