

II Peter 3

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Our last studies have dealt with [Matthew 16:27,28](#). We argued from the text that Jesus predicted that he would return within the time of that generation with the glory of the father's angels. His kingdom would then be established forever. The saints would receive that kingdom and remain in that kingdom forever.

The main argument against this proposal is that the earth is still here! This assumes that the Bible teaches a dissolution of the globe, however. If this assumption is wrong, then those guilty are reading into the Bible that which is not there (eisogesis). Biblical theology must be cautious, and it must consider alternatives. This is not an admission that we can never be correct in our interpretations, but is an admission that we are fallible and we can err. Since we can all agree on our ability to err, then it follows that we can legitimately question "traditions" that have been handed down to us.

When problems within a particular tradition begin to mount into a heap of unanswered questions, then it is time to take another look at the tradition. Certainly, every system has problems. Gordon Clark, the great evangelical philosopher, wrote, *"...no system can give man omniscience. But if one system can provide plausible solutions to many problems while another leaves to many questions unanswered... who can deny us, since we must choose... the more promising first principle?"* (A Christian View of Men and Things, Trinity Foundation, 1991. 34).

The "first principle" in this matter is Scripture interpreted in light of its own time of composition. Thus, when Jesus' audience heard "this generation" they thought of their generation, logically. The New Testament shows that they believed this for Peter wrote, *"the end of all things is at hand."* Either Peter misunderstood Jesus, or Jesus himself was mistaken, or God's time and man's time are so far removed that when time statements are mentioned in the Bible we cannot possibly interpret them correctly. Thus, for Peter, "at hand" could mean thousands of years away, a minute away, or ten eons away. Who knows? Is this from the hand of God, the author of confusion?

[2 Peter 3:1-13](#) has been used as an indubitable proof that the Bible teaches that the world will one day "melt like wax;" that it is God's purpose and intention to destroy his creation in a fiery blast. Granted, if God so wanted to do so, then he is perfectly just and right in doing so. The question is not whether he has the right to do this, but whether he has given us in Scriptures the idea that he will do this.

So that we may preserve space, I recommend that you have your Bibles open and read verses 1-13 at this point. These next few issues will deal with the text as closely as possible in the same manner we have treated our previous studies in Matthew.

Verse 1 may seem harmless enough, but, on a preteristic method of interpreting Scriptures, it is all important. It tells us to whom Peter is writing. "Dear friends...." What an intimate, pastoral address! He knows these friends. He has assuredly met with many of them. He mentions that this is his "second epistle" to them. Therefore, we can rightly go back to his first epistle and find out who these folks are. 1 Peter 1:1 states, *"To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."* This answers our first question as to whom Peter is addressing. They are Jews of the Diaspora (the Greek word Peter uses is Diaspora (Strong's 1290) translated "scattered").

Again, Clark, who is not a preterist, states, *"whatever the racial complexion of these churches and localities may have been, and regardless of a verse or two that seem to refer to the Gentiles, Peter addresses the Jews"* (New Heavens, New Earth. A Commentary on First and Second Peter, Trinity Foundation, 1993, p. 8). The Diaspora is defined as that scattering of Jews outside of Palestine of which Peter mentions several provinces by name (compare [Acts 2:9-11](#); [James 1:1](#)). We know that Peter was primarily the apostle to the Jews ([Galatians 2:8](#)). Most of Peter's ministry was in Jerusalem, and it is most reasonable that he was writing from Jerusalem to these congregations. This is not to infer that Peter's gospel was different from Paul's, but merely that the primary audience of Peter was different. Peter and Paul maintained total agreement as to the gospel of Christ ([2 Peter 3:15](#)).

Now, having noted the fact that Peter knew these people, and that Peter was writing his second epistle before AD 70, it is reasonable to infer that the matter he is getting ready to address was on their minds.

"I want you to remember the words spoken of in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles." [2Peter 3:2](#) speaks volumes as to Peter's understanding that the Scriptures ("holy prophets") and the New Testament writings (the command through the apostles) are inspired. However, note the word, "remember." If someone has to "remember" something, then it is obvious that it has been already heard before.

Thus, Peter's audience had heard what he is getting ready to say in the proceeding verses. They know the subject matter. Also, the matter is contained in the "holy prophets" of the Old Testament. Peter's second sermon in Jerusalem states, *"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days"* (Acts 3:24). What days? Read Acts 2:16,17! The "last days" are the "these days" of Peter! Peter is saying that every prophet in the OT spoke about his days in the first century. This should be very clear to the student of the Bible.

Verse 3: *"...you must understand..."* *These three words reflect one Greek verb "to know."* The Greek reflects that they were "knowing" or had knowledge that *"...in the last days scoffers will come..."* Does it take a rocket scientist to see that Peter's "last days" in [Acts 2:17](#) and here are the same "last days?" Were there "scoffers" in Peter's day? If not, then why would Peter "remind" them that they would be scoffed at?

Preterist exegesis treats these letters as they were originally inspired to those they were written to. Peter is not writing to the 21st century. He is writing to his "dear friends" who "knew" that the prophets stated

clearly, as well as the Lord, that they would be scoffed at. This was not something Peter said was going to happen thousands of years from his time, but was happening to them right then! If they were being scoffed at, then it follows that they were living in the last days. Peter has affirmed this twice.

What were these scoffers saying? And why would it affect the Jews living in Asia Minor? This connects the scoffing with the Jewish religion, and we can see throughout the book of Acts that the temple was perceived as being spoken against. Jesus had prophesied that the temple would be destroyed within that generation, that *"not one stone would be left upon another."* Paul had affirmed that the "wrath of God" was coming upon the Jews for their failure to understand the meaning of Christ's ministry. The Jews of Jesus' day had expected that God would reward the city of Jerusalem, not destroy it. He would glorify it and the Jews and crush the Roman beast. Within this context, then, it can be seen that the content of the scoffers fits accordingly.

"Where is this parousia he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of the creation." The "parousia" immediately brings us back to Matthew 24 where the same word is used in context with the question concerning "when" the city would fall. It would fall "in this generation." Yet, Jesus had spoken these words nearly 30 some years ago. A delay was perceived. Did not Jesus indicate that in his parables? Several times in those parables, Jesus uses the figure of a king who delayed his coming, or who went away for a long time. The "parousia" would not happen immediately, but it would come within that generation... at the last hour.

