

Title: The Day of The Lord
Date: 2/16/25
Subject: How God's people are to live in the light of the impending day of the Lord
Scripture: 2 Peter 3:10 - 16

Steven J. Cole was on radio watch on a Coast Guard cutter bridge when he met a man who was fascinated by biblical prophecy. It was the chief petty officer who came to get paperwork. He looked over Cole's shoulder and asked, "Whatcha reading?" Before Cole could explain, the chief answered his own question, "Oh, Peters huh? You ought to read Revelations. It's really (cool – except he didn't say "cool" but used non-Christian language)." Cole thought, but didn't say aloud, "Here is this thoroughly pagan man who thinks that *the* book of the Bible that describes God's awful wrath and judgment against sinners is a cool book!" (bible.org/seriespage/lesson-13-living-light-day-2-peter-310-13)

Peter writes about some cool things for Christians but some not so cool things for unbelievers.

READ 2 Peter 3:10 - 16

I. The day of the Lord will come

The text begins with the word "but." It goes back to what was written previously about the Lord being patient and not wanting anyone to perish. Therefore, the promise of his coming is delayed, not cancelled.

The day of the Lord is the day when the Lord brings this phase of humanity to an end and ushers in the eternal state. It's part of the last days (v. 7) which are also called the end times. Sometimes second coming is used to cover all end time events – rapture, tribulation, return, millennium, the creation of the new heaven and new earth, rewards - though it more specifically refers to Christ returning to rule during the millennium.

What will the day of the Lord be like? The day of the Lord, by any other name, would smell as apocalyptic. It will bring the destruction of the known universe and judgment of the unrighteous. The destruction will take place after the Millennium which will be followed by the final battle between God and the forces of the devil.

Start in v. 10. "The heavens will disappear with a roar." Talk about a big bang. The word was used to describe a raging forest fire. I haven't been near a forest fire, but have driven through the aftermath of charred trees and scarred hills. I've been near barn fires fueled by dry hay. I was near a massive bonfire made of trees pulled from a fence line. The guy had poured lots of gas on it. The fire exploded with 40 foot flames.

The word was also used for the sound of birds' wings in the air. Nothing gets the old heart beating during deer hunting quite like walking near a clump of brush and a partridge decides to wait until you're almost stepping on it to burst into the air.

Another scripture says, "All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree" (Isaiah 34:4). Another says God's voice will shake the heavens (Hebrews 12:26).

The association with fire is repeated: v. 10 - “the elements will be destroyed by fire,” v. 12 - “the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.” Go back to v. 7 - “the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire.”

The wildfires that consumed Pacific Palisades and other California places were horrendous. There was terrible loss of life. News people were amazed at the total devastation and the incredible heat that had been present. You may have seen pictures of metallic puddles formed from the heat melting the alloy of vehicle rims.

Scientists talk about the super volcano under Yellowstone and the devastation that would follow an eruption. Ten feet of ash up to 1000 miles away. 90,000 deaths.

Those fires pale in comparison to the fire that comes with God's judgment. It will melt what had been thought to be un-meltable. The heavens and earth will be consumed.

We find a third depiction in V. 10: “the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” It's the idea of being exposed. Nothing will be hidden. The Lord will see everyone's hearts.

II. Responses

A. Those who haven't placed their personal trust in Jesus Christ.

The day of the Lord will come upon them like a thief. Thieves don't call ahead for an appointment. “Hello, Mr. Birr. My name is...well, my name doesn't matter. I'm a thief and I'd like to rob your house. When can we fit it in? I'll be on a cruise from the 6th through the 10th, so I was wondering if we could schedule the robbery for the night of the 11th. That would give me a day to recover from the cruise.” Thieves don't operate that way. They want the element of surprise to prevent the homeowner from being ready.

The day of the Lord will catch many people unprepared. They may have taken care of accumulating a large following on social media, a sizable financial portfolio or a series of athletic achievements, but they haven't taken care of their soul. They haven't put their trust in Jesus Christ as the one who rescues them from their sin. They're in for a big surprise.

There will be judgment and eternal punishment for those who are unsaved. “Not everyone who says to me “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Some will even say they prophesied in his name and drove out demons and performed miracles. Jesus will tell them plainly “I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!” (Matthew 7:23). He goes on to say people need to have their lives built on him as a firm foundation. His point is not everyone who claims to be a Christian and is truly a Christian.

