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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“The Patience of God”

2 Peter 3:9-15a

VERSE DISCOVERY: 2 Peter 3:9-15a (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- Using a calendar of your choosing (it should be big enough for everyone to clearly see it), ask if we were to go through the months in it, what are some of the days that you are most looking forward to and why?

In today’s lesson, some people were looking forward to a very special event (the second coming of Christ) and others were not. The one’s that weren’t mocked or scoffed at those who were waiting in faith.

- People make fun of others for all sorts of reasons. Peter talks about being made fun of or mocked in today’s lesson, and the reason was because of their faith.

Waiting on promises is hard. Waiting on promises around those who don’t believe in the same promises is harder and this is what the people were facing. Jesus was and is coming back one day. But, because it hasn’t happened yet, and because years and years have gone by, and He still hasn’t “cracked the sky”, some who disbelieve scoffed at those who were still holding onto to their hope that this will happen.

But rest assured, Jesus will come back.

The only reason it hasn’t happened yet, God, in His loving patience toward people, is holding off His coming for now; He’s holding off the time of final judgement for now because He is being longsuffering with humanity. He doesn’t want people to perish, but to be saved, so for now, He is giving space and opportunity for that to happen. God won’t wait forever. I repeated, God will NOT wait forever, but for now, in His patience, He waits.

- Peter had authority to teach people about the coming of Christ. Peter, who was one of Jesus’ original twelve disciples when He was engaged in His earthly ministry, knew one hundred percent that Jesus was coming back. He, with the other disciples (minus Judas), were with Jesus when Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection. And, while they were standing, staring at the sky He disappeared into, “two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,*” (Acts 1:9-11; emphasis mine). Jesus also taught them, “And there shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes

of the earth mourn, and *they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,*" (Matthew 24:30; emphasis mine; see also Mark 13:26; compare Revelation 1:7, and many more verses on the return of Christ). But for now, God is being patient.

- Also, you can do an internet search for an object lesson focusing on God's patience to use as a lead into today's lesson.

Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 6-14

Verses 3-7

No one said the road would be easy but standing firm in one's faith is an essential element of keeping said faith. Yes, there will be critics. Yes, there will be people who jeer, egg you on, and plain old, just make fun of you for what you believe in, but standing firm is still something that each Christian must do during it all (For younger students, you can use the idea of a big, mature tree with roots deeply planted. Its branches move with the wind, but its core, its trunk stays planted where it is).

Peter, in this lesson, let his readers know that scoffers will come. Peter always had a special way of laying the truth down without sugar coating the results. On more than one occasion he didn't bite his tongue about how difficult the road would be to travel at times (see 1 Peter 4:12). Sometimes, in this walk with Christ, you will go through some difficult days, and sometimes those days are made difficult because the unbelieving people around you.

But Peter let them know, none of that mattered or changed the truth on the events that would take place in the future when Jesus came back. Whether or not one believes, it still doesn't change the fact that the same God who created the heavens and the earth, is the same God who destroyed the earth by water once before, and in that future day, He will use fire to do the destroying again.

There is a day of reckoning on the horizon. As the days turn like the hours on a clock (Take out a real or fake clock. Placing your finger on the hands of the clock, spin the time around and around demonstrating it going by just like the days.) There is a coming day of judgment that all people need to prepare for. It may not have happened yet, but it is coming.

Verses 8-10

If it's coming, what's the hold up, some may ask? The reason God is holding off is for the most wonderful of reasons. God loves people and He wants as many people to make it to heaven to live with Him forever. Isn't that a beautiful thought? So, for now, He, in His patience, is waiting.

One thing we must know, is that God doesn't mark days and times like we do. Referring back to your calendar, point out this is how we keep track of things and events, but for God, this is nothing. One day to God is like a thousand of our years. WOW! What would that be like? So, what seems long to us is not as long to God, so He waits.

But the other thing we must know is that God will not wait forever. Yes, He is loving. Yes, He is patient. And yes, His timetable may look different than ours, but He does have one, and when it is His proper time to move, He will, and the *"day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"* (vs. 10).

