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a *Grace Notes* course

## **2 Peter**

### **Lesson 9**

#### **2 Peter 3:1 to 9**

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## 2 Peter Lesson 9

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**2 Peter***Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 2 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list showing the portion of 2 Peter to be studied in each lesson.

Lesson 1	Introduction; 2 Peter 1:1 to 4
Lesson 2	2 Peter 1 :5 to 6
Lesson 3	2 Peter 1:7 to 9
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**2 Peter 3:1**

"Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder)..."

Chapter three introduces the subject of the Lord's return in the light of false teaching. Three times Peter uses the word for "looking forward." Peter wants his readers to look forward to the rapture of the church to be with Jesus Christ because apostasy will not prevail in the end.

**Beloved**

Peter employs the word "beloved" four times in this chapter (vv. 8,14,17). Peter loves his readers. We are objects of Peter's love because Peter was the object of God's love (1 John 3:1,2; 4:7). Each and every believer has the same amount of love from God.

Peter calls his readers "beloved" four times in this chapter because he treats a subject that has to do with God's own. That subject is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some Christians evidently are not aware that Jesus is coming back.

We answer to one name in public but we may answer to another name in private, such as "sweetie" or "honey." Our spouse calls us by different names than our colleagues at work. (I hope that name is not "jerk!") God's term for His own is "beloved (Ephesians 1:6)."

**I now write to you this second epistle**

Peter now explicitly states his purpose for writing a second epistle. He wants Christians to know that at the end of this age many apostates will come to deceive Christians. They also need to know that there is hope at the end of the day --

Jesus will return to resolve apostate issues.

**Principle**

The reality of Jesus' return keeps us on the tiptoe of expectancy.

**Application**

Jesus may come momentarily. We might meet Jesus at any moment. This should keep us at peak spiritual vigilance moment by moment

**in both of which I stir up**

The word "stir up" comes from two words: through and stir and came to mean to wake up fully, rouse. In the two following passages, this term is applied to Joseph and to Jesus,

"Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife...." (Matthew 1:24).

"But He [Jesus] was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'" (Mark 4:38).

Peter wants his readers to wake up to the truth of how the Bible can change our lives.

**Principle**

God directs Christians to wake up to the reality of God's Word so He can change their lives.

**Application**

If we know the principles of God's Word, we can apply those principles to experience. Deceiving Christian leaders today use many gimmicks to mislead Christians from operating on the Word of God. The Bible is our only criterion for determining what is true.

Satan loves Christians to fall asleep spiritually. Sometimes he slips them sleeping pills. He wants to sedate Christians into lethargy.

The Devil would love to put us to sleep. If he could slip us a sedative, he has done his job. The Devil aims to lull Christians into spiritual drowsiness, as much as to tempt them with blatant sin.

**your pure**

"Pure" comes from two words: sun and to judge and means to judge by the sun. We get the English word "heliograph" from the Greek word for "pure." Hel is sun and heli is sunshine. Heliograph is a system of signaling by using mirrors to reflect off the sun. In the early days of the United States, the US military used heliograph to defeat the Apaches. They defeated the Apaches by holding a mirror to the sun.

"Pure" also signifies unalloyed. Greeks also used this term for mixing metals. Metal without mixture

is metal without alloy. Alloyed metal is weaker than unalloyed metal.

Again, the Greeks used this word for unmixed substances as wine mixed with water. This would dilute the wine. It was not pure wine.

The word "pure" eventually came to mean genuine, unmixed. Some pottery dealers would sell defective pots by filling the cracks with wax and then painting over the wax filling. This was deception for the pottery would not perform its true purpose. If the person who bought the pot leaves it out in the sun, the wax would melt.

Sharp people would hold the pot up to the sun to see if there were any cracks in the pot. People judged a painted-over pot by putting it up to the sunlight to determine whether there were cracks in the pot. They tested the pot by the sunlight. God's desire is that our lives will stand up to the judgment of the light of God's Word. We test doctrine by the sunlight of truth.

The purpose of both first and second Peter is to remind believers to do pure thinking. Pure or transparent truth is unmixed, unsullied, and free from falsehood. Peter wants Christians to give doctrine the transparency test. Judge everything by God's truth. Pure minds are minds unaffected by seductive evil influences. These minds are uncontaminated by outside influence.

"...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ..." (Philippians 1:10).

