

The Day of the Lord Will Come 2 Peter 3:1-13

Richard Baxter was a well known Pastor ministering in the 1600's.

- He disciplined the whole village where he pastored.
- We still use his books *The Reformed Pastor* and *Dying Thoughts*.
- He published tons of pages of Bible study.
- And he accomplished all this while living with all sorts of trials.
- Someone once asked him, "Given all your sufferings, how have you managed to be so productive and faithful all these years?" (he lived to 76)
- He responded, "I think about heaven for thirty minutes every day." (Whitney)

This vision of the future (of the *new heavens and new earth*) is meant to inspire God's people to faithful and fruitful now. Let's spend 30 min thinking about it.

If you haven't been with us for our "Sermons on the Mound" from 2 Peter, we have been talking about growing in the knowledge of Christ, and being aware of the dangers of false teaching. "Guarded and Growing" (17-18)

One of the core doctrines that they denied was the belief in the second coming of Christ and future judgment.

Chapter 3 is all about this day of the Lord (3:10;12) – a day of judgment and a day of salvation. It's a day that centers on him... We have days that center on people...

- **Wedding Day** – everyone is the supporting cast
- **Graduation Day** – signs in the yard, parties, etc
- **Birthday** – Uk's QB
- The Day of the Lord is His Day.
- The last time they saw Jesus was meek and lowly; but the next time, on this Day, he will shine in brilliant majesty!
- It will be the Day in when everyone will realize that He alone is Lord and that He is central. We're to live in view of it.
- It's when we see him as central now, and live in view of this day that our lives find satisfaction and meaning.

I want you to see four truths related to the Day of the Lord.

1. God's Word Reveals It
2. God's Work in the Past Supports It
3. God is Patient in Delaying It
4. God's People Ought to Live in View of It

#1: God's Word Reveals It (3:1-4)

1: The "**second letter**" – with 1 Peter most likely being the first letter.

"beloved" – they are objects of God's covenantal love.

- We are "in the beloved" – in Christ; loved with the greatest of all loves.
- It also conveys Peter's tender care for God's people.

“stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder”

- Peter is not teaching them something they don't know, but rather reminding them of this central idea in our faith so that they can preserve in the faith and reject the false teachers and their ungodly way of life.

“sincere mind” – as opposed to the deception of false teachers who have hidden motives.

2: What to Remember: “the predictions of the prophets and apostles”

- The prophets foretold of the two advents of Christ. (cf., 1 Pet 1:10-12; 22-25)
- And the apostles word carries that same authority, as it is the Christ's word to us “through” the apostles. (Open the Book)
- The apostles also give us clear teaching about the coming day of Christ.
- This reaches back to what Peter said in chapter 1:16-21.
- God's Word Is Our Final Authority and we embrace what it teaches about the day of the Lord.

3: Why We Need Reminded: “scoffers” mock it.

- A scoffer is one who makes fun of something by mocking.
- **Scoffers gonna scoff**
- Scoffers proudly dismiss the claims of Christ as being beneath them.
- They deny the return of Christ; they deny future judgment and salvation.

“first of all” – as in matters of priority. Know that this will happen.

- It will seem ridiculous to some people.

“last days” – the time between the ascension and return when Christ establishes a new heavens and new earth (3:13).

Pentecost: Acts 2:15-17

For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams..”

“following sinful desires” – The scoffing doesn't exist in a moral vacuum.

- It is accompanied by the desire to gratify the desires of the flesh.
- Whereas, the coming of Christ for the believer inspires holiness and godliness. (3:11)

4: What the Scoffers Say: “Where is the Promise of His Coming?”

- Just as people mocked the prophets (Jer 17:15; Mal 2:17), so these false teacher continue to mock God's Word.
- Their logic: **“For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation”** (4b)
- They claim that things have remained the same since the beginning of creation. (“fathers” referring to OT patriarchs)

- “Things have just went on with such regularity and no divine intervention that it’s crazy to see some cataclysmic return and judgment” they say.
- They argue that since the days of the patriarchs, there has been no **intervention** from God, especially judgment.
- But Peter has already defended the idea of God’s intervention and judgment in the examples of Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah and the Fallen Angels (2:3-22), showing that God is both rescuer and judge and that these events are previews of the judgment to come.
- And now he defends the idea again in verses 5-7.
- Further, saying that nothing has changed since the beginning, overlooks one massive reality, namely the coming of Christ in his **first advent**, his atoning death, victorious resurrection and ascension as King.
- **The good news of the gospel is that God *has* intervened in history to rescue sinners like us.**
- And now Peter says, God will intervene again in the future...

#2: God’s Work in the Past Supports It (3:5-7)

5-6: Scoffers mock this because they “**overlook this fact**”

- They deliberately overlook – that is, they choose to disregard what Peter is saying.