After thirty some years, I confess, I would be tempted to think, "Well, where is his coming?" On this verse we can note the Jewish characteristics as well. "Our fathers" identifies who these scoffers were. This is a common phrase in the New Testament used exclusively in Jewish contexts. They were a younger sort. If they were in their thirties, and their fathers had been in their fifties or sixties when Jesus was alive, and had since died, but, at that same time, the temple rites continued with no indication that it was going to fall, then it becomes evident that the charge had some serious merit to it.

This is why Peter must "remind" them, and strengthen them by "the command of the Lord." It was a frightening day for the Jewish converts to Christ. Should they turn? Were they wrong? Maybe they misunderstood Jesus. Maybe they misunderstood the apostles. After all, many of those have already died, and it has been a few decades. The temple still stands, "everything goes on as before."

Jeremiah addressed the same situation. Then, the Jews claimed, *"the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord."* They claimed their "safety" in that place. God would not destroy them. But what does God say to them "through" the mouth of the holy prophet? *"The temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers, I will thrust from my presence"* (Jeremiah 7). The same situation now faced the firstfruits believers, and it is because of this sameness that Peter could remind them "through the mouths of the holy prophets" that such scoffing would be in vain and met with wrath as it was in Jeremiah's day.

The points so far, then, are:

1. Peter was basing his comfort from the Scriptures.
2. He was affirming to them that this would happen to them by the Lord's own words.
3. They were facing the same dilemma the prophets faced when, for example, Jeremiah spoke against the temple's demise in his own generation.

I am always open to criticism since I am fallible. Dale Lloyd, a subscriber to the Post, brought to my attention a small but important detail in the quotation I used from Gordon Clark's commentary on 2 Peter. Clark wrote that the epistle is written to Jews, which is not the entire truth. No doubt Jews were in the congregation Peter was writing to, but there is a distinction between Jews (House of Judah) and the House of Israel. The House of Israel (ten tribes) were scattered after the sack by the Assyrian nation (722 BC). The nation was divided after that and is addressed as two separate houses in Ezekiel and Hosea, for example.

These "diasporic Hebrews" were "divorced" by God (Jeremiah 3:8). Yet, they were also promised to be once again restored. Ezekiel 37:15-28 addresses the two houses with the promise that David would once again be king over a united Israel. This is the "restoration" of Israel under Christ (David). Those days, according to Ezekiel, would be when God's dwelling would be with Israel. Ezekiel wrote, "My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Ezekiel 37:27).

Paul quotes this very verse in 2 Corinthians 6:16, which he saw as fulfilled in the church. *"For we are the temple of the living God,"* Paul wrote, *"...as God has said, 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.'"* What is of interest to us is that this cannot be the case if Israel is still awaiting a future restoration some 2,000 years after the time of their visitation from God in Christ! The context of Ezekiel is "in the days" of her restoration. Paul quotes that that was happening in his day.

Further, if we consider that Peter was addressing the scattered House of Israel, then 1 Peter 2:10 makes perfect sense. There, Peter wrote, *"once you were not a people, but now (in Peter's day) you are people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."* Does this quote sound familiar? It should. Peter is alluding to Hosea 1:10. There, Hosea is prophesying to the House of Israel (not Judah). Hosea takes a wife (Gomer) and has a child, who the Lord called, "not my people" (lo ammi). Then, God promised them, *"in the place where it was said, 'you are not my people,' they will be called the sons of the living God."*

Thus according to Peter, God was calling them in that generation "my people." Israel was being raised from the dead, Judah was being reunited to the scattered house of Israel under one Lord: Jesus Christ. All Israel was being "saved." To this Peter wrote to those readers, *"you are a chosen generation."* It was Peter's generation that saw the restoration of Israel "in the heavens" by the gospel, the power of God unto salvation! In short, God kept his promise.

We can even go further. The apostle Paul quotes [Hosea 1:10](#) as well ([Romans 9:25,26](#)) and clearly states that this prophecy was being fulfilled in his day as it relates to the Gentiles coming into the promise of redemption.

Thus, these particular Hebrews, who were “not my people” were scattered among the nations (Gentiles) and were, in every sense of the word, Gentiles themselves. It was because of this that God could call all the Gentiles, both Hebrews and non-Hebrews “from every nation” because the promises made to Israel included that gathering of the “nations” (in the Greek, the word “nations” is also the word translated as “Gentiles”).

Yet there are Christians today who believe that God has not yet kept his promise concerning Israel's restoration/resurrection in light of what the Bible actually says was occurring in the days of the holy apostles! As Preterists we affirm with Paul that, *“Christ became a servant of the circumcision on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, so that the nations may glorify God for his mercy”* (Romans 15:8).

With that being said, then, I want to thank Mr. Lloyd for his insight. Now, we can continue our discussion of 2 Peter 3:1-13.

We finished verse 3 and noted that the scoffers were skeptical of their fellow Hebrews belief that the “parousia” would occur in their generation. It had been thirty years since Jesus announced that he would indeed come, that Jerusalem would be *“encompassed by armies”* (Luke 21:20), and the temple would be destroyed. [Matthew 24:27](#) uses the same word as Peter ([parousia](#) - Strong's 3952 - “coming,” “presence,” “arrival”). In the context of Matthew 24 Jesus clearly stated that Peter's generation would not all die until this parousia occurred. Thus, scoffers were on the scene, mocking this prediction. Peter is comforting them not to be troubled by these fools, because they too were prophesied about *“in the last days.”*

We now resume with verse 5. *“But they deliberately forget....”* Preterists pick up on everything, and this verse proves that these scoffers were contemporarily with these congregations. He is using the present tense. Now, wouldn't it be considered a little strange that mockers were scoffing at the idea of the parousia 2,000 years ago? Peter states that “in the last days” these scoffers would come. If they were already there in Peter's day, then it follows logically that Peter was living “in the last days.” The last days of what? Old covenant Judaism!

