

2Peter 12-01-20b

Okay, let's pick up our study in 2 Peter chapter 3. The heavens and earth as we know them, this physical universe with its molecules and its forms of energy is going to pass away. It is going to dissolve. It is going to melt.

It is going to end with a great noise and with a lot of heat and fire, which of course, what is the name for the process by which the universe came into existence according to science? What's the popular name? The big bang. What is a bang? It's a loud noise. How do they describe the hot big bang model? What does it begin with? Intense heat, intense heat, unimaginable heat, unimaginably dense explosion just beyond it.

It's incomprehensible. Scientists can't even figure it out. And you say, well, what caused it? Where did it come from? They have no clue.

And they get angry if you start pressing them on that point in some cases. But we're looking forward, hastening the coming of the day of God. We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness is at home.

And Patty made a great point just after our first session tonight, because if you think about this, the only familiarity, the only guiding information that we're going to have when we enter this completely new realm of existence is righteousness. We don't know the kind of physics. We don't know the kind of resurrection body.

We don't know the kind of sites we will see or the kind of sounds we will hear. We have a few sort of allusions and visions that John gives us in the revelation. And we think of glassy seas and innumerable saints and coals of fire and the throne of God and bright glory and so on.

But we really just have no conception of what it's going to be like. We have five or six senses here. Who knows how many senses we're going to have there? I think it would be great to, right now, we either see things, just as one example, we either see things as opaque or transparent.

I look at a wall, it's opaque. I look at glass in a window, it's transparent. And you put down a floor, it's opaque.

And if you say, I wonder where the joists are under this floor, because I'd really like to put a screw in there and fix this squeak. Well, wouldn't it be great if you had the kind of eyesight where you could just change the opacity to transparency and look and see? And you'd say, oh, the joist is right there, and I'll just put the screw in right there. Well, just as a suggestion, these are the kinds of things that we can't even imagine.

We don't know what capabilities and what opportunities and what characteristics are going to pertain. There's one thing we do know, and the Bible is consistent in its testimony on this point. It

is characterized by righteousness.

So do you want to be completely dazed and confused and awkward and inept and unknowing and not able to navigate, not be able to find your way around, bumping into things, tripping over things, being completely unfamiliar? Then just stay away from righteousness. But if you want to have a clue, if you want to be knowledgeable, if you want to be proficient, if you want to be useful to God the Father, if you want to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you want to enter fully into the next phase of God's plan, if you want to be a part of it, if you want to be a dynamic force within it, if you want to be of service and of use, then study righteousness. Lay hold of righteousness by faith, because the more we understand about righteousness, the more at home we are going to be in the new heavens and the new earth.

The key, the operative environmental principle in that new environment is righteousness, and the more we can learn about righteousness, the more we can grasp it, the more we can live in its light and produce it by faith, the more ready and comfortable and useful we're going to be. You think back. Think back to when you maybe moved and had to go to a new school or started school at a new, you know, now we've got this level thing.

When I went to school, you went to the same school from kindergarten until you dropped out or graduated. Now you go to a junior elementary and a senior elementary, and then you go to a junior high, and then you go to a high and then a senior high, so every two or three years you're moving to a new school. Well, when you get there, or you go to a new job, or you go to a new place, and you know that feeling of awkwardness and unfamiliarity, and you don't know any of the people, you don't know where any of the hallways lead, you don't know which door is a broom closet and which door is the bathroom and which door is the office.

You're trying quickly to gather information and try to get your bearings and try to get some sort of comfort level, but it can initially be very stressful. Yeah, those of us that grew up in a military family and moved from pillar to post, and you know you're the new kid, and you don't know anybody, nobody knows you, and everybody else seems to know how to act in class, and when to take out the books, and what chair to sit in, and when to do this, and when to do that, and you're just a fish out of water. You're a, you know, a duck in the desert.

You just don't know how to act. Well, I can't think of a worse place for that to be the case than the new heavens and the new earth. There's no excuse for it.

God is giving us the information now. As we come to know God and we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, we are going to be the guides. We can be those who can show others, well, go this way.

I believe if you go down and turn to the right, that's where the gates are to Jerusalem. Right down that way, that's where the tree of life grows. That's where the river of life is.

Right up there, see that glow, that distant glow? That's the throne of God. That's the lamb who is the light. You see the dark area back there? Well, that's where you and I are going.

