

“A DAY IS AS A THOUSAND YEARS.”

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Scripture Texts: II Peter 3.8-13

Introduction.

It is interesting to note that most of the second epistles in the NT deal with false teachers and false prophets and false apostles, people who are deceiving believers and creating doubt and sowing the seeds of apostasy and immorality. It is a serious problem in every age.

Peter in his second letter certainly has been warning about these things. In chapter three he has focused specifically on those scoffers who are saying that Jesus is not coming back like he promised. He is long overdue and we might as well just live and act as we please since it doesn't matter.

Where is God in the midst of all the chaos, conflict, terror, crime, violence, war, immorality? Why doesn't God come back and fix everything that's wrong with the world? What is God waiting for? When is the last act? When will the curtain come down on history?

Why is the present age so long? Two thousand years and counting.

If you have questions like that, Peter has answers.

Four questions answered in II Peter 3:

1. How can we be sure the day of the Lord will come?
2. Why hasn't it come?
3. What will happen when it does come?
4. What should we do in the light of this?

We looked at the first question two weeks ago. How can we be sure the day of the Lord will come? Peter gave three reasons based on the predictions, prophecies and promise of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.

Peter pointed out three facts they have deliberately overlooked, that God created the heavens and the earth, He is in control. And God already once before wiped out the earth

with a flood in judgment on the wickedness of mankind so He can certainly do it again. And the predictions of the holy prophets and Jesus and the apostles all point to an appointed day of coming judgment, the day of the Lord.

Tonight we will look at the second question. Why hasn't this day come yet? To this question Peter gives two very strong reasons that reveal to us the nature and character of God.

First, God isn't like us, He is eternal and doesn't look at time the way we do (vs. 8). Second, God isn't like us, He is patient and has a good reason for why He hasn't come yet (vs.9).

This is Peter's direct answer to their question in 3:4, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

This is Peter's final persuasive argument for why we can know in the face of the scoffers that Jesus is coming back. The long time between comings is not an issue.

God is eternal, 3:8, day/thousand years.

Satan's lie here is that it has been so long in coming that it isn't going to come. Did Jesus really say He would come back, if so what's taking Him so long? Maybe He changed His mind. Satan sows the seed of disbelief, doubt. Will the world really end as He said?

The first reason for the delay is a matter of perspective, a matter of our perception of time compared to God's perception of time. Actually we should be able to understand how this works. Just ask any parent with small children. Children have a hard time understanding time.

We don't dare tell kids too soon about a trip to grandma's or to Disney World. They get impatient, we have to tell them how many sleeps before the event.

To a child driving to Portland is an eternity, are we there yet? But to a parent it is a short trip, just a few hours.

We are like children who don't have our parent's perspective on time. Having God's perspective helps us be patient in His delay. The scoffers forgot about the nature of God. God is not old or young. God is eternal. God doesn't have a watch or a calendar.

"With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Can we just pause here for a moment, and pull off into this scenic overlook and take in what kind of a being we are talking about here?

What kind of being experiences a thousand years as if it were one day, and one day as if it were a thousand years?

What kind of being is from everlasting to everlasting and never changes?

What kind of being knows the end from the beginning and everything in between?

What kind of being is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the one who was, the one who is and the one who is to come (Rev. 1:8)?

What kind of being is known simply as I Am (Exodus 3:14)?

What kind of being knows everything that has ever happened and ever will happen and all of it in a single instant, a single moment?

What kind of being never forgets anything and never learns anything new?

What kind of being knows the past, the present and the future and all of it with equal clarity?

What kind of being is completely unaffected by time, by the passing of time?

Isaiah 46:9b-10 For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

God is infinitely above us and eternally different from us that we cannot begin to fathom all His purposes and ways. If something in our life or in the world make absolutely no sense to us at all, remind yourself that the problem is with us and not God.

The larger point is that the passage of time doesn't effect God's faithfulness to His promises. Time has no bearing on God, He is above time and outside of time and not effect by or influenced by time.

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

We have a saying, “I remember it like it was yesterday.” God remembers creation like it was yesterday. To God a millennia is one sleep.

