

## 2 Peter 3:10-18

“The Day Of The Lord”

Understand that the purpose of prophetic truth is not speculation, its motivation. When God gives us forewarning, when He reveals to us things to come it's not really so that we can have the “one up” on others or perhaps somehow impress them with our eschatological insights. But rather it should serve to give you and me a certain incentive, it should spur us on to a particular, practical end. That's the point that Peter makes in this his final section of his 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle.

As our time came to a close in our last gathering concerning 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter we were considering what seems to be the apparent *delay* of the Lord. Why does it seem like God is so slow when it comes to winding things down and wrapping things up as it pertains to the coming of Christ? Why does He seem to *delay* His coming? However the fact of the matter is that God is not *slow*, He's *sovereign*, God doesn't dwell in time like we do, He dwells outside of time in the eternal. For Him time is a non-essential, oh He has a Divine *timetable* don't get me wrong, He's right on schedule, but the schedule that He's on is *His* schedule not ours. The bible declares in no uncertain terms in Vs 9 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Ch 3 that God is not willing that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance. Do you realize that those are statements that are categorical in nature; they include everybody, there's not a single exception. There's not 1 person on this planet whoever *has* lived and/or whoever *will* live that God does not want to save and is not willing to save should he/she repent of their sin and surrender to Christ. God is *always* willing to save man. However, the sad fact is that man is *not always* willing to be saved by God; they'd rather cling to their sin and suffer the ramifications than to their would be Savior and so find forgiveness. But I say all that to say this; God is not slack, He's not slow, He's patient with people He waits that more people might repent...

However things will not always go on as they are; God's Spirit will not always strive with man; and as we approach Vs 10 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Ch 3 he moves from the seeming *delay* of the Lord to the inevitable, inescapable *day* of the Lord...

### Vs10-13

Look back at Vs 10 (read). Obviously there are tons of things to think through and consider contained even with in this single Vs. Peter points out 4 inevitable things that we should be aware of, he points out a “cause and effect” kind of a happening, what will happen, how it will happen, and what will be the results of the happening.

If you take notes you might simply write these down, or perhaps underline them in your bible; 4 inescapable, unavoidable things that are coming down the prophetic pike. Peter is here speaking in emphatic terms. There's no room for negotiation in these things that he is saying *to* us and sharing *with us*, he's not saying these things *might* happen, or that perhaps there's a chance that they *could* happen, these statements are definitive; they *will* take place. #1 The day of the Lord *will* come #2 The heavens *will* pass away with a great noise, #3 The elements *will* melt with fervent heat, and #4 both the earth and the works that are in it *will* be burned up.

The day of the Lord *will* come. Peter has been seeking to encourage our hearts and open our understanding regarding what appears to be a delay, God is not willing that any should perish, He desires each and every person to repent so He patiently waits for people. But He won't hold the door open forever the day of the Lord *will* come.

What is the day of the Lord? It comes up from time to time; it's spoken of or referred to throughout the scriptures, what gives? What exactly is this phrase "the day of the Lord" a reference to? It's a good question; the "day of the Lord" doesn't exactly refer to a single day so much as it does a single span of time whereby God will be dealing with man in a very specific way so as to "wind down and wrap up" the prophetic picture. To sorta sum it up for you (there's no way time would allow us to speak in detail on each aspect, I'd encourage you to research the matter for yourself personally) the day of the Lord when brought up in scripture is always closely associated with judgment. We read in Isa 2:12, "*For the day of the Lord of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up — And it shall be brought low —*" Again in Joel 1:15, "*Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.*" There are several references both O.T. and N.T. that refer to the day of the Lord, it might be called "The day" "That day" "The great day" they're all speaking of the same thing, the *day of the Lord*. Specifically/scripturally it begins with the rapture of the church, carries through the Great Tribulation period, on through the millennial reign of Christ, the release of Satan, the final once for all defeat of Satan, the White throne judgment and the cleansing of this world as by fire so as to usher in the rest of eternity referenced in Vs 12 as the "day of God."

Now I know that I just referred to a whole lot of things on the prophetic timetable that we don't have time to discuss, it's not my intent to confuse you on those things or leave you hanging with the desire to want to know more about something that we can't delve into. However again I would encourage you to seek those things out and learn more of them.

There are 3 things specifically that the NT exhorts us to not be ignorant of, #1 God's plan for Israel, #2 Spiritual gifts and their place in the church, and #3 The 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ and the things that surround it or are entailed in it/related to it. What are probably the 3 biggest areas of ignorance in the church today? What God's plan is for Israel (how they fit in to all this), spiritual gifts in the church, and the prophetic events that surround the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ, and the day of the Lord. Don't be ignorant of your enemies devices, the things that are important to God he wants to squash their importance to you.

