

IF JESUS IS COMING AGAIN,
WHY IS HE TAKING SO LONG?

2 PETER 3:1-10

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Have you ever wondered if Jesus is actually coming again?

It has been nearly 2000 years since the angels said, "Men of Galilee...why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:11

Will he?

I know that "yes" is the evangelical knee-jerk response to that question but I want us to think more carefully about the question and our answer.

Is he truly coming again? What difference does it make?

Does your belief in the 2nd Coming of Jesus affect your life? How?

This past weekend I sat and talked with a relative in his late 30s who believes that Jesus **already came** a second time in A.D. 70 when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

He's a Christian who holds, what he and others call, a "consistent preterist" view of scripture.

It's a doctrine that is becoming popular among some evangelicals.

He believes that the 2nd Coming **and** the resurrection **and** the final judgment all took place within 40 years of Christ's ascension to heaven – A.D. 70.

He believes those events happened in a spiritual way and we are not to expect them to happen in a literally physical way.

The result is that he does not look forward to the return of Jesus, he does not anticipate a physical resurrection from the dead and there is no day of judgment yet to come.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:16-18 wrote, "Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some."

In my nephew I have seen no signs of the negative effects that the Apostle Paul refers to in such beliefs but I cannot help but wonder if that will be the fruit of his teaching.

The Apostle Peter apparently encountered similar teachings in the churches to whom he wrote in what we call 2 Peter.

In the second chapter of the letter, Peter said, "...There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies..."
2 Peter 2:1

Under the guise of Christian freedom (2:19), they taught a libertine philosophy that disregarded God's call to holiness.

They apparently taught that appeals to sexual purity, self-control, temperance and the like were legalistic and restrictive.

And apparently another related teaching of theirs was that Jesus wasn't actually coming again – the point being that the idea of a coming judgment day was a myth.

You can easily see how the two ideas were related: If Jesus is not coming again, if there is no judgment day coming, no accountability, then what does it matter how we live?

Please stand for the reading of God's Word in 2 Peter 3:1-10.

"Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 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. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by

water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 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. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 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 in it will be laid bare.”

May God bless the reading and understanding of his Word.

From verse 4 we will see the question that is asked:

2 Peter 3:4 “They will say, "Where is this `coming' he promised?"

What is the question? "Is Jesus really coming again?"

I think there are two kinds of people asking this question:

The first kind is specifically mentioned in the text.

This is the person Peter calls a "scoffer" a "mocker", one who speaks scornfully - "Where is this coming he promised?"

In this case, the tone of the question implies a cynical answer - he's not coming!

But the second kind of person is more important to Peter.

This is the person to whom Peter is writing; the one who has fallen prey to the cynicism of the scoffers.

They are now questioning the coming of Jesus.

They aren't cynical but they now doubt.

I suspect that is true of some of us from time to time.

Something or a series of negative things happen in our lives and we grow discouraged.

With that comes the temptation to become skeptical about God's involvement in our lives.

That may yield to a cynicism; giving up on God and especially giving up on striving for holiness in life.

It doesn't mean we run out to be as bad as we can be, but it does mean why try so hard to be Christian if it won't matter after all?

The question is, "**Is** Jesus coming again?"

"Is there rhyme or reason to all that happens in life?"

The "scoffers" have an answer to the question but before we look at their answer let's see what evidence they draw on to support their answer?

They say in 2 Peter 2:4 "Ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

What's the point they are making? That **nothing** ever changes!

In their case for at least two thousand years and in our case over four thousand years life just seems to go on.

Millions of people are born, live and die and nothing changes.

That evidence bothers me from time to time; does it bother you?

- Peter and Paul believed he was coming and he didn't.
- In A.D. 300 Augustine and Constantine believed he was coming; he didn't.
- In the 1300s John Wyclife and John Hus died for their belief in Jesus and his coming again; he didn't come.
- In the 1700s John Wesley and George Whitefield preached that he is coming again; he didn't.
- In the 1900s Charles Spurgeon and Dwight Moody believed he was coming again but he didn't.
- My parents and my boyhood church taught that he was coming but he hasn't.