Hebrews 8:13 affirms, *“by calling this covenant ‘new’, he has made the first one obsolete; and what is being made obsolete and aging will soon disappear.”* What was going to “disappear?” What was then being made obsolete? Hebrews was written before AD 70. There are two conclusions that can be reached here. Either the old covenant is still in the process of “being made obsolete,” or it was “soon” to be made to disappear in the destruction of the nation of Israel. Again, it does not take a rocket scientist to make the

connection.

This is the same context with Peter. He continues, *“but they deliberately forget that heavens were of old and a land by water and through water having been held together by the word of God.”* This is a literal rendering from the Greek. What is of interest here is that Peter used an imperfect verb for the “heavens were.” The imperfect tense is a past tense of completed action. The implication is that there is a “past” heavens and a “now” heaven.

Peter proceeds, *“through which the then world, being overflowed with water, perished.”* A “land” and “heavens” existed in the past, and Peter calls this “the then world.” This “world” perished, along with the heavens and a land. The word of God held this together, but it can also be demolished by that same word.

Now, we must comment on Peter’s understanding of the term “world.” If we applied the hyper-literalist approach, the world was destroyed with water, along with land and heavens. Did God, after the flood, create another “heavens” and “land” making a new “world” since the past one was destroyed? We would all say, “no.” As we proceed I will press this point about Peter’s language and make it clearer.

“But the now heavens and the land by the same word have been stored for fire, being kept in a day of judgment and destruction of the impious men.” Peter is alluding to the words of the Lord spoken to him on the Mount of Olives. *“As in the days of Noah...”* That was the “then world” of Noah, and it was destroyed. The “now heavens and the land” refer directly to those “deliberately forgetting” that destruction. They were mocking this coming destruction, and they refer directly to the Jewish people, the “impious men” of then Israel.

Now, it is on this score that some may object that it is a far leap to make “heavens and the land” refer to “the Land” of Israel and its “heavens.” On this objection we must note a few things. First, Peter calls Noah’s days a “world” with “then heavens and a land.” We know that the “heavens” were not destroyed then remade, literally. We also know that Noah landed on a mountain, which was there before as well, and still here to this day. So, what “world” was destroyed, or “perished?” The literal globe, moon and sun? Hardly.

Thus, it is shown that “world” can refer to a specific generation without implying the literal, physical cosmos of the universe, as well as Peter’s use of “heavens” and “a land”. We use the word today when we say the “wide world of sports,” or “he is in his own world,” or “Noah’s world.” The fact is, Noah’s world, with its “heavens and a land” perished and is no more. The now heavens and the Land” were also being kept for judgment by fire, the “world” of Judaism.

Does the Bible support our contention? Certainly. The Tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly one. It was a shadow of “heaven on the land.” For example, Isaiah saw the Lord lifted up, surrounded by cherubim. The

ark of the covenant had two cherubim. The embroidery of the tent were pictures of cherubim (Exodus 26). God's heavenly abode has a "holy place" and "most holy place" according to the author of Hebrews. So, too, the earthly tabernacle had these. It was a pattern or copy of "the heavens." This extremely documented fact in the Bible (a subject of rich typology) should settle the question. But I will add to it.

Isaiah 51:16 states, *"And I have put my words into your (Zion) mouth, and in the shadow of my hand I hid you in order to plant the heavens and lay the foundation of the earth (or, "land"), and saying to Zion, you are my people."* What is this? God hid Zion in his hands in order to plant the heavens and the land in Zion. Zion, then, according to Isaiah, is a Land and Heavens in and of itself. There are other allusions like this in the Hebrew Bible, making it clear that Zion can be called a heavens and a land.

Also, as John Lightfoot (1602-1675) noted in his classic Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, the Rabbins frequently refer to Israel as "The Land." Those not of the "Land" were called "those without the Land." We find this confirmed in first century Jewish thinking in Paul. He states that the Gentiles were "outside" the "citizenship of Israel," (Ephesians 2:12). Again, Josephus, the Jewish historian writing in the first century, compares the fabrics of the tabernacle as representing "the heavens and the land" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 3.7.7).

Further, Jewish philosopher Moses Maiminides (1135-1168 AD) confirms the biblical view when he wrote that we should "understand the metaphor frequently employed by Isaiah.. when (he) describes the ruin of a kingdom or nation as *"the stars have fallen," "the heavens are overthrown," "the sun is darkened," "the earth is laid waste and trembles,"* and similar metaphors (from Guide for the Perplexed, p.204). Read how Isaiah describes the overthrow of Babylon in chapter 13. The Bible is full of this type of metaphor (called technically, "apocalyptic language").

Again, I like to support my argument from the Bible and scholarship. The great Puritan minister, John Owen (17th century) wrote, *"On this foundation I affirm, that the heavens and earth here intended in this prophecy of Peter, the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.., do all of them relate.. to that utter desolation and destruction that was to be made of the Judaical church and state"* (The Works of John Owen, vol. 9, pp.132-135.138-139). Owen was not a preterist. Owen was a Reformed Calvinist, a Puritan minister and age renowned respected theologian, as was John Lightfoot, who presided over the Westminster Confession of Faith. Lightfoot asserted the same words as Owen.

Thus, we have the support of the Bible, the support of Jewish commentary, and the support of conservative scholarship that "heavens and the Land" in Peter refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. We will continue with the other verses next issue.

The notion that is being challenged is that this passage unquestionably refers to the literal destruction of the entire universe. Peter does not say it will be "transformed," but that it will be "destroyed by fire" and "melt like wax" with the "elements" burning (v.10).

The "elements," according to this view, are the protons, neutrons, atoms, and molecules (we will explore this view next issue). That is the strict literal understanding of many for this text. To properly understand Peter we will consider the Greek text, commentaries from reputable authors and most importantly the Bible, the "whole counsel of God," on the matter, and see if the Bible speaks with the vocabulary of Peter in other places. And, of course, that ever important matter of "context." Who is Peter addressing? When did Peter write? What was the historical conditions around them? How would they have understood Peter's message?

One charge that is quite odd is that Preterism makes the Bible irrelevant by applying "everything to the past." First off, the charge is groundless, because it is untrue. The Birth of Jesus is foretold in the Prophets, and fulfilled in the Gospels. Since it is fulfilled, and there will be no other virgin births of Messiah, does that make the passage that foretold the now fulfilled event irrelevant?