You should also know that there are different terms that *don't* refer to the day of the Lord. The "day of Christ" is spoken of a few times in your bible; it's a reference to the rewards and the blessing that will be bestowed upon the saints at His appearing. "The day of God" which we just mentioned, it speaks of the time when the day of the Lord ends and the day of God begins, the eternal state that we'll abide in forever there after (no more presence of sin, or evil in anyway, a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells). But the point here is this; the time will come when God will deal definitively, decisively and very directly with man; the day of the Lord *will come*.

How will it come? In a manner that shocks, stuns, surprises, confounds and confuses those who dwell on the earth, like a "thief in the night."

A seemingly favorite expression of the Lord in His forewarning of His coming again; over and over again He likened His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to that of a thief in the night. He said, "*But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*" Matt 24:43-44 Paul picked up on that in 1 Thessalonians when he said, "*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*" 1 Thess 5:2 Here Peter employs the term as well. The point being that when Christ comes again it will be both surprising and catastrophic, a thief comes when he's least expected, when everything seems "A OK." I just quoted to you from 1<sup>st</sup> Thess, if you keep reading there Paul expounds a bit on what he means by likening the day of the Lord to a thief in the night. He says, "*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*" 1 Thess 5:2-4 What's that? Yeah, listen, the day of the Lord will overtake the world like a thief in the night, however *you* (child of God) are not of the night, you are of the day, you are watching, you are ready, you're waiting, it won't surprise you, that is, it won't be detrimental to you, you'll be caught up to be with the Lord in the air and so shall you ever be with the Lord...

So we have the *confidence* of His coming, we have the *character* of His coming, and now we consider the *consequences* of His coming.

The *cause* is the day of the Lord; what's the effect? It brings us to our 2<sup>nd</sup> definitive statement of Vs 10, "The heavens will pass away with a great noise," when he speaks of the "heavens" here, don't think it's a reference to the place where God dwells. This is a reference to the atmosphere above you. We're talking about the universe as we know it passing away so as to make room (if you will) for the new heavens and the new earth. We read in Isaiah 34:4, *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; All their host shall fall down As the leaf falls from the vine, And as fruit falling from a fig tree.*" Again in Isa 51:6, *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.*" This of course takes us to the end of the millennial reign of Christ when the heavens and the earth are cleansed not by flood, but by fire. It's been referred to as the "catastrophic conflagration" (fire) at the end of the Millennium. How the heavens will disappear with a roar; we spoke last time about the makeup of an atom, how it's all held together by Christ; what happened when the atom was split, nuclear fission, the atom bomb. Everything including the air you breathe is comprised by atoms. Now, the nuclear explosions that we're now able to create involve a fist full of atoms. What do you suppose would be the result of the releasing of *all* the atoms in the universe? Let's call the words, "Great noise," and "fervent heat" a radical understatement. Rev 20:11, *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*" Jesus said, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*" Matt 24:35 *The day of the Lord will come, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, #3 the elements will melt* with fervent heat (I believe we've basically covered that one).

#4 Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. If you've been a believer very long at all you've heard someone no doubt employ the phrase, "It's all going to burn." Now you know where that phrase comes from, it's all literally going to burn.

We get so attached to the things of this world, someone puts a ding in our car door, or somehow damages something we're trying to keep in pristine condition and we go through the roof! Why? It's all going to burn anyway. Oh we want to be good stewards during the interim period and certainly there's nothing wrong with taking care of stuff, but how critical it is that we maintain the proper perspective. Where does your priority lie? In the things of this world? Jesus said we're to lay up treasures in heaven, where thieves don't break in and rust and moths don't destroy. Paul told us to, *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*" Col 3:2

This is all gonna burn, both the earth and the works that are in it, all the great technological advancements of man, all the industrial and architectural accomplishments of man, all of our great achievements and inventions will dissolve in a moment of time... No one will be standing at the White Throne Judgment pointing out there great works, their incredible accomplishments, their merits, they'll all be gone.

Question, what are you living for? Where are you going to be when this goes down? Is everything you're living for, everything that you consider to be of value destined to go up in cataclysmic fashion; in a universal atomic cloud? Or are the things you're about working in such a way as to glorify the Lord forever? Now is the time to decide, today isn't the day of the Lord, it's the day of salvation and what you decide in the here and now determines your fate forever... Don't put it off till it's too late.

