

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 13TH - 14TH, 2022 // BOOK OF 2 PETER

THE DAY OF THE LORD (2 PETER 3:1-10)

In both of Peter's letters, his purpose for writing them was to **"stir up sincere understanding by way of reminder"**—to reinforce the importance of truths with which we're already familiar (vs. 1).

- His letters were intended to help us **recall the teachings of the O.T.** and the commands of Jesus given to us by the apostles in the Gospels (vs. 2).

Jesus told His apostles plainly that those who follow **Him can expect persecution**, and we see the prophets of God in the O.T. often being **mistreated for speaking truth** (1 Peter).

- Jesus also warned us of false teachers, and we see in the O.T. **false prophets peddling lies to the people of Israel** (2 Peter).
- Something else we see all throughout the Bible is the presence of **"scoffers"** (Prov. 13:1).

But as we get closer to the return of Christ in the last days **"scoffers," who follow their own evil desires**, will increase (vs. 3).

- To **"scoff"** is to ridicule and make fun of something.
- Ridicule and weaponized humor is **the lowest form of intellectual criticism**—you don't have to have **any rational, coherent, or logical points of contention** with a person or their ideas to mock their beliefs.

The **"scoffers"** we can expect to encounter in these last days are those who **mock and ridicule the promise of Christ's Second Coming**.

- Their ridicule is based on the observation that the world is **going on just as it always has**, and it's comical to them for anyone to suggest that someday **it's going to come to an end because of a divine act of judgment**.
- But there's something they **"deliberately"** overlook.

First, some scoffers deliberately **overlook the rational fact that our universe** must have had a sovereign Creator (vs. 5).

- For anything to come into existence, **there must be a first cause**. It takes a deliberate ignorance based on an unwillingness to acknowledge God to state that **"no one + nothing = everything."**
- This is the **"suppression of truth"** we see Paul describing in Romans 1.

Secondly, **"scoffers"** deliberately overlook the accounts given to us in Scripture of God's **worldwide judgment against evil** (vs. 6).

- Perhaps they ignore or downplay God's righteous judgment against sin so they can present a God who **gives them license** to do what they want.
- The same word of God that created all matter and **judged the entire world** in the flood will one day bring a judgment of fire upon the earth (vs. 7).

The **scoffers and false teachers who mock the idea that Christ is coming back** are not only deliberately ignorant of what God is able to do and what He has done in the past (vs. 6), they're ignorant of God's nature and character (vs. 8-10). **Why does it seem like God is delayed?**

- God **doesn't work on our timing**: He relates to time differently and has His own perfect timing based on His sovereign, perfect wisdom and will (vs.8).

What **seems like forever for us is but a short time for God!**

- Secondly, **God's apparent delay in fulfilling the promise of the Second Coming** is related to His incredible love for humanity (vs. 9).
- God is **patient and desires all to come to repentance** without having to perish.
- He's giving **humanity more time to come to a saving knowledge** of Jesus!

Though the **Lord's love to the lost makes it seem that perhaps** He is delayed in His coming, the truth is that Jesus will come again (vs. 10).

- And when Jesus does return, **He will come at a time that will surprise many (as a thief in the night, Matt. 24:43)**.
- The ultimate **result of His coming will be a total transformation of this present world (in which the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will burn and be dissolved)**.

"Heavens": the galaxies and solar systems beyond the Earth.

- **"Elements"**: earth, air, fire, and water; the atomic particles which are the basic structures of nature.
- **"Earth"**: this entire planet that we inhabit.
- **"...the works on it"**: all the structures, systems, and civilizations of humanity.
- All of these things will **be laid bare before Almighty God**. Then He will create a new Heaven and a new Earth (Rev. 21:1).

HOLY CONDUCT & GODLINESS (2 PETER 3:11-13)

In light of the fact that **this world and all of its structures, systems, and civilizations** are temporary—what sort of people are we to be?

Some Christians live their lives for...

- The pursuit of **worldly success, wealth, pleasure, entertainment**, and comfort.
- The pursuit of **beauty, vanity, and external appearance** to impress or gain applause.
- The pursuit of **power or political dominance**.

There's nothing sinful about **pursuing a career, raising a family, taking a vacation**, watching football, or participating in the political process.

- However, we **must keep in mind that investing all of our selves and energy** in what is temporal is foolish and wasteful.
- **"All of these things are to be dissolved"**: There is coming a day when **the things of this earth will completely vanish**.

The eternal things we are to **invest ourselves in primarily** are our **"holy conduct"** and **"godliness"** (vs. 11).

- **"Holy conduct"** describes someone who has a **standard of personal behavior** for their life that is based on their dedication to God.
- **"Godliness"** is the **quality of conforming our lives to the desires** and will of God.
- These ambitions are **worthy investments** of time.

