

2 PETER – PASSING ON THE TRADITION

CHAPTER 3 – WAITING FOR JUDGMENT



A DIFFICULT LITTLE LETTER

- One of the most controversial letters in the NT
- Both the content & historical context have raised many questions
- Greek very different to I Peter
- Not quoted until 3rd Century AD
- Debate about authorship
- One of the last books accepted into the canon
- Chapter 2 very similar to Jude – who copied who?
- References to Jewish legends
- Speaking of Paul's letters as if they are already recognised as Scripture

THE AUTHOR

- Two basic ideas about how it was written:
- Directly by Peter
 - Whilst in prison in Rome – shortly before he was martyred
 - Around 64-68 AD
- Indirectly by Peter
 - By a disciple after his death – using Peter's words & ideas
 - Unknown date, possibly after 90's AD



THE AUDIENCE



- Written to the same Churches as I Peter
 - In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia
- Churches facing persecution from outside
- Churches facing heresy from inside
- Mostly Gentile Christians – but who are familiar with Jewish writings & legends

THE SOURCE & FRUIT OF TRUTH

- The letter highlights the source of the truth – what was revealed in Christ & seen by the Apostles & handed on to the Church
- It contrasts this with the source of the heresy – what is “revealed” in Jewish myths, legends, and false writings
- The letter focuses on the fruit of the truth – holiness & Godly lives
- It contrasts this with fruit of the heresy – immoral lives & rebelling against authority

THE SOURCE & FRUIT OF TRUTH

- Makes this a very relevant letter for today, as culture wrestles with the question “what is truth?”
- As we talk about “alternative facts” or “post truth”.
- 2 Peter points us to look at the source and the fruit of truth.
 - Where did it come from?
 - What is its fruit?

PASSING ON TRADITION & LIVING GODLY LIVES

- Chapter 1: Passing on Tradition – from the Apostles
 - Living Godly Lives
- Chapter 2: Standing against Heresy – from the False Teachers
 - Living Ungodly Lives
- Chapter 3: Waiting for Judgment – from God
 - Living Godly Lives

WAITING FOR JUDGMENT – WHAT JUDGMENT?

- Just been talking about God judging the False Teachers
 - God has judged in the past & will do again in the future
 - God will also rescue the righteous in the midst of that judgment
- Makes sense at first glance
 - God will judge
 - Scoffers say “when will he judge? Everything is carrying on like normal!”
- But the language Peter uses expands this judgment to more than just the False Teachers

THE DAY...

- Peter uses 4 terms when speaking of judgment
 1. Promise of his coming/presence
 2. Day of judgment
 3. Day of the Lord
 4. Day of God
- Language similar to the Prophets
- The Day of YHWH (Day of the LORD)
- YHWH's great acts of salvation/judgment in history
 - Exodus, Fall of Israel, Fall of Judah, Exile, Return, Maccabean revolt, Messiah's Kingdom
- YHWH's great acts of salvation/judgment at the end of history
 - Judgment of all nations
 - Salvation of the righteous

THE DAY...

- Always used as a call to holiness for God's people
 - Loyal remnant – stand firm, live in faith
 - Disobedient – repent & return to God
- The future predictions are a part of this call
 - Stand firm – in the future you will be rescued
 - Repent – or in the future you will be judged
- New Testament writers spoke of Jesus' coming in the same way
 - What type of Day? – In history or at the end of history?

THE COMING OF CHRIST & THE EARLY CHURCH

- Many promises said “soon”
- Expectation that Jesus would come soon within the Apostle’s lifetime
- Constantly on the watch
- NT writers speak of the second coming as if it is imminent
- Many believed would happen before John’s death (Jn. 21:20-23)
- Early Christians (including Apostles) began to die
- Eventually all of the first generation would die
- Church had to adapt – look to a future without the certainty that Jesus would return in their lifetimes
- Need to reinterpret some of the “soon” promises – can’t all be about the second coming

THE COMING OF CHRIST

- Seems to be used in the same way as the Day of YHWH
 - Near judgment – Christ will judge nations in history (God the Father has given him all authority, he is King of the World)
 - Far judgment – Christ will judge all nations at the end of history
- In NT there are references to both as Jesus “coming”
 - Near judgment – Son of Man coming to Jerusalem (Mark 13)
 - Far judgment – The Rider of a White Horse coming to judge the nations (Revelation 19-20)

GOD THE CREATOR & JUDGE (1-7)