### **minds**

The word "minds" here is from two words: through and think, thus it carries the idea of to think through. This refers to people who are mature in their thinking. They think through things based on the Word of God and apply it to their experience. It is the follow through that counts in athletics. It is the follow through of measuring things by God's Word and applying them to our experience that counts in living the Christian life. Do you have the ability to think through things using God's Word as the standard?

God saves our minds as well as our hearts. Some who come to Christ never had a serious thought in their lives before their salvation. They never

directed their minds to things that matter most. Those without Christ do not think perpendicularly. They think horizontally, not vertically. They can understand the horizontal but they cannot understand the vertical. They cannot understand anything that has to do with God, Christ, Bible or Christ.

"But the natural man [the man who simply has mind, emotion and will but no spirit] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

This does not mean that we receive more brains when we become Christians. It means that the orientation of our minds change. The Holy Spirit begins to influence our thinking.

"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you" (2 Corinthians 1:12).

### **Principle**

God wants us to pass the transparency of truth test.

### **Application**

We live in the day of the non-mind. People operate on their feelings. They live in subjectivity. Some preachers would rather use the gimmicks of subjectivity than truth to build believers. There is no way that we can live our lives unto the Lord without applying the truth of God's Word to experience. That is the way we depend on the Lord. Anything else is gimmick.

God wants us to evaluate things in the light of the Son. He wants us to use the transparency test -- He wants us to use the Word of God to determine whether something is true. He does not want us to use subjective thinking when it comes to truth. He wants us to measure things based on the objective truth of God's Word. Are you a Christian who measures everything on the basis of the teaching of God's Word?

"For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:17).

**by way of reminder**

Note the emphasis on remembering in this second epistle of Peter: 2 Peter 1:12,13,15. This is the purpose of the epistle.

The phrase "by way of reminder" has to do with the application of truth to our experience. God's Word is worth repeating. All good things in life are worth repeating. If that is true of life in general, how much more is it of God's Word. We cannot get through the Christian life with one shot from God's Word. What we really want to know is what we can apply to any experience of life. We need truth for times of success. We need truth in times of trouble. When we go to sleep at the switch of knowing God's Word, we will enter deep spiritual trouble.

The word "remind" comes from two words: under and remember. The word "under" carries the idea of authority conveying the idea of to remember our true authority [under] which is the Word of God. Christians are to put to mind, bring to remembrance the truth Peter taught them in his epistles. This truth deals with the application of truth to experience.

Repetition is important to teaching God's Word. Truth needs to be inculcated into our way of thinking, our attitudes. One shot at truth will not give us the stability we need against the forces of Satan.

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little" (Isaiah 28:10).

**Principle**

We need to know God's Word so thoroughly that we cannot forget it in time of temptation and suffering.

**Application**

There is a tendency to ignore God's Word in times of success. When we go to sleep at the switch spiritually, then things fall apart and we wonder why. This is the reason we should apply truth consistently to our experience.

Most people apply truth when things go wrong. That is usually too late. We need to be prepared before the crisis comes. God's truth needs implanting into our minds before we enter the

pressure cooker. God wants us to use God's Word for more than suffering. He wants us to use it for life. We base our capacity to love God on our knowledge of God, not on subjective thinking.

We cannot recall what we have not learned; we cannot apply what we do not know. Application depends on recalling the right truth at the right moment. The principle is that we need to know God's Word so thoroughly that we cannot forget it. We know more than we ever live. Our primary need is not new truth, but to live out the truth that we have. Harry Ironside speaking of the doctrinal teaching said, "If it's new, it's not true; and if it's true, it's not new." Many people are always on the outlook for something new. They do not appreciate the truth that they possess. They do not appropriate truth that they have. We must remind ourselves of what we know.

It is important to learn biblical truth and to apply it to our experience. Our capacity to love God, love others, enjoy life, operate on a scale of values, all revolve around knowing and applying truth to our experience.

We need to know truth in order to recall truth. Application of truth depends on remembering God's truth at the time we need it in our experience.

**2 Peter 3:2**

"...that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior..."

**that you may be mindful**

Peter repeatedly reminds his people to remember. His readers need to remind themselves of something important. "Call this to your mind." "Put your mind full of the Old Testament and New Testament." Our thoughts wander. Our imagination tends to run away into territory of temptation. Therefore, we need to focus our mind on the Word of God.