You see these things that we're thinking through right now should be invoking a response in you, it should make an impact, serve as incentive, it should stir you in such a way as to make a difference in the way that you approach life, that I approach life. Because at best everything I'm about as it pertains to this world is temporary, that should cause me to think about my life and my priorities, my practicalities very carefully...look at Vs 11  
Vs11-12

You see if Vs 10 is what *will be*, than what follows is how that should affect our day to day activities presently. "Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be?" It's a rhetorical question, but just in case we miss that Peter goes ahead and answers it for us, God's judgment should serve as an incentive for you and me to lead holy lives. Peter brings up a 4 fold ramification to what we've just been informed of; the information, the realization of what he's just told us should stir us unto #1 holy conduct, #2 godliness, #3 it should cause us to look forward to the day of God and #4 it should stir us to hasten the *coming* of the day of God.

An expectant attitude ought to make a difference in our personal conduct. If you are a believer, if Christ is in your heart you have escaped the corruption that is in the world. Therefore you shouldn't be living like you're *of* the world. You should be different; not odd or weird, but different, people who are different attract others, people who are odd or weird repel others. Christ in you will be attractive to others; there'll be something different about you and its Christ in you, the hope of glory.

You and I should conduct ourselves in holiness. What does it mean to be "holy"? The word "holy" speaks of being set apart, separated from one thing and being given over in totality to another.

To be “holy unto God” means that you’ve been separated from the world, “cut off” from the world and set apart exclusively for the use, the service, and purposes of God for your life. Now, that doesn’t mean we go join a monastery somewhere and live in isolation. That’s the polar opposite of what God calls us to do, God’s heart for you might be to shine the light of Jesus Christ in the construction world, or the world of education, or whatever chosen profession you happen to be in. You’re *in* the world, but not *of* the world. You’re holy unto God; holiness should characterize your life. Meaning that your practical mannerisms, your behavior will not be identified in the same likeness as would someone who doesn’t know the Lord. You’re not going to be partying, you’re not going to be surfing the web looking for porn, you’re not about filling the void in your life with the things of this world because Christ has contented you, He’s forgiven you and filled your life. Now you want to lead your life in a manner that’s pleasing to Him, not that grieves Him, you don’t entertain yourself with the things that took Him to the cross... Now I’m not saying that Christians can never be ensnared, they can. But the primary practice of your life isn’t characterized by those things; you love the Lord, you know the day of the Lord will come therefore you want to be ready, you want to please Him, you conduct yourself in holiness.

“and Godliness” or with reverence and respect toward God, “holiness” you might understand as the way you lead your life toward man, “godliness” is how you lead your life toward God, not only reverently, respectfully, this is where your prayer life enters in, your study of God’s word, you keep your attitude in check before Him.

“Looking for” or “looking forward” to the coming of the day of God, that day when you will dwell with Him and never be apart from Him forever; “and hastening” that day. Or to understand that another way, somehow and in some way God has opted to let us play some part in His appearing. “What do you mean? Are you saying I can speed up His appearing?” I’m not saying that, but it appears as though that’s exactly what Peter is saying. Those aren’t my words, they’re God’s word. “How do we do that?” I believe it’s a 2-fold application. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray words to this effect, “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*” Matt 6:10 When you pray, “Even so, come Lord Jesus” there is a degree to which you hasten the coming of the Day of God. Don’t ask me to explain it beyond that, it’s simply what the word declares. The other thing we can do is share the gospel, see people saved, get God’s word out, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in (be it in time or #) the day of the Lord will be ushered in. Now, I’m not saying that God can’t come back until we get the job done. Because God will get the job done with or without us. But there is credence to the fact that God has allowed us the opportunity to partner with Him in His plan. Pretty radical isn’t it? As you look forward to it, and hasten the day, what a testimony to “loving His appearing.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim 4:8)

But Peter tells us that prior to the day of God (that blessed eternal state) the heavens will dissolve, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.

Vs13

Translation: the end is not the end. Not for the godly, not for those who lead their lives in holy conduct robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ We look for a new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

A place whereby safety isn't an issue, you don't lock your doors, you don't exercise the right to bear arms because righteousness dwells upon the earth. We're not looking forward to the *destruction* of the earth as such, but to the *construction* (if you will) of the new heaven, and new earth wherein righteousness dwells. Isaiah 65:17 *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind."* Now prophetically this happens after the millennial reign of Christ over the earth (which will be glorious in itself [Isa 11:1-9]) and the final White Throne judgment. Rev 21:1 *"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away."*

Vs14-16

"Be diligent to be found by Him in peace" here's the idea; if our heart is set on being with the Lord, anticipating, eagerly awaiting the new heavens and the new earth, we'll work hard, we'll endeavor carefully to walk in a godly manner toward our brothers and sisters. We'll want to be found in peace regarding one another, and morally upright (with out spot) before God.