Do you ever wonder if he **really** will?

Some of those "preterits" I mentioned earlier, have found a way around the issue – believe he has already come.

It is to such doubt that Peter writes but **first he shows the motives of the scoffers.**

Notice the end of verse 3 where it says, they are "scoffing and following their own evil desires."

They don't want to believe that Jesus is coming again.

The whole idea of his coming again raises the issue of moral accountability and they want to live as they please.

Look at the first words of verse 5 "They deliberately forget" and hold this view in spite of the real evidence.

Why? So they don't have to think about the consequences of their actions.

If they can convince themselves there is **no accounting to be made to God for how they live** then there are no standards.

We live in an era when there has been an assault on the idea of the existence of absolutes.

Everything is relative we are told.

Many philosophers say there is no God.

The common people say there **is** a God but it makes little difference because he has nothing to say to us.

Therefore we are on our own to decide what is best for us.

And even if some say the Bible is the word of God they reject its authority when it runs counter to their opinion or their circumstances.

As in Peter's day they are following their own desires.

We can fall prey to that kind of thinking and acting.

We become "functional atheists."

We can repeat the creeds but we live as if Jesus will never come again and we will never be held accountable for our lives.

So again, what evidence do the scoffers use to support their conclusion that Jesus isn't coming again?

2 Peter 3:4 "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

What conclusions do they then draw?

Jesus isn't coming. The idea of a "second coming" is a myth.

Then importantly, they conclude that there is therefore no threat of judgment.

In verses 5-7 Peter answers the same question: Is Jesus coming again?
This time it is his response, not the scoffers.

What evidence does he use to support his conclusions?

He says, the false teachers gloss over two obvious events proving that things have not always gone on as they have since the beginning of creation.

In verse 5 he reminds his readers that God acted at the very beginning by creating the world.

2 Peter 3:5 “But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

In a definite reference to the book of Genesis chapter one, Peter makes it clear that the physical world did not always exist and that it was not somehow spontaneously generated out of nothing.

The world is not the product of eternal unbroken evolution.

In raising that issue I am not here arguing for the particular processes God may have used in bringing the world into the form we now know it, but I am presenting Peter's argument that God created this world – v5 “by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.”

The Bible says that God spoke creation into existence.

Genesis 1:1,9,10 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.”

To the scoffers Peter says, "What do you mean, 'everything goes on, nothing changes?' That is not true. God has acted.

Is it important whether or not we believe the world came to be by God's hand or only by evolutionary processes?

Over the past couple of hundred years there has been again, as in Peter's day, a frontal assault on the idea of God's involvement in our world.

Today, even Christians have removed God from creation.

At best many seem to have a "clock-works" God who wound things up initially millions of years ago and then merely let it all play itself out.

I'm not arguing necessarily for a "young earth," a literal 24-hour day creation but I am more aware than ever why some are so concerned about the creation-evolution debate.

At stake is your understanding of the Providence of God.

As the Westminster Shorter Catechism says, "God's providence is his completely holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing every creature and every action."

Do you believe that or do you live as if God has withdrawn into his heaven only to maybe appear from time to time or never?

It is not too extreme to say that if you take God out of the beginning of time (creation) you will eventually take him out of the end of time (2nd coming and judgment).

That is precisely what many, even those who call themselves Christians have done.

Listen to one theologian, "The (2nd Coming) was an integral part of an existing framework which thought of the world as created a few thousand years earlier and ending in at least a comparable, if not a much shorter, period in the future. If we jettison this framework, **and jettison it we must today**, does any place remain for the (2nd Coming)?" (Ernest Best, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 367)

"If we take what they (the scientists of our age) say of the End as seriously as we now do of what they say about the Beginning then we have to conclude that the End is something with which men will never have to reckon in practical terms...and that it is as wrong to think of a real physical End which God achieves in some public way as it is to think of a real physical Beginning." (Ernest Best, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 363)

This theologian follows some scientists in taking God out of the beginning and ends up likewise taking God out of the end.