How does a thief operate? Are they sneaky and do things without people noticing, without warning? Or, do they announce they are coming to steal your stuff? They do things suddenly, by surprise. And, what Peter is teaching, is when God's timetable is up and He is ready to usher in that time of final judgment, it will all come suddenly, without warning. When that happens, all this old stuff in this earth we see now will be done away with, and God will bring in the new.

Verses 11-15a

What all this means for us is, as we said before, yes, God is patient, but the end can happen at any time. With that in mind, how should we be living today and every day? We should be living lives in anticipation of His arrival. We should be living godly and right lives knowing that at any moment we can step into eternity one way or another. We must live lives without spot (which means no sin) so that we can live forever in heaven with Jesus when He comes.

God is patient and that patience is giving more people a chance at salvation. But, as we have already stated, there will be an end. We must be ready for that time.

Activities

- Peter taught, and Jesus promised that He will return some day. But for now, God is being patient. The Bible calls this patience, longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9). In our lives, we spend a lot of time focusing on the here and now, the current times we are in. But eternity is in the future for every single one of us. Considering that, what do you think about God's patience? What do you love about God's patience? Jot your thoughts down on the **Journal Page** provided on site. Children can write down their ideas of what they think eternity in heaven will be like on the **Kid's Journal Page**. You can also use my **Blank Journal Pages** to bring out ideas you would like to cover.
- Younger students can draw a picture of the what they think it will look like when Jesus comes back, and we go to heaven to live with Him there in the **Draw the Scene** section found on site.

- While we are learning about God's patience it is also important for us to be patient. Remember, we learned that God's timing is not like ours and sometimes waiting on His promises to come to pass may not happen when we think it should, so we must be patient. To help students grasp this concept, do an online search of games and activities that teach patience to children.
- Also, playing a game of **Freeze** can help younger students to understand the idea of patience. Students can twirl, dance, jump around or do all kinds of silly actions. But, when you say, "Freeze", they must stand still like a statue and not move. They must be patient until you say, "Unfreeze!" The last one left standing is the winner!
- Alternate activity sheets such as **Word Search and more** are available on site for those who just want to work with printed materials.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***"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."*** 2 Peter 3:9
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 15)

Life

While we are living in God's blessed patience today, sometimes it's hard to remain in hope because of situations and things we may face. Encourage yourself this week in the Word of God. Find Bible verses or songs that speak of the joy and blessedness we get to experience in heaven, in our future home. Let those words lift your heart above any adverse thing you may be currently facing.

Another idea is to pass it on. If you have found an encouraging song or verse, pass it on. Somebody else might need to be encouraged in the same way. Write out the words or verse on a little hand-made decorated note or card and give it to someone who may need a lift. You can even give it secretly or mail it secretly to them if you have their address.

TOPIC:

“The Patience of God”

2 Peter 3:9-15a

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Waiting for things and promises to come to pass can be extremely hard sometimes. Especially if you have been hearing it for a while but have yet to see the fruition of it. This is a matter that Peter addressed in this portion of his letter. The gospel has been preached for some time by now. Those that believed were hopefully waiting for the promises preached to come to pass. They’ve heard the story of Jesus’ ascension and the urging to keep focused for His return. Yet, the scoffers (unbelievers) were making it hard to hold onto their faith. They ridiculed their beliefs and mocked their devotion.

Peter taught there’s a different end for us who are believers than for those who are unbelievers. Those that believe should never let go of the promise that He is coming back again regardless of how long it seems to us. Just look at this way, we are thanking God for His patience and longsuffering because it gives more people a chance to be saved. I think that’s well worth the wait, don’t you?

SCOFFERS MAY DISBELIEVE

2 Peter 3:3 “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”

“Knowing this first.” Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:12, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.” Yet, it still amazes us when we go through hardship. We are still taken aback at any signs of adversity. Here, Peter said the **“first”** thing you should know is there are going to be **“scoffers.”** There are going to be people who don’t believe what you believe and because they don’t, they will mock, ridicule, and make fun of you for what you believe in.

