

A Study of The Epistle of 2nd Peter
Theme: "Grow in Grace and Knowledge"

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Lesson: 17 Chapter 3:1-7 Date: 11-21-21

2 PETER 3:3-7

3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.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."⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and

BIBLE TEXT and STUDY NOTES

(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, (2) that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of **the Lord and Savior** through your apostles.
(Prophets = Old Testament; Apostles = New Testament; Lk 1:70; Ac 3:21; 1 Cor 10:14; Eph 4:11)

(3) knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. (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."
(Is 5:19; Jer 17:15; Ezek 11:3; 12:22,27; Mal 2:17; Mt 24:48; Mk 10:6; Lk 17:30; 1 Th 2:19; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 13:7; Jude 17, 18)

(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.
(Gen 1:1-10; 7:11,21,22; Ps 24:2; 33:6; 136:6; Prov 26:11; Mt 24:39; Jn 1:3; Heb 1:1-3; 11:3)

(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.
(Zeph 1:18; Mal 4:1; Mt 10:15; 2 Th 1:7-9)

LUTHER'S WORKS – VOLUME 30

"Here St. Peter now comes to us again and warns us in this epistle to be prepared and to expect **the Last Day** every moment. In the first place he states that he has not written this epistle for the purpose of laying the foundation of faith. This he did previously. No, here it is his purpose to arouse the people, to remind them, and to urge and impel them not to neglect their faith and to remain in their sincere mind and in their understanding of **what a true Christian life is**. For, as we have often said, the office of preachers is not confined to teaching. In addition to this, they must always exhort and urge. For since our flesh and blood always clings to us, the **Word of God** must be awake in us, lest we give way to the flesh instead of fighting against it and being more than a match for it.

...before **the Last Day** they will fall into such error that they will deny the existence of God and ridicule everything that is preached about **Christ and the Last Day**. This is true... But one should not understand this to mean that the whole world will say and believe such things. The majority, however, will do so. For today this is already evident, and it will gain more ground when **the Gospel** is more widely disseminated among the people. Then the people will bestir themselves well, and many hearts that are now concealed and are not evident will become more vocal. Furthermore, the number of those who do not believe that **the Last Day** will come has always been rather large.

... Furthermore, now that **the Last Day** is at the door, such people must come forth, in order that **Christ's words** in Matt. 24:37–39 may be fulfilled. "As were the days of Noah," He says, "so will **be the coming of the Son of Man**. For as in those days before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the Flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of **the Son of Man**."

Likewise: “**The Son of Man** is coming at an hour you do not expect” (v. 44). Likewise in Luke 21:34–35: “**That Day** will come like a snare upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.” And in Luke 17:24 we read: “As the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will **the Son of Man be in His Day.**” That is, He will appear swiftly, unexpectedly, and suddenly, when the world will be living in the greatest smugness and will be making light of **God’s Word.**

Therefore the nearness of **the Last Day** will be betokened when people live just as they please, following all their passions, and when questions like “Where is the promise of **His coming?**” will be heard among them. The world has been standing for such a long time and has always remained. Now shall things finally change? Thus Peter warns us, to keep us from worrying and to give us a sure sign that **the Day** will come soon. He continues:

He says that such people do not go to the trouble of reading **Scripture** and deliberately refuse to consider and realize that the same thing happened long ago. When Noah built the ark, the earth, “formed out of water and by means of water,” was destroyed by water. Indeed, the people were so smug and sure that they thought there was no urgency at all. Nevertheless, they were all destroyed by water. It is as if he were saying: If **God** destroyed the world with water at that time, and proved with an example that He is able to sink it, how much more likely He is to do so today, since He has made this promise!

Here St. Peter speaks quite sagaciously about creation. In times past heaven and earth were also firm; they were formed out of water and existed in water through **the Word of God.** Heaven and earth have a beginning. They have not had an eternal existence. Heaven is formed out of water and has been water above and below. But the earth has been formed in water and has existed in water, as Moses describes it. Here St. Peter refers to Moses.

All this is preserved through **the Word of God,** just as it was also formed through the **Word of God.** For it is not the nature of heaven and earth to exist in this way. Therefore if **God** did not keep it this way, everything would soon collapse and perish in the water. For **God** spoke a powerful word when He said (Gen. 1:9): “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; that is, the waters must move aside and make way, in order that the earth, on which one can dwell, may come forth. Otherwise the water would naturally flood the earth. Therefore this is one of the greatest miracles **God** still does today.

Thus St. Peter now wants to say that the scoffers are so wanton and hardened that they refuse to honor the **Holy Spirit** by reading how **God** preserves the earth in the water. From this they would become aware that everything rests in **the hand of God.** Consequently, since **God** drowned the earth at that time, He will do this for us again. For that example should surely persuade us that since He did not lie then, He will not lie today either.

At that time, when **God** destroyed the world with the Flood, the water came down from above, up from below, and from all sides. Consequently, nothing but water was visible; and the earth, in conformity with its nature, had to be submerged in the water. But now **God** has promised that He will never again destroy the world with water, and as a sign of this He placed the rainbow in the heavens. Now, therefore, **God** will let the world be consumed and perish only by fire, so that there will be nothing but fire, just as at that time there was nothing but water.

St. Paul also speaks of this in 2 Thess. 1:7 f.: “When **the Lord Jesus** is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, etc.” Likewise in 1 Cor. 3:13: “Each man’s work will become manifest; for the **Day of the Lord** will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire.” Thus when **the Last Day** breaks all of a sudden, in one moment there will be nothing but fire. Everything in heaven and on earth will be reduced to powder and ashes. Everything must be changed by fire, just as the water changed everything at the time of the Flood. Because **God** let what took place at that time be a sign, therefore the fire shall be the sign that He will not lie.”

LIFE APPLICATION

Why do we daily need a stirring up of our sincere minds, by way of a reminder of these matters?