

Sunday, August 4, 2024 pm

STUDIES IN 2 PETER (15)

The Day of the Lord

2 Peter 3:10-13

Tonight, we continue our study through 2 Peter. We are coming to the conclusion of this letter (one more lesson). After exposing false teacher in 2 Peter 2, in our last lesson (3:1-9), Peter addressed scoffers who mocked the delay of the Lord's return. It is possible this is the primary false doctrine Peter was warning against (though the concepts of chapter 2 apply to ANY false teacher). In that lesson we concluded with vs. 8-9 where Peter noted that God does not view time as we do (He works on His time frame – 1000 years as a day), but also that He is delaying His coming because of His longsuffering. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. And that brings us to today's text.

I. The day of the Lord (10)

- a. *But* – a marker of contrast. Yes, He is longsuffering and delaying that day. HOWEVER, it will NOT be forever. A day IS coming.
- b. *The day of the Lord* – an expression of a day of judgment. In scripture there have been several days of the Lord.
 - i. Isaiah 2:12, *For the day of the Lord of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low—* a warning of judgment from YHWH because of idolatry. I would be against Israel, Judah and other nations.
 - ii. Joel 1:15, *Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.* A day of judgment against Israel (likely the same as Isaiah)
 - iii. Isaiah 13:6 - *Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.* Declared against Babylon.
 - iv. Acts 2:20-21, quoting Joel 2:31-32, Peter is clearly noting that Joel prophesied of the time of Jesus and the church. He mentions things happening BEFORE the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. LIKELY, Peter here is referencing what would happen to Jerusalem in about 40 years from that time. It was certainly a “day of the Lord.”
 - v. The point is that scripture speaks of several “days of the Lord” – they were days of God's judgment AND often included deliverance of His people.
 - vi. Here, it is my conviction because of the timing and text, Peter is speaking of the Lord's second return – 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 speaks of this coming “day of the Lord” that they were to anticipate. 2 Thessalonians is written to clarify that it would be a while before that “day of the Lord” would come.
- c. *It will come as a thief in the night* – it will be unannounced.
 - i. We do NOT know when He is going to return. 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Cf. Matthew 24:43-44.
 - ii. He has appointed a day (Acts 17:30-31), but that exact date (or even decade or century) is unknown. He could come today, next year or another 1000 years. He knows, but we don't. Jesus taught that in 3 parables in Matthew 25. Vs. 13 declares at the end of the parable of wise and foolish virgins that we need to watch because we do not know the day nor hour of His return.
 - iii. When He comes it will be the final judgment

1. – John 5:28-29 – all who are in the graves will rise and be judged (Acts 24:15 – Paul spoke of a resurrection of the just and the unjust);
 2. 2 Corinthians 5:10 – we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...;
 3. Acts 17:31 – He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world;
 4. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 – both the righteous and wicked judged; etc.
- iv. That is why we must ALWAYS be prepared – a constant message of scripture. 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Peter 4:7, *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.* Also, Revelation 16:15, *“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*
- d. *The heavens will pass away with a great noise, the elements will melt with fervent heat. Both the earth and its works will be burned up* — this is the promised destruction by fire. It will be the end.
- i. Words used in this text seem to indicate that EVERYTHING in the material universe will cease to exist (be annihilated). The heavens (and their bodies) will dissolve. The earth and all its works (both natural and manmade) will be destroyed.
 - ii. While most of our versions use the phrase, “burned up” to describe the earth and its works, some versions use different words (based on variants in mss). Hamilton in his commentary (Truth Commentaries) on this text notes there are at least 7 variant readings for this phrase. The LSB (Legacy Standard Bible) says, “its works will be found out.” The ESV says, “the works that are done on it will be exposed.”
 - iii. Those who advocate that the earth will not be utterly destroyed will appeal to these readings (including premillennialists and JW’s). BUT consider, that if God destroys everything and we stand in judgment, truly the works of men WILL BE “exposed” and “found out” – see Hebrews 4:12-13, cf. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