It's interesting how closely connected the concepts of peace and holiness really are. As a believer I can't have true peace if I'm harboring some sort sin in my heart. I can't have peace with God, I have no peace with in myself, it impacts my peace with you if I'm trying to hide something from you...However if I'm leading a life of blamelessness, holiness, uprightness and with integrity before God then I have nothing to hide, my conscience is clean, I have peace, both with God and man.

Another huge key to peace is to trust in the Lord. Isa 26:3 *"You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."* If you really believe God is in control you don't lose sleep at night. If you're fretting, uncertain, wondering how, or what's going to happen; that's evidence that you're not sure that God is in control and there's no peace in your heart. Yet the bible declares, *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* Phil 4:6-7

What does it mean to be blameless? It speaks of being “morally irreproachable.” You don’t place yourself in morally questionable kind of situations, where there are speculations because it appears shady. You lead your life with out fear of the light of scrutiny because you don’t place yourself in suspicious situations that invite questions upon your integrity, you’re blameless...

Now Vs 15 we basically covered last time; God’s longsuffering is our salvation. I’m so glad Christ didn’t return 20 yrs ago, His longsuffering and patience was my salvation.

However Peter points out Paul here, how that God had gifted him in wisdom and in that sometimes he wrote things that can be tough to understand. I think we’d all agree with that. But what we want to draw attention to is the fact that untaught and unstable people twist the scripture. 1<sup>st</sup> of all note that even as the epistles were being circulated they were recognized as Scripture. 2<sup>nd</sup> of all note that just because someone employs the scripture doesn’t mean that what they’re saying is *scriptural*. They may be twisting the word to their own end. That word “twist” speaks of placing to the rack, torturing. Some people torture and twist the word of God to get what they want out of it. They employ it in such a way as to make it say whatever they want it to say. These people are those who are “untaught” and “unstable” people who don’t seek to know God’s word with in its proper context and how it’s to be applied to their life. Listen, receiving solid bible teaching and placing into practice in your life will bring stability, steadfastness.

Now certainly it’s the Holy Spirit who teaches us, but gathering together to learn from those whom God has gifted to instruct the body is only wise. Notice that those who twist God’s word do so to their own destruction. Those who seek to use the word to justify sin, or somehow take advantage of others systematically disqualify themselves from salvation, the do so to their own destruction. God does not take lightly the twisting of His word. That’s not to say that someone who teaches God’s word is going to always have it perfect, we’re speaking here of the motive of the heart. But we’re to be those who search out what we’re taught to see if in fact what we’re being taught is the truth of the matter.

Vs17-18

As Peter “puts his pen down” he issues a final warning and a final word of encouragement. The warning, “Beware lest you also fall away from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.” There where it’s been translated, “You know this beforehand” is the word from which we get our word “prognosis.” When a doctor examines you, says, “Keep eating like this, you’ll have a heart attack by the time your 50.” He’s given you a forewarning, a prognosis of the problem so that you have time to make some changes. Peter tells us what’s coming down the prophetic pike so that we can make some changes.

So that we won't be led away with the error of the wicked, no one haphazardly drifts into spiritual growth and stability, it's the product of discipline and diligence. But *anyone* can haphazardly drift *out* of dedication and spiritual growth. Here's the point, if there are changes you need to make, now's the time to make them.

Begin to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Exercise the balance of learning and living the word of God. Don't just *shove* bible truth in your mind, *show* bible truth in your life.

The word "grow" is in the present tense, it means it's something that will never stop this side of eternity. The Christian life is never static it's either moving forward or backward. It's the key to a steadfast relationship with the Lord, growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ To Him be the glory both now and forever...Amen.

#### Prayer Points:

Lord what a timely reminder as we begin the new year that each day brings us closer to *that* day; that day when You will call us up to meet with You in the air and You begin to deal very decisively with sinful man. Help us to have our priorities right lest we fall from our own steadfastness. We thank You for the salvation that Your longsuffering brings, certainly we all know people who need to know You, who need to be forgiven by You... Yet Lord we hasten the day when we'll see You face to face and so shall we ever be with You.

If today God is dealing with you, drawing on your heart strings and you find yourself so thankful that in this moment the day of the Lord hasn't arrived but that today is the day of salvation. Than now is the time to decide what you're going to do and where you're going to be on that day. Don't cling to you sin, come to know your Savior. Jesus died for you, He shed His blood for you and hung upon the cross so that you might be forgiven, made whole and have life in Him. Is Christ calling out to you? Come to Him today.