

The Return of the King Revelation 6-19

How to Live a Life of Pleasing God In a Doomed & Dying World

2 Peter 3:1-10

Last week we began looking at the Return of the King. What a scene of devastation and horror awaits the lost who continued to refuse to repent. We did a Jet Tour through:

God's Description of the End of Days

Then we ended at 2 Peter 3. On the way back to 2 Peter, stop and look with me at 1 Peter 1. To understand 2 Peter 3, we need some perspective.

Peter is in the midst of great persecution, writing to a group of local churches facing fiery trials. Peter the Apostle, has reached the end of his public ministry; and he is being hunted down by the Emperor Nero, as the most visible of Christ's followers. Peter was a big target.

We know that Peter chose one of the most difficult places to minister. Here in 1 Peter 1 we find the address of those that he has served. They were the saints in Roman Asia, the most secular, emperor-worshipping, hostile to the Gospel territory in the Roman Empire. Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia & Bithynia constitute the northern two-thirds of Roman Asia, or modern day Turkey.

Peter spends the five chapters of 1 Peter to those early believers, encouraging them to stay true to Christ as they endured persecutions, as well as all the challenges of living out their faith in the daily life in the Roman Empire.

Then in his last letter, he uses 2 Peter to get them ready for the reality of death (2 Peter 1); the deception of false teachers (2 Peter 2); and the End of Days (2 Peter 3).

What a lineup of Biblical doctrine he sent them; and, what an amazing pair of Epistles for believers to study! Now look with me at 2 Peter 3.

God's Word is History Pre-Written

God has already written down the details of how everything of the world we know will

end. The end is by the fire of God.

The end is God reconstituting the universe from the atomic particle level to the galaxy cluster level: all are burned, refined, and remade into the Universe of God's creation.

Open with me to 2 Peter 3:1-10 and note these truths given by God, as we stand and listen to God tell us what will happen in the future.

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 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, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 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." 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, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 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. 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. 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. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

2 Peter 3 is our opportunity to be:

Tutored in History by Almighty God

If you've ever been trained by a master musician, it is on your resume for life.
If coached by a living sport's legend, we talk about it for life.
Here, the Almighty God of the Universe tutors us on history.

Isn't it thrilling to get some guidance from God on how to understand history? Here in this final chapter of his epistles, Peter is guided into what may be the most important explanation of human history in all of God's Word.

Peter first gives us a **framework for interpreting all of history** (v. 1-10). Then Peter gives us a **challenge for living all of our life** (v. 11-18). Today we are going to start with the framework. I call these:

Three Fixed Reference Points to Understand God's Plan

There are three points of history in verses 5,6, and 7, that form a framework for understanding God's Word as well as God's Plan. God affirms as factual, events in the past that are very crucial for anyone who loves the Lord and wants to serve the Lord. Here they are:

1. **Fixed Point-1-There was a Genesis-described, Literal Creation of the Universe by the Hand of God through Christ:** God the Son, Jesus Christ created everything from nothing, just like it says in His Word. v. 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.

Fixed Point-1-There was a Genesis-described, Literal Creation of the Universe by God the Son.

2. **Fixed Point-2-There was a Genesis-described, Literal Flood that destroyed the entire world:** God destroyed the world with water, as a judgment on sinful humanity, by flooding the entire earth, saving only Noah and those associated with his ark. v. 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

Fixed Point-2-There was a Genesis-described, Literal Flood that destroyed the entire world.

3. **Fixed Point-3-There will be a Revelation-described, fire-of-God-induced end of days for humanity:** God will destroy the world, the final time, with fire. v. 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.

Fixed Point-3-There will be a Revelation-described, fire-of-God-induced end of days for humanity.

That should change how we look at everything if we believe God. Those three are life-altering truths. But sadly most people do not believe what God has said, and thus have lost their way, and are drifting through life without God's fixed reference points.

These set points in history are to help each of us find our way, according to God. If we would look back at the Flood we would know God means business. The flood came from the Creator who made everything from nothing. That same God is warning of a fiery end to everything as His judgment on humanity's sinfulness. Now, back to Peter's intention in this chapter:

We Have a Trustworthy Guide for Pleasing God in a Wicked World

Now join me as we walk back through II Peter 3. We need to pause between each verse and think about what the implications are from God. First, the Lord tells us what do when you find yourself in a hostile, secular, temptation-filled world that denies their Maker!

Stir up Your Mind by Remembering God

v. 1 "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder)".

First Peter reminds them of the powerful ways God's Word impacts our minds:

- ***God's Word can stir our minds to respond to God*** as v. 1 says, and nothing else can do that.
- ***God's Word can heal our stressed minds***, as Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple", and nothing else can do that either.
- ***God's Word can bring life and hope to our souls***, as Psalm 119:25 says, "My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word", and nothing else can do that either.

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **Stir up Your Mind by Remembering God in v. 1**. Next, Peter says:

TRUST THE WORD

v. 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."

The second truth Peter gives them is sometimes old to us. But when you live in a hostile world, and you feel strong temptations breathing down your neck all day long, it is good to remember to trust the Word as from God as v. 2 says.

We trust the Bible, because it is the Word of God. But what does it mean to be the Word of God? Modern theologian John Frame, in *Salvation Belongs To The Lord*, defines the word of God as "God's powerful, authoritative self-expression."

God's word is amazingly powerful because it doesn't just communicate. God's Word also creates and controls. Frame goes on to say, "the word is the very presence of God among us, the place where God dwells. So you cannot separate the word of God from God himself."

