

2 Peter 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Chapter 3, verse 4 - Comprehensive theological analysis. Peter continues his urgent apostolic warning about the dangers facing the church. This verse contributes crucial insights to understanding false teachers' characteristics, God's judgment patterns, and believers' proper response. The Greek terminology reveals theological precision in Peter's argument, emphasizing both divine sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility in sanctification.

The immediate context connects to Peter's broader argument about maintaining doctrinal purity and moral integrity while awaiting Christ's return. Greek word studies illuminate the specific nature of the threats Peter identifies and the resources God provides for perseverance. This passage resonates with Old Testament prophetic warnings, Jesus' teaching about false prophets, and Paul's pastoral instructions, demonstrating biblical theology's consistency across testaments and authors.

Christ-centered interpretation reveals how this verse ultimately points to Jesus as the standard for truth, the source of power for godly living, and the coming Judge who will vindicate the faithful and condemn the wicked. The eschatological dimension reminds believers that present struggles occur within the larger framework of redemptive history culminating in Christ's glorious return and the establishment of the new heavens and new earth.

Historical Context

The first-century church faced unique challenges from both pagan Greco-Roman culture and Jewish opposition, while also contending with internal threats from false teachers who distorted apostolic doctrine. Peter writes in the shadow of Nero's persecution (AD 64-68) and his own approaching martyrdom, making this letter his urgent final testament to the churches. Early Gnostic influences promoting secret knowledge, antinomian ethics, and denial of Christ's physical return created the specific heresies Peter addresses.

Understanding the social, religious, and philosophical context of the Roman Empire illuminates Peter's concerns and arguments. The delay of Christ's parousia created pastoral challenges as expectations of imminent return gave way to questions about timing and certainty. Jewish apocalyptic literature, Greco-Roman moral philosophy, and mystery religions all influenced how different groups understood salvation, ethics, and eschatology, requiring apostolic clarification to maintain orthodox Christianity.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge compromises you might be tempted to make for cultural acceptance or personal comfort?
2. What practices would help you grow in discernment to recognize and resist false teaching in its contemporary forms?
3. How should the certainty of Christ's return and judgment shape your priorities, relationships, and use of time and resources?

Interlinear Text

καὶ λέγοντες Ποῦ ἔστιν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας
And saying Where is the promise coming
G2532 G3004 G4226 G2076 G3588 G1860 G3588 G3952

αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἦς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν
of his as they were from for the fathers fell asleep
G846 G575 G3739 G1063 G3588 G3962 G2837

πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως
all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation
G3956 G3779 G1265 G575 G746 G2937

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:15 (Parallel theme): Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now.

Malachi 2:17 (Parallel theme): Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (Parallel theme): Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Luke 12:45 (Parallel theme): But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

Matthew 24:48 (Parallel theme): But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Genesis 19:14 (Parallel theme): And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 (Parallel theme): For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Mark 13:19 (Creation): For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 (Parallel theme): The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Revelation 3:14 (Creation): And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

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