For all practical purposes he removes God from life.

And that is, I think, exactly what Peter feared for his readers – that they would begin to doubt the providence of God in human history and also doubt the providence of God in their lives.

And in doubting, they would eventually give up and just do whatever.

So I ask you, are the circumstances of your life the product of mere chance or the produce of some unseen fate or are they the product of the loving hand of God.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” That’s God’s providence.

I could tell you awesome accounts of God’s intervention in people’s lives saving them from crushing circumstances.

But you have the ability to rationalize away all such accounts, see them as merely the result of chance.

You struggle with making God the actor in positive things that happen in life because you then have to make him an actor in the negative things that happen.

And because you can’t quite reconcile a good and powerful God with some of the horrific things that have happened to you or others, you tend to just leave God out of it and thus leave God out of life.

But the Bible says in Nehemiah 9:6, God “you alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything.”

And in Matthew 10:30 “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

And is he involved in our lives now?

Jesus said, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:20

Acts 17:28 “For in him (God) we live and move and have our being.”

To combat the cynicism of the false teachers, Peter also reminds his readers of **another great illustration of God’s invention in history and life.**

God acted in an event that is well known in every civilization the world over- the Flood.

2 Peter 3:6 “By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

The same people who play fast and loose with the Genesis account of **creation** usually likewise discount the Genesis account of the **flood** saying it was a story, a myth, a fable with a moral.

But you cannot so easily dismiss the flood when you realize that Jesus believed in an historical figure named Noah who lived through a literal flood:

Luke 17:26 Jesus said, “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

The author of Hebrews likewise believed in the historical figure named Noah who lived through a flood as much as he believed in Abraham, Jacob and Moses.

Hebrews 11:7 “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

The false teachers said, “Everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” **but they are clearly wrong.**

No, Peter says, God is not an absent landlord; he has acted in human history.

Now with the illustration of creation and the flood in mind, Peter turns the discussion toward his real purpose:

Verse 7 “By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

The same “word” of God that spoke the worlds into existence and brought the flood on the earth keeps the skies above our heads and the earth beneath our feet **reserved for destruction by fire**.

In Colossians 1 Paul writes that God the Son holds all creation together. By his sovereign will the world keeps going until just the right time when he will end it all.

And again looking at verse 7 Peter says that not only is the earth waiting for fire but also there will be a judgment when all those who reject the mercy of God in this life, will be sent to destruction.

And that word "destruction" does not mean extinction but it means eternal separation from God otherwise called "the lake of fire" in the Bible.

And again to Peter's main point: The right conclusion then is that as certainly as God has intervened in the past so he will again in the future.

As certainly as judgment fell on those unwilling to turn to God in the past so it will fall on those who reject God now.

What is Peter's final conclusion then?

Yes, Jesus is coming again.

And when he comes he is bringing judgment with him.

I want you to look at verse 10.

2 Peter 3:10 “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 in it will be laid bare.

In verse 7 Peter introduced the concept of the heavens and earth being burned and the unrepentant being destroyed.

Here in verse 10 he gives a fuller description of that event.

The phrases "The day of the Lord" (verse 10) and the “day of judgment” (verse 7) both refer to the time when Jesus comes again.

All the way through the Old and New Testaments those phrases mean the times of God's interventions in judgment.

When it says that the "day of the Lord will come like a thief" it means the same as it does in I Thessalonians and Matthew - that his coming will be sudden and surprising to the unexpectant - they will be caught off-guard.

And while we don't know in detail what the words ("disappeared with a roar" and "destroyed by fire") describe, we do know that this language speaks of a destruction of the heavens and earth as we know them and of an awesome judgment of those who refuse to trust and follow Jesus.