The Book of Revelation has been treated as largely unfulfilled, thus irrelevant to the generation of saints to which it was given! Why must we insist that Peter's congregation was not a real, heart-pumping people? Did Peter's message "apply" to them? Peter explicitly told his congregation, *"in the last days scoffers will come, asking, 'where is this parousia you promised?'"* Jesus told Peter point blank: *"for as lightning comes forth. . . . so will be the parousia of the son of man."* Then Jesus added in Peter's ear, *'this, your generation, Peter, will not pass away until all these things are fulfilled.'* Thus, Peter was promised by Jesus Himself that there would be a parousia, a divine visitation, in his generation.

If the promise was made known to that generation that the parousia was going to occur, surrounding the events of Israel's earthly demise, then quite clearly, 30 years after it was promised, scoffers would come asking, "Where is this parousia, Peter? You said it was going to come, and it has not come in 30 years! Where is it, Peter? Maybe you were wrong!"

Strong words. Scoffing words. If the parousia does not happen, Peter is a liar. Worse, Jesus is a liar, because He's the one that told Peter he would come *"before some of you tasted death"* (Matthew 16:28). Peter is up against the wall here. God made a promise to those disciples. Would He keep it?

Peter makes it clear that these "scoffers" were contemporary in his days. Jude 18 uses the same word as Peter. Jude wrote, *"Be mindful of the words previously spoken by the apostles. . .because they told you, 'at the last time will be mockers.'"* Jude made it plain that these men were contemporary as well.

We have made that a point to note. If the Apostles were clearly teaching, beyond any shadow of a doubt, in simple, child-like terms that Jesus' parousia was possibly not going to occur until thousands of years removed from their generation, then why are scoffers mocking the promise in Peter's own day? Peter could simply instruct his own followers to respond by saying, "Listen, we never said it was going to happen in our generation; it could be a thousand generations before he returns." Thus he would effectively defeat their mockery.

Secondly, mockers scoff at something they have heard, and disagree with. The message they were ridiculing must have been preached by the apostles (according to Jude 18). That message was that the parousia would occur in their time, in their days. The scoffers are mocking this and asking, "where is it?" The Futurist turns Peter into little more than the boy who cried wolf. Where is the wolf? Well, the boy made it up. He was a liar. This point has never been answered successfully. It is usually dismissed. But it is not being dismissed by loyal students of the Bible anymore.

In his commentary on II Peter, the late Gordon Clark made the following points:

1. "The doubt [of the scoffers] must be based on the length of time since the ascension."
2. "Some thirty years had elapsed between the resurrection and the writing of Peter."
3. "Many of these Christians in these thirty years have died."
4. "From Acts 1:6-7 it is incontestable that these people had expected Christ to return in their lifetimes" (New Heavens, New Earth: A Commentary On First and Second Peter, Trinity Foundation, 1993, p.226).

Clark was not a Preterist (he had some partial-preterist leanings, but he never seems to have spent a great deal of time on eschatology). Clark, a master logician, is oblivious to the implications of his view. But, he is also a master of Greek. He knows what the text meant to them and applied it to them. The thing is, you cannot have inspired prophets "incontestably" believing in the parousia of Christ only to be wrong! This crushes biblical inspiration! A liberal can see this and merely ask, "What else are they wrong on in their beliefs?" Clark never saw the implications, and from my years of reading him, never made the attempt, either.

I can pick up virtually any commentary, like the Pulpit Commentary, and read, "*The Lord had promised his coming; St. Paul had spoken more than once as if that coming were very near at hand. Yet he came not*" (Pulpit Commentary: Peter, John, Jude, Funk and Wagnells Company). The Rev. B.C. Caffin, MA, wrote those startling words. "*Peter wrote as if it were near, and scoffers were mocking him, and it came not. The scoffers were right!*"

We noted before, also, that Peter's language was quite odd for literalists. For he wrote that Noah's "world" (kosmos) was "destroyed" along with its "heavens and a land." But, we argued, were the "heavens" destroyed in the flood? Did God make a new sun after the flood? Did he make a "new heavens" after the flood (see Heavens and Land Destroyed)? And how about the "world" and the "land?" Noah landed on an existing mountain top that was there since creation! It was not destroyed. Did God make a "new land" after Noah's flood? The absurdity of such a view becomes apparent.

The point from these verses is that Peter wrote, "but the now heavens and the land" are reserved for fire.

Ask yourself this question honestly. If the “then” heavens and the land of Noah are the same heavens and the land Peter was speaking of from a geological/literal point of view, then why suppose that the geological/literal heavens and the land are going to pass away in Peter’s day anymore than they did in Noah’s day?

The heavens and land (which Peter calls “the then world”) did not “perish” literally in Noah’s day. Yes, there was destruction and people died, but this suggests that the culture that perished can be called the “then world” with a “heavens” and a “land.” They are the same clouds, and same solar system that Peter was under. Thus, it is clear that a “heavens and a land” can be “destroyed” without the literal universe being annihilated. That is why we quoted from John Owen and John Lightfoot, two respected men of Reformed history. They saw the textual implications. Hal Lindsey does not.

A recent book entitled *The End of All Things: A Defense of the Future* by C. Jonathan Seraiah (Canon Press, 1999) endorses the view we are expounding here (p. 54, 64n.9). Many other “partial-preterists” like Seraiah take this view as well. They all utilize John Owen and John Lightfoot, as well as Milton Terry and J.S. Russell. Kenneth Gentry (who does not interpret this passage in this fashion), Andrew Sandlin, Richard Pratt (who apparently holds that Peter was advocating a “delayed” coming of the Lord), and R.C. Sproul, Jr. endorse Seraiah’s book.

What is interesting is that this book is directed against Preterism! A list of endorsements is no proof that a view is correct, but it does say this: that if there is a list of scholars in the conservative schools, then the matter must be investigated on each side. Any courtroom will follow this procedure to arrive at what constitutes the best evidence for the best, most plausible defense.