**of the words**

The Bible is verbally inspired. Inspiration carries more than the thoughts of God, it conveys the very words of God. This means that these words have no errors. There is no book on earth like the Bible.

The word here for "words" is the spoken word, a saying, or speech.

### Principle

Storing God's Word in our minds means that we build the Word of God into our lives.

### Application

If we memorize Scripture, God will be our divine Ally. One of the most effective means of growth in my life is the memory of Scripture. I memorize Scripture that deals with my temptations and failures. It is not enough to memorize a verse; we must understand the principle behind the verse. When temptation comes, take that principle and apply it to your situation. The right verse will come upon the television of your soul at the right time.

If we attempt to bear testimony to Jesus Christ, a verse will come to mind that is right for the situation. Stock the shelves of your mind with the Word. The Holy Spirit will enable you to do it. Do not fear that you cannot do it. Take God's word seriously. He will bless you for it.

### which were spoken before by the holy prophet

"Holy prophets" are Old Testament prophets whose writings the Holy Spirit inspired as the Word of God.

The Bible will do us little good if we do not come to it with a reverent mind. It is a holy [set apart] book delivered by holy prophets. The Bible will do us good if we hold it in reverence. Your attitude towards the Word will determine whether you apply it to your life.

### and of the commandment of us

A "commandment" is an injunction, charge or precept. These commands are precepts of the authors of the New Testament.

### the apostles of the Lord and Savior

The "apostles of the Lord and Savior" are the authors of the New Testament. Peter links Old and New Testament writers of Scriptures showing the unity of both testaments. The unity of Scripture has a pattern -- "the Lord and Savior."

### Principle

Saturate your mind with Scripture.

### Application

We never outgrow the tendency of sin until God promotes us to glory. As the hymn says, "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it." However, when we put the Bible in our minds, it deters sin. We will not be sinless, but we will sin less.

"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!" (Psalm 119:11).

Unless we are one hundred per cent sold on the Bible as the infallible, inerrant, unalterable Word from the living God, it will be of little use to us. We will not use it effectively in our lives. If we have not previously programmed our minds with the Word, nothing will come out. We cannot use what we do not have. Some people wonder why Christianity does not work. No wonder! They do not apply the Bible as God intended.

God gives us the mental furniture to think thoughts after Him. Innumerable benefits come to us when we think God's thoughts. The good is often the enemy of the best. We clutter our minds with things that are good but not with the best. We litter our minds with the mediocre. These things are neither vulgar nor coarse, but they are not the best. The very best is to know God by the Word of God. The greatest deterrent to falling into sin is the knowledge of principles of the Word and the application of them to experience. This is God's mode for safeguarding His own from sliding into sin.

It is not enough to know God's principles, we must apply those principles to our heart.

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6).

"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deuteronomy 11:18).

"Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16).

"But His word was in my heart like a burning fire  
Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it  
back, And I could not" (Jeremiah 20:9).

Meditate on God's Word.

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your  
mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night,  
that you may observe to do according to all that  
is written in it. For then you will make your way  
prosperous, and then you will have good  
success" (Joshua 1:8).

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in  
His law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

Let the Word "abide" in you.

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,  
you will ask what you desire, and it shall be  
done for you" (John 15:7).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all  
wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another  
in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,  
singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"  
(Colossians 3:16).

"I have written to you, fathers, Because you  
have known Him who is from the beginning. I  
have written to you, young men, Because you  
are strong, and the word of God abides in you,  
And you have overcome the wicked one" (1  
John 2:14).

### 2 Peter 3:3

"Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the  
last days, walking according to their own  
lusts..."

Peter presents the attack of these scoffers against  
Christianity in verses three and four.

#### knowing this first:

Invariably what God commands us to know, we do  
not know (1:20). We are to put priority on  
knowing the nature of scoffers in the last days. To  
protect ourselves against apostasy, we need to  
know some things.

#### that scoffers will come in the last days

Scoffers in this context are apostate teachers who  
deny the Lord Jesus (2:1) and His Second Coming  
(2:3). The "last days" are the period of time before  
the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. These are  
the "last days" of the church before Jesus comes  
back for the church.

#### walking according to their own lusts

"Walking" means to go from one place to another.  
Evidently these false teachers will be very  
evangelistic with their false doctrine.

The scoffers of the "last days" will attack  
Christianity in a special way. They will attack it  
by drawing the church into immorality. This is a  
powerful motivation. There is a close connection  
between their apostasy and their immoral living.  
This immoral living is generated from their  
viewpoint.

