

12th Bible Study - Feb. 22, 2023

BIBLE SKILL

Read, reflect on,
and emotionally
react to a verse.

Focus on 2 Peter 3:9. Read the verse aloud several times, emphasizing different words each time. For example, in one reading emphasize words referring to human beings, such as *some*, *you*, and *any*. Then read the verse again, emphasizing all the actions, such as *delay*, *perish*, and *repentance*.

Make notes about your thoughts. How does this verse move you emotionally?

What feelings were evoked by the different words and phrases as you emphasized them?

WHILE WAITING (2 Peter 3:11-13,17-18)

¹¹Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness ¹²as you wait for and earnestly desire the coming of the day of God. The heavens will be on fire and be dissolved because of it, and the elements will melt with the heat.

Peter didn't defend the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus merely for theological discussion. He revealed the way people should live in light of the imminent return of Christ. We need to separate from the evil of the world and live in such a way that we accomplish God's purposes and bring glory to His name. We will one day give account of our lives to God. Peter encouraged his readers to "earnestly desire" (v. 12) Christ's coming. The coming of Christ isn't something believers should fear but something we eagerly anticipate. The expression "earnestly desire" can also be translated "hasten the coming." Certainly Jesus had taught that the gospel would spread to all ethnicities before the end would come (see Matt. 24:14), and perhaps Peter had this in mind as he spoke of hastening the day.

¹³But based on His promise, we wait for the new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell.

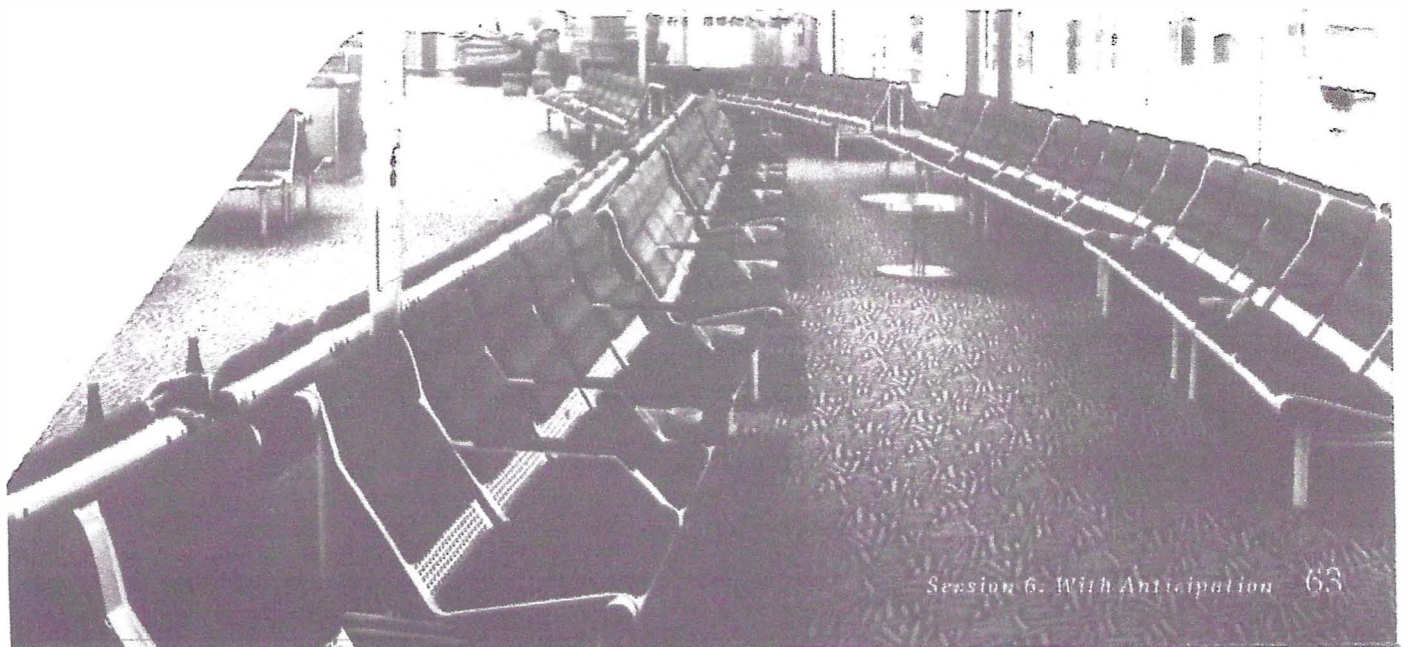
So that people wouldn't worry about the dissolution of the earth, God promised to bring new heavens and a new earth. Some Bible students understand Peter to indicate that this will be a brand-new universe, created by the word of God from nothing just like the original creation (see 2 Pet. 3:5). Others believe Peter was talking about a transformation of the elements of the existing universe. Scripture indicates that the final home of the resurrected, redeemed saints will be the new Jerusalem that will come down to the re-created earth (see Rev. 21-22). Whatever the case, our final destination will be "where righteousness will dwell."

How does the life we live to live in anticipation of the return of Jesus reflect the life we'll have after His return?

¹⁷Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stability. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Peter ended his letter where he started it: with a call to spiritual growth. He encouraged his readers to “grow in the grace and knowledge” of Jesus Christ. This growth isn’t merely theological knowledge or understanding. It’s growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our relationship with Him needs to deepen. The false teachers didn’t believe they would face judgment or have to give account of themselves, so they felt free to live in ungodliness. However, we know that one day Christ will return and bring judgment on the ungodly.

If a person is growing in his or her spiritual life, all the other issues faced in this life become secondary. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.



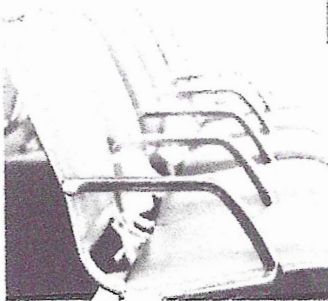
➤ OBEY THE TEXT

Believers can be confident in the return of Christ. We can urgently show God's grace by sharing Christ with all people. Believers demonstrate assurance of the return of Christ by building godly character in anticipation of that return.

How can you use the truths of 2 Peter 3:9-13, 17-18 when confronted by a skeptic who denies Jesus' return? Record key points. With whom can you share these insights?

Record the names of people you know who haven't yet accepted Jesus. Thank God for His patience, ask Him to send someone to share the good news with them, and express a willingness to be that person.

Quickly review the previous sessions in the study, looking for insights you highlighted and actions you identified. How have you turned these insights into action during this study? Share with the Bible study-group how you've grown, encouraging one another in your spiritual walks.



MEMORIZE

The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.—2 Peter 3:9

FEBRUARY 22

Seek His Kingdom

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.*

MATHEW 6:33 (NIV)

ON THIS FIRST day of Lent, search your heart for anything distracting you from feeling the comfort of Jesus' presence. Vow to use this time to enhance your relationship with God and cultivate a deep and abiding prayer life.

Heavenly Father, today, on Ash Wednesday, guide me to live by Your will. Protect me from temptation.
