

BOOK OF 2 PETER
THE DAY OF THE LORD-MOTIVATION FOR MATURITY
2 PETER 3:10-18

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Introduction

(Tell the story that comes out of the Alaskan Gold Rush days.)

There is another season approaching that will be here before we know it!
There is a time coming that will be unlike anything any of us have ever experienced. Nothing like it has ever happened before.
It is the coming of the Day of the LORD!

The Apostle Peter both warns about **this coming day and the necessity of being prepared for it.**

Last time we were in this chapter, we saw Peter mention the **mockers and their response to the Day of the LORD in 2 Peter 3:3-9.** There is little doubt that the **mockers are alive and well and abundant in our day and time.** Peter said that **these mockers that would appear in the last days scoffing at the promise of the Lord's return!**

These mockers **believe that the promise of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is just foolishness** because as the latter part of *vs. 4* says "*all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*"

In following after their own lusts, these mockers fail to see the overwhelming abundance of evidence that **God has judged the wickedness of mankind in the past through the Genesis flood.**

They **purposely ignore the evidence for the worldwide flood because they don't want to face the reality that the Lord, in fact, will return someday and he will bring judgment upon all the wicked.**

Vs. 10 is actually an expansion of Peter's warning in **verse 7.**

A study of the phrase "*the day of the Lord*" as it is found throughout the Bible, **finds that one of the main parts of it is that it is a coming day of judgment on the wicked!**

Even though **the sinfulness of man is constantly provoking God's wrath,** we find that He is yet still **forbearing.** Our God patiently endures the provocation of evil men. Why? **2 Peter 3:9!**

The fact that the Lord has not already returned **does not mean** in anyway that He is being slack about fulfilling His promise to return! The fact that the Lord **has not** yet returned **is the demonstration of His great patience with all of mankind allowing time for yet one more sinner to repent or their sin, be forgiven and receive eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Lord has been longsuffering or forbearing up until now, but Peter is emphatic of the fact that **He is coming back!** Foolish people may scoff or sneer at His promise, but **the Lord is coming back and they will have to face Him to be judged.** Let's look at the Scripture and see first:

I. THE SUDDENNESS OF THE EVENT! (Vs 10)

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

Several other passages use the same comparison to describe His sudden return.

In *1 Thessalonians 5:2* Paul says, "*For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*"

The Lord Jesus Himself used the same phrase in *Matthew 24:42-44* in His warning for folks to be prepared!

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

The metaphor of **the day of the Lord** coming "*as a thief*" describes it as coming suddenly and without immediate warning for that is how a thief comes. All of us know that there is always a possibility that our houses could be robbed, and so we do certain things to prepare:

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We lock doors...we secure windows...we carry insurance.

But listen, no thief is going to send us an announcement that he is going to drop by our house tomorrow night at 2 a.m.! Thieves know that if we know when they are coming we will be fully alert and prepared for them!

*(Mossburg pump shotgun **in hand** loaded with 00 buckshot)*

No...A thief is more than likely going to come **when we are not expecting him** and **when we are not prepared**. That is the way in which Jesus said He would return. That is the manner in which **the day of the Lord** will come.

The call for us to be ready is an important one, for **we have become so accustomed to the patience of the Lord that we have a hard time thinking of God actually coming to judge**.

Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: 13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

One can mentally assent that Jesus has promised to return some day and say they believe it to be true, while at the same time not believing it could be right now. Many don't really believe it could be today.

Scripture teaches the imminent return of Christ. Something that is **imminent** is **both forthcoming and impending**. That is why so many Scriptures warn about it and call for us to be ready.

In **James 5:8** the coming of the Lord is described as being "**nigh**" or "**near**" and then in **James 5:9** it says that "**the judge standeth before the door**".

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It describes the action of ***drawing near and standing at the door and continuing to stay near and stand at the door***.

While **the coming day of the Lord will be judgment on the ungodly** it stand to reason that they do not desire to see it happen! But the opposite **should** be true for believers.

Both Paul and John had expectations that the Lord might return in their own lifetime.

*1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,***

*1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then **we** which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall **we** ever be with the Lord.*

*1 John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, **we** may have confidence, **and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**"*

In the book of the Revelation listen to the statements of our Lord:
*Revelation 3:11 **Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.***

*Revelation 22:7 **Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.***

*Revelation 22:12 And, **behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.***

*Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.***

There is to be an expectation of His return that could be near.

