

Looking Forward to Eternity

2 Peter 3:1-13

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567

Christians, are you looking forward to spending an eternity with Jesus? Even in the absence of the signs of severe famines and wars (Matthew 24:7) here in North America, has not seeing a generation of lovers of themselves and money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient, ungrateful, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, rash, conceited and unholy people (2 Timothy 3:1-5), not convinced most of us that the Day of the Lord is at hand? Even though we look forward to the return of our Savior, one can't help but wonder how the knowledge of this truth has made us any better than the scoffers of this world who believe God will never come good on His promise to judge this world? Upon close examination of our motivations and subsequent deeds, is not the above description of what the people will be like in the end times not act as a mirror reflecting what is truly in our souls? After all, don't Christians spend most of their time trying to secure the carnal desires of their own hearts just like unbelievers do? In today's sermon I am going to examine 2 Peter 3:1-13 in the hope that the Spirit might motivate you to start living every moment spotless and blameless with your eyes fixed on the return of Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)!

³ Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."



One of the signs of the end times is that many people will scoff at the mere idea of an impending Parousia.¹ For a world that has made self their god, it should not come as a surprise that those who have rejected any concept of absolute truth would also scoff at doctrine suggesting a time and place of future judgment. Having abandoned the faith their conscious has been seared as with a hot iron by hypocritical liars and deceiving spirits (1 Timothy 4:1-2). The world has taught them that truth is relative and individualistically

¹ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 212.

determined and as such no one truly knows which path to God is right, or even if God exists! While some believe in an afterlife these anthropocentric hedonists² mock any idea of the Day of the Lord coming in which there will be separation of the wheat from the tares (Matthew 13:24-29). Believing all will make it to “heaven” based on their own relative goodness or that upon death they will simply cease to exist, they scoff and do not live as if Christ is about to return but instead live to maximize pleasure and minimize pain that comes from following their own evil desires.

They ridicule and scoff at God’s word by presenting their “wisdom” on this matter. Defiantly they ask where is this coming that was promised? We have been waiting for over 2000 years and yet everything goes on as it has been since the beginning



of creation! Ever since Christ told us “I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back” (John 14:3),

Christians have been looking up to the heavens expecting Him to return in their lifetimes. When men from supposed God-fearing groups such as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ, the Worldwide Church of God and the House of Yahweh for example use the contents of Scripture to predict the exact date of the end of world and yet it does not come about,³ this only fuels more ridicule and scepticism, “doubts and disbelief

of other aspects of Christ’s teaching.”⁴ Every time a Christian says “Jesus will return in my lifetime” and they are buried without this promise being fulfilled it only reaffirms Albert Einstein’s statement “I do not believe in a God who maliciously or arbitrarily interferes with the personal affairs of mankind.”⁵

² Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 150.

³ Taken from the following website: <http://thesoapboxrantings.blogspot.ca/2014/04/10-people-who-predicted-end-of-world.html>

⁴ Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 212.

⁵ Taken from the following website: <https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=OfqwjH09&id=5A6355F331BC6032E4E7D6D699AD8266558156AA&thid=OIP.OfqwjH09KwutDQiw6i96JwHaDf&q=do+not+believe+in+god&simid=608041863706707092&selectedIndex=17&ajaxhist=0>

⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

To counteract their foolishness Peter reminds them that creation and the flood prove that God has and will intervene during human history. Out of the watery chaos



(Genesis 1:2-6)⁶ the land was separated from the water by the word of God (Genesis 1:6-10).⁷ With a series of commands “let there be” all things seen, and unseen were created by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). Peter not only reminds the scoffers they owe their very existence to God but goes on to say that the flood is proof that God can also destroy what He has created. It is at this point that Peter draws a parallel between Noah’s time and this generation. They too felt that God

would continue to overlook the evil inclinations of their hearts and forgo any kind of judgement upon this world (Genesis 6:5). Despite the warning they too continued to eat, drink and marry right up until the day that the flood came and destroyed them all (Luke 17:27). “Floods of sin called for floods of destruction!”⁸ Peter warns the scoffers that God is about to destroy the world again but this time with fire!

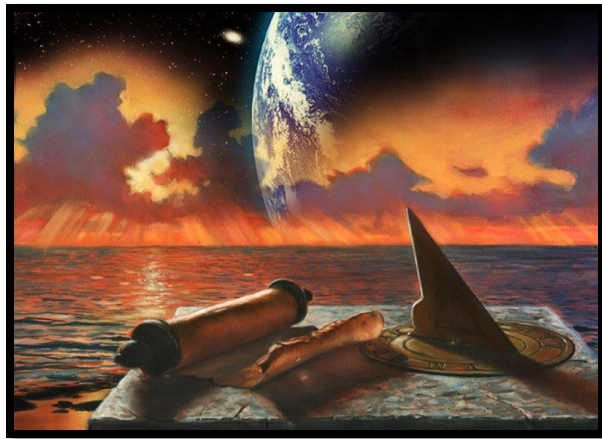
⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

⁶ Michael Green, [2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 152.