#### Principle

False teachers try to intimidate Christians from  
their convictions.

#### Application

False teachers will come with ridicule. They will  
make fun of those who hold to truth and deride the  
doctrine of the church. By this they hope to  
intimidate Christians.

### 2 Peter 3:4

"...and saying, 'Where is the promise of His  
coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all  
things continue as they were from the beginning  
of creation'"

#### and saying,

Mockers make the following claim.

#### Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep,

These skeptics ridicule the promise of Christ's  
coming. This word "promise" means a gracious  
promise, a promise with no strings attached. This  
promise does not depend on what we do but on  
what Jesus' did for us.

Skeptics make the argument that since the promise  
of His coming has not been fulfilled, God does not  
keep His Word. The return of Christ is at the core  
of Christianity. If there is no future for  
Christianity, no heaven, and no presence with  
God, then what is the point of our faith? Since  
there are about 345 verses in the Old Testament  
that set forth the Second Coming, this is quite an  
attack on the veracity of God's promise.

The argument of these false teachers is that we live  
in a stable universe. We cannot expect such events



as the Second Coming of Christ. Mockers not only ridicule the veracity of God's promise but the graciousness of His promise.

### **all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation**

The word "continue" means to continue throughout, i.e., without interruption. These scoffers maintain that nothing changes. God does not intervene into creation. Creation goes on the same year after year. Deists declare that God made the world and then went off never to connect to it again. They claim that God is not interested in the world. He is so tied up in celestial red tape that He does not have time for us.

Today we call the claim that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism means that the present cosmos is simply a reflection of the patterns of the past. This philosophy precludes God's incursion into time and space and postulates a universe run by natural laws.

### **Principle**

God cares about the details of our life.

### **Application**

This particular attack on Christianity is an attack on the character of God. It says that God does not keep His promises. He has blind apathy toward His creatures.

Weak minds and wicked motives will seize on the idea that Christianity is a dilution. If there is no future accountability, there is no hope. There is no sense of awe of God or of facing Him in eternity.

God declares that He is a personal God who is so involved in our lives that He counts the hairs upon our heads (with some of us that may not be much of a problem). He knows each tear we shed.

### **2 Peter 3:5**

"For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water..."

Peter now answers the objections of the scoffers. First, he turns to the principle of Catastrophism.

### **For this they willfully forget:**

Scoffers want to deliberately forget that God created the world. They choose to conveniently forget the actions of God. They cannot bear the idea of the reality of who God is and what He has done in their mind. God's truth passes unnoticed by them.

The phrase "this they willfully forget" is literally "this escapes them." These people do not want to know truth because they purposely shut down their volition toward God's truth. They shut their eyes to the facts. The world is not eternally stable. Things are not forever the same. Cataclysms can come.

God's truth is hidden from them due to their own will. Peter's condemnation of evolutionary and uniformitarian cosmology of "latter day" intellectualism centers on the principle of Catastrophism. The evidence of this is so clear to him that to deny it is "willful ignorance" on the part of those who reject it.

Many scoffers shut their eyes to the facts. They cannot face the facts of God's Word. Their ignorance is culpable. Any other idea than uniformitarianism is strange to them. That is why Catastrophism escapes their thinking.

### **Principle**

Negative volition continues to plague people today.

### **Application**

People negative to God are not open to truth about God. They do not know because they do not want to know. This is willful ignorance.

Some people do not want to believe the Bible. They study everything they can find that assaults the validity of Christianity. These people are negative in their volition toward God and His Word. It is one thing to be ignorant of the Bible but it is another thing to be "willingly" ignorant of it.

(This devotional is out of the norm in that we deal here with some scientific and philosophical issues of evolution and creation.)

### that by the word of God the heavens were of old

God created by His "word." Ten times in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible we read, "And God said." God created the world by His "word." He did not use the process of evolution but spoke the universe into existence. Creation "by the word" is what we call special creation. God created the world ex nihilo (out of nothing).

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3).

### and the earth standing out of water and in the water

On the third day of creation, the earth emerged from the water (Genesis 1:9-10).

The Bible submits a cosmology of the universe in this passage. Cosmos is order; the opposite of chaos. God is a God of order. He, therefore, made creation a place of order and system.

