

A Hopeful People – Discussion Notes¹

(Updated 1/2020; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: II Peter 3:1-13

Summary Highlights: Peter writes this second epistle to stir up the minds of his readers. He wants them to remember what had been spoken to them through the prophets and apostles. Peter warns of scoffers. The scoffers will talk against Jesus' return. Peter reminds his readers of God's involvement with creation. Peter assures his readers that God will keep his promises. God is trying to give people a little more time. Judgment is coming. Peter raises the question about how to live by such promises of God. He urges holiness. He urges a hope in God's supplying a new Heaven and a new Earth.

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that believers should put their hope in God, not in the false teachings of this world. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to make sure that our hopes are in God.

Key Points:

1. Remember God's word. Notice in vs. 1 the urging to remember what had been spoken. In order to remember, we must make sure that we hear, in the first place. *Let's work on listening carefully to what God is saying through His messengers – especially Bible based preaching and teaching.* Taking notes and reviewing them periodically will be helpful in our remembering God's word.

2. Scoffers. Notice in vss. 3-5 that there will be scoffers. They are known for following after their own lusts, talking against God's word, and being willfully ignorant. There are those who for some reason hang around the church, but they are more concerned about satisfying their lusts than with being a follower of Christ. They, in effect, challenge the authority of God's word with their own reasoning. And they are willfully ignorant. There is nothing wrong with our explanation. The problem is they don't want to understand. *Let's be aware of scoffers and make sure we are not scoffers.* On the contrary, we should seek to deny and dedicate ourselves to divine directions, instead of our lusts. We should trust and obey God's word, instead of what seems right to us, since what seems right to us can end in death. We should strive to understand God's word, instead of being willfully ignorant.

3. God is a promise keeper. Notice in vss. 5-7 that just as sure as God spoke the world into existence and then destroyed it with the great flood, God will destroy the

¹ Prepare to discuss the following: What is the point, what scripture supports the point, what is the application sentence, and what is an example of living by the material? After the material is covered, be prepared to answer the following: Which point do you want to spend extra time on, why do you think this point is so important, and what tips do you have for living by this material, in spite of the challenges? **What is one thing you will take from this session and work on, in regard to your discipleship goals?**

world with fire next time. *Let's work on trusting God, even when we don't understand His timing or methods.* God will do what He said He will do. He said He will bless those who obey Him and punish those who don't.

4. Ignorance. Notice in vs. 8 the urging for the people of God to not be ignorant. We are all ignorant of something, since we don't know everything. However, we should strive to learn and obey God's will for our lives. *Let's work on moving past ignorance to knowing and obeying God's will.* Prayerful study and obedience with the support of other believers will help us in this area.

5. God's longsuffering. Notice in vs. 9 that one of the reasons for God's apparent delay is that God has merciful longsuffering. God is trying to give people a little more time. Even though this idea may appear to conflict with God's foreknowledge and election, we should not ignore God's patience with and hope for humanity. We should work on being patient and hopeful for humanity as well. We should work diligently to help people get saved, instead of believing that God's long suffering will last forever. *In other words, let's help people get saved, so when God's long suffer ends, they will not experience His wrath.*

6. Holiness. Notice in vs. 11 that the promises of God should lead to our holy, set apart, godly living. Because God will bless us according to our obedience and punish us according to our disobedience, we should strive to live holy and obedient lives. At the core of holy living are the issues of loving God, ourselves, and others with the assurance of being saved by faith in Jesus' death for our sins. *Let's live like we believe the promises of God.*