

**EXEGETICAL
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Series B

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Advent II: II Pet. 3:8-14: The Day of the Lord is Surely Coming.

1. The pastor will recall that the canonicity of II Peter was questioned in the early church and the debate still goes on. Franzmann (The Word of the Lord Grows) remarks "While the place of the first letter (of Peter) in the canon has always been an assured one, the second letter is decidedly an antilegomenon, with the weakest historical attestation of any book in the New Testament. . . . Origen (AD 185 to 254) is aware of the fact that its place in the canon is in dispute. . . . The authenticity of the second letter was questioned even in the early church and is denied by the great majority of scholars today. . . . (But) the Second Letter of Peter is designed to maintain hope pure and strong in men whose hope is threatened by false teaching and is in danger of being weakened by doubt. . . . The church has been strengthened for battle and heartened in its hope by the living words of this letter, words which are as clear and sure as the history of the letter is dark and uncertain." II Peter does not teach anything that is not found elsewhere in Scripture. We should be content to consider this book truly canonical.
2. The repetition of individual words in this chapter is truly remarkable. Note agapētoi vss. 1.8.14.17; epaggelia vss. 4.9; lanthanō 5.8; hydōr 5 twice.6; logos (theou) 6.7; hēmera (of the Lord) 7.8.10.12; hōs twice 8; stoicheia 10.12; luō 10.11.12; kausōō 10.12; and prosdokeō 13.14. Read the entire chapter and note the effectiveness of these repetitions.
3. Vss. 1-7 give us the situation in which the Christian finds himself in this world. There will be unbelieving scoffers. They will contend that there will not be an end of this world simply because it has not yet come. These scoffers deny two great truths: that the universe was created by the Word of God but the world was destroyed by the flood; and, that by the same Word of God the universe is being kept for its final judgment and dissolution. The denial of God's creation out of nothing is very prevalent in our time. And the denial of the final judgment and destruction of the universe is also very prevalent. People live as if they were going to live forever with impunity. God's Word is completely disregarded.
4. Vs. 8: de is plainly "but" contrasting vss. 5-7 with 8-9. Literally the first part of this vs. reads "but let not this one thing escape your notice." The one thing which the scoffers overlook is an attribute of God. The beloved should not forget that their Lord is the eternal God. Bengel says: "He does not so fully reply to the mockers as he instructs the faithful." Franzmann remarks: "To speak of 'delay' in connection with the Lord's coming is to impose human standards on the Lord, to try to fit Him into categories which are not His." TEV gets at the meaning of this verse: "There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same." Peter is not quoting Ps. 90:4 which reads: "For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by." (NASB) Bigg correctly observes: "St. Peter is not quoting, but drawing an inference from, the Psalm. . . . What St. Peter wishes is to contrast the eternity of God with the impatience of human expectations." Bengel says: "Moses describes God's eternity somewhat more absolutely; Peter, in its relation to the last day, and to men looking for this." Old Concordia Bible with Notes comments: "What he has determined to accomplish a thousand years hence, is just as sure as if he had determined to accomplish it to-morrow." Stoeckhardt: "Our time does not affect him, nor does our measurement fit into His calendar. . . . The space of a thousand years is to Him but a moment." Time began in Gen. 1. It will end on the

last day (Rev. 10:6). We are bound to time. God is not. Lenski says: "His relation to time must never be confused with our relation to time. . . . Peter does not say 'A single day IS a thousand years and a thousand years ARE a single day'. . . . Both are really the same with the Lord; neither hampers nor helps him." This verse looms large as a basis for two false doctrines: 1) The evolutionists and its sympathizers have used this passage as a basis for interpreting the word "day" in Gen. 1 as a thousand years or a long age; and, 2) The chiliasts (millennialists) have used this verse for their interpretation of the thousand years of Rev. 20. Both false doctrines are a clear violation of simple rules of interpretation.

