

“HASTEN THE COMING DAY.”

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Scripture Texts: II Peter 3.10-14

Introduction.

In II Peter 3 Peter is helping the Christians in his church know how to deal with people who say Jesus isn't coming back and the world is not going to end in some sort of fiery ordeal and trial and great judgment.

If it hasn't happened in the past two thousand years, no sense thinking it will now. Live for the here and now. Live for today. Don't worry, eat, drink and be merry, it's all good. God is good and God is love and we have nothing to fear.

They said this to justify their sexual freedom and indulgence and their love of money and love of earthly and worldly pleasures. And people who try to justify themselves always try to convince others of their same view, the more the merrier, the more confident they are in themselves. See we aren't alone in this.

We can summarize II Peter 3 as Peter saying, don't believe it, the world you love is all going to burn. How can Peter say that? By answering four questions.

Four questions:

1. How can we be sure the day of the Lord will come? Peter gave ***three reasons*** based on the predictions, prophecies and promises of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles.

According to the prophets, Jesus and the apostles we know ***first***, that God created everything, it is all His and He can do whatever He please with it. We know ***second***, that God already destroyed everything once before so there is a precedent set for Him destroying it again.

We know ***third***, from the Word that there is a great judgment coming by which all things will be judged not by water this time but by fire.

2. Why hasn't it come? 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).
“With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

Second, God isn't like us, He is patient and has a good reason for why He hasn't come yet (vs.9).

He is waiting for all to repent. God is not slow, full of love and mercy.

Our text this evening answers the final two questions:

3. What will happen when the end does come?

4. What should be do in the light of this?

God will destroy the old, 3:10, the Biblical way of looking at history.

Matthew 24:42-43 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

The end will be a big surprise, like the flood was in Noah's day. The day is fast approaching, it is two thousand years closer, it will come like a thief in the night.

We are having some experience of that here in Lynden recently. Thieves who have come at night.

Think about the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on a lazy, quiet, sunny Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. No one saw it coming. 2,300 men lost their lives because of our being unprepared and ignoring a couple of possible warnings.

It may be a surprise, but it will be certain. It is coming.

II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord **will** come like a thief, and then the heavens **will** pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies **will** be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it **will** be exposed.

Notice first, the second coming of Jesus is going to affect everything, it is going to change everything. Nothing will be the same, it will touch every facet and every inch of all of created reality. Jesus changes everything, He always has, He always will. He is God.

He brings upheaval into our lives when He enters our lives and He brings upheaval to our world when He enters our world.

Peter describes the end in three ways:

First, the heavens will pass with a roar. The sky, first heaven.

Second, the heavenly bodies will burn and dissolve, the sun, moon, stars; the second heaven

Third, the earth and works on earth, exposed. Fire exposes, exposes houses, forests, opens things up to a penetrating gaze. Secrets will be exposed.

Some people think this means all the created universe will be completely obliterated, annihilated and God will completely start over. He will make all things new from scratch.

But that is not the witness of Scripture that talks about a restoration, a renewal, a regeneration. It will parallel with flood, where God purged and purified yet planet was still here. The fire will purged and purified, but not annihilate.

This kind of end reveals a Biblical view of history as opposed to other views. Some say history is cyclical, death, reincarnation, death, reincarnation. Others say it evolved out of nothing and it is evolving toward nothing.

Christianity has a linear view, history is going somewhere, it is moving toward a very determined and decisive end. There is a coming day of the Lord, a fiery judgment.

History had a meaningful and purposeful beginning and history will have a meaningful and purposeful ending, God writes it all for His glory.

Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, 3:12

This is a strange phrase. What does this mean and how is it even possible? Hasn't God already numbered the days and set the date? How can we change the sovereignty of God?

It is hard to understand, but this much seems to be clear, we have some part to play in bringing the end. God links His sovereignty and our actions. He calls us to pray and it matters.

Matthew 24:14 This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end [telos] will come.

Matthew 9:37-38 He said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Our lives have significance to God and to God's eternal plan and purpose. Our lives matter in the scope of time and history and eternity.

Remember God doesn't do time the way we do and He doesn't think of dates on a calendar as we do. God thinks in terms of the fullness of time. Jesus came to earth the first time in the fullness of time and He will come the second time in the fullness of time.

When the Gospel has been preached to all nations, when the fullness of the Gentiles and Jews have been gathered in, when all the elect are safely home, then His day will come.

