

Looking Forward

2 Peter 3:10-18

Intro

This morning we will conclude our verse by verse study of 2 Peter...

But before we work our way through our final passage, let's briefly remind ourselves of the section that we studied last week...

2 Peter 3:1-9 (NKJV)

- 1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),**
- 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,**
- 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,**
- 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 creation."**
- 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,**
- 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.**
- 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

[expand — God has promised to judge sin & judgment will come...]

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

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.

• [expand — *God prefers mercy over judgment...*]

*With this reminder, let's read the passage that we will be studying this morning in a message I have entitled, **Looking Forward...***

2 Peter 3:10-18 (NKJV)

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

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?

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

I've divided this passage into two sections...

- 1) *The Day of the Lord***
- 2) *The Diligence of Saints***

Let's move into our first section...

1) The Day of the Lord (vs 10-13)

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,

Now, I believe that **the Lord in the day of the Lord** is none other than ***the Lord Jesus***...

As you consider this idea, would you please turn to...

Colossians 1:16-18 (NKJV)

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Now, as we turn back to 2 Peter 3:10, we must confess that there is much disagreement among Christians regarding **the day of the Lord...**

- And, as always, I would encourage you to study the subject on your own and not merely believe what I believe because I am standing on a stage and you are sitting in a seat...

With that said, I will offer you my understanding and trust that you will do the work of a Berean and study the Scriptures for yourselves to see if these things are so...

- Now, Peter's argument here in **1 Peter 3** is that God is *delaying His judgment* so that people might be saved but this delay will not last forever and *judgment will eventually come...*

*And when it does, that judgment will come **as a thief in the night...***

- *That judgment will be **sudden and unexpected...***

With this in mind, I understand **the day of the Lord** to begin with ***the Rapture of the Church*** and extend all the way through the ***Tribulation Period, the Millennial Kingdom, the Great White Throne Judgment*** and finally to the establishment of ***the New Heavens and the New Earth...***

- And I believe Peter is condensing this timeline down because his focus is on the fact that ***the judgment of God is coming...***

Now, as we consider this idea, it is interesting to note that in the Jewish way of thinking *evening is the start of the day...*

We see this in...

Genesis 1:5 (NKJV)

So the evening and the morning were the first day.

- [ex. Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown...]

Even for us Gentiles, *the new day technically starts at **midnight** — the new day starts in the **dark...***

- Could it be that **the day of the Lord** starts in the *darkness of the Rapture & Tribulation Period* and progress to the *light of the Millennial Kingdom?*...

It is an interesting idea to consider...

But even if I am wrong about exactly what events qualify for **the day of the Lord**, I believe the principle of ***evening before morning*** — the principle of ***darkness before light*** — is one that we should all take to heart...

*Because the Bible makes it abundantly clear that this world is a **world of darkness**...*

This life is not as it should be — and things cannot continue on this downward trajectory forever...

But instead of cursing the darkness we should seek the light...

As believers, ***we are the light of the world — we are a City on a Hill — we are pilgrims on our way to our Father's House*** and we should invite others to join us on our journey...

- We are to follow the light of Christ as He leads us through ***this present darkness*** into ***that everlasting light***...

With this in mind, I believe that Peter focuses on ***the final aspect of the day of the Lord*** — *the destruction of the current universe* — for a very specific purpose...

But before we discuss that purpose, let's read the rest of vs 10...

in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Now, some interpret this as ***a refining of the current universe*** while others (myself included) see this as ***a complete destruction of the current universe*** to make way for the New Heavens and the New Earth...[expand]

As we move into vs 11, we will see why Peter highlights this aspect of the day of the Lord...

11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

dissolved — *to reduce something by violence into its components, destroy; of the parts of the universe, as it is broken up and destroyed in the final conflagration...*

So, I believe that in vs 11 Peter is making a simple case — he is essentially saying: *“Since everything on the earth will eventually be destroyed, don’t focus on the things of this world”...*

For a similar sentiment, please turn to...

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

As we turn back to **2 Peter 3:11** we must consider the following question...

If we are not to focus on the things of this world because they will be dissolved — what are we to focus on?...

Well, Peter tells us that we should be focused on **holy conduct** and **godliness**...

holy conduct — living a sanctified life; being set-apart for God's use...

godliness — worship and respect devoted toward God; well-directed reverence for God...

- [expand — turning away from idols and worshiping only God...]

The Apostle Paul shows us what **holy conduct** and **godliness** looks like as we turn to...

2 Timothy 2:20-26 (NKJV)

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Please turn back to 2 Peter 3 as we move into vs...

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

the day of God — *the time after the day of the Lord — the eternal state in the New Heavens and the New Earth...*

looking for — *looking forward expectantly...[ex. children looking forward to Christmas...]*

hastening — *1) to cause something to happen or come into being by exercising special effort; 2) to desire earnestly...*

*And it seems that both of these definitions for **hastening** are true in this context...*

As believers we are to earnestly desire the day of God — the day when there will be no more tears or pain — the day when there will be no more sin or death...

But we are also to hasten the day of God through our obedience to the Lord — through our service to Him as we seek to make disciples wherever we may go...

