



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N36 September 8, 2024

PEOPLE GET READY

"Living with the End in Mind"

2 Peter 3:3-14

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Eternity

I believe there is a heaven and a hell, and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom.

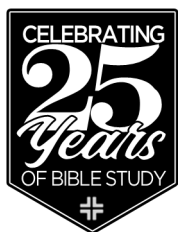
"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

John 14:1-3



Q?

What should believers in the last days remember?



While Paul teaches that believers who die, that is "are away from the body," are in heaven, that is, "at home with the Lord" (2Co 5:8), heaven is not where believers will spend eternity. Heaven is where believers go to await the resurrection of their physical bodies, something that happens in connection with the return of Christ. Pastor Roger Sappington explains this clearly in his well-written article entitled, "5 Surprising Facts about Heaven" (nextstepdisciple.org/article/5-surprising-facts-about-heaven). Here are his five surprising facts: 1) Right now, Heaven is in its embryonic state; 2) Heaven will eventually be on earth; 3) God will have work for us to do; 4) God will make us like superheroes for his glory; 5) Heaven will be a place of continual discovery. You will want to read his full article.

Here is what he writes about the second surprising fact, the fact that believers will spend eternity on a new earth:

"I know what you're thinking – the 1987 Belinda Carlisle song got it right. Well, kinda. Heaven will be on earth, but not in the arms of another person (unless we're talking about Jesus).

"After the resurrection, there will be a great judgment as God separates those according to what they have done with him in their time on earth (Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 25:31-46). Romans 2:6-8 says, 'He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.' The eternal life of those God deems righteous by their faith in Christ will be lived out on a New Earth that is united with the New Heavens.

"This understanding of eternity – as life with God on the New Earth – was prophesied multiple times by Isaiah (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22), but was more clearly described by the New Testament writers. Consider these two passages

specifically:

"2 Peter 3:10-13 > 'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.'

"Revelation 21:1-5 > 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"

"These passages demonstrate that the resurrection experience of Christ-followers will be in a sanctified body on a physical earth where 'righteousness dwells.' Though the Lord is present in the intermediate state of heaven now, the descriptions of the New Earth lead us to believe that he is even more accessible/experiential there. In the New Earth, the Lord is enthroned over his people, ruling with love, justice, and righteousness. There is shalom across the entire creation as the 'former things' (characterized by sin and rebellion) have passed away."

Read 2 Peter 3:3-14

3 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

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. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

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 done in it will be laid bare.

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 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. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

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.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "last days" in v. 3.
- Circle "scoffers" in v. 3.
- Circle "this coming" in v. 4.
- Circle "ancestors" in v. 4.
- Highlight v. 4b.
- Bracket "out of water and by water" in v. 5.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in vv. 5, 8, 9, 10, 13.
- Underline "heavens" in vv. 5, 7, 10, 12, 13 ("heaven").
- Double underline "earth" in vv. 5, 7, 10, 13.
- Circle "world" in v. 6.
- Circle "fire" in vv. 7, 10.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 8.
- Bracket "day of the Lord" in v. 10 and "day of God" in v. 12.
- Circle "laid bare" in v. 10.
- Circle "elements" in v. 12.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. *When* do scoffers come, *what* do they deny, and *why* do they deny it?
2. To debunk *why* they deny it, Peter points out what scoffers deliberately forget. What *two* things (vv. 5-6) do they deliberately forget?
3. Firey judgment is coming on “the present heavens and earth.” Explain why you think that is either *planet earth* or the *whole universe*.
4. Explain the *comparison* in verse 8.
5. Explain *why* the Lord has not yet returned according to Peter.
6. The “day of the Lord” – what day is that?
7. Explain the *comparison* in verse 10.
8. Describe the kind of people Christians ought to be in light of the fact that “the heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare” (v. 10).
9. Believers are *looking forward* to a new heaven and a new earth (v. 13) – the old ones will either be *renewed* or *replaced*. Why so?
10. **Discussion:** Peter indicates that believers can *speed the coming* of the “day of God” (v. 12). *How* so? Talk about it.

Commentary On The Text

2 Peter 3:3-14 is divided into five paragraphs in the NIV, four in the ESV, and three in the NET. The following exposition will follow the paragraph divisions in the NET. The first paragraph, verses 3-7, warns against the coming of scoffers in the last days. And since the last days arrived with the coming of Jesus, believers then and believers now are living in the last days, which means scoffers continue to be a bane on the body of Christ. The scoffers whom Peter warns against (cf. chap. 2) denied the return of Jesus. They reasoned that he isn't coming because he hasn't come . . . yet. Everything continues as it has from the beginning—which assumes that God is not involved in and doesn't care about the daily lives of people. One commentator explains: "One could hardly find a better summary anywhere of the philosophy of naturalism, which so thoroughly permeates contemporary western civilization, than what this verse contains. Peter referred to the mockers' denial of supernaturalism and their assertion of uniformitarianism . . . They assumed that God does not intervene in the world" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Peter," 2024 ed., 64, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2peter.pdf).