This is where we live, back here, and let's sit here by this road because I know sooner or later somebody's going to come along with a pile of leaves from the tree of life. Maybe we can get a few and, you know, do better. You want to grasp, you want to lay hold of these things.

This is our entree. This is our training. This is our indoctrination, our initiation, our familiarization with eternal life with God.

This is the record that God has given to us eternal life and that life is in his Son. We have eternal life now and it is shot through. It is characterized by righteousness.

We've got to learn this righteousness. We have to think this righteousness. We have to immerse ourselves in and pursue righteousness because this is the only thing that is going to light our path when we get to this new creation, new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

So, here's my conclusion. The reason I think it is important to understand the difference between *naos* and *kainos*, the reason I think it is important to understand that this is going to be a completely new universe and a completely new earth, completely new Jerusalem, completely new physics, completely new everything. The Bible emphasizes this because it is essential that we recognize that we're not taking anything with us.

Your ability to get along, your ability to cope, your skills, your talents, your way with words or your way with people or your way with whatever it is you have a way with here is going to be done away with. The only useful commodity that we will show up with is righteousness. That's what we've got to concentrate on.

That's what we have to be characterized by and then we will be ready and we will be proficient and most of all, we will be pleasing in the Father's sight. We will be reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ. He will be the firstborn among many brethren who are wise, who are useful, who can move with the plan of God forward into the eternal future.

Therefore, verse 14, beloved, looking forward to these things, waiting expectantly for these things, this is another present active participle. Participle takes a verb and turns it into a noun, right? To swim, that's a verb. Swimming is a noun.

It's a gerund. It's a participle, right? So, therefore, *agapetoi*, being the people who are expectantly waiting, being expectantly waiting ones is about the closest you can get in English. Being expectantly waiting ones, *pros docantes*, *doceo* has to do with your thinking, *pros* face to face with, be diligent, *spoudazo*.

This is translated in Timothy, study to show yourself approved. *Spoudazo*, this is putting some

effort into it. It's not passive.

It's not apathetic. It's not sitting around waiting for something good to happen. Spoudazo, you press, you push, you pursue, you put some effort into this thing.

You've got a little bit of drive. You've got a head of steam built up here. Be diligent to be found by him.

Now, think about that. Be diligent to be found by him in peace without spot and blameless. Looking forward to these things, there's a new heaven and new earth coming.

The Lord Jesus Christ is going to come. The elements of this whole universe is going to melt with the fervent heat and be done away with. So, be diligent to be found.

You think about that thief in the night business. When the Lord Jesus comes, he's not coming as a thief to take away. It's not going to be a negative event.

It's not going to be a time of loss. Work at being ready so that when he comes, he finds us. We don't find him.

Remember, Jesus said, don't pay any attention. He's talking to the Jews of the tribulation generation. Somebody says, look, here he is and run that way.

Or, oh, he's over here and run over that way. Jesus told the Old Testament saints, don't be trying to find me in the last days. We are to be found by him.

We look forward and recognize that these things are coming. We are looking forward to and hastening the day of his return. We want it to come, but with that in mind, we are working so that whenever he comes, he will find us busy.

This is sort of like children who are in the house and the parents have gone out to run errands, go get groceries or whatever. Kids are in the house. They're old enough.

They don't need a sitter, junior high age maybe. Well, you can be in there playing with matches, looking for Christmas presents in the closets or something, or you can be doing your homework. Now, there's no parent there.

Parent left and said, you know, it'd be really nice if he could do those supper dishes. I've got to run out and do an errand. I'll be back in a little while.

I've got to go visit a sick friend or something. Can you do the dishes and, you know, get your little brother ready for bed? This is what my task used to be, little tykes running around. My dad would be at the base.

My mom would have to go do something. He said, well, can you help the little ones get ready for

bed? So I'd chase my little brother down and tackle him and get him to put on his put on his jammies. And, you know, I was the oldest.

And so that this was what my mother asked me to do. Now, we could have all just had wrestling matches or taken all of our toys out and played with them instead of getting ready for nighttime and bedtime. But how would we be found when our parents return? This is the idea.

When the parents come back, it'd be pretty stupid to do foolish things and be disobedient and then be found unprepared, be found disobedient, be found in line for discipline and judgment. Wouldn't it be better to be found with everything done? Oh, what a nice job you did on the kitchen. Hey, look, your little brother's all in his jammies and he's already fallen asleep and everything is neat and everything is in order.

