

The Soon Coming End – Part 1

2 Peter 3:1-13

¹ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles. ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

(2 Peter 3:1-13 (NASB))

The message that comes to us today from these words of scriptures is that, yes, with a certainty, there is a soon coming end to the days of this earth. And yes, to many people who hear bible prophecies such as these, we preachers probably remind them of the "doomsday" bearded hippies of the 1960s who walked around the streets with a big sign on their chest and back declaring that the world was ending.

But be that as it may, the days of this earth really are coming to an end.

And no, it will not be as the environmentalists are declaring, that people are destroying the earth with all the natural pollutant that we use, and that we are cutting down too many trees and burning too much coal and other fossil fuels. Those thing might truly

damage the air we breathe, but that has nothing at all to do with the message being given here.

And neither is it as our secular believing scientists allege it to be, where the earth having evolved itself out from some sort of mysterious “Big Bang” explosion and bringing us to where we are today, that likewise, some millions of years from now, a catastrophic cosmic event will take place to destroy the earth.

I know that such beliefs are to some degree comforting to those people who believe them, especially because, in believing such philosophies, there is no God who created them and therefore no God to hold them accountable at their final end.

Unfortunately for all of those unbelieving people, just wanting their scientific fantasies about evolution and such things to be true does not make them true. The “real truth” is that one day, a day that will be much like today, all of their fantasies will come crashing down upon their heads, and they will then realize that it is the things spoken about here in these scriptures that are the “real truth”. And on that great and terrible day, there will be distress and anguish in their souls like they have never thought possible, and they will be forever without relief.

Folks, this that we are reading about here today is the real “truth”, the only “truth”. All of those other stories that people want to believe are just that, they are stories and fantasies, put into people’s minds by the great deceiver, satan. Not much different from the first story told by satan, when he beguiled poor Eve saying, “You will not surely die!”

This is the “truth”, the only “truth”, and you and I need to be guided by it. The earth did not create itself and neither will it destroy itself. God has done it all. He spoke this earth into existence, just by the power of His voice. And with that same thunderous voice, He will call everything to a close. And it will be exactly as we read here in these scriptures.

And we cannot plead ignorance and say that we didn’t know about it. As the Apostle Peter reminds us here, the warnings have been poured out to us within these scriptures for thousands of years. Listen to the words of verses 1 and 2.

¹ . . . I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles.

(2 Peter 3:1-2 (NASB))

Notice these words! Here we are told that the “holy prophets”, Daniel, Ezekiel and others, men who lived several thousand years ago, warned us that the last days would come. And then also later, the Lord Jesus, along with His Apostles, Peter, Paul, and especially John with the Book of Revelations, all have cried out to us in these words, warning us that there will surely come a day when the Lord Jesus will burst through the clouds and call all of life on earth to an end.

And it will surely take place just as it is written here. Verse 7

⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

And verse 10

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

And verse 12

¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12 (NASB))

Here, Peter gives the ultimate destruction of the earth and everyone left on it. And again, this will surely take place exactly as it is written here!

Thankfully, through it all, God remains loving and generous to the people of the earth. Remember the words of John 3:16,

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 (KJV))

God really does love all people. And He does not desire that any should perish. And though all men be wretchedly sinful, God is patient. Listen to the words of verse 9 of our text,

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3: 9)

And God is especially loving and generous to those of us who have placed our faith and trust in Him. For us, there will come a very special moment in time, just before He begins to rain the “intense heat” spoken about here in verse 12, the fire and brimstone,

upon all the earth, when we will be swiftly “raptured” off the earth and joyously united with Christ in the heavens. And as the old hymn refrains, “What a day of rejoicing that will be”!

Let me read those words for us in 1 Thessalonians 4,

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV))

This is what will take place with all of us who have put our trust in Christ, both those who have already died and all those who are still alive when He returns. Just before God begins to rain fire and brimstone upon the earth, we will be “caught up” to be with Him in the heavens forever. And truly, “What a day of rejoicing that will be!”

