

# REDISCOVERING OUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY



## ACT 6 BIBLE STUDY

### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. How would you characterize yourself - one who is more nostalgic, lives in the present, or plans for the future? And how does that impact your daily life?
2. When you think about the justice of God, what feelings does this bring up for you? Fear? Excitement? Confusion?
3. When someone wrongs you or offends you, are you one who makes quick judgments or do you tend to draw out your decisions?
4. What are two or three problems/issues/crises in our world today where you wish God would bring about justice?

### SCRIPTURE **Read 2 Peter 3:1-18**

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. Reading this passage from 2 Peter, what catches your attention?
2. How does Peter contrast "wholesome thinking" with that of the "scoffers"? What is the difference between their response to God's withholding his judgment?
3. Based on Peter's critique of the scoffers, why is it important for Christians to be familiar with the arc of God's story as revealed in the Bible?
4. What does Peter emphasize about the character of God when talking about his judgment? Should we view the justice of God as being rooted in anger or vindictiveness? Why or why not?
5. Peter urges his readers to live in light of God's impending judgment. What specific instructions does Peter give to do this?
6. What does it mean to "be at peace" with God? What does it mean to "grow in the grace and knowledge" of Jesus? How can we intentionally pursue both of these things?

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What causes some of the challenges to "wholesome thinking" in your own thought life while in college?
2. In what ways does the college environment "scoff" at Christian ideals and how can you navigate that tension?
3. Have you ever considered "the Lord's patience" (v15) and its impact on our own salvation? How can we be both thankful for God's patience with us while at the same time living in light of God's future judgment? How do we make sure we're not taking advantage of God's patience?
4. If you grew in "grace and knowledge of Jesus", and that led to more "peace with God", what part of your life would most benefit from having His peace?

## SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

**Spiritual Exercise For The Week:** Personal and spiritual growth often follow our willingness to listen to others. Peter desperately wants his readers to consider their thought patterns because he knows the temptations that will try to derail the peace of their faith and their lives of holiness. Like an older sibling nagging them to listen before they make a poor decision, Peter urges them to keep in mind the consequences of their life decision. What would an older sister or brother in the faith tell you if they wrote to you this week? Take a moment and journal what a letter written specifically to you - as a college student at UVM - might look like.