

PROPHETIC WORDS DECLARE THE FUTURE

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Look ahead to the blessings of the new heavens and a new earth promised by God.

Suggestion: This lesson will call attention to important truths in this week's Lesson. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: Peter wrote chapter three to encourage the believers to stand firm on the prophetic words of God despite of the scoffers' ridicule of them. Mockers will perish in the fire of God's wrath, but believers will be blessed with His righteousness in the new heavens and the new earth in the future. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (2 Pet 3:13).

When do the "last days" begin? 3:3

A mistake is made when the last days is taken to refer only to the future days of the Tribulation. The last days began when Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven. All Christians have lived in the last days when scoffers mocked the prophetic message of Christ's return to earth. Peter reminds us that a thousand years is as a day with the Lord - 3:8.

How do people that scoff at God's prophetic words show their ignorance? 3:3-7

Scoffers walk in the lusts of their flesh so their thoughts are not God's thoughts and their ways are not God's ways (Isa 55:8). They build their case against God's prophetic word on their sinful ways. When Christ appears to delay His return, they conclude that His promise was empty. They ignorantly claim that He will not come; nothing has dramatically changed since the beginning of creation. Peter answered their accusation on how God dramatically changed the world with a flood in the past as He promised and will change it once again in the future with fire that will melt the elements of the earth and heavens - 3:5-7. We could add to Peter's answer that God kept His repeated promise to send His Son to redeem sinners, even though He waited thousands of years for the fullness of time to do it - Gal 4:4.

Since God is eternal, how does He reckon time? 3:8

Peter said, "One day with the Lord is AS a thousand years and a thousand years AS one day." Notice, he did not say one day with the Lord IS a thousand years and a thousand years IS one day. Since He is eternal, days and years do not have the same meaning as they do to us. In God's reckoning of time, a thousand years or more is of little importance to Him in keeping His promises. What is important to Him is that He keeps His promises. Peter's words remind us of the prayer of Moses: "A thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past" - Ps 90:4.

How can God be sovereign, not willing that any should perish, yet billions are perishing? 3:9

God is sovereign in that He provides salvation for everyone and decrees that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" - Rom 10:13. He chooses those that He foreknows will accept His offer of salvation. Then He predestines them to be like His Son, calls them, justifies them and glorifies them - Rom 8: 29-30.

Why does Peter say we look for God's promise of the new earth and new heavens and not mention the promise of Christ's Kingdom on this earth? 3:13

Peter was looking at the final promise of God when righteousness on the earth will be complete. The OT and NT speak of Christ's Kingdom on earth - Zech 14:9; Rev 20:4-6. However, both passages speak of sinful people on the earth in His Kingdom, even though it is righteously controlled. Perfect righteousness will be experienced in the new earth. Believers should look for the glory of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, but after this Kingdom the perfect rule of God will come in the new earth, which will be greater yet. At this time New Jerusalem will come from Heaven, where we will live - Rev 21:1-3.