Biblical cosmology is the opposite of uniformitarianism which attributes the origin and development of all things in the cosmos to innate laws and processes eternally resident therein, with neither beginning nor end. Biblical cosmology presents the destiny of the cosmos in terms of the creating, and sustaining of the universe by a transcendent yet immanent and personal God. God reveals the origin and nature of the universe primarily in the Bible, not in creation itself.

### Principle

All present processes of creation are basically processes of conservation and disintegration, not processes of creation and integration

### Application

Uniformitarianism will be the philosophy of "latter day" thinking. Without the principle of uniformitarianism there would barely be a science of geology. This flies in the face of special, instantaneous creation.

Catastrophism holds that one or more catastrophes had an influence on shaping geological formations. Catastrophism is a fighting word among present day evolutionists. Geology suffers from great want of scientific data. Some evidence contradicts uniformitarianism such as pollen grains in Pre-Cambrian rock in the Grand Canyon.

Present processes from the viewpoint of Scripture are the process of providence, of sustaining, upholding and preserving (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 3:7) rather than the process of evolution. The basic structure of cosmic law (energy and entropy) supports creation. Energy is the capacity of a system to accomplish something. Entropy is a state of randomness and disorder.

The first law of thermodynamics is the conservation of mass-energy. Nothing is now being created but all things are in the process of preservation. The first law testifies that the beginning of the cosmos could never have been accomplished within present processes, none of which are creative processes.

The second law of thermodynamics is that entropy of a system must increase without the injection of intelligence. This is what we call a "closed system." A closed system is isolated from external sources or ordering energy. The system, however, may be enlarged to any arbitrary size, even to that of the cosmos itself in so far as the actual scientific evidence goes. Systems tend to become disorganized approaching a maximum state of disorder or "death." If the universe was indefinitely old, it would have already reached this state of maximum entropy. Since the cosmos is still far from dead, it must have had a beginning. The present, conservative, processes of the cosmos could not have accomplished that beginning.

Summary: All present processes are basically processes of conservation and disintegration, not processes of creation and integration.

The presupposition of natural science that our universe is an infinitely closed cosmology (all reality is declared to be within this realm of energy and matter) defined its own reality. However, this is not science at all but is philosophy at its core.

To postulate creative processes that scientists cannot prove by the scientific method is just as

metaphysical as to postulate a creator. The failure of uniformitarianism to establish its presuppositions scientifically has led to physics making way for metaphysics in science. To postulate creative processes that cannot be proven by the scientific method must now be as metaphysical as to postulate a creator.

### 2 Peter 3:6

"By which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water"

#### by which

The word "which" is neuter plural and refers to two sources of flood waters. Water came from the skies and from below ground (Genesis 7:11; 8:2).

#### world that then existed perished, being flooded with water

The "world" here is the world of people. The Flood destroyed all inhabitants of the world except those on the ark. The whole state of things then existing perished.

We get our English word "catastrophe" from the Greek word for "flooded" (katakluzw). It is not all that clear whether this is the flood of creation or the flood of Noah's day. Whether Peter refers to the judgment of Noah's day or to pre-Adam judgment is conjecture. The important thing is that we realize that there was a catastrophe in the past.

#### Principle

The stability of the world depends entirely on God's will.

#### Application

God has sovereignly passed judgment on the world. He is ultimately in control of the universe. Our universe is not random, but God carefully and providentially manages it. He, at times, chooses to intervene into the universe.

### 2 Peter 3:7

"But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"

#### But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved

We get our word "thesaurus" from the Greek word for "preserved." A thesaurus is a place of treasure. It is a place of storage. God stores the "heavens and earth" like a treasure. He put them on layaway.

The "heavens" here is the universe as we know it. God is in the process of preserving a world of people for judgment.

#### by the same word

The "same word" that caused creation and the flood will cause the last great conflagration. The latter catastrophe is as certain as the former.

#### are reserved for fire

Only three verses in the New Testament says that the world will be destroyed by fire (this verse and verses 10 and 12).

"Reserved" means kept. God keeps heaven and earth for a future judgment. God is great at making reservations. He has made a reservation for the unjust unto the Day of Judgment. Peter predicts a future conflagration.

#### until the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men

God judged the earth in a universal judgment by the flood. He has another cataclysmic and universal judgment coming to the world, a judgment by fire. This will be a conflagration of incredible magnitude. This fire is a fire of cosmological purging.

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14-15).

