

Fact Sheet for “Three Final Exhortations” 2 Peter 3:11-18

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1 Peter is about encouragement in the face of persecution. 2 Peter is about a commitment to live a godly life as we look forward to the promised end time judgment.

In Chapter 1 of this second letter Peter urged them on to godly living (see 1:3-4). In chapter 2 he warned them of false teachers (see 2:12-14). Now in chapter 3 he reminds them of the coming end-time judgment.

ESV 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

As we come to the closing words of Peter’s third and final chapter we will find an exhortation he repeats three times. For the Christian these are words we need to take to heart and live by. If you have never placed your faith in Christ you are on the wrong side of these words. What’s ahead for you is ugly and permanent, and can only be avoided by seeking forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

ESV 11 ¶ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Focus on what Peter focuses on. Peter asks the core question, “What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?” The remainder of verses 11 and 12 is built around this core question. This is his point.

This is also the 1st time within this passage that Peter links our knowledge of end time events with godliness.

“These things” mean this earth and sky that we see every day. The word “dissolved” in verses 10 and 11 translates the usual word for “destroyed”. It is used as part of a word in Revelation to refer to Satan (Revelation 9:11). This word is also used for divorce (Matthew 1:19). Peter writes that this earth and sky will be destroyed one day. He goes on to mention that day.

The term “day of the Lord” is used in various ways in the Bible. It can refer to a time beginning, during, or at the end of the coming judgment. It can also refer to the whole time of judgment. However it always refers to a time of God’s judgment.

Here are some verses in the NT. Acts 2:20 happens *during* the Tribulation (Revelation 6:12). 1 Corinthians 5:5 refers to a time of future judgment for Christians long before Christ’s 2nd coming. The marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-9) has taken

place and is followed by Christ's second coming. Paul adds to 1 Thessalonians 5:2 by writing this day will catch the unsaved world when they are saying, "There is peace and security." Paul followed 2 Thessalonians 2:2 with the indication that the day of the Lord will come *after* the antichrist appears. The "day of the Lord" in 2 Peter 3: 10 and the "day of God" in verse 12 here focus on the day of final judgment, the great white throne judgment, after the Tribulation, after Christ's second coming, and after the Millennium (Revelation 20:11; 21:1).

Now here's a question. How can we hasten the coming of the day of the Lord? How can we make it come quicker? The answer is, "We can't!" There is another valid way to translate "hasten" that makes perfect sense in context. We can "be eager for" the day of the Lord.

The words "heavenly bodies" in verses 10 and 12 actually translates the word "elements" as in the KJV, NAU, NIV, NKJ, and NLT. This present earth and sky will be destroyed one day by fire.

¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

These words again remind us of Revelation 21:1. This is God's promise!

¹⁴ ¶ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

This is the 2nd time within this passage that Peter links our knowledge of end time events with godliness.

Peter earlier wrote about the patience (literally "longsuffering") of God (3:9). Paul had written about God's patience also in Romans 2:4 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4).

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ^{18a} But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is the 3rd time within this passage that Peter links our knowledge of end time events with godliness.

Growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a statement about lifestyle!

Then Peter ends this book with one of the many benedictions in the Bible...

^{18b} To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.