

Text: 2 Pt 3.11-13

We are coming to the end of 2 Peter.

A reminder: the theme is spiritual growth in light of the rise of false teachers and false teaching

As we come to the end, Peter is making personal applications to his readers. He wants them to grow in a certain direction.

Read 2 Pt 3.11-13

I've taken our title from v. 11,

What Sort of People Ought You to Be?

I've asked it as a question. One thing to notice in our Bible is that it isn't phrased as a question. The commentators say it is sort of an expression of surprise, even shock:

It is as if he is saying, 'what sort ought you be ... you need to ask!!'

No matter how we should take it, Peter spells it out once again for us. Because of the truth of God's second coming, we ought to be a certain kind of Christian.

Because of the arguments that surround eschatology, Christians can become weary of second coming passages.

In the Bible, though, they are often connected to admonition and application. We ought to live in light of the Lord's return. It is part of the Christian way of life, part of the "Christian mind."

I. A reminder of coming destruction (11a, 12b)

A. The final destruction of creation for man's sin (11a, see 10)

1. The heavens will pass away with a roar
2. The elements will be "loosed" (destroyed) with intense heat
3. The earth and its works will be burned up
4. *Since* all these things... heavens, elements, earth ... are to be "loosed" (destroyed)

The word translated "destroyed" here is the verb beginning Gk students learn as they begin to learn the verb system:
 λυω (*luō* — "loo-oh")

- Meaning, to loose, to destroy

So, to untie a sandal – “to loose the bonds;” or “to loose the bonds of matrimony,” *i.e.*, “to divorce” or *destroy the marriage*; or “to loose the bonds of laws,” *i.e.*, “to destroy the legal system”

Here we are talking about the destruction of the universe, the loosing of the very elements in the bonds that hold them together.

B. The day of God will bring about this destruction (12b)

1. The imagery is repeated

- a. “heavens loosed by burning”
- b. “elements melted with intense heat”

2. The day of God brings this about

- a. Unusual term, usually “day of the Lord”
- b. Essentially refers to the same thing

Rev 16.14, battle of Armageddon, called “the day of God” — it occurs at the end of the Tribulation, normally called “the day of the Lord”

We need to note how often this image is repeated here: Verse 7, verse 10, verse 11, verse 12

Remember the mockers in their mocking (the false teachers) “Where is the sign of his coming?”

The repetition is emphatic: this day is coming *by the word of the Lord*.

This means something for us.

II. An application for the Christian walk (11b-12a)

A. Conduct: “holy conduct and godliness”

1. Holy conduct: separate from sin and the world, alive to God

“If the grace you possess does not make you honest, God have mercy on you and take such grace away from you. If you have a kind of grace that does not keep you chaste and make your behavior decent, if you have a sort of grace that lets you cheat and lie, that allows you to take undue advantage in trade, away with such grace. It is the grace of the devil, not the grace of God, and may you be saved from it. If our religion does not make us moral, it is a millstone about our necks to destroy us. If you have not reached morality, how can you dare to talk about holiness, which is a far higher and loftier thing? The best morality in the world will not prove a man to be a Christian, but if a man does not have morality, it proves that he is not a child of God.”¹

2. Godliness: “God-likeness” – piety and behaviour that honours and pleases God

a. A theme of Peter: 1.3, 6-7

b. Godliness is a virtue we should add to (or supply, develop in) our faith (1.6-7)

c. God gives us everything pertaining to “life and godliness” through his divine power

We don’t need anything more to develop godliness: in our salvation, we’ve already got everything we need.

However, the word of promise gives us natural motivation: the Lord is coming, and we need to focus, or concentrate on it

¹ Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 2 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 2 Pt 3.11.

B. Concentration: “the day of God”

1. We have anticipation of the coming end, we are looking for it

In the Papyrii, there is a line in a letter saying “many times in the day we expect you to come to us”²

- a. Root means “to watch, to notice”
- b. Add a preposition: “to” or “towards”
- c. Basically the idea of looking ahead

Our anticipation is the coming Day of God, which includes judgement (as v. 12) *and* promise (as v. 13)

2. We are “hastening” the day of God

- a. A little question here – a bit of a strange expression

How can we “hasten” the day of God? If we live more godly lives, will it come sooner?

- b. The word also means “earnestly desiring”
- c. In a sense, with the Christian mindset, we are “hastening towards” that day with our hearts: we desire it

III. A promise of perfect renewal and righteousness (13)

A. Our focus is not on destruction but promise

1. The promise of a new heavens and a new earth

- a. Two Gk words for “new”
 - 1) *Neos*, as in “brand new”
 - 2) *Kainos*, as in “fresh, renewed”

- b. The new heaven and the new earth are completely renovated

2. Possibly the “destruction” is a purification, *i.e.*, universe not completely destroyed but purified

3. Nevertheless, our focus is on the new not the old

² J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930).

B. The chief aspect of the new is that in the new heaven and new earth, righteousness (personified here) has a permanent home

“In [this future world] the moral attribute of ‘righteousness’ is no longer a wanderer and a guest, but ‘dwells’ securely in her own eternal home.”³

1. Righteousness doesn’t show up occasionally, fitfully, as believers struggle with their old man
2. Righteousness lives there ... no more sin, no more sorrow

Conclusion:

What Sort of People Ought You to Be?

God’s people, that’s who you ought to be.

³ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, S.C: Bob Jones University Press, 1989), 165–66.