

Joshua & Peter: The Sufficiency of God

Lesson 20: The Sufficiency of God's Prophecies

Key Verse: 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.~2 Peter 3.9

Where does your impatience flourish? Maybe in bumper-to-bumper traffic; having less than 15 items at grocery checkout while the person in front of you has 30 items; a canceled flight; arriving at your appointment early only to have to wait an hour beyond your appointed time to be seen. Your response to having your plans frustrated with delay reveals your humanity. What you do while you wait, as well as your attitude, often reveals where you are in the process of being made more Christ-like (patience is a "fruit" of His Spirit!). Yet God teaches us that His **patience** transforms our plans from our will, or agenda, into His will. His will, revealed in His patience, is that "all should reach repentance" (V 9). Because God keeps *all* His promises, you can be confident in His **fulfillment of His prophecy** of "the promise of His coming" (V 4), no matter how long He takes to return. *All sufficient God, we praise you as merciful in your patience towards all your people. Thank you for delaying Your return, delaying to fulfill that final prophecy, until all You have called to salvation from Your judgment are secured in the righteousness of Your Son. To You, O God, be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

2 Peter 3 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, **2** that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, **3** knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. **4** They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

5 For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, **6** and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. **7** But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. **8** But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish¹, but that all should reach repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. **11** Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, **12** waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God², because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! **13** But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. **15** And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, **16** as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. **18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

¹The translation of this sentence can provide doctrinal confusion about election versus God's patience being so that all people will be saved ("...but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish..."). A better understanding of the context and meaning of this sentence would read: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you [God's elect/chosen], not wishing that any [of you, God's elect/chosen now and in the future] should perish, but that all [God's elect/chosen people in all of time past, present and future] should reach repentance." Thus, this verse does not contradict the doctrine of election once researched for context and original meaning! (see Sproul, pp 278-279)

²This is not a command to attempt to cause the return of Christ by fulfilling our human understanding of unfulfilled prophecy that occurs before Christ's return. We are not capable of manipulating God nor thwarting His will! Rather, we are to "wait productively. Be holy and godly. Be persistently pure and at peace. Hate sin. For by these things you hasten the coming of the Lord." (Helm, p 267)

Diamonds:

Just like Joshua, Peter offers his final words knowing that his life on earth is about to end. His final words to God's people reveal his continued concern of the continued campaign of false prophets and teachers to discredit God and lead God's people into "the error of lawless people and lose your own stability (V 17).

1. From verse 4, what argument are the "scoffers" using to discredit God?

2. How do you encounter this same argument today? What do people say, or what have you heard others say, that mirrors what the scoffers are saying?

Eschatology is the study of the final judgment, death and destiny of the soul and of humankind (Google dictionary). RC Sproul cautions against Christians "reading the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other." (p 284). After all, Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, and more have been persuaded through events in their lifetime that the Lord's return would occur in their lifetime. In becoming laser-focused on the "when" of Christ's return, we may lose sight of the purpose of His delay—repentance that leads to salvation of His elect.

3. As we wait for Christ's return, what does Peter tell us we are to be doing, how are we to be found, and how are we to wait for His return? (It may be helpful to read this passage in additional translations.)

4. Refresh your memory of Peter's call for God's people to live in holiness and godliness through our heart's attitudes and actions. Read the following verses from several translations to help you identify Peter's instruction in your own words and for best personal application:

- a. 1 Peter 1.14-21:

- b. 1 Peter 1.22-2.3:

- c. 1 Peter 2.11-13, 18 and 3.1:

- d. 1 Peter 4.1-6, 19:

- e. 1 Peter 4.7-11:

- f. 2 Peter 1.5-9:

5. How does living out holiness and godliness (your answers to question 4) prevent you from being "carried away by the error of lawless people" as well as from "[losing] your own stability [in the knowledge of God] (V 17)?

6. How can your sisters-in-Christ pray for you today so that you will continue to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (V 18)?

Deity: Patient³~ Patience (Greek, *makrothymia*) involves self-restraint that does not retaliate reactively. It endures injuries inflicted by others without the need for revenge and willingly accepts irritating or painful situations. *Longsuffering* captures the essential sense in one word.