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If you have ever watched a clown perform you have probably laughed. Why? Because much of their performance is mocking the actions of another and the way they jokingly do it tickles our funny bone. **“Scoffers”** work in much the same way except it’s not funny at all. I think if we had the predetermined mindset to **“know”** these things will happen it will prepare us for when those times do come. Especially in these **“last days,”** referring to the time between the first and second return of Christ.

“Walking after their own lusts.” The word **“lusts”** has an s on the end of it signifying that there are various pursuits of ungodliness that the unbeliever and scoffer delve into. They scorn and mock that which is right with the end purpose of being able to do what they want to do. If they convince themselves there is no return of Christ to look forward to, then what is there that would prohibit living a life of sin and dishonor. If they believe there will be no repercussions to their current actions and lifestyle choices now, why would they stop pursuing those things and ideas they desire to pursue, even though they are wrong.

We see this attitude alive in the world now. We see Christians are rallied against because they raise a standard in their life and take a stand for their beliefs, yet at the same time, the mindset of the world is the Christian better not say anything about the beliefs of others. For if they do then they are considered intolerant of others for not supporting their lifestyles. All so that the unbeliever/scoffer can continue **“walking in their own lusts.”** **“Lusts”** are sinful desires that go against the plan and design that God has for humanity.

2 Peter 3:4 “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.”

A large part of gospel preaching and teaching is focusing on and preparing people for the return of Christ because their eternity hangs in the balance. Since the scoffer is not looking toward the same heavenly treasure as the believer and does not believe themselves that this event will take place, their job is to try to tear down and even use human reasoning against those who are awaiting God’s promise through the return of Christ.

“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.” Their reasoning, yesterday came and went, and nothing happened. Last year came and went and nothing happened. As

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a matter of fact, since the world was created, days and years came and went, and nothing happened. You keep saying it, but **“Where is the promise of his coming?”**

Most people base everything they believe or don't believe on what they see with their natural eyes and their short-sighted minds. When the unbeliever looks down through history, they don't see the chain of events that brought salvation to mankind. They don't see the promise of good that God has stored up for our futures. They don't see the fulfilling prophecies that brought God's kingdom closer to man. When they look down through history all they see is a normal course of events that has continued uninterrupted. They don't see this beautiful, epic love story where God tries to woo mankind back to Himself. Therefore, they can't fathom this incredible promise either. To them, nothing has changed. Since they don't see it, they don't mind letting their hatred for those of us who do see it show. They ridicule and mock the one who believes in the return of Christ (compare Jude 1:18-19). They trust that everything will remain as it has since the beginning of creation.

2 Peter 3:5-7 “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: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 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.”

“They willingly are ignorant.” Here it states that this is one's choice in the matter of whether they believe or not believe. God is not going to arm wrestle someone into faith. God has blessed every human being with a free will, and they are the ones who will choose whether or not they will follow Him.

“Willingly” implies truth or no truth, they will not comply. Their minds are made up to purposely follow a life of sin and what *they* believe or disbelieve to be true and right, regardless of the evidence before them. Here, their ignorance will not allow them to believe in the order of Creation as stated in the Bible or any other biblical truths that follow. For too long man has opposed God's truth to his own finite theories of evolution and reasoning on how the world came to be.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face

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of the waters,” (Genesis 1:1-2). Before God stepped in there was just chaos. Our lesson speaks of **“the earth standing out of the water and in the water.”** This was God’s doing! Nothing that we see in this world today existed nor did it evolve from some species. But on the third day of creation, God said, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering of together of the waters called he seas: and God saw that it was good,” (Genesis 1:9-10).

Though the order of creation is apparent and evident some still choose to disbelieve. The apostle Paul said this doesn’t excuse them. “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,” (Romans 1:20).

And, it is by those same waters that God stepped into history and judged mankind for his sin once before through the great Flood (see Genesis 6:6:5-7; 7:11-24; compare 2 Peter 3:6 of the lesson text), therefore Peter teaches, He will do it again! Whether or not one is looking for it, the time of final judgment will come.