#### Principle

God has made a reservation for those who do not come to Christ.

#### Application

The final termination of the world will be an awful devastation. No one will escape. It will be a universal judgment except for those who come to Christ as their Savior. To see the world as we know it destroyed is not pleasant. No single person

will escape; there will be place to flee. This will be most awful judgment yet.

### 2 Peter 3:8

"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"

The paragraph that extends from verse eight through verse thirteen sets before us the outcome of the coming of Christ.

Scoffers say in verse four, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Their idea is that it has not happened so it must not be true.

### But

Peter shifts his attention to Christians. Has God forgotten about His plan? It has been many years since this promise has been made. Christians should not get discouraged at God's delay of executing His judgment. He is faithful to His promises even though they may take time. The wheels of God grind exceedingly slow but they grind exceedingly fine.

### Beloved

Peter speaks to Christians with tenderness – "beloved."

### do not forget

Peter uses the word "forget" for the scoffers in verse five; now he uses the word for Christians. "Forget" means escape notice, to be hidden from, unnoticed. The Greek indicates that Peter's readers are in the process of forgetting. These Christians allow certain skepticism about Christ's return blunt the impact of His return on their lives. This passage says that that "forgetting" is culpable ignorance.

The scoffers "forgot" (v.5) but Christians are not to forget (1:9). Christians have a tendency to forget how the nature (essence) of God works. We get so caught up in finite way of doing things that we forget that God operates from a completely different viewpoint than we do.

### Principle

Forgetfulness has great negative impact on how we apply truth to experience.

### Application

Forgetfulness is a term of application. When we forget about who God is we cannot apply who God is to our lives.

How is it that people can learn and forget so quickly? How can people learn truth and proceed to quickly forget what they learned? There are a number of reasons for this. Some people never truly learned the principle in the first place. They are ignorant of the principle. In this case, application is not the issue, but they have not formed clear enough principles to apply truth to their experience.

In another situation people know the principles of God's Word but they operate on false criteria such as emotion as their primary operating principle. We all have emotions but the point here is that we can use our emotions falsely. Emotions should be the result of principle rather than the cause of principle. If we live out principle, pertinent emotions should follow. Emotions get out of whack when we live inherently in emotions without principle.

Some people use emotion as the criterion of their soul. Eventually they base their whole evaluation of the Christian life on how they feel. This leads to psychological hedonism and keeps people from applying God's truth to experience. Some people try to solve their problems by tantrums. They blow their cork and exhibit childish behavior. This is living by manipulation. Emotions rule in this situation. When this happens, we become slaves to emotions. This destroys the Christian life. We cannot absorb and apply God's truth in this environment.

If we stay out of fellowship long enough, this will also destroy our capacity to apply God's truth to experience. We eventually lose conscious awareness of God's principles because we do not think that those principles work anymore. The longer we stay in this situation, the more deprived we get. This is one problem of "forgetting" in this verse.

Another problem that comes from "forgetting" is displaced orientation. When we fail to categorize God's Word into proper principles for living, we live fragmented lives. We all need standards of

conduct. Much Bible preaching today strictly revolves around inspiration and not teaching. No wonder people cannot apply truth to experience-- they only see one issue at a time! They respond to one inspiration after another and not to the whole counsel of God. They fail to categorize God's principles in order to structure their entire life around God's philosophy of life.

Failure to orient to God's Word as integral principles for living is like throwing all our clothes into one big pile. When we want to wear a certain combination, we must dig through the pile until we find things that match. By the time we do this spiritually, we may end in spiritual disaster. This is a problem of categorization of God's Word for our lives. If we hang God's principles into categories, we can sort out what we need at the time we need it. We no longer have to say, "I wonder where that principle can be found in the Bible for my life."

Many people do not apply truth to their lives because other things distract them from the principles of the Word. Learning and applying principles to experience requires discipline. It does not come with casual Christianity. If we put learning God's Word on the outer edge of the periphery of our lives, we will not live out the Bible in our lives.

### **this one thing**

Peter asks his readers to focus on one tenet. We need to focus on the principle of God's essence. His essence does not operate on human timetables. He operates on His own timetable. We need to be patient in our understanding of how God operates. We should understand that God will fulfill His promises in His own good time.

### **Principle**

Christians need to learn how to focus on the most important principles of life.

### **Application**

We spread our goals for life in so many directions that we cannot say "this one thing" I do. We are spread so thin that we cannot focus on the most important.