Paul displayed his own patience in ministry to the Corinthians, attributing his longsuffering to the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6.1-10). James extolled patience in times of suffering for the faith (James 5.7-11). Peter reminds his readers of God’s patience before their salvation (1 Peter 3.20; 2 Peter 3.15). Patience is an element of love (1 Corinthians 13.4) and, in the end, is to be demonstrated toward everyone (Ephesians 4.2; 1 Thessalonians 5.14).

7. Review your study of Peter’s experiences with Christ (found throughout this year’s lessons). How do you see Christ demonstrating His divine Love through patience towards Peter as Peter “[grew] in the grace and knowledge of [His] Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (V 18)?
8. How does seeing Peter grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus encourage you? How does Jesus’ love through His patience with Peter encourage you today?
9. Who are you patiently loving as you wait for their salvation? Please allow your group the privilege of praying for them by name.

Doctrine: Fulfillment of Prophecy~ Hundreds of biblical prophecies have been fully or partially fulfilled, and many more await fulfillment. Fulfilled prophecy proves that the God of the Bible is the true, omniscient, and omnipotent God. The only way prophecy can be repeatedly and accurately fulfilled is if the God who reveals future events also governs history to see that things come to pass. Only the one true God has the sovereign power to do that (Isaiah 46.9-10; 2 Peter 1.21).

Fulfilled prophecy also proves the Bible is God’s Word, because the accurate forecast of a future event can only come from God because mere men cannot see the future (Deuteronomy 18.21-22; Isaiah 44.25; 46.9-10).

God’s fulfillment of prophecy in the promised Messiah can be trusted as true. In making known the “mystery of His will” through Jesus (Ephesians 1.5-10), the Old Testament prophecies come to life in His Son, Jesus (Malachi 3.1, 4.2; Matthew 1; Mark 1.1-11; Luke 1-2; John 1.1-36). In the death and resurrection of Messiah, God’s promised “healing” for all who “fear [His] name” (Malachi 4.2) has been accomplished (Isaiah 53; Matthew 26.53-56; Luke 27.7, 15-22, 37; Luke 24.5-9, 13-27, 44-53; John 17.1-5, 12, 37; John 19.23-24, 28, 32-37; John 20.30-31). More than twenty Old Testament predictions were fulfilled within one 24-hour period at the time of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion (Matthew 5.17).

³ Mayhue, R. and MacArthur, J., *Biblical Doctrine: A Summary Truth of Bible Truth*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2017) p 376

The fulfilled prophecies show us that God unfailingly keeps all His promises. As such, the believer is confident in the sin-conquering resurrection power of the indwelling Holy Spirit in this life (Ephesians 1.1-14; 2; 5.1-2; 6.10, 24). In addition, the believer is confident in God's power to preserve and bring His daughter to her heavenly home, eternally dwelling in His presence (Deuteronomy 33.26-29; Matthew 25.46; John 3.16-17; Romans 6.22-23; Hebrews 10.11-23; Revelation 21.1-7, 22; 22.21). With Christ-like empathy and understanding Paul sums up these life-giving present and preserving future promises in 2 Corinthians 4.7-18.

10. List all that God has accomplished, including fulfilled prophecies, that Peter mentions in 2 Peter 3.1-18:

11. What errors in thinking do you notice of the scoffers? What leads you to sometimes make the same mistake in your thoughts as you encounter unfulfilled hopes and/or promises of God?

12. What scripture provided in this definition encourages perseverance in your unfulfilled hope and/or promise of God?

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer: The two anchor verses from our study are below, with blanks for you to fill in your first name. Additionally, Peter's doxology concludes God's precious promises to you, His daughter. We join you in praying this for you until we meet again!

Joshua 1.9: "Have I not commanded _____? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD _____'s God is with _____ wherever _____ go[es]."

1 Peter 5.10: And after _____ have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called _____ to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore _____, confirm _____, strengthen _____, and establish _____."

To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. –Peter's final written words to God's people.

Review all of your Scripture-Soaked Prayers. How has God revealed His sufficiency to you?