Scoffers laugh and jeer because God is taking so long for the time of His coming when they should be rejoicing that He is taking His time. Instead, they use this time to indulge in evil. “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,” (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

In God’s proper timing, when He is ready, He will, **“by the same word”** He spoke during those times speak again and everything that we see around us today will perish. Jesus Himself stated that “Heaven and earth *shall* pass away,” (Matthew 24:35; emphasis mine). Psalm 102:26 tells us, “They *shall* perish, but thou shalt endure...” (emphasis mine). One day, their hope, which is not in God, will die. Yet, they still ignore the one who will “endure.” Go figure?

Still, God is patient today, but there will come a time for **“judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”** He is reserving everything for that fulfilling time. For now, He is holding back His **“word”** for that **“day of judgment.”** But then, everything that was spoken of for that day will happen and the ungodly will perish. There is a different end for the wicked as opposed to those who believe. “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup,” (Psalm 11:6). It will happen!

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...BUT GOD IS NOT SLACK

2 Peter 3:8-9 “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. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

But we, as His children, are not to operate in “**ignorance.**” We are to be fully aware of the ways of God. One thing is, God is not on a timetable such as we are. We mark our days by when the sun rises and sets at night. We mark our seasons by the temperature in the air, the budding or non-budding of plants, and by the harvests we reap. We mark our lives by age milestones. When you are a child you can’t wait to hit the double-digit numbers and be 10. After that, other milestones are marked such as when becoming a teenager (13), sweet sixteen, at 18 you are considered a legal adult and so forth.

God is infinite. He cannot be marked by time. “I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty, (Revelation 1:8). There never a time when He wasn’t because He always was! With that being said, “**One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**”

“**For the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.**” God is not an unreliable resource to depend upon like man. Many get confused along the way because they attribute man’s faulty characteristics to the holy and perfect God. When someone promises something but takes a long time fulfilling it, we tend to lose faith in that individual. But God cannot be counted in the same category as man. His not moving right now is not due to “**slackness**” or an inability to perform. Habakkuk tells us, “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry,” (2:3). Shortly after that in the next verse, he says, “The just shall live by his faith,” (2:4b). Every word of God for good or for bad, for happy or for sad, for those who believe or for those who don’t believe will come to pass!

For right now He is withholding His hand of final judgment so that as many people as possible can be saved. For everyone out there, there is hope for salvation if they will just turn to Him

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and repent and be saved. They don't have to go out like that when God is waiting for them right now, right this moment.

God's waiting won't add to the demise of people. Rather, His "longsuffering" is *because* He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Will all come and get into this life He offers through Jesus Christ? No. But God loves mankind so much that He wants to get as many people as possible out of that life of sin and unbelief that is seeking to take them down for all eternity. God wants as many people as possible to be saved and living in heaven with Him. How beautiful is His love toward us!

But people must repent! They must turn to Him. They must turn away from their old life; change their mind from their sinful thinking and living and turn to Him. A true, repentant heart admits that it has fallen short of the glory of God and is seeking restoration and salvation that only God can give through Jesus Christ our Lord. "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye," (Ezekiel 18:32).

2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the earth shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." There's something to be said for preparing for the unknown. In life, we put all kinds of securities in place such as home alarm systems to warn against intruders and we stock-up supplies in the event of some horrific storm. Our future in Christ is not an unknown, yet, still knowing what will take place, some disregard all warnings. Jesus said, "If the goodman had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up," (Matthew 24:43). Thieves are not known for announcing their arrival. The element of surprise works in their favor. It catches people off guard when they least expect it. Here we are told that when we least expect it, it will happen.

"The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Everything will be gone! Nothing on this earth will last forever. Yet, day by day, people put more stock in the things this world possesses and the "works" they can do with their own hands rather than God. Therefore, Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon

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earth,” (Matthew 6:19) because the earth and all that is in it will vanish one day. As stable and as strong as we think a mountain is, Revelation 16:20 tells us, “And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” All will **“pass away!”** Peter’s emphasis for us is not what’s going to happen with the world for we should already be prepared for that. His concern in dealing with the Christian is what’s happening with us personally.

