

# Peter's Later Thoughts

## The Epistles

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Peter cannot be charged with changing his mind later after receiving further revelation. His Epistles, written much later, show clear evidence of the same posttribulational thinking as his early sermons. Shortly before his martyrdom, he was still teaching believers to anticipate Christ's posttribulation coming in glory, with no hint of a pretribulation rapture.

### First Peter

*1 Peter 1:7,13*

*7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ...*

*13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

Peter encouraged believers to remain faithful to Christ until the "revelation of Jesus Christ" in glory. The word "revelation" is the Greek word, "αποκαλυψις" (apokalypsis). This word is used of the second coming several times. In fact, the last book of the New Testament is named "the Revelation (αποκαλυψις) of Jesus Christ," and depicts only His coming in power and glory after the tribulation. Each time, the "revelation" of Jesus Christ has the idea of His coming in glory, showing Himself to the world in all His awesome power. Paul gave a very vivid picture of the "*revelation*" of Jesus Christ in the following verse.

*2 Thess 1:7-8*

*7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is **revealed** from heaven with His mighty angels,*

*8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Greek reads literally, "*rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven,*" which Paul describes as "*in flaming fire, taking vengeance*" on the wicked. This certainly does not fit a pretribulation rapture by any stretch of the imagination.

Peter went on to encourage his readers to endure the anticipated suffering to come, keeping their hope fixed firmly on **the revelation** of Jesus Christ's glory.

*1 Peter 4:12-13*

*12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

*13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is **revealed** [Greek: "in the revelation of His glory"], you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

The "fiery trial" was a specific time of testing that would end with the revelation of Christ in glory. The KJV/NKJV, by using the definite article and future tense, ("*the fiery trial which is to try you*"), indicates it was a known trial that would come in the future to try them all. He was most likely referring to the tribulation and persecution mentioned by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:9,21), although this is not certain from the text. However, the important point here is that Peter encouraged them to place their hope in Christ's coming in glory and power. Christ's coming in glory is always posttribulational, (Matt. 16:27, 24:20, 25:31, Mark 8:38,13:26, Luke 9:26, 21:27, 2 Thess. 1:9).

## **Second Peter**

In his second Epistle, written just before his death, Peter devoted his last instruction for Christians to the second coming. He addressed the apparent delay in Christ's return from the perspectives of both the scoffers (who denied His future coming) and believers (who were watching for it). In verses 3-7, Peter wrote that the long delay should not be interpreted by unbelievers as indicating Jesus was not coming back. He then explained the reason for the delay (in order to encourage those watching).

*2 Peter 3:9*

*9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is **longsuffering toward us**, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

Peter did not say the delay was caused by Lord's being longsuffering to the lost, but to us. He does not want any to perish. This strongly implies He is waiting for Christians to complete the Great Commission! This idea comes directly from the Olivet Discourse, and was reinforced by Jesus after the resurrection.

*Matt 24:14*

*14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

*Acts 1:6-8*

*6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

*7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*

*8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Peter went on to describe the coming of the Lord, calling it the "Day of the Lord," (vs. 10), and the "Day of God," (vs.12). In his first sermon, Peter clearly established the fact (by quoting Joel) that the Day of the Lord will come after the cosmic signs, the darkening of the sun and moon. And, Jesus told him these same signs would occur "*immediately after the tribulation*" (cf. Matt. 24:29 & Acts 2:20).

Peter connected the expected coming of Christ **for Christians** with the coming of the "Day of the Lord" (2 Pet. 3:9-10). And, as we have already shown, he understood the "Day of the Lord" to be "*immediately after the tribulation*" (Acts 2:20 & Matt. 24:29).

It is interesting to note that Peter repeated himself in verse 12, but substituted the phrase "Day of God" for the phrase "Day of the Lord."

*2 Peter 3:12*

*12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*

No doubt the phrases are interchangeable. The "Day of God" is found only one other time in the Bible, and it is undeniably in a posttribulation setting, (Rev. 16:13-16).

Notice also that this is the day for which Christians are "looking," and are capable of "hastening." The reason we are "looking for" this day is obvious. Jesus commanded his disciples to "watch" for His posttribulation coming, and then added this important statement: "*What I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!***" (Mark 13:37).

As to how we can hasten the posttribulation coming of Jesus, the answer is also found in the Olive Discourse, and earlier in this chapter. We are to complete the Great Commission (Matt. 24:14 & 2 Pet. 3:9).

No hint of pretribulationism can be found in Peter's sermons or his Epistles. He faithfully and consistently obeyed the command of Christ to *"teach them to observe all things I commanded you."* In his sermons and Epistles Peter consistently repeated Jesus' teaching to him about watching for the blessed hope of believers.