

Fact Sheet for **“Solely Good Eschatology?”**

2 Peter 3:1-10

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We've come to the third and last chapter of Peter's second letter. The whole second chapter was about false prophets and those they influenced. In this third chapter he turns his attention to his readers.

ESV 1 ¶ This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,

“the second letter” – a reference to 1 & 2 Peter

“stirring up... by way of reminder” translates the same words as in 2 Peter 1:13.

The word translated “sincere” is literally “sun judged”. Our English word is from the Latin *sine cera*, “without wax”. Some pottery salesman would use wax to cover-up cracks in pottery. You could see those places by holding the piece up to the sun.

Our lives should stand the light of God's revealed Word.

2 that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,

The prophets...

“predictions” – literally the words spoken beforehand

The commandment...

ESV 2 Peter 2:21 For it would have been better for them never to have known (full knowledge) the way of righteousness than after knowing (full knowledge) it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

Both the words of the prophets and the commandment(s) of the Lord had to do with personal righteousness. But they also had a sense of God's coming judgment on sin.

3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

Scoffers are the false prophets who deny Jesus Christ (2:1) and His return (3:4).

“the last days” – Before the Lord's return

They denied the coming judgment and followed their own sinful desires, including sexual perversion (2 Peter 1:4; 2:10, 18; Jude 16, 18).

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

The angels, apostles, and writers of the NT repeatedly referred to the second coming of Christ (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7).

The false prophets mentioned “the fathers”, a reference to the OT patriarchs... Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, etc. Their line of reasoning was this. Since nothing has happened in all this time then it won't happen at all. Peter responded to their argument.

⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

“they deliberately overlook” – contrasts with Peter’s reminders to his readers to remember
“the heavens” – the expanse or sky created on the second day of Creation (Genesis 1:6-8)
“the earth was formed out of water and through water” – the land appearing on the third day of Creation (Genesis 1:9-10)
“by means of these” – literally “by which”, a reference to both water and the word of God.

There was a universal flood. And God made a promise at that time that the world would never again be destroyed by water (Genesis 9:8-17). Peter was both a creationist and a believer in the universal flood. The coming destruction will not be by water but by fire, in the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

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

THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT EACH OF THE DAYS OF CREATION WERE THOUSANDS OF YEARS! IT ALSO DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE THOUSAND YEAR MILLENIUM IS JUST AN INDEFINITE LONG PERIOD OF TIME! This *does* mean that God’s time table is longer than ours. The coming judgment will happen. God is not asleep. We are but a vapor, then we fly away (Psalms 90:10; James 4:14). God is eternal. His time schedule is oh so much longer than ours.

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

This verse does not teach universal salvation. It also does not void the passages about election. Instead it describes God’s heart. A similar passage I 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief¹, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved², and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Now here is the critical question. Why did Peter write these words? Was his only purpose that his readers have good eschatology (the doctrine of last things, from the Greek word *eschatos* meaning “last”)? Was his purpose solely rooted in what they understood? No. His purpose was rooted in their character. He urged them to live righteously, becoming partakers of the divine nature (1:3-11).

There is an afterlife for everyone. One real question is where. For the Christian it will be with Christ. For those who are not Christians it will be in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 15). Another real question has to do with what we as Christians will experience. Christ offers eternal forgiveness for sin but not a pass for sin. Christians will live eternally with Christ, escaping the lake of fire, but we will still answer to God for our sin (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Peter wrote these things to remind his readers to live lives of holiness and godliness (3:11). One way to encourage ourselves in this direction is to keep our eyes on God’s future sure and certain judgment of sin.

Make sure first of all that you are in Christ. Then keep your eyes on Christ!

¹ See also 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

² See also Revelation 6:14; 20:11; 21:1.