As follower for Jesus, **our lives are to be about waiting** for the "day of God" (vs. 12).

- We have the responsibility of **preparing ourselves spiritually for the day** in which we see Jesus face to face, and we have the responsibility to **work diligently to spread the gospel**, love the least of these, and make disciples.
- We labor while we wait—passive, lazy, spiritually obese Christians **will be held accountable**.

"HASTEN ITS COMING" ... ?

We **don't know when the Lord will return**, only the Father knows (Matt. 24:36).

- But there is a sense in which **God has ordained the obedience of the Church** to hasten the day of the Lord's return.
- Evangelism (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 11:25)
- Prayer (Rev. 22:20)
- Holiness (vs. 11)

The **best use of your energy and time is to prepare yourself spiritually** to meet the Lord and to be diligent in the spaces in which God has placed you in to do His work.

- Why? Because this **present reality is passing away** (vs. 12), and our eternal, true home is the "new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells" (vs. 13).
- **Are you ready for that kind of home?**

BE ON YOUR GUARD (2 PETER 3:14-18)

While we wait for the Lord's return, we're to make **every effort to be thorough and diligent** in two areas of our spiritual walk (vs. 14).

1. To be **"found without spot or blemish."** This doesn't mean we can achieve perfection, but we **can have victory over besetting sin** and grow in our character to look like Christ.
2. To be **"at peace."** We're to be at **peace with God and at peace** with other people.

We're to **regard the patience of our Lord as salvation** (vs. 15a).

- Christ's supposed **"delay"** in **returning is a reflection of His patience** and desire to see humanity saved. Is that your heart too?
- Paul also wrote letters to the church about this truth (1 Tim. 2:4) as **the Holy Spirit inspired him and gave him wisdom to do so**. But Peter wants to address something about Paul's letters.

There are some things in **Paul's letters that are hard to understand** (vs. 15b).

- We don't know exactly which things Peter is referring to, but **we may guess it might have been Paul's teachings on the law**, salvation through grace, election, or freedom in Christ in matters of personal conviction.
- Whatever it was, the **"untaught and unstable"** were twisting these things (vs. 16).

A **common tactic of false teachers (or even ignorant, immature, or rebellious Christians)** is to distort and twist Scripture in order to condone or excuse sinful lifestyles.

- We are **all imperfect in our exact interpretations of God's perfect Word**: In this life, there are some parts of Scripture we can only "know in part" (1 Cor. 13).
- But there are some who **intentionally force unnatural and strange meanings** into Scripture by twisting God's Word to make it say something it doesn't.

"Be on your guard" (vs. 17): Don't get led away by people who would **deny the Second Coming of Christ** or any other plain teaching of Scripture.

- Many Christians fall from their **"stable position"** as faithful disciples because of unbiblical teaching.
- **"Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus"** (vs. 18): This is a call to grow in our understanding of the grace **God has given us and in our personal relationship with Jesus** as our Lord, Savior, and friend.

"THE LAST DAYS"

- In the Bible, **the time between Jesus' ascension into Heaven and His return to the earth** is called **"the last days"** (2 Peter 3:3).
- In these last days, **the Spirit of God has been poured out on anyone** who would call upon the name of Jesus for salvation (Acts 2:17).
- God has **given us His Holy Spirit for a purpose and a calling** as His people.
- We can either **cooperate with** and surrender to the work of the Spirit in our lives, or **we can oppose it**.
- We're called to keep in **step with the Spirit** (Gal. 5), be **led by the Spirit** (Rom. 8:14), and be **filled with the Spirit** (Eph. 5:18).
- We can **grieve the Spirit** (Eph. 4:30), quench the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), or **insult the Spirit** (Heb. 10:29).

The **Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of God's people** is intended to **make them holy in their conduct** and grow them in godliness.

- The Spirit convicts us of sin; but we must respond with **true repentance**, or we'll **"quench"** Him.
- The Spirit leads us to **God's Word, prayer, and Spiritual discipline**; but we must listen and respond, or we'll **"grieve"** Him.

The **Holy Spirit's presence in the lives of God's people is intended to equip them to work diligently for the activity of God on the earth** during these last days.

- The Spirit empowers us to **share the gospel and make disciples**; but we must be obedient and **"go."**
- The Spirit empowers us to **serve**; but we must be obedient and willing to **"wash feet."**

Jesus is coming back. This earth is **passing away**.

- **There will be some who are taken off guard** and will see His return like that of a **"thief"** because, for them, it means that **all they've been living for (the temporal) will be taken away**.
- **In these last days**, are you surrendered to **the Holy Spirit's work in your life and God's will on this earth?**