I am pleased with you for being responsible. I'm pleased with you for paying attention to what I asked. I know that you love me because you do what I say.

The greatest expression of love is to heed. If you love someone, you think about them. You heed them.

You try to do things in a way that is pleasing for them, right? And the lack of those things speaks in the other direction. So how is the Lord Jesus going to find us when he comes? Is he going to be a thief in the night for us, too? Or will he find us? Look at these three things. In peace, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

Irenae, without spot and blameless. Isn't it interesting that those two things are separated out? We think, well, sin, that's defilement. And if I confess my sins, I'm cleansed by the blood of Christ and now I'm not defiled and I'm not going to be judged and I'm not going to get disciplined because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, right? So that seems like kind of a monolithic idea.

It's one thing. Here's sin that's unconfessed and is a problem. Confess that sin, the blood of Christ is applied, goes away, everything's good.

So why do we have these two things, without spot and blameless? Well, here's the thing. What is a spot? What is a spot? We know that Irenae is peace. We know what blamelessness is.

But spotless, this is actually a negative. It's the word *aspiloi*. And this is spotless ones, actually.

You have the alpha privative and then you have *spilos*. This reminds you of the word *spoil*. Is it spoil or is it going to spoil? And this means literally unspoiled, being of the highest quality without defect, spotless, of an outward condition.

We had this word in 1 Peter 1.19. You were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver and gold and so on, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Observationally, you can see a spot, right? Now, observationally, can you see blame? Well, only if you happen to see a blameworthy act take place. But if I stand here before you tonight, you could look at me and say, well, I don't see any obvious spots, but can you look at me and tell if I am to blame for anything today? Well, you really can't.

Spot has to do with what is observable. Blame has to do with what is more internal responsibility in the abstract. And so the idea is, what is your character? You have obvious character traits.

You can be an obvious reprobate. You can be an obvious rascal. You can be an obvious hard to get along with person.

You can be an obvious arrogant person. You can be an obvious abusive person. There are things that are on the exterior, and we can say, oh, here's a flaw.

Here's a weakness. Here's a shortcoming. And it is observable.

Blame is much harder to fix. This is more in the thoughts and intents of the heart. Am I to blame? Could I have done more? Did I have nefarious thoughts? Did I have selfish motives in doing this seemingly wonderful thing? This is when you get into politics in the election season.

All of this starts coming to the fore. Well, here's this person, and he was a big businessman. Well, is being a big businessman good or bad? Well, I look at it, and I see spots.

I see people that were harmed and companies that went under and people that lost their jobs. Those are the spots. And people say, well, he's to blame because he was greedy.

He was thinking only of money and careless of others. Well, you don't really know what he was thinking. He might have been thinking, wow, when I help our company succeed, all of our employees, we add jobs.

We benefit the people who are here. Everybody wins. It's a win-win.

We do these things. So what was going on in the heart? Well, you don't know. So when it talks about without spot and without blame, this is pretty well comprehensive.

Anything observable on the outside or any of those hidden and secret faults on the inside, be diligent, be pressing, be working to be found by him without obvious faults and without secret faults, without spot, without blame. That's how it strikes me anyway. And in peace.

How many times do you see in the New Testament, Paul chiding, I hear that there are wars and divisions among you. It should not be so. Live in peace with all men to the extent that you can.

Be diligent to be found with him not actively battling others, not characterized by strife, not carrying a grudge, not seeking revenge, not looking to balance the scales or right some imagined wrong. Be in peace. This is peace with others.

This is peace with self. Now, there are people that are not at peace with themselves. You look at these eating disorders and other kinds of sort of obsessive behavior sometimes where people are, there's people that hurt themselves.

And I mean, they're not at peace. They've got unreconciled problems. And the biggest problem is that they don't have a relationship with God and they don't recognize that they, the great thing about belonging to God is what does the Bible say? You are not your own.

You are bought with a price and it is not a cheap price. It's the blood of Christ, which is one of the most precious prices that can be paid. You're worth something to God.

God paid the blood of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ for me and for you. That makes you worth something. And you've been given opportunities and you've been given resources and you've been given comfort and you've been given encouragement.

You've been given the presence of the Holy Spirit just as much as any other believer. You have intrinsic worth in God's eyes because you have all of these things from Christ. So how can you not be at peace? Stop obsessing on yourself.

Stop obsessing about what others think or what you think of others. Be at peace. Be centered in the plan and purpose of God and recognize that in Christ, old things are passed away.