"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching

forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Christians should be careful not to forget about the essence of God for His essence is the foundation for creation and His purposes in the world.

### **that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day**

The "one thing" that God wants us to know is something about the essence of God. Peter wants us to know something about how God figures time. Someone may say, "The Bible promised Jesus' return two thousand years ago and He has not come. God does not fulfill His promises." However, as far as God is concerned, it has only been two days! One day with the Lord is as a thousand years.

"For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:4).

We see time in one dimension and God sees time in another dimension. Man looks at things from a finite perspective. God looks at things from an infinite perspective.

God's computation of time is totally different than our calculation of time. He operates on principles of infinity. God is a timeless and spaceless Being. There is no such thing as time in God's Being. God does not have a past, present or future. He is not sequential. Everything with Him is eternally present.

### **Principle**

Delay does not daunt God's plan.

### **Application**

We cannot judge God like we judge men. God's thoughts are not like our thoughts. His ways are not like our ways. God does not look at the passage of time like we do. God does not experience time as such. Our time concepts are not the framework in which God works out His purposes, so we cannot judge God by human standards. God does not work in our time framework.

Lapse of time does not impede the promises of God. God has a different view of time than we do.

God resides in eternity. We like to reduce God to our dimension. This distorts a true picture of Him. We have lost our sense of our awe of God in this generation of Christians. We think of God as one of us. However, there is an incredible distance between God and us.

We want to reach nirvana now, some present place of completion. That will not take place in time. We have to wait for the eternal state for that. We think that some human standard of success will bring us to that place of nirvana. "I am already twenty-five years of age and I have not made my first million yet."

God is never in a hurry and never makes haste. God's program will move to fruition in spite of any circumstance or situation. There will come a day when the last soul will come to Christ and the body of Christ will be complete; then He will come. Only God knows this time. If anyone tries to pinpoint this date, they are off base. Even angels do not know the time of His coming.

We should never become impatient with God's timetable. God has everything in place. Impatience has a tendency to judge. Impatience rarely gets the facts or waits for the facts. When we find people who are impatient, we find people who will hang us and hold the trial afterwards.

God's promises are as good as if they were made today (Isaiah 41:10). Time is no barrier to the promises or plan of God. Time belongs to God. The effect of an "any moment" return of Christ keeps us on the tiptoe of expectancy for His return.

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

This means that we should keep short accounts with the Lord. Have you confessed the sin in your life? Clear off each day so that you begin everyday with a clean slate. Live each moment with nothing between you and the Savior. Is there any unfinished business you have with anyone? Heal that relationship. Deal with that situation. Live on the tiptoe of expecting the Lord to return at any moment.

The lapse of time is often the nemesis of time oriented beings. Time goes by and you still have not snagged a spouse. We are about to retire and we still have not made our first million. You are twenty-eight and no one recognizes you as a success! "I am on a date with this jerk and this evening feels like it is going on forever!" We are creatures of time, but God is not.

God will fulfill His promises. When we get into a jam, we want out immediately. God may keep you in a process of suffering for His own purposes. God has His own timetable. We cannot pressure God into changing that timetable.

No one knows when Jesus will return. He will return, for He said, "I will come again" (John 14:3). Many irresponsible people set dates of Christ's coming today. This brings disrepute on the Bible. Down across the corridors of church history many groups have set dates only to lose credibility in the end. These groups become the laughing-stock of the community. Their ridiculous predictions cast aspersions on the trustworthiness of Scripture. God has purposely concealed the time of Christ's coming.

### 2 Peter 3:9

"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"

The second reason the Lord delays His coming is to allow more people to come to Himself.

### The Lord is not slack concerning His promise

The word "slack" means to hesitate, linger, delay and this is the only place it occurs in the New Testament. God is not tardy in keeping His timetable for earth. He does not loiter fulfilling His promises.

Peter here presents a magnificent view of God. The Lord delays not because He cannot or will not fulfill His promises but because He wants none perish.

### Principle

We can hold God to His promises because He is faithful to keep them.

**Application**

God is not culpable in His dealing with the world. He has His own timetable for dealing with the world. There is an immense difference between God's timetable and man's timetable. We cannot impose our timetable on God. What men count tardiness is something else entirely; it is the incredible patience of God with the world.