THEREFORE, HOW WE LIVE MATTERS

2 Peter 3:11 “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” Since Peter already focused on the times and seasons of the future, he now wanted to focus on his readers and their inner man, and how they are representing themselves to the waiting world. How do we live our lives considering our eternity? Knowing that **“all these things shall be dissolved”** how do we let that information guide us in our life decisions and choices? Do we act as carefree and irresponsible as those who live with no hope of a better future? Or, do we make sure the faith we profess on the inside is shining like a beacon on the outside to draw even more people to Christ?

How we live matters! Talk is cheap! Actions speak louder than words! We’ve heard those sayings most of our lives but usually only apply it to someone we are in an argument with. What Peter really wants us to do is mind our own steps in life. It’s easy to pick away at the life of another and the choices they have made when we are not as careful to judge our own. Jesus asked, “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3). Our eternity is not bound up here, rather we are pressing toward the goal of heaven. We are working toward the end of salvation. With that being said, we must mind **“what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”** We won’t have to answer for nobody but ourselves and how we lived. And, how we will live matters!

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2 Peter 3:12-14 “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

In these three verses, we see the word “**look**” three times. At the time of this writing, Peter was nearing his end. This would be the last letter he wrote so he knows something about waiting in expectation of a better future. Hard times and trials tend to dash one’s hope. But Peter expressed that “**we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth.**” We are not to stop anticipating the better that God has for us. The unbelievers and scoffers live the way they live because they don’t have this assurance. But we have the “**promise.**” “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19). God is the author of the promise and God makes good on His promises; therefore, we should never stop looking! (see also Romans 8:31-39).

“**Wherein dwelleth righteousness.**” Speaking of our eternal home, the Bible tells us, “There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” (Revelation 21:27). A lot of works carried out by men and woman today will not see the light of heaven tomorrow. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God,” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Not on this list? It doesn’t matter. If one is not born again then they will not walk the streets of glory (see John 3:5). Only the righteous will be there. (This would be a good point to make a call to salvation for your students urging them to prepare themselves for that coming day).

“**Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace.**” When someone is diligent that means they are putting forth a conscientious effort to pay careful heed and give it their all. Since that day is inevitable, and since we don’t know the day or the hour, we must be ready to “**be found of him in peace.**” Romans tells us, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all

NOTES:

ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (1:18). In that day, those that are not **“found of him in peace,”** will surely wish they were.

“Without spot and blameless.” Israel was initially supposed to be the nation that would show the whole world how to have a relationship with God. They were to be examples of His righteousness but failed. Nevertheless, God had a plan to bring a Savior into the world **“without blemish and without spot,”** (1 Peter 1:19). Now, we are being called to live like Jesus. **“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked,”** (1 John 2:6, see also 1 Peter 1:13-25 and Matthew 5:48).

2 Peter 3:15a “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.”

“The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.” Have you ever really had an off day and thought to yourself that you were glad today was not the day when He came back? Yeah, me too. There are others that don’t know Him, and it is during this waiting period of His **“longsuffering”** they have a chance to accept and experience salvation. His love compels Him to wait a little longer. He won’t hold off forever, as the lesson has proven. Things will change despite what the scoffers believe. Our job in the process is to thank Him for His patience, hope in His coming, and live like we are in anticipation of the return of Christ, because we should be.

His longsuffering, which is stated twice in this lesson, is God’s patience at work in the best possible way. Believe today and turn to the Lord for salvation.

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TOPIC:

“The Patience of God”

2 Peter 3:9-15a

Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T or F.** God’s longsuffering is because He doesn’t want anyone to perish. (2 Peter 3:9)
2. Who are the people Peter warned will come in the last days? (2 Peter 3:3)
A. cursers B. Believers C. Scoffers D. None
3. The lesson states, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,” (2 Peter 3:10). What does that mean?

4. God is infinite and doesn’t mark time like we do. How did Peter describe time according to the Lord? (2 Peter 3:8).

5. “Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without _____, and blameless.” (2 Peter 3:14)
A. Spot B. Blemish C. Stain D. None

6. **T or F.** God will never destroy the earth again. (2 Peter 3:12)
7. When our lesson tells us “account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation,” (2 Peter 3:15a), how does that encourage you?