II. **Are you ready for that day? (11-13)**

- a. *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved* – broken apart or reduced to ruin (see the previous section). Another definition is, to loose or untie – consider 2 Peter 3:5, 7 – it is by the word of God the heavens were created and by that same word they are preserved (held together). When God determines it is time, that will be it!
- b. *What manner of persons ought you to be* – how are you living your life? There are many reasons to live godly lives, but one of the most powerful ought to be our understanding that we don’t know WHEN our time on earth is over. Hebrews 9:27, James 4:14 – what is your life...
- c. *In holy conduct and godliness* – living righteous and reverent lives.
 - i. Peter has emphasized holiness – 1 Peter 1:15-16, 2:5 – a holy priesthood.
 - ii. Philippians 1:27 reminds us, “only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...” Also James 3:13, 1 Peter 2:12 – conduct honorable among the Gentiles...
 - iii. Godliness – the word that calls for reverence toward God – 2 Peter 1:6-7, 1 Timothy 4:7-8 – exercise yourselves toward godliness. 2 Peter 1:3 also notes that God’s divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.
- d. *Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God* - in our last lesson, we addressed how God is longsuffering. And noted that such is not about us, but about others. As long as this world continues there is hope for ONE MORE. And for that reason we ought to be content should the world continue. HOWEVER, the Christian who is living a godly life cannot wait to leave this world – cf. Philippians 1:21-23. Titus 2:11-13 - ... looking for the blessed hope...
Hastening – a word meaning to cause something to happen sooner. Considering where the world is headed, we ought to be hoping for His return soon. The word indicates doing what you can to

- cause it to happen sooner. HOW can we do that? By being holy and doing our best to win others to Him.
- e. *Because of which the heavens will be dissolved...* - another declaration that this will be it. So much for premillennialism, realized eschatology, a replenished earth, etc.
 - f. *Nevertheless we*, While we know the world and material universe will come to its end on that day, we live by faith and hope of eternal life – Titus 1:2.
 - g. *According to His promise* - we trust that God can and will keep His word. This is a statement of comfort no matter what we face in this life. Recall vs. 9, “*the Lord is not slack concerning His promise...*” He will keep His word.
 - h. *Look for new heavens and a new earth* in which righteousness dwells.
 - i. This phrase has caused much discussion, even among some brethren today. We may be familiar with the concept of **premillennialism** which teaches that when Jesus returns, He is going to dwell on this earth for 1000 years with His saints. During that time, the earth (and physical heavens) will be refurbished or renewed. This will be followed by the end and THEN we will go to heaven. We have shown this doctrine to be false at virtually every step of the process. Jehovah’s Witnesses, and perhaps others, take this further and say that we (the majority of the “saved”) will live on this renewed earth forever. They will use our text to teach this by defining the terms in vs. 10-12 as meaning refurbished instead of annihilated. Is that really what we are looking for? There are many problems with that view.
 - ii. **A description of our eternal home in heaven.** That is what the text is teaching. Consider:
 - iii. That is what Jesus promised – John 14:1-3, etc. NOWHERE does Jesus promise to return to this earth (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17 – we will caught up in the clouds and always be with the Lord).
 - iv. NOTICE in our text the order of events, first the day of the Lord comes (judgment), THEN the destructive terms happen.
 - v. We have been promised that our eternal dwelling will be in heaven – Matthew 6:19-20, 1 Peter 1:3-4, Colossians 1:5, etc.
 - vi. Consider also Revelation 21:1, the new heaven and new earth come after the first heaven and earth have passed away (an expression that means to cease to exist – cf. 2 Peter 3:10). Note also its context (20:11-15 which describes the judgment day (bear in mind that much of Revelation is figurative, but this text seems to give us a timeline).
 - vii. We continually try to reach others by letting them know that they can live eternally in heaven with God, Jesus, Holy Spirit and the saved. Its not just about a materialistic dwelling on this earth (either for a specified period of time or eternally).
 - viii. The expression, “new heavens and new earth” is descriptive of where we will live. We currently live in THIS earthly and heavenly realm. We want a NEW one, not a refurbished one.
 - ix. There are other passages that speak of new heavens and earth that could be dealing with something different (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22), but our context CLEARLY points to a different and better place.

Peter gives another reason to be faithful to God and not easily deceived by purveyors of error – there is a day of judgment coming. We must be ready for that day to come. Are you ready? Think about it!