5. Vs. 9: Note that the Majority text reads an article before kyrios. In any case in this vs. Peter surely is speaking about Jesus as Lord. We think immediately of Heb. 13:8 where the attribute of eternity is attributed to the incarnate Christ. The gen. epaggelias is the gen. of separation "the Lord does not hold back from the promise, from fulfilling it." (BD 180,5). Bigg explains it thus: "The genitive is perhaps analogous to that used commonly after verbs of failing, or missing, such as hamartanō, sphallomai, hustergeō." On epaggelias here Old Concordia Bible with Notes states: "of a future judgment when he will save his people and destroy their enemies." It is wider in application than the word in vs. 13. Bengel says: "The promise will be fulfilled whatever mockers may prate." Who are the tines of the second clause of this verse? Lenski explains: "These 'some'" are not the mockers, who claim that all this talk about the Parousia is nothing; these are some of the Christians who will be disturbed by these coming mockers. . . . 'Some'. . . get uneasy and think that perhaps the mockers are right in claiming that there is nothing to this whole promise of Christ's return." But the application is wider than Lenski allows. It seems to cover the mockers also. On the hōs clause Bigg remarks: "as if delay sprang from impotence or unwillingness to perform." They merely "consider." They do not believe. The tines impute slackness, negligence, sloppiness to God because He waits so long before executing his threatened judgments. The strong adversative conjunction alla divides the false thought of this vs. from the correct thought. Note that the Majority text reads "toward us" not "toward you." The participle boulomenos is epexegetical (explanatory) of the verb makrothumei. Some explain it as causal. Thus TEV and Bigg. In this vs. we have the same truth as is clearly stated at I Tim. 2:4. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord uses vs. 9 four times in the article on Election. See Tappert 621.28 and 32 and 629.81; 630.84. God's serious desire that all be saved must not be overlooked in a discussion of Election. The second alla in this vs. does not distinguish false from true doctrine but contrasts the two sides of God's will toward all men. Stoeckhardt: "What some men call slowness is longsuffering and patience on God's part." Lenski: "This longsuffering extends the time, puts off the Parousia." Franzmann: ". . . the question of the time of His coming fades into insignificance (cf. 11, 12, 15)." JB renders this verse: "The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow." That gives a wider application to tines than Lenski allows. By the way, note the utter importance of metanoia, the very lifeblood of a Christian. Bigg quotes Augustine: "God is patient because He is eternal." Is maybe God delaying the Parousia because of my sloppy repentance? Lord have mercy on me!

6. Vs. 10: Vss. 8-9 stress the fact that the day of the Lord will truly come according to His promise and purpose. Vs. 10 tells us how that day will come. Vss. 11-13 linger on the "how" but are already a bridge to the exhortation. The verbs are in the first person plural. Vs. 14 is purely hortatory or parenetic. The verb is in the second person plural. Note the good paragraphing in Nestle-Aland XXVI. All our versions, except AAT, follow this paragraphing. AAT makes 11-14 one paragraph. Note the prominent and emphatic position of the verb. Note the de, translated by all but AAT as "but." "But there will come the day of the Lord as a thief." "Despite the fact that the Lord delays the Parousia for the sake of men's repentance, nonetheless it will come, and what's more it will come as a thief." Bigg aptly remarks: "There will be no time for repentance then. This is the essential point on which the wise teacher will dwell.," Codex Sinaiticus and the Majority text read hē before hēmera. It is not necessary because a noun modified by a genitive is virtually definite. By the way, the terms "the day of the Lord," "the day of God," "the day of Christ," "the day of the Son of Man" are used synonymously in Scriptures. Cf. vss. 7, 10 and 12. The words en nukti "in the night" are likely imported from I Thess. 5:2. See apparatus. Jesus used the comparison with a thief at Mt. 24:43 and Lk. 12:39. Franzmann remarks: "Jesus cut off all attempts at calculating the time of His return (Mt. 24:43; cf. 36). It is echoed by Paul (I Thess. 5:2) and John (Rv. 3:3; 16:15)." The phrase en hē is temporal, adverbial meaning "when." roizēdon is defined by Rienecker-Rogers thus: "with a hissing or crackling sound. The word is onomatopoeic, expressing the whizzing sound produced by rapid motion through the air and was used of shrill rushing sounds, the hissing of a snake, the whirr of a bird's wings, the hurtling sound of an arrow and is then used for the rushing movement itself of the accompanying crash or roar. Here probably the roaring of flame is meant." The word stoicheia, as always, causes much discussion. Because of its proximity to ouranoi and because it is distinguished from gē (the earth) many feel that it means the heavenly bodies. Thus Bigg, Bengel, Alford, Plumptre, Green and TEV. Not so Lenski. In any case the words kausoumena luthēsetai (repeated in vs. 12) denote a sudden, universal conflagration and dissolution. The words ouranoi, stoicheia and gē denote the things which God Himself created. But the ta en autē erga denote the things which man has made. On this last item Kretzmann remarks: "All the mighty and magnificent structures of man's hands, the immense cities with their proud skyscrapers, the great ships and all conveyances which the ingenuity of man has devised for use in the sea, on land, in the air, all the wonderful works of art which are exhibited with such self-satisfaction: they all will perish by fire in the destruction of the last day." Even the most beautiful Renaissance works of art and the exquisite music of Bach are to be used now only to glorify God. THEY WILL PERISH ON THE LAST DAY. The final verb in vs. 10 is very difficult. There are three variant readings: "will be burned" (Codex A, Lenski, KJV, NKJV, RSV, JB, NASB). Another is "will disappear." Thus TEV. But the most difficult is that found in Nestle-Aland "will be found." Thus NIV, AAT, Rienecker and Franzmann. The latter explains: "The best attested text is the very difficult 'will be found', which may mean that THE EARTH AND THE WORKS of man that both adorn and disfigure the earth will be exposed to the fire of God's judgment, be refined and purified, and emerge as God's 'new heavens and a new earth' (13). The universe will pass through fearful convulsions (DISSOLVED, 10, 'melt' 12) as Jesus foretold (Mt. 24:29). But God's goal for His creation, over which He once spoke His 'very good' (Gn. 1:3; I Tim.4:4),