When Jeremiah looked upon the land of Judah, in a vision, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 589 B.C. by the Babylonians, he wrote, *“My anguish! My anguish! I writhe in pain, the walls of my heart is beating wildly. My heart! I cannot keep silent, for the sound of the trumpet I hear! The alarm of war! Disaster upon disaster follows hard. The Land (earth — Hebrew, eretz) is laid waste. The whole Land (whole earth) suddenly! My tents, in a moment, my curtains! . . . I looked on the Land (earth) and Lo! Waste and void. And the heavens. And the heavens had no light! I looked on the mountains and Lo! They were quaking and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked and there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and the fruitful Land (Judah) was a desert and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD, before His fierce anger”* (Jeremiah 4:19-26). This is one of several examples than can be given in the highly intense language of the prophets.

Peter was a prophet. He knew Jerusalem was going to be “laid waste,” as well. He knew what was coming. Is it seriously to be suggested that Jeremiah languished in pain over the destruction of Jerusalem, but Peter, facing the very same event in his generation could care less? He was an apostle in Jerusalem. He lived there. He knew the people. He was raised around the temple. He was a Hebrew. And he knew what was coming because his Lord had told him.

And, as in the days of Jeremiah they mocked and said, “peace, peace.” But there was no peace. There will be nothing but disintegration. “God will not destroy this Temple, Peter, you are foolish! Where is this so called parousia and day of the Lord against the Temple you talk about?” And yet, for comparing Peter to Jeremiah, Preterists are “splitting hairs,” when both prophets of God faced the very same tragedy to their own people.

Paul wrote, *“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not. . . that I have great grief and incessant pain in my heart, for I was praying that I myself be a curse (anathema) from Christ on behalf of my brothers, the kinsmen of me according to the flesh, who are Israelites”* (Romans 9:1-4a). Why? Could it be that he knew that *“the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven”* and that *“the wrath has come upon them (the Jews) to the uttermost?”* (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). Historical context demands it!

Verse 8 is perhaps the most abused verse in the entire Bible: *“but, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing: that one day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. (9) The Lord is not slow of the promise as some men calculate slowness. . .”*

Let me render this in the MFT (Modern Futurist Translation): *“The Lord promised to come in our generation, before some of us standing before him would die, and that all these things would be fulfilled in our time, and we have preached to you that we are in the last days, as well as have told you repeatedly that the time is at hand, and very near. But, all of this matters not, for, in man’s time, ‘near,’ ‘at hand,’ ‘generation,’ ‘some of you standing here shall not die’ and like phrases may mean to God’s time thousands of years into the future of man’s time. Thus, when you hear us inspired apostles tell you that the time is at hand, pay no attention to earthly ways of calculating, because time to the Lord is completely different from our time. God changed in the past, so maybe He is repenting from calamity once again. The best we can say of our time is that the Lord is near, maybe, perhaps, we really don’t know, but we are going to say it anyway: The time is at hand, so at least pretend that he could come, although, we really don’t know, since he could come thousands of years after we, beloved, are long, long dead. So be of good cheer!”*

A long translation, yes, but it speaks for itself. I have incorporated all of the arguments that have been proposed against our interpretation for this is logically what the Futurist has to come up with. And you know what? They believe this!

The Apostolic Fathers (late first century to 180 AD) also used this very verse to “delay” the parousia into the future based on what they interpreted Peter as saying according to a Greek mindset and not according to a biblical mindset (I cover this fully in my book, *Misplaced Hope*). In the Greek mindset of the then philosophy of Atomism (materialism and Stoicism), the material globe would dissolve in a great conflagration.

In the biblical mindset, and in Peter’s, “heavens and the land” destruction need not mean a literal

destruction of the universe, even though it employs de-creation language. The biblical imagery of the Prophets proves this again and again, in text after text, after text. The church on this issue has inherited a Greek conflagration theory instead of a covenantal destruction in terms of a universal collapse theory. I reiterate: Noah's heavens were not destroyed literally. Yet, Peter says they were. Read the verse yourself. The "then world perished." The "then heavens" were destroyed. Literally?

The verses we are on now plainly explain themselves. After Peter alludes to Psalm 90:4 (read it), he then interprets the meaning, *"The Lord is not slow of the promise as some men count slowness."* What men? The scoffers! *"Where is this promise?"* What promise? The promise of the parousia! When did God say he would come? "In this generation."

Some men were counting the thirty years after Jesus said those words as slowness, and Peter is saying, "Listen, beloved, God will keep His promise. He is not slow. A thousand years to Him is like a day, so what is 30 years? He will come just like He said He would. Take heart!" Which, honestly, is more plausible? The Modern Futurist Translation or the alternative? Hebrews 10:37 nails the lid of the Futurist interpretation shut: *"For in just a very, very little while He who is coming, He will come and He will not delay!"* This is the literal Greek translation.

Peter uses the same verb "will come" in verse 10, *"but the day of the Lord will come. . ."* We can add, "without delay" and "in just a very, very little while." Thus, Peter is not teaching that since time to God is different, God is going to "delay" what He promised. There is nothing here that indicates this whatsoever. It is simply a false device to interpret Peter based on the false assumption that Peter's language can only refer to the literal destruction of the universe, and since that obviously did not happen, Peter is contending for delay.

Peter uses Noah's "day" as an example. God told Noah to prepare a large boat because in Noah's day, God was going to destroy the people. When Noah entered, God said, *"Seven days from now I will send rain.."* (Genesis 7:4). Delay? Contingency? Maybe God meant 7,000 years from Noah's day. Maybe He wanted Noah to simply be "ready" just in case. No. Noah acted on what God said to his generation. Destruction is coming, Noah, prepare! Imagine if Noah had in mind the strange interpretative devices men have used for Peter's words!

We will explore the further comparisons of Noah's day to Peter's. The Bible makes plain statements between these two episodes. Next month, I will conclude our study of 2 Peter 3:1 -13. By now, hopefully, you are beginning to see that there is another solution than that which has traditionally been taught. Let's keep Peter in his own context, in his own day, so that we might obey the God who inspired him. Blessings in the Name.

I will conclude our study in 2 Peter 3 in this article. We have covered the first 8 verses of this chapter. To

briefly review, I noted that the “scoffers” were contemporaneous with Peter’s congregations. This point meant that they were living in the “last days.” To meet their mockery, Peter alludes to Noah’s “days” and the “heavens which were” (implying that they are no more), and the land.” He calls this the “then world” and it also “perished” with water.

