

2 Peter

Lesson 4 Chapter 3:1-18

Leader Guide

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Lesson 4

2 Peter 3:1-18

End Times, The Day of the Lord

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?
You ought to live holy and godly lives. 2 Peter 3:11

Prayers

Introduction

Peter closes his letter with a glimpse of the end days, a reminder that our days are numbered, so we should live with an eternal view and make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with God. This peace is only found by faith in Christ. Peter's closing and the entire letter are remarkably similar to Paul's letter to the Greek Thessalonians. Paul also reminded believers they should live with a view the Lord's coming was imminent.

Read 2 Peter 3:1-18, The Day of the Lord

^{2Pe 3:1} Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

^{2Pe 3:2} I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

^{2Pe 3:3} First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.

^{2Pe 3:4} They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

^{2Pe 3:5} But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

^{2Pe 3:6} By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

^{2Pe 3:7} By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

^{2Pe 3:8} But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

^{2Pe 3:9} The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

^{2Pe 3:10} But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

^{2Pe 3:11} Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives

^{2Pe 3:12} as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

^{2Pe 3:13} But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

^{2Pe 3:14} So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

^{2Pe 3:15} Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

^{2Pe 3:16} He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

^{2Pe 3:17} Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

^{2Pe 3:18} But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Discuss

1. What are Peter's purposes for his teaching on the last days in his second letter, verses 1-2, 11, 17-18?

Peter wants believers to stimulate their wholesome thinking – in contrast to the message of the false teachers to indulge their sinful nature.

The second thing Peter wanted is for believers to recall what they learned from the scriptures and Christ through the apostles.

2. Compare Peter's purpose for his teaching on the last days to Paul's in 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11.

^{1Th 4:13} Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

^{1Th 4:14} We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

^{1Th 4:15} According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

^{1Th 5:4} But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

^{1Th 5:5} You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

^{1Th 5:6} So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

^{1Th 5:7} For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

^{1Th 5:8} But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

^{1Th 5:9} For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

^{1Th 5:10} He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

^{1Th 5:11} Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing

Believers were concerned about their loved ones who died before the Lord's coming. Paul wanted them to be certain of their resurrection.

Paul wanted believers to live with the understanding their days on earth were short. They should live with self-control, faith, love, and hope to encourage and build each other up in the face of persecution and suffering.

3. What are the signs of the last days in verses 3 and 4?

Scoffing and mocking God that judgment at the end of days would come and living to satisfy evil desires

4. Verse 8-9 Why is God slow to bring judgment on the world?

God does not wish anyone to perish, but they should come to faith in Christ and be saved.

5. We believe God is waiting for the Lord's commission in Matthew 28:18-20 to be fulfilled.

^{Mt 28:18} Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

^{Mt 28:19} Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ^{Mt 28:20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- a. How do you see the Lord's commission being fulfilled?

The gospel is advancing globally at a rate not seen since the first century. The church body is becoming more diverse in ways we could not have imagined twenty to thirty years ago. In the Lutheran church, for example, countries with the largest Lutheran populations in 1990 were Germany, the United States, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway. By 2019, Germany, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Sweden, Indonesia, and India were the countries with the most Lutherans. Today, the United States and Canada have about the same percentage of Christian populations as Russia.

Regions with the highest percentage growth rate in Christianity are the Middle East and Asia. This is partly possible because higher growth rates are possible where the numbers are smaller, but this is not always the case. In China, for example, an estimated 60 to 100 million Christians worship in unregistered house churches, similar to the number of Evangelical Christians in the United States or the number of Americans worshipping on any given Sunday.

On the negative side regarding church decline, the largest declines in Christianity are in the United States and Europe. The United States ranks third among countries with the largest number of non-believers. Germany, France, and the United Kingdom now have about the same number of non-believers as North Korea.

- b. How are you personally involved?

Teach children and grandchildren to pray and tell them of the love of Christ

Tell neighbors of the love of Christ and be a good neighbor, generous and sensitive to their needs.

Through acts of charity. Serving in your local congregation

Live committed to the Great Commission, supporting missions and bible translation.

6. How will God destroy the earth, verses 10-12?

The end will come suddenly and unexpectedly. People will be carrying on the routine they normally do. The heavens will disappear with a roar, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare by fire.

7. What additional details does Paul provide on the last days in 1 Thessalonians

^{1Th 4:16} For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

^{1Th 4:17} After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

^{1Th 4:18} Therefore encourage each other with these words.

^{1Th 5:1} Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,

^{1Th 5:2} for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

^{1Th 5:3} While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

The end will come suddenly with the Lord's return, accompanied by the archangel's trumpet call and acclamation. The dead will rise, and believers who are alive will be taken up and meet the Lord in the sky.

8. What will come in place of the earth and heavens, verse 13?

God will create a new heaven and earth.

9. What additional details does John provide about the new heaven in his vision in Revelation 21:1-6?

^{Rev 21:1} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

^{Rev 21:2} I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

^{Rev 21:3} And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

^{Rev 21:4} He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

^{Rev 21:5} He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

^{Rev 21:6} He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

Believers will be in the Lord's presence and enjoy eternal life without death, mourning, crying, or pain.

10. Why did Peter think it was important for believers to understand the last days v 11-15?

Peter wanted believers to understand their lives were short and they should make every effort to live holy and godly lives.

11. What was happening to the gospel message immediately after the apostles recorded it in the letters verses 15-16?

Peter wrote that some of Paul's writings are hard to understand, so some people distorted the gospel's message. People do the same thing today with verses they don't agree with. Some issues that come to mind are Paul's stand against homosexuality, the role of women in ministry, or Jesus' declaration he was the only way to eternal life.

12. One thing is certain; the end will come. The end will be on the day of the Lord's coming or our death. We all desire to hear the Lord's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," so what remains on your bucket list before the end?

I desire to see my grandson mature in his faith, see family members come to Christ, and see Bible translation advance God's kingdom.

13. How would we live if we truly felt Christ was coming – SOON!

Even though I am now retired and have plenty of time to spend at my discretion, I find that most of my days are spent on things that will all pass away. If I truly lived with the expectation of Christ's imminent return, I would be more focused on things with eternal value; deepening relationships with others, service to others, charity, or how I can use my God-given gifts to advance his kingdom.

Closing Prayer