Peter debunks their argument by pointing to two occasions on which God did intervene in the world—two occasions the scoffers choose to deliberately ignore. On the first occasion, he created it. And on the second, he destroyed it. The creation of the world as we know it (Ge 1-2) involved his word and water. And the destruction of that world (Ge 6) also involved his word and water. One commentator clarifies the meaning of Peter's difficult to understand words: "the earth was formed out of water and by water" (v. 5). "Peter refers, of course, to the watery chaos (Gn. 1:2-6) out of which the world was formed at God's repeated word, 'Let there be . . .'. It was from water that the earth emerged; it was *with* (i.e., by means of) *water* (rain, etc.) that life on earth was sustained; and yet this same water engulfed it, when God's word of judgment went forth at the flood" (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*, TNTC, 141). Peter goes on to say that the present world of human beings is destined to be judged and destroyed like the antediluvian world, but by fire rather than water.

The second paragraph, verses 8-13, is chock-full of information regarding the day of the Lord and instruction regarding how believers ought to live given it "will come like a thief" (v. 10). Peter opens in vers-

es 8-10 by explaining why the Lord has not come yet, and it's not because he isn't coming. It's because what seems like a long time humanly speaking—a thousand years, for example—is but a short moment in time for God, who is from everlasting to everlasting (Ne 9:5; Ps 90:2). What's more, God is patient, "not wanting any to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (v. 9). That said, the day of the Lord will surely come "like a thief" (v. 10), that is, unexpectedly. Paul writes: "The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 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" (1Th 5:2-3). On the meaning of the day of the Lord, one commentator writes: "The phrase 'the day of the Lord' refers to a specific time yet future, as it is used elsewhere in Scripture. This 'day' will begin when Antichrist makes a covenant with Israel, and it will conclude with the burning up of the present heavens and earth (Dan. 9:27; 2 Pet. 3:12; et al.)" (Constable, 71). The climax of the day of the Lord will see the heavens disappear with a roar, the elements destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it laid bare prior to the appearance of a new heaven and new earth. The sequence suggests that these events will take place following the judgment of the dead before the great white throne described in Revelation 20:11-15. Peter's words leave open the question as to whether the present heaven and earth will be *renewed* (perhaps in the way the preexistent formless and empty earth was transformed into the earth as we know it in Genesis 1) or *replaced* by a newly created heaven and earth—I incline to the former.

Peter closes in verses 11-14 by explaining the practical implications of his eschatology. In a nutshell, people who look forward to the day of God ought to "live holy and godly lives" (v. 11). They ought to live in obedience to the word of God so as to "speed its coming" (v. 12). Twice he refers to what believers are looking forward to, namely, "a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (v. 13). He concludes: "So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him" (v. 14).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 3 *last days* “The ‘last days’ are the days that come between the first coming of the Messiah and his second coming” (Edwin A. Blum, “2 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 284). “With the coming of Jesus the last chapter of human history had opened, though it was not yet completed. In between the two advents stretches the last time, the time of grace, the time, too, of opposition” (Michael Green, *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude*, TNTC, 137).

v. 3 *scoffers* Cf. Ac 20:29-30; 1Ti 4:1; 1Jn 2:18. “The ‘scoffers’ are the false teachers of chapter 2 who deny a future eschatology” (Blum, 284). “The false teachers are described by a pleonastic Hebraism, ‘scoffers . . . with scoffing’ (RSV; Jude 18 omits the ‘with scoffing’). These men mock at the parousia and at the same time ‘live self-indulgent lives’ (NEB). Cynicism and self-indulgence regularly go together” (Green, 138) — cf. “scoffers will come in the last days *with scoffing*” (ESV).

v. 4 *this coming* “By putting ‘coming’ in quotation marks and adding the word ‘this,’ the NIV rightly suggests that the word has a special reference here. The Greek word is *parousia*, used throughout the New Testament as a technical term referring to the ‘coming’ of Christ in the last day (see notes on 1:16)” (Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Peter and Jude*, 166).

v. 4 *ancestors* Cf. “fathers” (ESV, NASB1995, NKJV). “‘The fathers’ that Peter mentioned are probably physical forefathers, more likely the Old Testament patriarchs, rather than the first generation of Christians. This is the normal use of the word in the New Testament” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 2 Peter,” 2024 ed., 65, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/2peter.pdf).

v. 4b *everything goes on . . .* “The scoffers supported their skepticism that God would break decisively into history at the return of Christ, by emphasizing the *immutability* of the world” (Green, 139, italics added). “The argument of the false teachers is essentially a naturalistic one — a kind of uniformitarianism that rules out any divine intervention in history” (Blum, 285).