This definition of ***hastening*** reminds us that ***God's timeline is not independent of how we live our lives...***

- ***By His design, we are a part of that eternal plan — believers are the primary agents through which He carries out His plans in this fallen world...***

And it seems that through our faithful obedience to His calling on our lives we can in some way hasten the day of God...

Continuing on in vs 12 we read...

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?

From the words **because of which** we learn that the current universe must be done away with for **the day of God** to come...

“Out with the old and in with the new”...

And this is similar to what we see in our own lives — we must submit to God burning up the old, sinful habits in our lives so that new, godly habits may be formed...[expand]

Paul put it this way in...

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NKJV)

22 ...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Continuing on in 2 Peter 3 to vs...

13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

As believers, it is vital that we remember that ***God has promised*** to create **a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells...**

promise — *a declaration to do something with the implication of obligation to carry out what is stated...*

And though it should go without saying, we must remind ourselves that God will do what He has promised to do...

look for — *to look forward to expectantly...*

And please notice that the aspect of the new heavens and the new earth that Peter focuses on is the fact that **righteousness dwells** there...

righteousness — *integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting...*

dwells — *speaks of permanent residence; of a permanent settling down...*

*This is something to look forward to both **externally** and **internally**...[expand]*

Let's move now to our second section...

2) The Diligence of Saints (vs 14-18)

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things,

*For the third time in three verses Peter instructs believers to **look forward** expectantly...*

And we must not ignore Peter's clear exhortation...

Because if we fail to look forward to the future that God will bring to pass — we will fail to live properly...

However, if we look forward with proper perspective we will be continually reminded that doing things God's way is the only way to live because there is no future in any other way...[expand]

Now as Peter continues, we will see that an expectant looking forward to the future that God has planned will empower us to live as He has commanded us to live...

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

diligent — *to make every effort to do one's best, to be eager...*

to be found by Him — *this phrase expresses the truth that God examines how we live our lives...*

And as God examines our lives, His desire is that He would find us **in peace, without spot and blameless...**

peace — *the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is...*

*Now, it is vital that we understand that this type of **peace** cannot be found apart from relationship with the Triune God...*

John 14:27 (NKJV)

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

You see, we must remain in right relationship with the Lord God if we are to **be found by Him in peace...**

So, if we are not **found by Him in peace** right now, it is time to see what is wrong and work it out with Him...[expand]

Moving to the last section of 2 Peter 3:14 we read...

without spot and blameless

This speaks of staying away from things that would **defile our conscience** or **give reason for us to be blamed...**

And I believe the big idea is that we are to do our best to **avoid sin and evil** and instead **focus our heart and mind on the good...**

I believe the best way to do this is to follow Paul's counsel in...

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

**Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—
meditate on these things.**

Continuing on in 2 Peter 3 to vs...

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—

Here Peter reminds believers that the **longsuffering of our Lord** is due to **His desire to save the lost** — not due to any slackness on His part...

as also our beloved brother Paul,

First thing to notice here is that Peter referred to Paul as **our beloved brother** even though Paul had rebuked Peter publicly as recorded in **Galatians 2**...[expand]

- This is a reminder that we are to take rebukes from fellow believers and then move on without bitterness...[expand]

as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

In other words, Paul had written about the longsuffering of God as well...

Romans 2:4 (NKJV)

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

As Peter continues writing about Paul in vs 15-16...

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

There is quite a bit going on in vs 16 so let's look at it more closely...

as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand,

Amen! — Anyone who has read the Apostle Paul knows that some of the things that writes are **hard to understand**...[expand]

Continuing on in vs 16 we read...

which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction,

untaught — *ignorant...*

unstable — *without a firm foundation...*

These people are unqualified to properly understand and explain the Apostle Paul...

twist — *to stretch on a rack, to torture...*

destruction — *ruin, lostness; eternal separation from God...*

as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Here Peter clearly speaks of Paul's writings as Scripture...[expand]

- [expand — it seems clear that Paul understood His writings to be authoritative...]

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked;

steadfastness — *firmness of mind and faith...*

Peter is warning believers not to be led astray by the false teachings of **untaught** and **unstable** men who could shipwreck their faith...[expand]

- False teachers have been a main focus of this letter and false teachers will always be a danger in this fallen world so we must continue to keep our guard up...

And as we move into our final verse, Peter gives a final exhortation that will help keep us from being led astray by false teachers...

18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The word **grow** is a *present tense imperative verb* and could be translated "*make it your habit to always be growing*"...

- As believers we should ***always be growing*** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

[ex. ABC - Always Be Closing // ABG - Always Be Growing...]

As we make growth our daily aim, we will not fall prey to false teachers...

Now to the final words of 2 Peter...

To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

The Lord Jesus is the Lord of glory — and He deserves all of the glory that we can give to Him today, tomorrow and forevermore...

Conclusion

As we close our time together, I will share a quote that I came across while I was studying...

“The purpose of prophetic truth is not speculation but motivation.” [expand]

Prophecy should motivate us to look forward to our glorious future while at the same time motivating us to live for Christ today...