Look with me please at the middle of verse 12 and 13 as well:

2 Peter 3:12-13 "That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

Here in verse 12 as in verse 10 we see reference to the destruction of creation and then in verse 13 we see the promise of a new heaven and a new earth - a home for the righteous.

Next week I'll go into this in more detail but let me give you an overview of those events taking place when Jesus comes again.

In this passage in 2 Peter, he takes a number of related events that happen over an extended period of time and compresses them into a brief description:

He says:

- Jesus is coming;
- He is coming in judgment;
- Judgment includes not only the eternal punishment of the unrepentant but also the destruction of the heavens and earth as we know them;
- And last, he writes that a new heaven and earth will appear which the righteous will call home.

In these first 10 verses of chapter 3 Peter is strongly pointing out the certainty of Christ's return and equally the certainty of judgment on sin.

Don't be fooled by those who say God isn't involved or God doesn't care about what happens here and now.

And don't deceive yourselves by thinking there is no accountability for the way we live our lives.

Having made the point that Jesus is coming again, Peter turns his attention to another question.

The question is not actually stated in your text but it is implied.

It is almost as if Peter anticipates the questions of his readers.

"Yes, Peter, I believe that God has intervened in human history and that he will do so again when Jesus comes again, but 'Why is he taking so long?'"

"Doesn't his delay just give more credibility to the argument of the scoffers? And doesn't his delay just feed the doubts of the believers?"

To those implied questions Peter gives two answers:

The first is in 2 Peter 3:8 "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."

The Lord's relationship to time is different than ours.

I don't think it will serve us well to argue whether God is beyond or above time.

Certainly he is, in the sense that he was not originally bound to time before he created it but he has chosen to put himself into the time he created.

But time from God's perspective is very different than from ours.

From the perspective of a million miles an inch is quite insignificant. Likewise from God's **eternal** perspective a day or a thousand years are nearly the same.

Peter's first answer to the question of "why is Jesus delaying" is that it is not a delay at all, in the way we think of it.

God is just working out his perfect salvation of us and it is all going just according to plan.

The timing of Christ's first coming as an infant was perfect ("in the fullness of time") and so will be his second coming as king of kings.

It is easy to understand why many thought and still think that when the Bible says that Jesus is coming "soon" it must mean in their lifetime.

But when the NT writers spoke of the nearness of the end, or the 2nd coming happening soon, they were speaking to its certainty not necessarily its immediacy.

I think professor Doug Moo of the Wheaton Graduate School is correct when he writes, "Imminence, defined biblically, means that the return of Christ and the culmination of history are always impending. The Parousia (2nd Coming of Jesus) is the next event in salvation history." (Moo, *2 Peter and Jude*, 194)

So when someone says Jesus is coming soon, you must be discerning as to whether they mean they know something even Jesus said he didn't know – that is, when he would come again OR if they mean that Jesus' return is absolutely certain and is the next major event in our salvation.

Peter's second answer to the question of **why is it taking Jesus so long** is in 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

The Lord Jesus has not come yet, **not** because he has obstacles to overcome before he can come; nothing is keeping him from coming except his patience and mercy.

Look at 2 Peter 3:15: "bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation..."

I wish to make a comment to those of you who are students of theology: If you read verse 9 and immediately want to enter into an argument as to whether they do or do not teach that God wants to save **everyone** or just the elect, you are missing the point.

Whether this verse is speaking of every human being or every one of “you” as the text says, the point is still the same:

God's timing on the 2nd coming of Jesus is due to his mercy. He wants everyone who will come (whether by free will alone or also by election) to have the necessary time to come.

A 17th Century Pastor describes it so well. I paraphrase:

God works with each of us according to our personality and temperament. Knowing us, he works through time with commands and threats and promises and alluring motivations.

He works in us with those tools, by those means, over a long period of time and he sometimes combines them so as to work in us the knowledge and responsiveness that leads us to conversion.

By the life giving power of his Holy Spirit his patient and powerful love does at last overcome all opposition to his grace and brings us to repentance and faith resulting in salvation.