None of us like to wait for someone who is late. God, in all His infinite years, has never been tardy one time. Everything comes exactly as He has planned. We need to follow this characteristic of God in our own lives. We need to be faithful in keeping our promises and patient in waiting for God to keep His.

Jesus is not slow in His coming. No one diverted Him to Mars. No, it is simply not the right time for Him to return. If He had returned a few years ago you would not have come to Christ.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

"He [Abraham] did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform" (Romans 4:20-21).

When we claim God's promises, we need to hold Him to His Word.

**as some count slackness**

We cannot measure God by our standards. God's delay is a matter of His longsuffering. God has a designated time for dealing with the world. God delay does not originate in His unwillingness or impotence to discharge His promise.

**but is longsuffering toward us**

"Longsuffering" is forbearance (Exodus 34:6). To have "longsuffering" is to be long-tempered, to bear with. It is a quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation. Longsuffering does not hastily retaliate or quickly punish. It is the opposite of anger. Mercy is often associated with this quality (Exodus 34:6; Romans 2:4; 1 Peter 3:20). Longsuffering does not surrender to situations. It does not fall under trial. A longsuffering person

has patience despite difficulties. God executes unfathomable patience toward us.

**Principle**

God is long-tempered with us.

**Application**

God has infinite patience with those who reject Him. He does not violate man's will. He created man as a free agent and He respects that agency.

It is wonderful God does not judge us the way we judge others. God deals in facts, not subjective judgments. "I don't have the facts but I have made up my mind. I don't like you so you have had it." Longsuffering is an attitude of love. It does not mean grudgingly holding back, while nursing the urge to. No, God's love takes up the slack.

If we operate like God, we will be long-tempered towards Him. Therefore, it is no longer a question of "Lord, why have you not provided me with the success I want?" When we love the Lord, we do not ask that. We know He is faithful to His promises. Or, we say, "I want it now." The Lord says, "Ten years if you are lucky!" Because we love the Lord, we trust Him to give it in His timing. Patience is the perpetuation of love.

One characteristic of love is longsuffering. We find ourselves tolerating things we would not have otherwise allowed. This does not mean we mindlessly give in to others' whims. We need to exercise discernment.

**not willing that any should perish**

God is not willing that "any" should perish. God not only desires that none perish eternally but He also desires that all be saved. God will not save us against our will, but holds us responsible for all our choices. You can reject Christ if you want to do so. You will suffer the consequences if you do so.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

The word "willing" expresses a strong desire on God's part. Not everyone will come to Christ but this is the will of God's heart. The word "willing" is the stronger of the Greek terms for "will." It

carries the idea of a deliberate exercise of the will. God's will has a predisposition that manifests itself in an intentional will.

This term for "will" carries the idea of a plan. God's will is deliberate and intelligent. It is God's carefully thought out will that no one should perish (John 3:14-17;10:27,28). God is always willing to save but man is not always willing to be saved.

To "perish" is the opposite of being delivered from sin. Are you in the predicament of perishing right now? You may say that you do not "feel" like you are perishing. We may not "feel" like our teeth are decaying either. We may not feel like we are in the process of dying but we are dying little by little each day. We will never accept Christ until we see our need of a Savior.

#### **but that all should come to repentance**

Repentance is a change in one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness. The focal factor of repentance is not sorrow or contrition but commitment to total change, both in thought and behavior with respect to how we think and act.

The word "come" means to make room (a place) for another, and so to have place, receive. God has room for those who wish to repent. God gives space for this. He makes room for people like this. Figuratively, God opens his heart to a person who repents. He has room in His heart for this person. There is a place in His heart to welcome and receive those who repent.

Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. In the process of believing, repentance takes

place. When we believe in the person and work of Christ, our mind changes. Our life changes. A transformation takes place.

#### **Principle**

Jesus died on the cross for everyone.

#### **Application**

Jesus died for "all" (John 1:29; 3:16,17; 2 Corinthians 5:14,15,18,19; 1 John 2:1,2; Hebrews 2:9). There is enough blood shed by Jesus to wash anyone who will come to Him. We do not go to Hell because we are dishonest or immoral; we go to Hell because we reject God's only remedy for sin, the death of Jesus on the cross as a substitute for sin.

Sin is not maladjustment of your genes. It is not a matter of sickness but a matter of sin. That is not very pretty or popular but it is biblical.

"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matthew 9:13).

The goodness of God leads us to repent.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30).

The Bible does not teach universal salvation.