



2 Peter 3 v9

(June 2013)

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‘This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2 That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior: 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance’.

Notes:

- This Epistle is specifically written to the ‘beloved’: ‘beloved, I now write unto you’ (vs.1)...‘beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing...’ (vs.8)...‘Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless’ (vs.14)...‘You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before...’ (vs.17)

The primary context is about the end of this age and the sureness of the Lord’s coming for his ‘beloved’. The thrust of the argument is about the Lord being *patient* (‘longsuffering’) with sinners coming to repentance. It is a clear exhortation to the ‘beloved’ to be patient and not to listen to the false teachers (previous verses) who were scoffing at the promise of the coming.

The passage begins with the pronoun **‘you’** (vs.1) and continues all the way through with **‘your’** (vs.1) and **‘you’** (vs.2) and **‘usward’** (vs.9). The people being referred to here in these pronouns are the **‘beloved’**. It is the **‘same ‘beloved’** who are described as the **‘usward’** whom God does not want to perish but to come to repentance.

The **‘you’**, **‘your’** and **‘usward’** cannot apply to the salvation of all people in these verses. Firstly, this violates the hermeneutical rule of *who* the passage is speaking to; and secondly violates the *context* of the passage being about the promise of the Lord’s coming and God’s patience to **‘usward’** in salvation. This is also seen in verse 7 and its contrast to verse 8. Verse 7 speaks of **‘ungodly men’** and their judgement which is followed immediately by the **‘but’** (adversative conjunction ‘de’) in verse 8 and addressed specifically to the **‘beloved’**. The **‘you’** are the **‘beloved’** in this entire passage.

Indeed, only the **‘beloved’** can have **‘pure minds’** (vs.1). And only the **‘beloved’** will God **‘stir up’** (exhort, encourage) their pure minds.

Only the **‘beloved’** can **‘be mindful’** *‘of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets’* (vs.2).

Only the **‘beloved’** can have the **‘promise’** (vs.4,9). (The **‘promise’** in scripture is either the Holy Spirit (Acts) or the coming of Christ for his **‘beloved’** bride. Here is it the coming of Christ to those who have the promise of the Holy Spirit. Only those who have the Holy Spirit and are the **‘beloved’** can have the promise of His coming).

Paul continues speaking to the **‘beloved’** in the verses following: **‘Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness’**, (vs.11). Only the **‘beloved’** have **‘holy conversation and godliness’**.

Commentary by Matthew Henry: 2Pet.3:9 *‘What men count slackness, is long-suffering, and that to us-ward; it is giving more time to his own people, to advance in knowledge and holiness, and in the exercise of faith and patience, to abound in good works,*

doing and suffering what they are called to, that they may bring glory to God. Settle therefore in your hearts that you shall certainly be called to give an account of all things done in the body, whether good or evil. And let a humble and diligent walking before God, and a frequent judging of yourselves, show a firm... (Matthew Henry)

- Such things as 'knowledge, holiness, the exercise of faith and patience, good works', are only accountable to the '**beloved**'.

Literal Greek for 2Pet.3:9: '***Does not delay the Lord the promise as some delay esteem, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing [for] any to perish, but all to repentance to come***'

NB. The rules of grammar and Greek show that the '**any**' and the '**all**' cannot refer to any other pronoun but to the '**us**' previous.

What do we make of the phrase '**repentance to come**'? This is an aorist infinitive active.

Aorist - undefined action. A snapshot of something that has or will happen. Aorist does not necessarily take into account a time period unless used with certain Greek 'moods' such as 'indicative'. 'Aorist' is simply *a statement of something that is a reality*. Here in 2Pet.3:9, in the mind of God, He has already seen it as reality (e.g. Rom.8:30). Aorist here refers to the reality of the event.

Infinitive - verbal noun. It is often translated in English as '**to**'.

Active Voice - Action being done by the subject of the verb - here it is God himself that is acting. In this verse God is active, man is passive. God is at some point in time (aorist) bringing his elect to salvation - here specifically 'repentance'.

Verse 9 is too often quoted to teach that God does not want *any human to perish*. Regardless of whether this premise is true or false, *this particular Scripture* (vs.9) is simply not speaking to or about unsaved men but to the '**us-ward**' - the already saved who are called the '**beloved**' several times (vs.1,8,14,17).

This scripture is in fact promoting the *preservation of the saints in Christ and the sureness of His coming!* It is a scripture misused by Arminians in late centuries and now sadly most of modern apostate Christendom. The context is, and historically has always been, to *believers* - the elect who would be saved and come to repentance at some point in time (aorist).

The theology behind this is the '*faith once delivered to the saints*' (Jude 3) and historically taught down through the centuries as orthodox, at least until the 19th/20th Century apostasy:

- God has an elect (Rom.8:30-33; Col.3:12; Tit.1:1; 1Pet.1:2, 2Jn.1:1; 2Jn.1:13)

- God elects, chooses His people of His own determination (Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; 1Pet.1:2,10; Tit.1:1; Rom.8:33; 11:5,7; Col.3:12; Rom.9:15-18; Gal.1:15,16; Jn.6:37; 5:21...etc)

- Only the elect can be saved and justified (Rom.8:30-33)

- The elect are only those God 'draws' (Jn.6:44,65)

- Man is unable to come to God of himself for salvation unless the Holy Spirit draws him first (Rom.8:6,7; Rom.3:10-11; Jer.17:9; Is.64:6,7)

- Only by the drawing of the Holy Spirit will the 'all' that the father has given, come, (Jn.6:37).

- The 'elect' will not be lost (Jn.6:37-44) but they will at some time 'come to repentance'.

Final comment: 2Peter 3:9 is arguably the most misused scripture in the modern church! It needs to be put back into its correct context.

Notes

About the Author and the Ministry

Terry Arnold holds a Doctorate in Theology (Dth), a Masters degree (MABS) and several diplomas. He was founder and president of *South Pacific Bible Institute*, a Bible college training and equipping people for ministry. In addition he was the founder of Hervey Bay Bible Church in Queensland, Australia. He has for 25 years served as an elder and then pastor.

Terry is the author of several books and is involved in a full time ministry of *teaching, informing* and *equipping* the church. He is also editor of a growing worldwide publication '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

His ministry includes preaching/teaching and conducting seminars and conferences in a wide range of churches and colleges.

TA Ministries is a non-denominational and non-profit faith ministry founded in 1989 when the book '*To Catholics Whom I Love*' was written by Terry Arnold. This book went through several re-prints and served as a fruitful outreach to Roman Catholics.

In 1996 the ministry became a full-time operation with the introduction of a free newsletter, later named '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

Diakrisis is published bi-monthly to *teach, inform* and *equip* the church of Biblical truths and to warn of false teaching. It has also been a valuable reference aid to hundreds of pastors/elders.