(Nisbet, 283)

The reason Jesus has not come yet is **not** due to some failure on his part but due to his mercy.

Please notice the pronoun in verse 9: God is patient toward YOU!

Peter is addressing people attending the church, people reading his letter.

It is possible that some of the people not only had doubts about the second coming of Jesus or had doubts about the wisdom of his timing but it is **possible that some of them still had not turned away from their sin and turned to God in repentance and faith** - willing to follow Jesus as their saving-Lord.

Peter says it is for you that Jesus waits to come.

Is it for YOU too?

Jesus is coming. He is coming as Lord of lords to judge the people of this earth.

We don't know precisely when he will come but we know the timing will be perfect and the last opportunity for salvation will be gone.

Yes, He is coming again. Have you responded to His mercy?

To the believer tempted to think God is removed, uninvolved and unnoticing, I think Peter's warning and instruction are summarized in verses 11-13

2 Peter 3:11-13 "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 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. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Other notes:

In the sermon I speak of "preterism," the interpretative view of Scripture that sees some or all of "future" events predicted in the NT as fulfilled by A.D. 70. There are partial-preterist views (R.C. Sproul?, et al.) and there are "hyper-" preterist views (they call themselves "consistent preterists). It is the latter view that I contest.

While I have not read the following book, according to the synopsis it might be helpful:

C. Jonathin Seraiah, *The End Of All Things*. Paperback - 208 pages 1 edition (October 1, 1999) Canon Press; In the present work, C. Jonathin Seraiah ferrets out the leading flaws of pantelism (the so-called 'consistent preterism') and reinforces the accuracy of the orthodox understanding of eschatology-the future physical Second Advent of Christ, physical resurrection of just and unjust, and final judgment. The author shows that the leading Biblical texts that pantelists employ to buttress their position do not in fact support it, and that other texts flatly refute it. He observes, moreover, that pantelism is not a marginally flawed interpretation; rather, it subverts and restructures the Faith itself. It is essential reading for those interested in a Biblically grounded and historically informed eschatology.

Suggested Website articles:

http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/read/the_menace_of_radical_preterism

<http://triablogue.blogspot.com/2006/04/two-dozen-or-so-orthodox-arguments.html>

Other Notes on the 2 Peter 3:1-10 text

“Reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking”

We all need to be often reminded of the basics of the Christian faith so that they provide the context for us that we so desperately need when the world around us, and our own sinful nature deceives us.

This is not just mental but it starts there and moves to our attitudes and conduct.

“Wholesome” (Philippians 1:10 “pure” and blameless)

“thinking” – the mind/heart where choices are made – thus wholesome thinking – or thinking/choices that are pure – Christ-like.

Peter wants his readers not to be overcome by the scoffers but to think rightly, to think with understanding about what is actually true so that it might affect their lives.

“My second letter” is not necessarily 1 Peter.

We would expect that these are not the only two letters Peter ever wrote just as we know that Paul wrote other letters not in the NT (“previous letter 1 Corinthians 5:9 and a letter to the Laodiceans mentioned in Colossians 4:16).

“I want you to recall” two sources of information:

“Words spoken in the past by the holy prophets”

Old Testament prophets very likely the same as in 1:20-21 “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

“And the command given our Lord and Savior through your apostles.”

The Lord is the source and the apostles the spokespersons.

The “command” (of 60 uses in the Bible, it is always in reference to some demand or requirement – thus in context, a reference to holy living.)

Here Peter is telling them to reject the false teachers and pay attention to following and becoming like Jesus.

“Last days” – the days that began with Christ’s first advent and will end with his second advent

The **“scoffers”** were not just mocking the 2nd coming but just as importantly they were mocking the very idea of judgment.

If no 2nd coming, no judgment; if no judgment then no accountability to God.

This was Peter's concern expressed earlier:

1:16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

2:19 "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him."