⁷ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 213.

⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The World on Fire,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 19 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1873), 435.

Peter continues to make the scoffers wisdom look foolish by reminding them of the divine relativity of time and the loving forbearance of God.⁹ Living in a world of instant gratification it comes as no surprise that the scoffers would argue that the passage



of 2,000 years is proof that God has broken His promise. Peter reminds the scoffers that divine and human viewpoints concerning the passage of time differ greatly. Living in a world of instant gratification having to wait even ten minutes can seem like a lifetime! It is at this point that Peter quotes Psalms 90:4 that says, “a thousand years in Your sight are like a day that has just gone by.” This means that most human beings will live no more than two hours of God’s perceived passage of time! While two

millennia are certainly a long time for humanity, to God it has only been a couple of days since the Lord’s Return was promised! Furthermore, Peter reminds the scoffers that God has not broken His promise nor is He slow in keeping it but instead has been patient with humanity so that they might have ample time to repent and forgo being destroyed by fire!

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.



Lest they be unaware of what is about to come Peter describes the Day of the Lord as being one of judgment marked by comic catastrophes involving the heavens, elements and the earth.¹⁰ It is possible that the fire spoken of by Peter will come in the form of a global nuclear war, but other possibilities are fallen asteroids, giant solar flares, volcanic eruptions

⁹ Michael Green, [2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 157.

¹⁰ Norman Hillyer, [1 and 2 Peter, Jude](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 217.

or molten earth core eruption.¹¹ God may use any or all of these methods to destroy the world or may simply speak or “roar” (verse 10) and send fire reining down upon both the heavens and the earth. So intense will be this fire that even the elements or solid portions of the earth will be liquified and the sea will be no more. The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky (Matthew 24:29). In the end ‘the heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the earth shall wax old like a garment.’¹² God’s patience will not last forever. All of humanity’s accomplishments and sin must be eradicated from this world!

13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

After all the evil people are consumed by fire, God promises to send a new heaven and earth (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22) for His redeemed people to live. Even though we do not know exactly what our new resurrection bodies, heavens and earth will look like,



some details have been given in Scripture.¹³ After the fire destroys the heavens and the earth, God will send from heaven the Holy City to revitalize that which was lost (Revelation 21:1). This will be a City in which there will be no more death, morning or pain for sin and its consequences will not be permitted entrance (Revelation 21:4, 27). Paradise Lost will become Paradise Regained for in this City God’s will shall be done alike in earth and heaven.¹⁴ The City will not need the sun or moon to shine on it for the

glory of the God will give it light and the Lamb will be its lamp (Rev. 21:23). This City will forever be the home of those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 21:27).

¹¹ Taken from the following website: <http://discovermagazine.com/2000/oct/featworld>

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, *“The World on Fire,”* in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 19 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1873), 435–436.

¹³ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 166.

¹⁴ Michael Green, *2 Peter and Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 18, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 165.

Application

As Christians we should be careful to not boldly state we know when the end times are going to happen. Due to seeing the various signs of the end times many believe and profess the Day of the Lord is going to happen within their lifetime. While it would



be amazing to physically see Jesus coming in the clouds we must not forget that only God the Father knows the day and hour when His Son will return. To tell the people of this world that we know beyond doubt that Christ will return in our lifetime is not only a lie but also provides fuel to the scoffers when we die and the promise remains unfulfilled! Wishing that none of them shall perish let us show we truly love the people of this world by not saying anything that might detract them from the truth that they have merely one life

to live and upon death will be judged. As long as they are alive they get to choose which earth, the one consumed by fire or the one restored by God, that they are going to spend their eternity.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ^{12a} as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.



This passage is not just to warn the scoffers but also to encourage Christians to live their lives with eternity in mind. While it easy to get caught up in focusing on the physical world as if it will last forever, Peter implores the believers to live holy lives so that when Christ returns they might be found serving Him. This means focusing on the things that are unseen. Instead of trying to store up things on earth where moth and rust destroy (Matthew 6:19) we are to store our treasures in our eternal home.

Trying to become more holy like God means that we must put away any notion that grace justifies imitating the sins of this world. While our best morality cannot save a person, if a person has no signs of holiness

then this proves he/she is not a child of God.¹⁵ We need to stop ignoring God and start living for Him every moment of every day! If Christ returned this very moment are you ready to be caught up in the air with Him? If you are not, then may the refining fires go through your heart and purge you of every sin and may the Holy Spirit fill you with His presence and give you a genuine love to follow His commands!

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“The World on Fire,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 19 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1873), 441.