v. 6 *world* I.e., the world of human beings, the inhabited and organized human dimension of life on earth. “**The world** (*kosmos*) refers to inhabitants, since the earth itself was not destroyed in the Flood” (Kenneth O. Gangel, “2 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 876). “The globe was not destroyed, only its inhabitants and its ordered form” (Blum, 285). “There is nothing here to suggest that the whole earth was destroyed by the flood, let alone the heavens as well” (Green, 142).

v. 7 *heavens and earth* The extended passage contains repeated reference to the present “heavens and earth.” Some take these to refer to the *universe*, others to the *earth* and its *firmament*, i.e., heavens or sky (Ge 1:6-8). Peter’s reference to the destruction of the “world” and his focus on the future judgment and destruction of the ungodly, suggest that Peter may have planet earth rather than the whole universe in mind. However, his reference to “a new heaven and a new earth,” which will presumably endure, suggests he may have the whole universe in mind.

v. 7 *fire* “God has given orders that ‘the present heavens and earth’ (vv. 5-6) will experience another judgment yet future. Then God will, ‘by His word,’ destroy them by ‘fire’ rather than by water (cf. vv. 10, 12). This will evidently take place after the Great White Throne judgment and before the creation of the new heavens and new earth (cf. Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1). The world is presently ‘reserved for fire’ in the sense that this is its inevitable destiny (cf. Deut. 32:22; Isa. 34:4 LXX; 66:15-16; Zeph. 1:18; Mal. 4:1)” (Constable, 66-67). “Probably both water and the word are to be understood as the agents for destroying the former world (v.6), as the word and fire will be the destructive agents in the future (v.7)” (Blum, 285).

v. 8 *like* Cf. Ps 90:4. “The point of this verse in Psalms is that God, being eternal, does not experience time as we do. What seems like long ages to us is a mere blip in time to him” (Moo, 186). “God’s relationship to time is different from ours since He is eternal, but this does not mean that eternity will be timeless. Eternity is endless time. The common biblical phrase ‘forever and ever’ is another way of saying ‘time without end’” (Constable, 67).

v. 10 *heavens* “First, *the heavens* (i.e., the sky, thought of as an envelope about the world) *will disappear with a roar*” (Green, 150). “Roar” is an onomatopoeic word that can refer to the crackle of flames.

vv. 10, 12 *elements* “Secondly, the physical *elements* (*stoicheia*) will be destroyed by fire (*luthēsetai*). The *stoicheia* could mean the physical elements of earth, air, fire and water, out of which all things were thought to be composed” (Green, 151).

v. 10 *laid bare* “Thirdly, Peter anticipates the disappearance (*aphanisthēsontai*), the burning up (*katakaēsetai*), or best the disclosure, the laying bare (*heurethēsetai*) of the earth and all its works. The latter may mean either its fine buildings or the deeds of men” (Green, 151).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Since we know that heaven and earth as we know it will be destroyed by fire, make every effort to live a holy and godly life as you look forward to a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I like having things to look forward to – trips, concerts, special events. Even something as small as a special date night with my husband fills me with anticipation. But at the same time, waiting for the very things I’m looking forward to just about undoes me. “Hurry up and wait” is a real problem for me. I know it’s coming. I’m ridiculously excited about it. But the waiting tests my patience and my character. It makes me wonder if what I’m waiting for is real or if I created something imaginary. Instead of looking forward to my big shindig, I get grumpy in the process and have even been known to sabotage the whole experience with my doubt and anxiety. In our passage this week, Peter addresses early Christians and tells them to hurry up and wait on the Lord. He reminds them that Jesus is coming. He encourages them to ignore the scoffers who are planting seeds of doubt. He entreats them to live a godly and holy life in the waiting. I feel like we all need to be reminded of these principles. There are days when I’m filled with wonder and awe as I imagine the return of Christ. And there are days, especially when life gets difficult or challenging, that I just want Jesus to come that very moment. I find myself crying out, “How long, Lord? Jesus, come now!” And maybe that’s why. Maybe Jesus is helping us practice godly patience using earthly circumstances. What are you waiting for right now? How are you discipling your kids in this process? We’re praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 2 Peter 3:3-14

1. What will scoffers say in the last days?
2. According to verse 11, how should believers live their lives?
3. What promise of God’s do we have to look forward to?

What Do You Think?

Why does Peter compare the day of the Lord to a thief?

What Do You Do?

Put a whole raw egg into a cup and cover with white vinegar. Practice patience as you wait for 24 hours. What happens to the egg? What would have happened if you didn’t wait and tried to bounce the egg?

CORE COMPETENCY: Eternity

I believe in heaven and hell and that one day Jesus will come again.

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 5:3-4

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week’s verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.