This “**fact**” has two parts to it:

1. The very creation of the world demonstrates God’s intervention in it: “**forming the earth out of water and through water by the word of God**” (3:5)

- God created it by his **word**: Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.”
- God is the **first preacher!**
- God used **water** as an instrument of forming the world.
 - Genesis 1 a watery chaos covered earth. “The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (1:2)
 - It was uninhabitable for humans.
 - But God separated the waters by making the expanse of the sky. (Gen 1:6-8)
 - He also collected the waters so dry ground could exist (Gen 1:9–10).
 - “out of water’ is the idea of this emergence of the earth and sky from these waters.”
 - God created it all - he formed it. What was chaotic was made orderly.

2. Speaking of water, the flood in Noah’s day also demonstrates God’s intervention in the world: “**and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.**” (3:6)

- Instead of thinking God created the world and took his hands off of it, one should remember what God did when he judged the world in the story of Noah.
- The story of Noah is often taken in very superficial ways: “**love animals**” is often the **moral**.
- But Peter tells us what the point of that is: God judges and rescues.
- It’s a preview of final judgment.
- A lot of people dismiss this idea.

- But it's important to remember that the person that spoke on hell and judgment most is Jesus.

V. 7: Peter applies the lesson about the flood: **“But by the same word the heavens and earth now exist and are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly”**

- By God's word, the pre-flooded world was destroyed.
- What was orderly became chaotic, as God intervened by his word.
 - The flood was not a **“natural disaster”** but a divine intervention by means of his word accomplished through water.
- And by that same word, he will bring judgment again.
 - Peter expects this end to come *once*.
- Here, God is storing up **“fire”** – a common means of judgment as we've seen.
- **“being kept”** – that is, God is sovereign over the timing of this coming judgment.
- **“the day of judgment”** refers to the day of the Lord, a time in which God will bring final salvation to his people and judgment to his enemies.

God intervened in creation, in the flood, and he will do so in the future.

#3: God Is Patient in Delaying It (3:8-10)

8: The scoffers were **“overlooking”** certain facts, but Peter urges the readers to not **“overlook this one fact”** – and then he goes on to speak of the delay of the coming day.

The first thing he says is that God's timetable is different from ours [read]

- He doesn't calculate time like humans do.
- **Will you come teach in ... 2023!** “Yeah, man, if I'm alive I'll be there!”
- That's not a long time to the Ancient of Days.

We may wonder as we look at injustice in the world: Why are you being so slow?

- **Fast and slow are depends on your perspective.**
- **Children are impatient because they're so young.**
- **Seven year old wants a bike. “Wait 3 weeks and the price will drop from \$100 to \$30 at another store.” Adults would say, “Done. That's reasonable.” But the child will respond differently, “You don't love me! Three weeks! I may be dead by then!”**
- **Patience is “slowness” to the child.**
- **Peter says “soon” means in God's own horizon.**
- **God's relationship to time is a great mystery and transcends our finite minds.**
- **We shouldn't make this a strict mathematical timetable, but understand the general idea that God's timetable is not the same as ours.**
 - It says **“like/as”** not **“is.”**
 - It's a comparison or an analogy.
- **Peter likely has Psalm 90:4 in mind, “A thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”**
- **So the delay of Christ shouldn't weaken our faith.**

- We need to remember God's sovereignty over this day.
- It may seem like a long time to us, but not to him!
- Just because he hasn't arrived, doesn't mean he won't arrive!
- He is coming – like a thief in the night at his appointed time.

9: Peter adds that God is not slow in fulfilling his promises, but his expressing his mercy and his patience so that people will come to repentance **[read]**

- God's patience is expressed in various places (Ex 34:6-7)
- God's moral will is that no one would perish (Ezek 33:11, Storms)
- God invites the world to repent and believe on Christ.
- It is his kindness, his mercy, his patience that leads us to repentance.
- Good news: He doesn't say "Get it together" but *repent*.
- Anyone can do that if they will swallow their pride.
- Who escapes judgment and enjoys new creation; **not perfect people, but repentant people.**

10: God's Patience will not last forever.

- The day of the Lord will come **"like a thief."** (cf., **Matt 24; 1 Thess 5:2-3; Rev 3:3**)
- It's a reminder to be ready!
- God will bring judgement and salvation at his appointed time – a time that no one knows.
- Throughout Scripture, especially in the prophets we read about various "Days of the Lord" – days of judgment and salvation – sometimes referred to the immediate time period, but other times it points to this final day of the Lord. (cf., Joel 2:28-32; Obad 15-18; Isa 24:1-23).
- In the NT, the Day of the Lord is often referred to as the day of Christ (1 Cor 1:8; **Phil 1:6, 10; 2:16; 1 Thess 1:5-12**)
- It will come unexpectedly, like a "thief."

Three events will happen on this day.