Psalms 90:1-4 Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!”

4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as a watch in the night.

The use of a day and a thousand years is not meant to be taken literally or in any kind of limiting way? It is a figurative term for a really short period of time and a long period of time.

From God’s perspective a day lasts a thousand years, it never ends, it is always present in God’s consciousness. Any long period is like it just happened, and any short period is like it lasts forever, both are equally present in the consciousness of God. God has infinite bandwidth.

God is at work but on a different time schedule. In heaven we will marvel at God’s timing and plan. God’s plans include centuries.

Things in our lives now will ripple out and effect things in 2118 or 2218, just as things in 1818 have reached to us now.

The first reason for the delay is a matter of perspective, God is utterly and completely unlike us and thinks about things completely different from us. God is eternal.

God is patient, 3:9, not wishing any should perish.

The second reason for the delay is a matter of purpose, God’s patient plan to wait for all to repent.

We are impatient over the delay, when in fact the reason for the delay is God’s patience. Rather than being slow or lazy or lacking concern, God is full of love and mercy. God is exceedingly patient. His mercy and compassion are way beyond our limits.

This is a point about God’s character, He is holy and He calls us to repent and be holy. God’s delay is very purposeful, waiting until every last one of His elect is gathered in.

Romans 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

John 10:16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Jonah 4:3 I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

God delays to give every person prolonged time to repent and turn from their wicked ways, but people take the delay to mean God isn't coming.

The delay is meant to be used for spiritual and holy purposes, not for selfish purposes, for repentance not unbelief.

“Why did you take my gift of time for repenting and use it as an argument for unbelief?”

God is more patient with us than any other being we have every know. God is patient with you and me, He doesn't treat us as we deserve. He is slow to anger. His patience lasts for generations, for hundreds and thousands of years.

We can handle a delay when the delay is for a purpose. Have you ever been thankful for a delay? You are late for a train, and train is late, late for a plane and plane is delayed.

How much more should we be thankful for God's delay when it means eternal salvation?

Repentance and salvation take time. We are all a piece of work and some of us a bigger piece of work than others. And some only come in by the hardest and only at the last minute.

It is a great and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit to transform a human heart, to make old things pass away and new things to become new.

Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

What does this mean? If God doesn't wish any to perish and die, then why do they? How can God's wishes be negated?

We need to apply the rule of interpretation, Scripture interprets Scripture. We can't come up with an interpretation of this verse that contradicts other verses. We know clearly that Scripture says some, even many will in fact perish. Not all will be saved.

Notice it says God does not **wish** any perish. It doesn't say God does not **will** any perish.

In the realm of theology there is an understanding that there are two different aspects to the will of God. He desires salvation for all in one sense, but He has sovereignly ordained that only some will be saved.

God's revealed will in Scripture is that everyone should repent and believe and be saved. God's revealed will tells us what we should do. But God's hidden will or will of decree is what actually happens.

There is something God wills more than He wills that all be saved, otherwise all would be saved. God wills that He be glorified, and He is more glorified by not all being saved, than by all being saved (Romans 9).

Peter is referring to what God desires, but not to what God ordains, His desired will verses ordained will. The only alternative is universalism and that is ruled out by a huge weight of texts.

This stretches us and reminds us that God is God and there is mystery in His will and ways that is above our will and ways and reasonings and thoughts.

God so loves the world that He extends salvation through repentance and faith to all who ask. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Romans 10:13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Salvation is held out in the Gospel to all, it is only received by the elect.

There is another way to understand this. Notice it says God is patient toward *you*. He is writing to believers in the church, and not referring to the whole world. They are wavering under the influence of false teachers. God desires that these Christians repent.

God is patient with us here, not wishing any of us fall. He is giving us time. Perhaps God is waiting for you to repent. Perhaps God is waiting for someone you are praying for to repent. Christ hasn't come, so clearly there are many yet to come. Share the Gospel, spread the seed. God still has people in this church and in Lynden and in your family and among your friends.

Acts 3:19-20 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus.

May we always be moved to worship our eternal God and give thanks to our patient God for His patience with us, and make known the Gospel of His Son which is salvation to all who believe.