And considering this special moment when we will be “raptured out”, may I mention another verse that is especially comforting to me. It is in 1 Thessalonians 5,

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 (ESV))

These and other scriptures like them are a very special promise folks, they assure you and me who have salvation that we will not have to experience the “wrath” of God. His “wrath”, described here in the verses that we read a moment ago,

In verse 7

⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

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¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

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¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12 (NASB))

These words describe the “wrath” of God that He will pour out upon all “unbelievers”, those people who have refused to come to Him and receive salvation. And there are numerous other scripture verses like these, especially in the Book of Revelations. And folks, God’s “wrath” will be like no other suffering imaginable.

May I say again and again, God’s “wrath” is reserved only for those who have denied Him. For you and me, and for all of the other people who have, throughout time, fully surrendered our hearts to Christ, we will be completely and eternally spared from God’s wrath!

But with that comforting promise being said, we are warned that in the last days, these days that we are now living in, we believers will be subjected to the “wrath of man”, the unbelieving people around us, and also especially our government leaders, as they spiral out of control. Listen to these words in Matthew 24, describing the conditions as the “end of days” draw near.

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. ⁹ Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:4-14 (NKJV))

There will be turbulent times for those who are on the earth as the end draws near. Satan, knowing that his end is coming will go into a frenzy causing all sorts of misery for Christians. But we must endure to the end.

Verses 8 and 9 again,

⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8-9)

These are such precious and wonderful words of love and grace and patience! And please do take careful note of what God is waiting for people to do . . . to repent! God is waiting right now for everyone to come to “repentance!” And you and I are to be busy, right now, ministering the message of repentance to anyone who will listen.

Recall that just out ahead of the Lord Jesus in His ministry of salvation, God sent His forerunner, His messenger, John the Baptist. And He gave John a very specific message to preach, that of “repentance”, the acknowledgement that our hearts are desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, that we are totally depraved, filled with iniquity and sin, and desperately in need of cleansing from our sin, but having no means of our own to provide that cleansing.

You and I are to be the “John The Baptists” of our day. And as the message of repentance is given and preached by us, God’s Holy Spirit will open the hearts and minds of those who listen. That is the most important moment in a person’s life. It is a moment of “choice”. And fortunately, some will respond rightly and cry out, “yea Lord, I am wretched, a sinner in need of a Savior. Forgive me and wash away all my sins”, “and give me your strength, Lord Jesus, to turn away from the sins and the behaviors that once controlled my life.”

That is repentance sufficient unto salvation. And that is the moment in time when these words here in 2nd Peter will be fulfilled. Verse 9 again,

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
(2 Peter 3:8-9)

Before we close for today, may I confess to you that I am continually dismayed by the sinful behavior of most of the people of this world, and especially dismayed by the behaviors and dictates of our government leaders. And I often cry out to the Lord Jesus to please come and end it all, to split through those skies today, right now, and take us up to be with Him!

But thankfully, as we read in these words, God is more generous than I am. He is patiently waiting for people to repent. And so also should you and I be patient!

Thinking about these things has brought back to mind the words of an old country gospel song, entitled “Wait a little longer please Jesus”. And I’ll close with some of those words. Listen!

Here the labor is so hard and the workers are so tired
And our weary hearts are yearning for a rest
And we find we're getting anxious to be in that happy land
Where we'll receive such peace and happiness
We cry oh Lord please come, come and take your children home
But then we look around us and we say . . .
Wait a little longer please Jesus, there are so many wandering out in sin
Just a little longer please Jesus, a few more days to get our loved ones in.

The family's scattered here and there, but Lord we love them dear
And maybe we can help them find a way
Then if waiting is the cost that they may not be lost
Lord that's the reason why we should say
Wait a little longer please Jesus, there are so many wandering out in sin
Just a little longer please Jesus, a few more days to get our loved ones in.