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The grammar of the verb translated “*quickly*” there **does not** mean “*soon,*” but “*swiftly, all at once!*” (i.e. Before you could be aware and make preparations.)

It is for all these reasons that we teach and preach that **Jesus could return at any moment as directed by the Father.** He could come back today. He could come back before I finish this sermon.

So, Peter’s statement here in **2 Peter 3:10** that the day of the Lord is coming as a thief emphasizes that it will be a **sudden event at a time when folks don’t think it will happen.**

The real question is whether you are personally ready for Christ’s return? Are you ready for what will happen then?

So, there is *THE SUDDENNESS OF THE EVENT!*

II. THERE IS THE SCENE OF THE EVENT.

(i.e. What the Day of the Lord will Bring – 2 Peter 3:7, 10,12)

Peter looks to near the very end of the Day of the Lord to the event that happens just prior to the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. We saw this morning that it actually happens before the Great White Throne Judgment!

Read Vs 7

Just as there was a lot of water kept in reserve for the judgment of the ungodly before the Genesis flood, so the world is currently kept in reserve for fire for an even greater judgment!

Read Vs 10 and Vs 12

Contrary to what Jehovah Witnesses teach, this earth **is not** going to last forever. One day it is going to be destroyed!

Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:35 that “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*” Jesus did not say heaven and earth “*could*” or “*may*” or “*might*” pass away. He said they “*shall*” pass away.

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Revelation 21:1 states it this way, “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*”

Peter’s commentary here is simply more detailed and more graphic in its description about the “*passing away*” of the heavens and earth.

The term translated “*pass away*” in *vs. 10* is the same as used to refer to people that “*pass away.*” Their time here has expired! Well, the time of the existence of the present heavens will end and they will be destroyed by fire! (*vs 12*). When the Day of the Lord comes, what we now know as the heavens will be destroyed. They will no longer exist as we know them.

Peter says something similar will happen to the earth in *verse 10*.

The earth itself and its works, the things that have been built or produced, will all be destroyed—“*burned up.*”

The earth will be consumed by fire. Peter describes this further saying that the “*elements shall melt with fervent heat.*” (*Vs 10*)

To emphasize the point, he repeats it again in *verse 12!* This is speaking of the elemental principles which make up the earth being destroyed by heat with temperatures so high that they will “*melt,*” meaning to “*become liquid.*”

When the day of the Lord comes, things on the earth are going to get very hot! Talk about your “*global warming!*”

I hope you can understand clearly from the language that Peter is using that **the day of the Lord is going to be a time of judgment, but that is just the reason the mockers want to avoid it.**

That is why **they refuse to believe the evidence for Noah’s flood, because if they believed the flood, they would also have to believe that God is going to judge again,** which Peter says will come this time by fire.

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This is the reason for Peter's strong warning here.

The Lord is coming back!

The day of the Lord will come!

Don't become complacent because of the Lord's great patience!

Get ready for Him! Because He is coming back!

Are you ready? If you don't yet know the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ, you must repent! Those of us who do know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior must become mature in how we live!

THE SCENE OF THE EVENT

THE SUDDENNESS OF THE EVENT

III. THE SUMMONS OF THE EVENT

(i.e. The Call to Maturity – 2 Peter 3:11-18)

When we have studied the Day of the Lord in other passages of Scripture, we have seen that **there will be many events that occur between the beginning of the day of the Lord and its culmination in the destruction of the present heavens and earth and the creation of new heavens and earth. Peter jumps from the beginning to its end in order to place even greater emphasis on warning unbelievers to repent and call for believers to live right!**

A. The Importance Of Our Character And Conduct In Light Of The Coming Day Of The Lord. (Vs 11)

This is a very sensible question, don't you think? If the things of this world are going to burn up, how should that affect the way you live your life? What kind of character and conduct should you have? Let's consider a few practical questions to apply it to daily life.

1. What importance should be placed on the pursuit of material possessions?

What difference does it make if you get the big house, the luxury car, the large bank account, the latest electronic gadgets, the fancy china, or whatever else strikes your fancy?

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All of it is going to burn! Jesus already said that if He would provide for our material needs if we would seek His kingdom and righteousness first (Matthew 6:33), so we do not need material possessions for security.

2. What is the benefit of working your way up the corporate ladder or becoming important in some social society?

All corporations and social societies are going to end when the earth is destroyed. It is not wrong to be in position of power and influence, in fact it would be best for all of society if mature believers were in all those positions.