And others expressed the same concerns:

Acts 20:29-30 "I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

1 Timothy 4:1 "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons

1 John 2:18 "Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

"Where is this coming" is not an innocent question of timing but an insincere mockery of the very idea of Jesus' coming again.

Malachi 2:17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. "How have we wearied him?" you ask. By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

Jeremiah 17:15 "They keep saying to me, "Where is the word of the LORD? Let it now be fulfilled!"

"They deliberately forget" is not naïve or ignorant but willfully disregarding.

2 Peter 3:5-7 "But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By **these waters** also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

The English words "these waters" translate a word meaning simply "which." It is a translators interpretation whether "which" refers to the waters just described or to the "word" also just described and noted again in verse 7. Best guess is that "which" probably refers to both the waters and "God's word."

Examples of those who deny the 2nd coming as a literal or a future event:

2nd Coming not literal: "The Parousia (2nd coming) was a integral part of an existing framework which thought of the world as created a few thousand years

earlier and ending in at least a comparable, if not a much shorter, period in the future. If we jettison this framework, **as jettison it we must today**, does any place remain for the Parousia?" (Ernest Best, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 367)

2nd coming not future: "Preterist' means past in fulfillment, and 'Futurist' means future in fulfillment. Preterist basically means the opposite of Futurist. Futurists believe most end-time prophecies (especially the big three major ones – (2nd Coming), Resurrection, and Judgment) are yet to be fulfilled. Preterists believe that most or all of Bible Prophecy (especially the big three events) has already been fulfilled in Christ and the on-going expansion of His Kingdom. Most Futurists do not really believe Christ has been successful yet in fully establishing His kingdom." From the International Preterist Association:

"Out of water and by water" is probably a literary device to emphasize the role of water in creation because Peter is next going to refer to the flood.

"Fire" in similar contexts in the Bible is clearly about judgment.

Isaiah 30:30

Isaiah 66:15-16

Nahum 1:6

Zephaniah 3:8

"Destruction" is not annihilation but eternal punishment as in

Matthew 25:41

Mark 9:43, 48

Revelation 14: 9-11

Day of the Lord

Isaiah 13:6 "Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Ezekiel 30:3 "For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near—a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

Malachi 4:5 ""See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 "Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night

2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

DAY OF THE LORD. An eschatological term referring to the consummation of God's kingdom and triumph over his foes and deliverance of his people. It begins at the Second Coming and will include the final judgment. It will remove class distinction ([Isa 2:12-21](#)), abolish sins ([2 Peter 3:11-13](#)), and will be accompanied by social calamities and physical cataclysms ([Matt 24](#); [Luke 21:7-33](#)). It will include the millennial judgment ([Rev 4:1-19:6](#)) and culminate in the new heaven and the new earth ([Isa 65:17](#); [66:22](#); [Rev 21:1](#)). New International Bible Dictionary

Day of Judgment

Matthew 10:15 “I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town

Matthew 12:36 “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.

1 John 4:17 “In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the **day of judgment**, because in this world we are like him.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Verse 9

The controlling idea for the word “everyone” is the “you” of “he (God) is patient with **you**”

The “you” is all who would believe – God’s elect.

2PE 3:10 **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 in it will be laid bare.**

Like a thief is as the Lord and Paul said it – unexpectedly.

Matthew 24:43 But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

I think the “**heavens**” as in verses 5 and 7 refers to the celestial universe.

“**Disappear with a roar**” is an interpretation of a word that mean a shrill noise, a whistling sound, or the crackling of a fire and in this context where fire is discussed. Isaiah 34:4 “All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

The “**earth**” is quite clearly this planet.

The “**elements**” is a reference to the basic building blocks of matter known to the ancients as wind, water, fire and earth OR to the heavens – the celestial planets and stars.

Either way, the physical universe (earth and heavens) will be destroyed, burned, laid bare,

In context the NASB translation seems best – “will be burned up” not the NIV “will be laid bare.” Although “laid bare” fits the idea of judgment – all being revealed.