

3:1 *Peter's Second Letter*

By Way of Reminder.

Hilary of Arles: Peter makes a point of mentioning that this is his second letter, so that the recipients will not doubt its authenticity. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.¹

Arousing Your Sincere Mind.

Oecumenius: We learn from this verse that this is Peter's second letter. What he is saying is that in both of them he has tried to stir up the sincere mind which he knows is latent in his readers. Commentary on 2 Peter.²

3:2 *Remember the Commandments*

Remember the Predictions of the Holy Prophets.

Oecumenius: Here Peter tells us what the content of a sincere and pure mind is. It is the mind of a person who has heard and received the message of salvation which was preached by the prophets and the apostles. This is precisely what Paul meant when he said: "Built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles." ³ Commentary on 2 Peter.⁴

3:3 *Scoffers Will Come in the Last Days*

In the Last Days.

Hilary of Arles: Here Peter prophesies what will happen in the future, for we must always remember that there are prophets in the New Testament too. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.⁵

Gnostic Scoffers.

Theophylact: These scoffers were the Gnostics and other similar heretics who appeared at that time. Commentary on 2 Peter.⁶

3:4 When Is Christ Coming Back?

Things Have Continued.

Hilary of Arles: People were talking this way as if the flood had never occurred and as if fire had never come down from heaven in the past. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.⁷

The Scoffer's Impatience.

Oecumenius: These scoffers will start with the failure of Christ to return immediately. From there they will go on to corrupt all the saving commandments of the Lord, in order to destroy our faith completely. Commentary on 2 Peter.⁹

3:5 The Earth Was Formed by God Out of Water

Earth Formed Out of Water.

Hilary of Arles: The whole creation is basically formed out of water, even if it is solidified in the form of earth or elevated in the way that heaven is. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.¹²

3:6 The Earth Was Destroyed by Water

The New Beginning with Noah.

Oecumenius: When God originally made it, creation was good, and this was not by accident but by his design. However, human beings sinned and subjected the creation to their own vanity, which is why it is no longer firm but subject to many ups and downs. Then during the flood, because there were a few people who had maintained the pure worship of God, the world was refounded through Noah and those who were with him in the ark, along with the animals and seeds required to make a new beginning. Commentary on 2 Peter.¹⁵

3:7 Heaven and Earth Will Be Destroyed by Fire

Destruction by Water and Fire.

Didymus the Blind: Many people think that these words refer to changes and revolutions which will take place here on earth. They say that heaven and earth were once both water and that they were formed out of water by the Word of God. What had been the world up to then perished in water, and what are now the heavens and the earth are based on the Word but are being kept for destruction by fire. By these words the preacher is saying that what we now see before us will be consumed by fire. For he says that the day of judgment will come as a thief in the night, and that on that day the heavens will implode, and the elements will be burnt by the resulting fire. Afterward there will be new heavens and a new earth, in which the righteous will possess righteousness and the promises of God in their own dwellings. However, it must not be forgotten that this letter is counterfeit, and although it may be published, it does not form part of the earliest list of received writings. Commentary on 2 Peter.¹⁶

Kept Until the Day of Judgment.

Oecumenius: If someone asks why God created the world if all he intends to do is to destroy it, the answer is that the world will be renewed at the end of time. Commentary on 2 Peter.¹⁸

3:8 One Day Is Like a Thousand Years to God

All Was Night Before the Coming of the Lord.

Athanasius: A thousand years is the time that the temple worship lasted. For from the completion of the temple by Solomon, who built the Lord's house until it became redundant when Christ died on the cross is a thousand years. This thousand years is compared to a day, or to a watch in the night, because everything appeared to be night before the coming of the Savior. For until the sun of righteousness arose, everyone dwelt in ignorance and confusion. Catena.²⁰

Considering the Millennium as the Last Day.

Augustine: If we take the millennium and think of the end of that time as being the end of the world, we could say that it was the end of time in general, for a thousand years in God's sight are like a single day. Because of this, anything that was done during the millennium could be spoken of as done at the end of time or on the last day. Letters 199.17.²¹

God Remembers.

Hilary of Arles: Just as a man works for a day and afterwards remembers what he has done, so God does not forget even after a thousand years. It may be a long time before he gets round to punishing sinners, but when he does so he uses his power in a single instant. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.²³

3:9 The Lord Is Waiting for People to Repent

His Promises Not Delayed.

Augustine: The Lord does not delay the promise. A little while and we shall see him, where we shall no more ask anything. We will no more ask anything because nothing will remain to be desired, nothing will be hidden to be inquired about. Tractates 101.6.2.²⁵

As Some Count Slowness.

Pachomius: Let us not look upon God's patience as ignorance. He holds back and delays so that, when we have been converted to a better state, we may not be handed over to torments. Book of Our Father Horsiesios 3.²⁷

3:10 The Day of the Lord

Will Come Like a Thief.

Oecumenius: The day of the Lord will come without notice and unexpectedly, just as the flood did in the days of Noah. People will be eating and drinking and will not realize what is happening to them until the flood overtakes them. Commentary on 2 Peter.³²

3:11 What Sort of Persons Ought You to Be

Holy and Godly.