From this we gathered that the Bible uses cosmological terms, but does not always define them in the way modern day astronomers would. The “heavens which were” in Noah’s day, literally speaking, are the same “heavens” you and I see everyday, yet Peter says they perished. Biblical language is replete with this type of “heaven/land” de-creation language, which we noted. Therefore, the “present heavens and land” to which Peter refers need not imply the cosmological universe any more than it did in his reference to Noah’s day.

We contended, with scholarly and biblical evidence, that the “heavens and the Land” refer to the “temple and the Land of Israel,” the temple being a “copy of the true one: heaven itself” (Hebrews 9:24). The temple/tabernacle was truly a copy of “the heavens” on “the Land” of Israel and was approaching judgment very soon in Peter’s day.

The tabernacle of Moses was a type of what God did in reality through Christ: bring God’s true dwelling on the Land in “Spirit and in Truth” rather than “on this mountain.” Jesus explained this explicitly in John 4:21-24, and we see this occurring in Revelation 21. It is this “*new heavens/new earth*” that Peter is waiting for, “*wherein righteousness dwells.*” More on this shortly.

The “promise” of Christ’s return was not delayed as some men counted delay, but was right on schedule. It had been 30 years since the Apostles started preaching the coming of the Lord, and Peter is reassuring his congregations that 30 years to God is nothing since a day to Him is a “1,000 years.” God keeps His promises, and speaks to men in ways that men naturally understand time, and if He said, “this generation,” then Peter can write, “*you are a chosen generation*” in his first epistle to them.

Briefly, in that first epistle, Peter wrote, “*the salvation that is ready to be revealed in these last times*” (1:5). This “salvation” was the “salvation of your souls” (1:9). The prophets tried to “find out the time” and “*spoke of the things that have now come to you*” (1:12). Jesus was “*revealed in these last times*” (1:20).

Peter then quotes Psalm 118:22 in 2:7 where “*the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.*” Peter had heard his Lord quote this very verse in Matthew 21:42. In that passage Jesus tells the Parable of the Tenants, where the landowner rents the vineyard to murderous tenants who kill several servants, then kill the owner’s son. Jesus asked to the effect, “*what should the landowner do to those tenants?*” The Pharisees and Scribes in Jerusalem answered, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end!”

Then Jesus quotes the verse we have in I Peter 2:7 and says, “*I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce fruit!*” The passage concludes, “*When the chief*

priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus, they knew he was talking about them."

When was this event going to happen? AD 70. This is what Peter is waiting for. It was what all the faithful Jews were waiting for: The great tribulation and parousia of the Lord. You can see, then, the scoffers mocking this message saying, "where is this parousia?" "Where is this divine judgment on the Land and Temple?"

Three more verses in 1 Peter helps set up 2 Peter 3. In 4:7 Peter wrote, *"the end of all things is at hand."* In 4:5 the Lord is *"ready to judge the living and the dead."* How far was the extent of Jewish antagonism and persecution to other faithful Jews? Peter wrote, *"...your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (5:9).

Folks, Peter was writing this to first century believers who were suffering from their own kind just as Christ had predicted: Mothers against daughters, fathers against sons, brothers against brothers. We must pay attention to the original context of the outworking of Israel's covenant unto the end of the age in AD 70 when God showed the whole world that He is no longer operating according to the old covenant, but through a "new and living way" in Christ Jesus!

Yet, some have contended that the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel was merely a blip in history, a meaningless fact as it relates to the world-wide spread of the Gospel. History, however, records that the event was world-wide in effect since Jews were living in every part of the world at that time.

We can now resume our discussion with verse 9b. *"He is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to eternal life."* This verse has been, again, subjected to a great deal of exegesis. Historically, this verse has furnished the "excuse" for the "delay" of the day of the Lord. I made mention last issue that "delay" assumes that something was originally to occur, but was "delayed."

The second century church used this very verse to stretch out what they thought had not yet occurred (this is thoroughly covered in my book, *Misplaced Hope*). The reason God has not returned yet, and why the earth had not burned, is because God wants to save more people. Therefore, what was originally to happen in that generation of the apostles, in fact, did not, happen, but was "delayed," and has been delayed now for 2,000 years.

Basically, what this view is saying in its underlying theological motive is that God was going to come soon, but simply changed his mind and put off what he originally had in mind to do! This is how far people will go in order to save their traditions of men. This whole arrangement, of course, is based on the erroneous idea that God is going to blow the earth up in a final blaze of glory. Since that did not happen, then we must search for a solution to account for the "nearness" language. None but the preterist view does justice to the Scriptures, taking the Bible at its very words.

A second objection to our view on this passage is that the "you," "any," and "all" refer to all the elect souls of all time. Therefore, if what we are saying is true, then there is no more "repentance" to be given after AD 70. Simply put, if the preterist view is correct, then God has stopped saving people after AD 70.

My reply is that this implicitly assumes that Peter is talking about "all the elect souls of all time" which does not necessarily have to be the case. God has elected souls in Christ in every generation, and there is nothing here that suggests that this particular "*chosen generation*" (genos eklekton in the Greek - I Peter 2:8) is the last generation forever. The word "chosen" there is where we get the noun "elect." They were an "elect generation."

Further, this same Peter addresses people from many regions on the Day of Pentecost (compare 1 Peter 1:1 with Acts 2:9, 10) which are from the same audience he is addressing in this letter. In that Pentecost address, Peter said, "Ye men of Israel" (Acts 2:22), and "*save yourselves from this perverse generation*" (2:40). This is the same generation Peter is writing to in this epistle.

And he is telling them that God is not willing that any of them should perish, but that all of them come to repentance before the Great Day of the Lord. There is no one who believes that Peter's appeal to that generation to "save" themselves meant that this was the "last generation" forever in Acts 2:40, so why suppose it in 2 Peter 3:9?

The great Puritan Reformer John Owen (1684), who interpreted these verses the same way we do, stated, "*Now who are these of whom the apostle speaks, to whom he writes?*" Owen then describes them as the "elect" of those "last days" (John Owen, *The Death of the Death in the Death of Christ*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1999. p. 236).

