2 Peter 3:1-9

Key Verse 3:9

*“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.”*

Introduction: The believers were facing trials from the outside through persecutions and trials from the inside through false teachers. Peter wrote his first letter to address the former and his second to address the later. However, he wrote both to stimulate wholesome thinking based on reminding the believers of God’s words from the prophets to the apostles. The false teachers among them scoffed at God’ words. They taught that because Jesus' coming was delayed it meant that he wasn’t coming at all. In this way they wanted to try to escape God’s judgment for following their own evil desires. However, God’s judgement is sure. Just as God created the world by his word and judged Noah’s generation by his word, God will surely judge this generation. He will keep his promise to judge the wicked and save the righteous at the time of Jesus’ second coming. God is slow in bringing his judgment because he is patient with us. He wants as many as possible to come to repentance and salvation. God really wants to save everyone, so that no one would perish.

1. Read verses 1-2. What did Peter want to remind the believers through his letters? What do the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets refer to? (2a, 1Pet. 1:10-11, 2Pet. 1:20-21) What does the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles refer to? (2b, 2Pet. 2:21; Psa 147:15) Why did Peter want to remind the believers of these things? (Jn. 17:17)

*Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.* ***2*** *I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.*

1. Through his letters, Peter wanted to remind the believers of the words spoken by the prophets and the command given by the Lord through the apostles.
2. The words spoken in the past by the holy prophets refer to the prophecies pertaining to Jesus Christ and the gospel message. The prophets spoke about the grace of salvation coming through the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow (1Pet 1:1-12). These included the prophecies about Jesus' sufferings, his death on the cross, his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, sending the Holy Spirit, as well as his second coming and eternal kingdom. These prophecies about Jesus Christ did not come from the prophet's interpretation or will, but they spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2Pet 1:20-21)
3. The command given by the Lord through the apostles generally refers to God’s word given to the apostles. God’s given through the apostles is a sacred command which believers are called to obey. Specifically, the command given by the Lord through the apostles might refer to the greatest commandment, the command to love God and to love your neighbor, on which all the Law and Prophets hang (Mat 22:37-40, Mk 12:29-31). It could also refer to the command given for the disciples and the church to love one another (Jn 13:34-35).
4. Peter wanted to remind the believers of these things to stimulate them to wholesome thinking. They believers should remember God’s word from the Old Testament and New Testament and be sanctified by the truth, and live according to the truth of God’s word (Jn 17:17). In order to overcome the lies of the devil and messages of false teachers the believers should listen to, think about and meditate on the words of God. They should remember and continue to go back to the Bible--the only source of absolute truth.
5. Read verses 3-7. Why do scoffers scoff at God’s word? (3) What argument do they make against Jesus’ second coming? (4) What do they deliberately forget? (5) How was the world of Noah’s time destroyed? (6) How will the present heavens and earth and the ungodly be judged and destroyed? (7)

*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.*

1. Scoffers scoff at God’s word because they want to follow their own evil desires. Sometimes, their arguments might sound logical or reasonable, but the true source of their scoffing is always, and without exception, their own evil desires. Here, the scoffers Peter was referring to were false teachers inside of the church (1Pet 2:1)
2. These scoffers (false teachers) argue against Jesus’ second coming by saying, *“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”* They say that since Jesus hasn’t kept his promise, he’s not going to keep it, since hasn’t come, he is not going to come, and since he hasn’t judged the world, he’s not going to judge it. Everything just goes on as it always has. In this way, they spread destructive heresies and denied the Lord who bought them.
3. These scoffers deliberately forgot that God had already judged the world once, and would do it again. Just as God’s word of creation is absolute, his word of judgment is also absolute. Just as he judged the ancient world by water, he will judge the current heavens and earth by fire. Even though God gave Noah’s generation a time of 120 years, that did not change the response of evil people. They kept on sinning right up until Noah entered the ark (Mat 24:37-39). God’s coming judgment is as sure as his word of creation and his word of judgment in Noah’s day. If we believe his creation work and his past judgment, we also need to believe his judgment to come at the time of Jesus’ second coming. Scoffers do not believe Jesus’ second coming, because they think that they can escape God’s judgment or their sins.
4. The world of Noah’s time was destroyed by water. It was not completely destroyed. The wicked of that time were destroyed, but the evil desires of men’s hearts were not changed.
5. The present heavens and earth, and the ungodly will be destroyed by fire. Believers will be changed and inherit a new heavens and new earth.
6. Read verses 8-9. In what respect is the Lord not slow in keeping his promise of judgment? (8, 9a) Why is His judgment taking time to arrive? (9b)

*“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. 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.”*

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1. God is not slow and keeping his judgment in that to God the day is like 1000 years and a 1000 years like one day. God’s time is based on an eternal perspective. It is not based on a finite understanding of slowness. It’s been more than 2,000 years since Jesus ascended into heaven, but to God that’s only like 2 days
2. God’s judgment is taking time to arrive because God is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. God wants to save everyone. He is patiently waiting until the maximum number of sinners repent, so that he might save is many as possible from eternal judgment. Sinners should not take God’s patience for granted, but come to repentance sooner, rather than later.