But in Colossians 3:2, Paul calls on us to **set our affection on the things above, not on things on the earth** so that we *will "appear with Him in glory."*

We are to be heavenly minded and focused, not earthly minded and focused!

Remember how Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of that time because they sought glory from one another instead of seeking glory from God?

John 5:44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Peter's call here for us to be holy in conduct and to have a godly character is based in part on the fact that it would be futile to pursue things that are going to be ultimately destroyed anyway!

But there is more...The present heavens and earth will be destroyed, but **verse 13** adds that, *"Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

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Every believer should be looking forward to the fulfillment of that promise! How wonderful it will be live where sin has been done away with and only righteousness dwells. We prepare for it by striving to be holy in conduct and godliness in the present.

Peter then continues in his call for believers to be holy in conduct and character in *verse 14!* (Read it!)

To be *“without spot”* is to be unstained by the sinful pursuits of this world. To be *“blameless”* is to be free from guilt. Such living brings about an inner peace in our lives as we await the coming of the LORD!

B. The Importance Of The Development Of Our Understanding. (2 Peter 3:15-17)

Maturity is a growing understanding of the things of God!

- 1. Maturity Requires Understanding That The Longsuffering Of Our Lord Is Salvation. (Vs 15)**
Peter begins with a call to understanding of the truth that the Lord’s *longsuffering* or patience was necessary for our own salvation.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

It is because of the Lord’s *longsuffering* or patience that we were given time to repent and be saved, and it is what is necessary for others to have the time to realize their sinfulness, repent and also be saved.

If the LORD was longsuffering with them, we should be too!

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- 2. Maturity Requires Understanding What Is Taught In Scripture! (Vs 16)**

Peter has said several times in his letter that he was not saying anything new but teaching what had already been taught by the prophets, the Lord and the apostles. **(3:2)**

Here in this verse Peter also affirms that Paul’s letters are also part of the Holy Scriptures. Remember that Peter had written to the believers in the five provinces of Asia Minor – modern day Turkey.

Paul had previously written his epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians and Galatians who lived in the same areas as well as his personal letters to Timothy and Philemon.

Listen, we need to be students of the Bible and know what it says! At the same time we should realize that parts of it are hard to understand! **Don’t be surprised that it takes some work to understand the Bible. Hard doesn’t mean that it is impossible!**

By the means of our own diligent study, as well as the godly teachers and preachers God gives to us, and the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit we can understand the Scriptures!

- 3. Maturity Also Requires Understanding In Order To Be Careful Of False Teachers. (Vs. 16b-17)**

We have already talked about them as we have been studying 2 Peter 2 & 3.

Peter describes these false teachers here as *“unlearned”* and *“unstable”* and he points to the fact that the *“wrest”* or **twist** the Scripture! **(i.e. distort)**

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The word translated “*wrest*” was used to refer to torturing someone by “*twisting them.*”

Figuratively, it means *to pervert, to twist, or to distort language to a false sense and meaning.*

Christian maturity requires that we be careful of such men or we could be carried away by their errors. We stand in danger of having our own thoughts twisted from the truth!

4. Maturity Also Requires Us To Understand Jesus Christ. (Vs 18)

Peter expressed the same desire in his salutation in **1:2**.

We should develop more of the character of Christ in us as we grow in His grace and knowledge.
(i.e. We should be more like Jesus as time goes by!)

We should strive to be holy in our lives, because He is holy! (1 Peter 1:16)

There is no wonder then that he concludes with this encouragement to continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

Peter ends his letter with a statement that covers the purpose of our lives! “*To Him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen*”

Colossians 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

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There will be a day when all creatures will give glory to Him! (Philippians 2:10,11)

Revelation 5:12 “...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The glory of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior is the purpose of creation. We, as believers are to keep that in mind, and by keeping it in mind, our character and conduct will change too!

Conclusion

Peter ends the epistle the much the same way he started it. He wants us to be mature believers in Jesus Christ. He wants us to live life the way God meant for us to live it. God has already provided for us all that we need, but we have to do our part too. We have to believe what God says and trust Him for the future. That trust is put into practice when we obey Him.

What do you believe is the purpose of your life? Are you living with eternity in mind? Will the fruit of your labor on this earth be burned up, or will it bring reward in heaven? (See: 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).