

## 2 Peter 3:14-18: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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[0:00] 2 Peter 3, verses 14-18 These are the five concluding verses of the epistle of 2 Peter.

2 Peter, like so much of the New Testament, is written in the shadow of the imminent day of the Lord, anticipating the near coming of Christ in judgment. Considering the imminent coming of their Lord in judgment, the recipients of the letter are charged to ensure that when the time comes they will be found holy, without impurity, without moral spot or blemish, and at peace with God and each other.

The day of the Lord will be a day when the true character of things and of persons are exposed. And we are called to live our lives as those readied for a great unveiling. As Peter declares in verse 10, The earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

The patience of the Lord, his delay in bringing judgment upon the world, is an act of salvation. It ensures that all of his people can be gathered in. Peter has already spoken of this patience in verse 9.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

[1:58] God's intent in delay is salvation. Peter claims that his teaching on this point is also supported by the witness of Paul's writings, written according to the wisdom that was given to Paul by the Lord.

Perhaps he has in mind passages of Paul's letters such as Romans chapter 2 verses 3 to 4. Do you suppose, O man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? Peter's concern in this passage is to help the people to whom he is writing to understand the approaching day of the Lord.

However, much of the significance of this passage is found in material that is mostly tangential to Peter's driving point here, in his remarks concerning Paul. The first thing that we ought to notice is the way that he speaks of Paul, as our beloved brother.

Who is the R here? Richard Borkham has argued that this is very unlikely to mean my. The most likely possibility is that the R refers to Peter with his fellow apostles.

[3:07] The we in verses 16 to 18 of chapter 1 refers to the very core apostles, Peter, James and John. And as James has died by this time, one could perhaps even make a case that the we refers to Peter and John alone.

Paul is the beloved brother and the fellow witness of these apostles. In Galatians chapter 2, Peter and Paul had a great confrontation in Antioch. But here Peter expresses his union with Paul and appeals to him as a fellow witness.

Peter was the one entrusted with the gospel of the circumcised, and Paul with the gospel to the uncircumcised. Paul presents the fact of this mutual recognition in Galatians, and here Peter also expresses such a recognition of Paul.

The second thing that we ought to notice is that Paul's works seem to have been widely known to Peter. The leaders and teachers of the early church recognised and supported each other's ministries, seeing themselves as standing shoulder to shoulder in unity in their presentation of the gospel.

Paul's letters clearly were shared widely in the early church, beyond the churches and persons to whom they were directly addressed. The early church was tightly networked, with lots of movement around between the churches.