7. is not extinction but restoration and transfiguration."
- Vs. 11: Note that a subparagraph begins here. We touched on this matter in vs. 10. The first four words in Greek are a genitive absolute. Most versions begin with the word "since," making it causal. For the second time the dissolution of all of creation is mentioned (luomenōn). The versions take it either as "dissolved" or "destroyed." The main clause is introduced by the impersonal verb dei. Its subject is the infinitive hyparchein and the subject of this infinitive is potapous. KJV, NKJV, TEV and NIV consider potapous interrogative (What sort of persons ought you be?) whereas RSV, NASB, and NEB consider it exclamatory (What sort of persons ought you be!). It is not easy to make a decision between these two possibilities. Lenski prefers exclamatory. In any case Franzmann's observation is fitting: "This is the center of gravity in all the New Testament teaching of last things from John the Baptist and Jesus onward." The New Testament is constantly saying: "be ready, be faithful, be watchful." Sanctification does not save us. It is the fruit of justification. Sanctification means to take justification seriously. It is God's way of preparing us for eternity. The last five words of this verse are a prepositional phrase denoting manner "in holy conduct and godliness." Bengel remarks: "conduct as regards human affairs, godliness as regards divine things." On potapous Rienecker-Rogers remarks: "In the context the words hint that great things are expected of the readers." Kretzmann: "The thoughts and minds of the Christians are under no circumstances to cling to the things of this world. . . . Our conduct should be holy and unblamable, that our behavior at all times should express true godliness and reverence of His holy will." Before we leave this verse we quote an observation from Stoeckhardt: "Three times the Apostle Peter asserts that the heavens and the earth and all the works on the earth, and even the elements, out of which all things are made (he equates stoicheia with atoms), will be dissolved by fire. Does it not follow from this that the world will sink back into nothing, as was taught by the dogmatists of the seventeenth century? It does not. It says here that the elements will be dissolved (luthēsontai) by fire. That means that that which burns is dissolved into atoms. Peter does not say that the substance of heaven and earth is annihilated and turned back into nothing. All that he claims is that the present form of the world shall be totally destroyed."
8. Vs. 12: This verse continues the thought begun in vs. 11. Vss. 11-12 constitute one sentence. The accusative plural participles modify potapous of vs. 11. The first means "expecting." The second can mean either "causing to come early" or "being zealous about." It is amazing how almost all of our versions, in one way or another, prefer the former translation, NKJV, RSV, and NASB have "hastening the coming." TEV reads "do your best to make it come soon." NIV has "speed its coming." Likewise AAT. We prefer Rienecker-Rogers explanation "to be eager for." Thus Franzmann who says: "preparing for and earnestly desiring the salvation which will be given to God's people." Thus Lenski who adds an interesting thought: "One may expect and yet not be eager regarding what he expects; here also eagerness is to fill the hearts." Bengel gets both meanings out of it: "He who eagerly desires, presses the matter itself, if possible to a speedy accomplishment." He adds an interesting thought in this verse: "God grants TO MEN many thousand days; one, the last, is the great day OF GOD himself." di' hēn means "because of which (day)." The day of the Lord itself will be the cause of the fiery dissolution of all things. In this verse Peter mentions only ouranoi kai stoicheia