So the day is hastened by prayer, by repentance, by preaching and proclamation, by missions and evangelism. Then the end will come, then the telos will come.

God will make all things new, 3:13

It is easy to get discouraged about what is going on in our world, but glory to God we have a most glorious future to look forward to. Because of Christ we have a future and a hope. There is a wonderful fulfillment to our salvation, an everlasting, perfect home.

I Corinthians 2:9 No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.

We can't imagine what it will be like for all things to be restored to their state of perfect glory, for all things to return to their created glory, for all things to be made new, without spot or stain or blemish or pollution.

Every hint of the effects of sin will be erased forever, no trace of sin or evil or wickedness. The fire will burn out every hint of sin, evil, thorns, thistles, briars, diseases, plagues, pestilences, earthquakes, calamities, chaos, trials, troubles, wars, conflict.

All that will be left is righteousness, purity, beauty, wonder and glory. Our sin stained minds and imaginations cannot even begin to grasp this new reality.

There are stunning things of beauty in this world of ours, but as hard as it is to imagine they are all ugly in comparison to the new heavens and the new earth. The most beautiful realities are currently stained by sin.

We can wait and endure because of the promises of God to make all things new. Peter is not motivating us to live well out of fear, but to live well out of hope for what is to come.

Peter's point here is not so much how the world will end, but that it will end and that should effect how we live and prepare, that we should be concerned about eternity and holiness and godliness.

As creation will be purged and purified by fire, so we must be purged and purified by the Word and the Spirit.

There is a promised land better than the one flowing with milk and honey, or ice cream and raspberries.

Knowing what's coming, how can we not live in some way of anticipation and preparation, seeking and striving for the things that are above and not below?

How then should we live? 3:11,14, lives of holiness and godliness.

Most of the time when the NT talks about the end times the purpose is to motivate us to action here and now. Ours is not to be preoccupied with the future, but to live ready today.

We are not called to speculate, but to stimulate us to action, to holy and godly living.

3:11, 14 what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness ... 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

1. Plan for it. The day is coming and will come.

Not like wicked servant. If wicked knew Jesus was coming, what would they do.

Be ready, be ready to meet Jesus, have a plan.

You have a plan for dealing with thieves, have a plan for the coming of Jesus.

Prepare for it. Be diligent. Don't live a good life to merit a good reward. Rather live according to the new world to come. You can't long for and love the new world and live like the old. That is a contradiction in the heart.

If you claim to be a child of God, if you believe the Gospel is true, then live like it.

I John 3:2-3 Beloved, we are God's children *now*, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Live lives of holiness and godliness. Who can do that? Who can be holy? Isn't God the only holy being? So why does God command in Scripture, "be holy even as I am holy"?

By holiness we do not mean sinless or perfect. We do not mean some uptight, legalistic, prudish, killjoy, someone along the lines of a Pharisee or a monk in a monastery or a hellfire and brimstone Baptist preacher.

I Thessalonians 3 helps us understand.

I Thessalonians 3:12-13 May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 13 *so that* he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

I Peter 1:13-16 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*"

It is God's work by His Holy Spirit at work in our hearts making us like Him, in His image, causing us to abound in love, equipping us with His Spirit who enables us by His grace to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. He is at work purifying us and clothing us with His perfect righteousness.

The only possible people who are holy are those forgiven by Jesus, washed in His blood, cleansed and renewed and filled by His Holy Spirit. You can't do it, but He who is in you can. Forgiveness leads to holiness which leads to beauty, Christ-likeness.

Let's go back to II Peter 1.

II Peter 1:3-4 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, *so that* through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Be holy, be godly, by His divine power.

2. *Wait for it.* With patience and with longing. Vs. 13, a good promise. Long for His coming.

II Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have *loved his appearing*.

3. *Hasten it, hasten the day.* Repent. God is waiting for people to repent, so repent and call others to repent.

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,

Hasten by praying. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

Prayer: Holy Father, you are the creator God. You have power to make the heavens and the earth and you have power to make the new heavens and the new earth. Create in us a new heart and a new and right spirit that we might walk in newness of life, in holiness and godliness for your glory. Prepare us and make us fit and ready for the coming day of the Lord, cloth us in the robes of righteousness that belong to our only advocate and mediator with the Father, who is Jesus Christ, in whose name alone we pray. Amen.