All things are become kynos. These old things have been replaced with new and better things. All things are become kynos, new in quality, taking the place of the old defective things.

That's how we can be found at peace. Anytime we start being troubled, anytime we start feeling inferior, anytime we start feeling kind of shy and intimidated and troubled and uncertain and lacking confidence and starting to come glued at the seams, hey, I am body of Christ. I am bride of Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ died for me. I am in him. I am chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

I am heir to promises. I have eternal life. I'm expecting a resurrection body.

I plan on being an overcomer. I've got the word of God in my soul. I've got the Holy Spirit in my soul.

Why am I fretting about myself? Calm down. Irene. You know, they talk about an Irenic scene.

Irene, peace. It's peaceful. Be diligent.

And isn't it interesting, you have to work at peace. Spoudazzo, be diligent to be found by him at peace. Sweat and struggle and work hard to be found relaxed and confident and unruffled is kind

of the idea because we have to, to get a clean house, you've got to do some work.

You've got to throw out a lot of baggage. You've got to sweat and strain to get a nice place where you can just relax, right? Spoudazzo, work hard to be found by him at peace without spot and blameless. Does this all kind of lay down and make sense now, doesn't it? And verse 15, consider that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation.

Now he's harking back to what he began with. There are those who say that God isn't there. God isn't real.

The Bible's not true. The promises are, are a fantasy. You're believing in old myths and legends and people that didn't know a fraction of modern knowledge wrote these cumbersome old dusty books and a bunch of goat herders put these things together and you're still trying to believe it.

Come on, catch up, join us in the 20th century, be stressed, live a short life, die of heart failure, you know, join all the rest of us that don't have any peace, don't have any comfort, don't have any future, don't have any purpose, don't have any concept of what's going on in the world and live for the moment, eat, drink and be merry. Tomorrow we die. Fatalistic, materialistic, secularistic, humanistic, foolishistic, consider that the patience of God, the reason he's not constantly interrupting human history is he is waiting.

You think about any living organism and the complexity and the beauty of it. Dr. Goebbels was explaining to me about the beauty of the whole tooth system and how complex and interrelated everything is and how DNA knows exactly when to tell your baby teeth to fall out and your permanent teeth to start growing in and, you know, what if that timing got messed up? What if the teeth were pointed the wrong way? I mean, you know, I can think of all kinds of ways for that system to go wrong but and I cannot think of very many evolutionary mechanisms that would hone and refine this so that each facing surface on each one of your molars is exactly paired with one that's in a completely different part of your body. I mean, how does my lower jaw know what's going on in the upper jaw? It doesn't and vice versa.

You know, they don't talk when I chew. They don't communicate and say, hey, you know, you got kind of a sharp angle there. Would you mind kind of bending around a little bit? I'm getting, you know, the root down here is talking to me, kicking me saying, hey, too much stress.

It's designed by God. The patience of God, the reason he doesn't interrupt, he doesn't reveal himself in a big parade is for salvation. God has put this delicately balanced, wonderful testimony to himself and then he has retired.

Why? Anybody can acknowledge if you stick your face in the room. You can't help it. If God just took the whole human race, sat them on the edge of the throne room and said, hi there, I'm God, you're human, believe in me or die.

Well, not hard to believe in him, he's right there. It might be a few people slapping themselves saying, I must wake up, I must wake up. Bad dream, bad dream.

But especially those who wouldn't want to be in the presence of God. But what has God done? God is looking for people who spontaneously, with a minimum of information, choose for him, desire his presence, appreciate his provision, look forward to his universe where righteousness dwells. And the way he does that is by removing himself and putting the testimony and the evidence.

In the mouths of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. You have the witness of the Holy Spirit in the soul. You have the witness of the work of God's hands in creation.

You have eternity placed in the heart. You've got the testimony of three witnesses. And on that testimony, everybody chooses.

And God waits. He's letting the experiment run. Let as many people as possible spend as much time as possible analyzing the evidence.

We won't pressure the jury. If the jury needs to deliberate for three days, we'll give them three days. If they need to deliberate a week, we'll give them a week.

No pressure. Make your decision, make your choice. So the patience, the long suffering of our God is deliverance.

The reason he's holding back is to give everyone maximum opportunity to make that choice that only they can make. Then he breaks off. And you've got a long M-dash there in your text.