(heavens and elements). These words and those which follow are a variation on vs. 10. But we agree with Franzmann who interprets stoicheia here as "the various parts of which the world is composed." Does tēketai ("are melted") argue for heurethēsetai or katakaēsetai in vs. 10? On this vs. Bigg remarks: "The reader will observe the characteristic repetition of words and phrases in this passage." Rienecker-Rogers: "tēketai, the pres. tense is futuristic." Kretzmann: "The present heavens and present earth will pass away, not in utter destruction, but to be changed into a new form of existence."

9. Vs. 13: Here faith confesses in the first person plural, in keeping with God's promises found in Is. 65:17 and 66:22. The objects are placed first for emphasis. Note the chiasmic arrangement of adjectives and nouns. The kata phrase is adverbial denoting correspondence. In vs. 9 we had the promise of the Parousia. Here it's the promise of life eternal. The en phrase is adjectival, modifying "heavens and earth." The word dikaiosynē is very dear to a Christian. It is that reconciling gift of God in Jesus Christ which is the very antithesis of adikia, the condition of man and the whole universe ever since the fall. Bigg renders oikei "has its home." On this verse Franzmann: "Heavens and earth indicate the continuity of the world to come with God's first creation (Gn. 1:1), our world. The otherness of the coming world is expressed by new (kainos), a word characteristic of the new quality of all that pertains to the world to come. Cf. Mt. 26:29; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Heb. 10:10; Rv. 2:17; 3:12; 5:9; 14:3; 21:1-2,5; for the whole expression cf. Is. 65:17; 66:22; Rv. 21:1. Righteousness dwells In the world to come God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. All the ruin and frustration with which man's sin has disfigured God's good work will have passed away (cf. Ro. 8:19-22)." kainos denotes newness in quality but neos newness in time. And Lenski: "The question is raised as to whether this universe shall be annihilated, and a new heaven and earth shall be created ex nihilo. To answer it one must not stop with passages like Ps. 102:26; Is. 51:6; Jer. 34:4; Mt. 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Heb. 1:11; Rev. 20:11. Include also Rom. 8:19-22; I Cor. 7:31; Rev. 21:1-5. The heavens and the earth shall be renovated, renewed, purified, made perfect. There shall be no further separation between earth and the abode of God; they shall be one at last. Besides Rev. 21:1-5 read the whole of Rev. 21:10-27, and close with Heb. 11:10."
10. Vs. 14: dio, in view of all that's been said in this chapter. This is the third occurrence of agapētoi in this chapter (cf. vss. 1 and 8). The antecedent of tauta is "the new heavens and the new earth." This is third occurrence of prosdokaō (cf. vss. 12 and 13). Here the participle is causal. The impv. spoudasate means "be eager." It's object is the infinitive heurethēnai. The antecedent of autō is Christ. It could be either dative of agent ("be found by Him in peace" NKJV) or dative of association ("and at peace with him" NIV). The predicate adjectives aspiloi kai amōmētoi mean "without spot and without blemish." In I Pet. 2:13 the willful sinners are called spiloi kai mōmoi "spots and blemishes." The adverbial phrase en eirēnē denotes manner. It reminds us of dikaiosynē in the previous verse. Who are these people? Cf. Mt. 25:34-40. They are those who live now in daily repentance. Such people produce the fruits of the Spirit and fight sin.