Did you catch that? Peter is reminding us that: *You cannot separate the word of God from God himself*. God's Word reveals God.

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **TRUST THE WORD**. Next, Peter says:

EXPECT THE SCOFFERS

v. 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

In the days of Noah before the Flood, they were eating and drinking; they were marrying and giving in marriage. Noah was warning the people while he built the ark (2 Pet. 2:5), but the people ignored his preaching. The ark, its builder, and his message were all absurd, irrelevant, and to be ignored.

The idea of a coming Flood was laughable to people who didn't even know what rain was. God set up a misting system in the Creation of the Garden, that kept the Earth like a tropical paradise. Since no one ever saw God's Wrath in judgment it seemed impossible. So life's everyday pleasures prevailed. The routines of life went on until the rain started to fall.

"The people were so untouched by God's truth that they did not understand their perilous situation until the flood came and took them all away into a godless eternity. Flood translates *kataklysmos*, which means deluge or washing away, and is the term from which the English *cataclysm* is derived. Only after it was too late did the people of that generation understand their tragic destiny."

The times in which Noah grew up were among the most evil and corrupt in history. "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). If any man had reason to regret the time in which he lived it was Noah. But he did not complain

about when he was born, his lot in life, or his calling. He obeyed as he was and where he was.

Noah's job was to warn the people of his time that God would soon judge them because of their wickedness and unbelief. They had had the same opportunity to know God and His will as had Noah. The difference between Noah and everyone around him was not a difference in the amount of light but a difference in response to it.¹

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **EXPECT THE SCOFFERS**. Next, Peter says:

RESIST THE LIE

v. 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."

Satan's Gospel plan has five doctrines, which are: uniformitarianism, evolutionism, an impersonal god, animal ancestry, and sheer chance.

God's Truth has five absolutely opposite doctrines, which are: God has intervened cataclysmically, God is the author of creation, God Almighty is personally-knowable God, humans are made in the image of God, and the Universe is filled with the creative signature of purposeful design.

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **RESIST THE LIE**. Next, Peter says:

AFFIRM THE CREATOR

v. 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,

Remember how important God views His role as The Creator. In Revelation 14 when the world is spiraling into the final holocaust, God sends an angelic herald to loudly proclaim the "everlasting" as God calls it, message of salvation. Listen to the content in Revelation 14:6-7 (NKJV):

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of

¹MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983. [213 words]

His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **AFFIRM THE CREATOR**. Next, Peter says:

REMEMBER THE JUDGE

v. 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

Against the backdrop of the pre-flood world’s wickedness, cruelty, and darkness, Noah’s walk and his words shone with glistening condemnation. Black always looks blacker when white is placed right beside it. Our grace-energized lives of righteousness are always a rebuke the lost, even if we never speak.

Peter explained that in his first epistle when he said, “in regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*.” (1 Peter 4:4, NKJV)

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **REMEMBER THE JUDGE**. Next, Peter says:

ESCAPE THE FIRE

v. 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.

The most chilling lesson from the Flood is that most people haven’t repented of their independence of God since then, nor will they, right up to His return in fiery indignation. Jesus reminds us:

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matt. 24:37–39, NKJV).

Think of how similar our world is to Noah’s: they rejected Noah’s warning, like they do ours. Murder, blasphemy, idolatry, immorality, violence, and demon-interest were widespread then, like they are today. Very few, (just eight) were true believers in Noah’s day, the same is true today, as Jesus said, He will say to many professing Christians at the judgment to depart from Him (Mat. 7:24-27).

So Peter says to live a life of pleasing God in a doomed & dying world: **ESCAPE THE FIRE.** Finally, Peter says:

SEEK THE SAVIOR

v. 8-9 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. 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.

Think of the sheer terror those who saw the ark starting to float away felt as the waters rose and all hope of escape was gone. The same terror awaits all who neglect the message of salvation and careen headlong into a hopeless, Christless eternity each day.

Both groups immediately understood the truth of God's warnings as they became conscious of the finality of their rejection in their lifetime, of the only offer of salvation they will ever get.

The ark will forever symbolize many of God's plan of salvation. The Hebrew word for pitch, for example, has the same root (*kaphar*) as that used for atonement. Just as the pitch kept the waters of judgment from entering the ark, so applying Christ's atoning blood removes judgment from the sinner.

The ark is a beautiful picture of the salvation offered in Jesus Christ.

1. The ark was more than large enough to save all the animals needed to perpetuate each species.
2. The ark had plenty of room for every person who responded to God's offer for safety in Noah's long-repeated warning of impending doom.
3. The ark only saved eight people because only eight desired to be saved on God's terms. God does not wish "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
4. The ark reminds us that God is unchanging. His will in Peter's time, and Noah's time, is the same today.
5. The ark declares that everyone who perished in the Flood did so because they rejected God's only way of salvation.

Christ's blood is sufficient to atone for all the sins ever committed since the Fall. The reason more people are not saved before they die is simply because they are the only ones who *want* to be saved. Jesus absolutely assured us that no one who comes to Him will ever

be cast out (John 6:37).

Isn't it thrilling to get some guidance from God on how to understand history? Here in this final chapter of his epistles, Peter is guided into what may be the most important explanation of human history in all of God's Word. This morning Peter shares in 2 Peter 3:1-9, the first half of **How to Live a Life of Pleasing God In a Doomed & Dying World**.

Are you listening and responding to God? **#330 Come every soul by sin oppressed...**