Owen uses Matthew 24:31 as a cross reference, "*and he will send his angels and... gather all his elect.*" Marcellus J. Kik, John Lightfoot, Jay E. Adams, Kenneth Gentry, Andrew Sandlin, C. Jonathin Seraiah, Richard Pratt, David Chilton, Gary North, Rousas Rushdoony, Lorraine Boettner, Adam Clarke, and a long list of several other respectable scholars who are not full preterists all interpret the verse in Matthew 24:31 as having occurred in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. But none of them suggest that since God gathered together "all the elect" of that time, then God is done in the "elect-gathering" business after AD 70.

Further, they all take 24:22 as having been fulfilled as well, "*if those days had not been cut short, then no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened*" not "delayed."

This dispenses, then, of the notion that Peter is speaking of every single elect member of Christ's Body. Rather, he is addressing his own generation, and the elect of that generation. God was not willing that any of them should perish, but have everlasting life, and this "salvation" was "ready to be revealed" in those

"last times" of Israel's demise in that "perverse generation." God saved every last Israelite he intended to save right up to the "end."

Keep in mind that Jews were suffering throughout the entire world, and many perished without having accepted Jesus Messiah, but God was not willing that the "elect strangers of the Diaspora" (2 Peter 1:1) to whom Peter addressed, perish, but come to repentance and be gathered into Christ. Since God was not willing, it is safe to say that none of them perished, but that all of them repented. All, that is, that God intended to save.

Peter continues, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief..."* (3:9a). Rather than review the occurrence of this term in the New Testament, I will focus briefly on Ezekiel. First, a single quote from Paul will suffice: "Understanding the present time (Paul wrote Romans in the late 50's). The hour has come for you to wake up... because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the Day is almost here" (Romans 13:11, 12). Can Paul get anymore clearer? What "day" of "salvation" was "nearer" to Paul? Some have said, "well, everyday is getting closer to the second coming." If that's what Paul meant, then it hardly means anything. Anyone at anytime could say that.

There is no ethical impetus in what is so obviously true. But, if a looming judgment was known to occur very, very soon, then people take account of their actions in a different manner. If, for example, I knew that a certain world-wide judgment was definitely coming in my days, then I would live my life in such a way that would be different from my everyday life. I would sale all that I have, I would encourage those *"not to marry"* for the *"time is short"* (1 Corinthians 7:29).

I would not build a business in order for it to be successful financially, but would utilize every aspect of being towards the "time" of the impending, certain judgment to come in my own generation. I certainly would not be having church board meetings over the type of carpet to buy for our new million dollar church building, or new multi-million dollar television station, if I knew that all of this was going to end for certain in my own day!

In Ezekiel 7, it is agreed among scholars that this prophet is writing about the final sack of the Temple in 589 B.C. by the Babylonian Kingdom. There, Ezekiel wrote, *"The end has come"* several times. *"The time has come," "the day is near," "Their silver and gold will not save them in the day of of the Lord's wrath."*

All throughout the chapter, Ezekiel, writing just years before all of this happened, uses the same language of destruction as Peter. The Preterist interpretation is fully justified in comparing the two periods of Ezekiel and Peter since both use the same language to refer to the same event: the destruction of Israel.

Peter then continues to describe the "destruction of the heavens" and "the elements." They will "burn" and "melt like wax." The "land" (earth) will be "laid bare" and the "works in it."

The issue here is whether we take this language "literally" in the sense of atoms, protons and neutrons, or "literally" in the sense of Israel's demise. The "elements" (stoicheion in Greek) is used by Paul four times (Galatians 4:3, 9; Colossians 2:8, 20). The phrase he used was "the elements of the world." All these passages are in context of the Jewish principles of law-observance.

Paul is not using this phrase in the sense of atoms and protons. These are the "principles of the world" rather than the "principles of Christ." To be fair, stoicheion is defined as that, but not in Paul, as any commentator would show. No one disagrees with this. But, when we come to Peter, the word is defined differently as the atomic structure of the material universe.

However, when Peter implied the "earth and heavens which existed" in 3:5, did hydrogen, oxygen and boron "disappear" when God judged the "then world" of Noah? I ask again, why assume that to be the case in the "present heavens and Land reserved for fire" (3:7)? Paul wrote that these "principles of the world" are a *"shadow of the things which are about to come, but the Body is of Christ"* (Colossians 2:17). Note that.

The "shadow" was the "elements of the world" of Judaic ritualism, but the reality is "about to come" in the future, thus eliminating the shadow. When was this "about to" happen? What event would forever settle the matter as to which order God had chosen? Which event was "about to" happen which forever settled the question of the legitimacy of Temple worship, new moon days, Sabbaths circumcision, genealogies, religious festivals, and Jewish calendars (see Colossians 2:16)?

If Christ is the fulfillment of the Jewish shadows and types of the Law, and if circumcision was now spiritual rather than fleshly, and if the worship of God was to be made known as being "in Spirit and in truth" as opposed to "in flesh and shadow of truth," then what event, for all believing Jews and Gentiles would forever settle the matter as to which world God would accept?

What was "near" to signal the "day" of God's "judgment" in this matter between "shadow" and "reality?" Do I even have to spell it out? I will: Israel's fleshly demise in AD 70!

After that event, the Gospel was unrestrained by the outward, natural man of the Law, but entirely renewed in the Body of Christ. All Christians live in this reality whether they acknowledge it or not. Preterists are just calling their attention to it. We are calling their attention to what Peter was so anxiously looking forward to in his own generation.

We have pointed out that in the Old Testament, the "land laid bare" and the "heavens dissolving" is used several times in the prophets to refer to the destruction of national entities, or of Israel's demise in 589 BC.

One last prophet will prove this. Zephaniah, writing around the 620's, stated, *"the day of the Lord is near"* (1:7), and *"it is near and coming quickly!"* (1:14). What is this "day?" It is when God will *"stretch my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem"* (1:4). It is a "day of wrath" (1:15). A *"day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness"* (1:15).