Hilary of Arles: As you wait for the end of all things, you must live holy lives according to the three laws—the Old Testament, the New Testament and the law of nature—and you must keep faith in the Trinity, which is the law of godliness. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.³³

3:12 Waiting for the Day of the Lord

Hilary of Arles: You are waiting for the end as the virgins waited for the bridegroom. ³⁴ Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.³⁵

3:13 New Heavens and a New Earth

Creation Will Share in Our Glory.

Andreas: It is not just we, says Peter, but the whole creation around us also, which will be changed for the better. For the creation will share in our glory just as it has been subjected to destruction and corruption because of us. Either way it shares our fate. Catena.³⁶

3:14 Be Found by Him Without Spot or Blemish

Spotless in Faith.

Hilary of Arles: When he returns, Christ wants to find you spotless in your faith and uncorrupted in the chastity of your body. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.³⁷

You Wait for These.

Andreas: Everything in creation was made for our enjoyment, and it will be remade along with us.... This new life is for all who believe, and not just for Israel, for the Lord has exalted the Gentiles, lifting us up by the cross toward himself. Has he not provided for believers? Indeed he has. He has lifted them up and carried them and placed them in the many mansions which there are in the Father's presence. Catena.³⁸

3:15 Count the Forbearance of Our Lord as Salvation

So Paul Wrote.

Augustine: Peter, in his second epistle, urged us to holiness in living and character, declaring that this world would pass. New heavens and a new earth are expected which will be given to the just to inhabit.... Some people had used certain obscure passages from Paul's writings in order to excuse their lack of concern to live well, on the ground that they were secure in their salvation. Peter was saying that some

of the things which Paul said are hard to understand and that these people were twisting them to their own ruin. On Faith and Works 14.22 ⁴¹

The Wisdom Given Him.

Hilary of Arles: Note that Paul wrote to them not according to the wisdom which he possessed but according to the wisdom which was given to him specifically for that purpose. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.⁴²

The Forbearance of Our Lord.

Andreas: This is a reference to what Paul said when he wrote: “Do you not know that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” ⁴⁴ Catena.⁴⁵

The Lord’s Patience Is Our Salvation.

Oecumenius: If the patience and kindness of God calls us to repentance, this is because repentance is the way of salvation for us. God’s patience always works toward our benefit and salvation. Commentary on 2 Peter.⁴⁸

3:16 Some Things in Paul Hard to Understand

Do Not Make the Wicked Confident of Salvation.

Augustine: If it is both true and clear that those lacking in good works will be thrown into the fire, ⁴⁹ without doubt another interpretation of Paul’s sayings must be sought and his teaching must be adapted in those matters which the apostle Peter says are difficult to understand but ought not to turn people to their own destruction, so that, contrary to the most obvious testimony of Scripture, they make the most wicked confident of obtaining salvation, although they most stubbornly cling to their sin and are not changed by correction or penance. Eight Questions of Dulcitius 1.⁵⁰

Wisdom from Above.

Cyril of Alexandria: It seems that some people find Paul hard to understand, no doubt because he speaks about the wisdom which comes from above, for in him Christ himself is speaking. Catena.⁵¹

Peter Awed by Paul's Brilliance.

Hilary of Arles: Peter says this because he himself was overwhelmed by Paul's brilliance. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.⁵²

They Twist Scripture.

John of Damascus: The enemy of our souls has made some people turn away from the straight road and divided them by strange teachings and taught them to interpret certain sayings of the Scriptures falsely. But the truth is one, and it is that which was preached by the glorious apostles and inspired Fathers and which shines in the universal church. Barlaam and Ioasaph 16.134.⁵⁴

Scripture Not Unstable.

Symeon the New Theologian: It is not divine Scripture which suffers from those who twist it according to their own desires and who corrupt themselves in their own passions but rather those who disfigure it. Discourses 15.2.⁵⁵

3:17 Do Not Be Carried Away by Error

Beware Lest You Be Carried Away.

Cyril of Alexandria: Peter has to warn his people so that they will not be deceived. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself warned us for our safety, that we should "beware of those who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inside they are ravenous wolves."⁵⁶ And again: "Take care that you are not deceived. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they will deceive many."⁵⁷ And Paul cries: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers claiming to believe in the Lord Jesus."⁵⁸ For those who deform the truth by their doctrines of ungodliness and works of evil are like those who killed the prophets and apostles. Indeed, they are worse, because they have killed not only the living but those who have been saved as well. Catena.⁵⁹

3:18 *To Him Be the Glory Now and to Eternity*

Grow in Faith and Knowledge.

Hilary of Arles: Grow in the faith which is yours by baptism and in the knowledge which comes from putting that faith into practice. Introductory Commentary on 2 Peter.⁶¹

The Letter Ends in Prayer.

Oecumenius: Just as the other New Testament letters end with prayers, so too does this one, by praying that its recipients might grow in the faith of the Lord. Commentary on 2 Peter. ⁶⁴