The long suffering of our Lord is deliverance, is soteria, as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. Notice Paul didn't make it up. The wisdom that Paul has written down was given to him.

What did Peter say earlier? No prophecy of scriptures of any private derivation. Paul didn't just... Listen, you can't believe the freight liners full of writing where people are saying that Paul invented Christianity. You know, Jesus had a lot of good things, you know, the golden rule and lambs in the pastures and all, you know, besides still waters.

And then Paul came along and invented this whole big Christianity thing. No, he didn't. Peter himself says Paul wrote the wisdom that was given to him by God.

Our beloved brother Paul, no hard feelings about getting called out for eating and not eating with the Gentiles. And, you know, it's a little bit of public embarrassment there. Peter says, hey, you know, I've been embarrassed by a lot better than you.

The Lord Jesus himself had to ask me three times, do you love me? So, hey, no sweat. My

beloved brother Paul, I appreciate you helping me get even better at dealing with the Jews and the Gentiles. Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written you.

Now, what is it that the beloved apostle Paul has written to you specifically? What does Peter say Paul has written? That the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, right? As Paul has written, according to the wisdom given to him. Now, where did Paul write this? Can you think of a place? This is where the second most valuable book on earth, right behind the Bible, the new treasury of scripture knowledge helps. This is Romans.

Romans chapter two, verse four. Do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? Do you despise the riches of his forbearance and long-suffering? You may remember that this is in our memory verse packet, right? Do you not recall? Do you despise the riches of God's kindness, his goodness, his patience, his long-suffering? His goodness is giving you space to repent, giving you a chance to recover, to accept, to acknowledge, to be saved. This tells me that Peter, by the time he wrote this second letter, had read Romans, because that is the only place that Paul makes that point.

Romans chapter two, verse four. So, what a great thing. Peter is reading Romans.

Peter is an apostle, spent time with the Lord. He could say, well, that Paul, he couldn't be writing anything I'd be interested in. Look at the humility of Peter.

Look how much more Peter understands and knows, because he's not proud. He's not stuck up and saying, well, it would be unseemly for me as, you know, one of the senior apostles to be reading this upstart, last of the apostles, born out of time, writing these letters to different people, wrote a letter to Rome, and, well, I can't be reading that. I should be writing Scripture, not reading it.

Peter doesn't say that at all, does he? Peter is ready to learn. He's reading the epistles of the apostle Paul, and he says, he's writing according to the wisdom that God has given him, and Peter says, you know what? I've got a hard time understanding it. He speaks of these things, and there's some things hard to understand.

Peter says, I can't quite, I'm an apostle, and I don't understand Paul. This gives me great comfort when I study an epistle, and I have trouble working it out. I figure, well, if the apostle Peter had to work on it to understand it, then I shouldn't feel so bad.

Speaking in them of these things, of the goodness of God, the forbearance of God, of the coming resurrection, of the coming resolution of all things, some of them are hard to understand, and untaught and unstable people twist them to their own harm, to their own destruction. Now, you remember in the previous paragraph, we had all of those references to *luo*, *apoparaluo*, and so on. Well, the unlearned, *amathase*, that's an alpha privative, and then you have *mathase*,

reminds you of the word for disciple or learner, and asteritoi.

Asterizo is a word for they're unstrengthened, and they twist them, streblusen, as they do the other writings to their own apolia, apoluo, destroy from, loosen up and remove from. This destruction is loss of reward, loss of opportunity, loss of capability, loss of blessing. Apolia, this is perdition.

This is the word that is consistently used to describe Judas, son of perdition. This is the word that was used of the false teachers in 2 Peter and in Jude. Apolia, destroyed from, taken away and removed from.

This is what happens when we do not rightly divide the word of truth. This is what happens when untaught and unstrengthened people ham-fistedly try to work with the word of God. They twist it to their own great loss.

They do it with not just Paul, but the rest of the scriptures. And of course, there's the argument there that Peter recognized the writings of Paul as scripture. Well, this brings us to verse 17 and 18, which are the last two verses in the letter.

And this is what we will look at next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you that you have revealed to us everything we need to know for fulfilling our potential and our opportunities in this life and preparing ourselves for the next. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will enliven these things and keep them in the forefront of our minds, motivate us, correct us and rebuke us and encourage us with them so that we will make the most effective use of the time that remains to us in this life. And that when the Lord Jesus comes at your command, he will find us at peace without spot and blameless, ready to move into that new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells.

We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.