He then wrote, *"In the fire of His jealousy the whole world will be consumed, for He will make a sudden end of all who live on the Land (earth)"* (1:18). Then Zephaniah wrote, *"Gather together of shameful nation, (Israel) before the appointed time arrives...seek the Lord"* (2:1-3). Every commentator I sought that has evangelical merit refer these verses to Jerusalem's demise in 589 BC. If Zephaniah was writing in the 620's, then from 589 we get only 31-38 years! A generation!

The "day of the Lord" was truly only some thirty years away from his prophecy, and he said that *"the whole face of the Land would be wiped free"* (1:2). Yet, even when the same imagery is used in 2 Peter 3, facing the same calamity, we are asked to believe that Peter, who refers constantly to the prophets of the Old Testament, is completely unconcerned with his own people's demise so near to his day. That he would utilize the same language that the prophets used for the destruction of Jerusalem in 589 BC, but have a completely different meaning than they did!

For Preterists, Jesus settled the matter. "When you, Peter, John, James, Matthew, see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know, Peter, that these be the days of vengeance in fulfillment of all that has been written" (Luke 21:20-22). Do you think that Peter might have something to say about such a terrible catastrophe concerning his land, his nation, his people, and his religion? Or is he concerned with 21st century Iraq and warning his "dear friends" about the Pope, Saddam Hussein, and credit cards?

This, then, ends our concern with Peter's reference to the destruction of the "heavens and the Land." Peter is not talking about the universe, nor is he teaching that God is going to blow the globe up. The Bible nowhere teaches this. It has been proven through sober exegesis, utilizing all the Bible and Biblical language, that Peter is concerned with the "suffering" his own people were about to go through, and he alludes to the same language the "prophets" used when they faced the same situation as he did.

"But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (3:13). That was the next event. Messiah would come, be cut off, raised from the dead, and rule in the heavenlies in the last days of Israel's outward covenant. Those last days would be marked by scoffers, judgment and suffering for the elect. But, Israel's "kingdom" would be "taken away" from them in that "generation," and the whole world would know it.

She fell in AD 70 in a "time, times, and half a time" rebellion from 66 - 70 AD (3 and one half years), then the "end" would come. The next event was "the new heavens and the new earth" wherein God dispenses salvation without any old covenant fetters whatsoever, to all nations, to all peoples. This was the "salvation" to come, and this was the "eternal life" to be "brought" in that "burning by fire" of the Old

Covenant "heavens and the Land." No longer does God judge a man according to the Law, but judges him "according to the Law of Christ."

We no longer even ask whether or not we *"must be circumcised...in order to be saved"* (Acts 15:5). But, in that verse, that is exactly what the believing Judaizers demanded. This situation, from transition from the old to the "new order" (Hebrews 9:10) lasted a "generation." Therefore, the Christian message is not a mutilation of Peter's expectation of physical demise for the entire globe. This is to misinterpret Peter. Rather, the message of the Gospel is that message found in the "new heavens and the new earth" of Revelation 21:6, *"To him that is thirsty, I will give him drink without cost."*

Notice that Peter is following the same chronological order of John's Revelation. Peter was "looking for" and "hastening" the coming new heavens/earth. Why was he looking for it? Because he knew that it was to come in his own days. That's simple to understand. Yet, I have been told by Bible believing Christians that "cannot see" the new heavens and the new earth! I ask them if they can "see" the "righteousness of Christ" imputed to them, or the fact that they have been "born again," or the fact that they are "seated with Christ." Can you "see" these things with the eyes of the flesh?

Rather, in using the language that centers on Jesus Christ and the cross, the "righteousness" that Peter is referring to is that "righteousness in Christ," wherein the believer, "dwelling" with God, being made one with the Father through Christ, is counted as worthy to enter into the kingdom. This is what John "sees" in Revelation 21 and 22. What began at the cross in Jerusalem, ended at the fiery destruction of the holy of holies in Jerusalem in AD 70.

The "good things" were "already" breaking through the last days of the old covenant "age" (Hebrews 9:11). However, the author of that book also looked forward to a "world to come" (2:5). This was to appear "in a very, very little while" (10:37). While the Temple in Jerusalem stood, the "way into the most holy place was not yet (mepo - Greek) manifested. This is a parable for the present time" (9:8, 9). The present time for that author, before AD 70, was that while the temple stood, the way into the heavenly holy of holies was not fully available for the believer to enter.

In Revelation 6:9, the souls are under the altar. At the end of the destruction of the "Great City, where our Lord was crucified (Jerusalem)" (Revelation 11:8), John saw that "God's temple was opened and within His temple was seen the ark of the covenant" which is in the most holy place (11:19). The fullness of salvation was not available until the old wine skins, the old order dissolved. Hebrews makes this point again, "and by calling this one 'new,' he made the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete and aging will soon vanish" (8:13).

The absolution of the Old Covenant made possible the consummation of the New, and this is directly tied to Jerusalem's demise, the capital of the Old Covenant world. Again, Hebrews 9:10 states that the temple in Jerusalem will stand "until the time of reformation," or "new order." F.F. Bruce's comments are exact:

"The old covenant was now to give way to the new, the shadow to the substance, the outward, earthly copy to the inward heavenly reality" (NICNT: Hebrews, 1967).

John saw a "new Jerusalem" which implies an "old Jerusalem." Was God left temple-less? Was the most holy place of the old not replaced with a "better" holy place in the heavenlies? When the old holy place was destroyed, did God open a "way" into a "new" holy place? Where is this new place? It's in the "new Jerusalem!" But, we have Christians today saying that they cannot "see" the New Jerusalem! This is still trying to put old wine into new wineskins. It is wanting a fleshly tabernacle, visible to the flesh, for a spiritual reality.

In short, an immature faith that debases the spiritual reality in favor of an unfulfilled physical fantasy land. What Peter was longing for was a "new order" where the "old order" was burned with fire, and where it was no longer obligatory for him, as a Jew, to maintain the outward ceremonies. In the new heavens/earth, God's people were forever, entirely set free from what for 1500 years under Moses had "burdened" them under a "yoke" that enslaved them to sin, death, and condemnation.

This was Peter's song: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" If you can't "see" your total freedom in Christ, then I suggest prayer, because settling for anything else impairs seeing the glory of God fully in Christ, Jesus. He came, he saw, he conquered.