- Remember the predictions of the prophets & Jesus through the Apostles
- Scoffers will say:
 - Where is the promise of his coming?
 - All things as they were since creation
- Doubting Jesus' coming & judgment
- Pagan idea – eternal creation, gods part of that creation
 - Creator gods were formed from the waters

GOD THE CREATOR & JUDGE (1-7)

- Heavens existed long ago
- Earth formed from water by the word of God
- God made the world – he was separate from the waters & before them (heavens)
- Earth was deluged by those waters
- God is separate & sovereign over creation
- The earth was both formed & drowned by his word
- By the same word – heavens & earth stored up for fire – the day of judgment
- God is sovereign – both creator & judge
 - In the past & the future

GOD THE LORD OF TIME (8-10)

- With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, & a thousand years as one day
 - Time is different for God, he is sovereign over that too
 - He perceives it different than humanity
- He is not slow, but patient
 - Giving time for repentance
- The Day of the Lord will come like a thief – no one will know the time
- Heavens & earth will be burned & exposed

GODLY LIVES WAITING FOR THE DAY (11-13)

- How should you live as you wait? – lives of holiness & Godliness
- Waiting for & “hastening” the Day of God (probably should read “eagerly wait”)
- Heavens will pass away, heavenly bodies will melt & burn
 - As in verses 7 & 10 – the idea of judgment by fire
 - From Jewish writings – “Life of Adam & Eve”, “2 Baruch”
 - Idea was that God judges the earth twice, once with water & once with fire

GODLY LIVES WAITING FOR THE DAY (11-13)

- According to his promise – waiting for the new heavens & earth
 - Where righteousness dwells
- Picture from the Prophets
 - Isaiah 65-66 – new heaven & new earth
 - Ezekiel 40-48 – new Jerusalem
- All brought together later in Revelation 21-22
 - New heaven & earth joined as one
 - Dwelling in new Jerusalem with God

THEREFORE, WAIT & GROW IN CHRIST (14-18)

- Whilst waiting be:
 - Diligent, without spot or blemish, at peace
- The wait & patience of God is salvation
- Just like Paul has already told you in his letters
 - Some parts hard to understand
 - Ignorant twist his words – as they do the rest of Scripture!
 - Paul's letters already considered Scripture?
- Paul wrote to you?
- Galatia & Asia
 - Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, & I Timothy
- Peter in Rome with Mark
 - Mark was with Paul when he wrote Ephesians, Colossians, & Philemon
 - Probably also aware of Romans
- Silvanus co-wrote I Peter
 - Also co-wrote I & 2 Thessalonians

THEREFORE, WAIT & GROW IN CHRIST (14-18)

- You know all this beforehand – so don't let yourself be carried away with the error of lawless people & lose your stability
- But grow in the grace & knowledge of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ
- Peter & Paul have told them the truth
 - The true revelation of Christ passed down to them
 - Do not listen to the counterfeit!
- To him be the glory both now & to the day of eternity

APPLICATION – WAITING FOR OUR KING

- The Day of the Lord – The Coming of Christ
 - Loyal remnant – stand firm, live in faith
 - Disobedient – repent & return to God
- We tend to focus on the second part!
- Eschatology is scary!
- Revelation in particular – popular stories of great disasters at the end
 - “Apocalyptic” movies etc.
- But it should only be scary if you are disobedient!

APPLICATION – WAITING FOR OUR KING

- The role of prophecy is to “build up, encourage, and console the Church” (1 Cor. 14:3)
- End times teaching should bring comfort & hope
- Yet we make it scary
 - Jews did this too
 - Adding all the “heavens & earth burned with fire” to what the Bible said
- We should wait, not in fear – but in faith, holiness, & hope

WAITING IN FAITH

- Peter writes of the predictions of the prophets, the commandments of Jesus, the promise of his coming, the promise of the new heavens & earth...
- God has promised our salvation, our resurrection, our eternity with him
- We live in faith until we receive our inheritance
- We live trusting him, believing his promise, having faith in his word
- We have faith that he will do all we promised

WAITING IN HOLINESS

- Peter writes in I Peter to be “blameless when he comes”
- In this chapter – “found by him without spot or blemish”
- The Day of YHWH was always a call to holiness
- To be different, to be Godly
- To be loyal to and live like our King
- How do we wait for him? – By living like him till he comes
 - We are Jesus to the world until Jesus comes to the world

WAITING IN HOPE

- Peter writes of the promise of the new heavens & earth
- This is our hope – the resurrection, the new creation
- We live in hope, hope that even though we die, we will live again
- And not only will we be resurrected but this world will be made new
- Heaven & earth will become one
- God's throne will be on earth as it was meant to be

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."

Revelation 21:1-5