- Peter gives little explanation of the following apocalyptic and mysterious events and so we are left without knowing all the details – but we know enough to know that it will be unlike any day.

1. The heavens (all that God has created – v. 5 and 7) will pass away (10b)

- **"Pass away"** carries the idea of being no more.
- **"with a roar"**-- can refer to the swish of an arrow, to thunder, the crackle of flames of fire, the scream of a whip, rushing waters, or the hissing of a serpent (M. Green).
- Hence it denotes the violent nature of the passing away of the heavens

2. The heavenly bodies [elements] will be burned up and dissolved" (10c)
"Heavenly bodies/Elements"

- The stuff which physical things are made of.

"burned up and dissolved"

- **The current world will be no more and a new earth or renewed earth will dawn.**

- **All creation is longing for this:**

Romans 8:18–25: For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

3. “The earth and the works done on it will be exposed”

- **There will be no place to hide (cf. Rev. 6:15–16),**

- **Every person’s works will be exposed.**

- **Jesus misses nothing - he’s not like a referee who needs to watch the replay. He doesn’t need the help of slow motion.**

- **“Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” (Matt 10:26)**

- **“On that day when, according to my Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (Rom 2:16)**

- **The Lord “will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” (1 Cor 4:7)**

- **Sewing class — one day all our work will come into the light**

God is patient in delaying this coming day.

- **So be ready!**

- **Repent and believe!**

- **Devote your days to honoring the Lord Jesus, knowing that we will give an account for our lives!**

#4: God’s People Ought to Live in View of It (3:11-13)

The reality of this day means that we should live in a certain way.

Peter says we should be marked by two traits: holiness and hope.

A. Holiness (3:11-12)

11: We should be characterized by holiness (separation from sin and dedication to God) and godliness (reverence and resemblance).

- **Peter emphasized the calling to holiness in his first letter, and opened chapter 1 of his second letter emphasizing the calling to godliness.**

- **The point of eschatology is not to inspire wild speculation, but holy consecration.**

- **It’s not to make us fanatical, but faithful.**

- **Eschatology and ethics always go together.**

- The end is coming! Be holy. Be godly.

12: He adds that this pursuit of holiness/godliness is necessary because we are “**waiting for and hastening the coming day of God**” and then underscores again the nature of this day: “**because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn**”

- “**waiting**” – means we are anticipating the Parousa, the arrival of Christ.
- “**The coming day of God**” – not looking for the rapture, but for Christ to come and wrap it all up. And we will transition from his age to the next.
 - that day of judgment and final salvation.
 - The world will be destroyed, and a new one will be established.
 - Creation will be set free; we will receive resurrection bodies. (Rom 8)
 - We are living in view of that day. It’s not passive but active.
- “**hastening**” – God is sovereign and in control of human history, but he works through his people to accomplish his purposes.
 - We’re told elsewhere to pray “**your kingdom come**” meaning that our prayers have some bearing on the coming kingdom.
 - We’re told that “**the gospel will be preached to all nations and then the end will come**” (Matt 24:14).
- Which leads me to believe that believer’s obedience is a factor in the coming of Christ.
- We’re not just “killing time.”
- Our lives are filled with end-time purpose!

B. Hope (3:13)

What awaits God’s people: “**a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells**”

- A new heavens and a new earth!
- **100 Places to See Before You Die**
- Righteousness will dwell because the Righteous one, the one who took our judgment, will dwell with us!
- We live in a world where righteousness doesn’t dwell, but it will!
- Peter surely has **Isaiah 65:17-25** in mind:

¹⁷“For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent’s food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,”
says the LORD.

The prophet envisions God's people living free from sin and the curse; where total shalom is experienced.

The theme culminates in Rev 21-22. John's imagery leaves us in speechless awe.

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

What a vision! Think on that 30 minutes a day! It's coming!

In C.S. Lewis' *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, a conversation between Lucy and Aslan, the lion who is the Christ-figure in the story, unfolds:

"Do not look so sad. We shall meet soon again."

"Please, Aslan," said Lucy, "what do you call soon?"

"I call all times soon," said Aslan; and instantly he was vanished away.'

We can be certain Jesus' return is closer today than it was yesterday.

And Tomorrow, it will be even closer.

He is coming!

God's Word reveals it

God's actions in the past supports it!

God is being patient and merciful in delaying it — believe now while there's time!

And God's people live in view of it!

- **It compels us to live holy lives**
- **It compels us to live hope-filled lives.**
- **It gives us hope when the days are dark; in those moments remember that soon, the Morning Star will appear; a new creation will dawn, and the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters covers the seas.**
- **Come Lord Jesus!**

Christians are those who follow the Lamb into new creation.

The lamb who was slain for sinners, John says he saw "standing" — Jesus is the exalted Savior and the returning King of Kings.

Soon we will see him and dwell with him in the new heavens and new earth.