Prior to The Left Behind books and movies, there was the movie Thief in the Night. It showed the aftermath of Jesus coming to rapture the church out of world. The movie caused people to consider whether they were ready for Jesus to come. One of the scary scenes involved a preacher preaching up a storm at his pulpit and nobody was in the sanctuary. The main characters walked in and heard him passionately preaching about Jesus. They asked why. He said he had been a Christian in name only. He had taught a social gospel and

salvation by good works. The truth of the Bible hit him when he wasn't taken and he was trying to do his best during the tribulation to bring people to a saving knowledge of Christ.

B. Those who have placed their trust in Jesus

Anticipation. The day of the Lord won't surprise us like a thief because we aren't in darkness (1 Thess 5:1-4) and look forward to the day of God. This comes across in vv. 12, 13 and 14. The idea is having an eager anticipation of receiving a desired gift. How do we do that? Think about what heaven will be like. Read what the Bible says about it. Listen to and sing songs about it.

The new heaven and new earth won't be someplace that's updated, remodeled, remanufactured, improved or tweaked. It'll be completely brand new. We aren't given many details here or in other scriptures as to what they will be like. Inquiring minds want to know. Will it glow or not? Do the angels really have wings? Will we teleport from one place to another? Will the new earth resemble what we presently have? Should it make any difference to us if we have the answers to these questions? Absolutely not.

Bill Gates' home near Seattle, has 66,000 square feet, 24 bathrooms, 7 bedrooms and is valued at 130 million. Jay-Z and Beyoncé's home in Malibu is valued at 200 million. Both are far shy of the most expensive home in the world. That title belongs to Buckingham Palace, the official residence of the British Royal family since 1837. It has 775 bedrooms, 78 bathrooms, 52 royal and guest rooms, 92 offices, and 19 staterooms, all withing a cozy 828,821 square feet. The estimated sale price is \$1.3 billion,

Our new home will be make those homes look like tar paper shacks...and we won't have all those bathrooms to clean.

What's important is it's the home of righteousness, a place where there'll be no sin, no evil, no more of the things we sang about earlier. Everything will be perfectly aligned with God.

We're able to look forward because we believe God's promise. V. 13 recalls v. 9. There are two parts to his promise. There are the rewards for those who are rightly related to God through Jesus Christ.

Another scripture (1 Cor 3:10-15) declares Jesus Christ is the only foundation for life. Followers of Christ are likened to builders and implored to be careful how we build on the foundation. Materials include gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, straw. The Day will bring our labor to light, and it will be revealed with fire which tests the quality of each person's work. If what we built survives, we'll receive our reward. If it's burned up, the person will be saved as one escaping through the flames but he'll suffer loss.

What's our motivation? Actors are motivated by applause, awards and money. Athletes are motivated by the desire to win, applause, awards and money. Students are motivated by the quest for knowledge. Maybe, but also by a desire to please parents/teachers... and money, either as rewards for grades or the hope of making some. Catch the common denominator? Money.

As followers of Jesus Christ, money isn't to be our motivator. We're after a different kind of treasure, one we can send on ahead to heaven. This passage brings up the motivation of not focusing on the temporary because of the impending total destruction of everything and preparing for our new home.

Preparation. How are we to live? Go back to v. 11. Read 11A. Isn't it great when the answer is supplied and you don't have to come up with one? It's kind of like the teacher giving a test and then giving out the answer key. Just copy in the answer. Everybody gets 100. Fantastic. God wants everybody to pass his test with flying colors so he tells us the answer to his question. We aren't left hanging about what our conduct should be. We "ought to live holy and godly lives."

There is a question about whether the question in v. 11 is really a question. A good number of translations and commentators say it's a declarative statement: "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be." Either way, it's about "ought," as in should, our duty, our responsibility.

The question, whether expressed or implied, is about with whom we align. We can't be neutral.

The anticipation of heaven is vital to right living. If we don't believe we'll be with the Lord, there's no reason to live holy and godly lives. These tombstone inscriptions reflect what happens when people don't believe there is a God-ordained end of the world with reward and punishment (Barclay). Hedonism: "I was nothing. I am nothing. So you who are still alive, eat, drink and be merry." Apathy: "Once I had no existence, now I have none. I am not aware of it. It does not concern me." Despair shown through conversational form: "Charidas, what is below?" "Deep darkness." "But what of the paths upward?" "All a lie..." "Then we are lost."

Since we belong to the Lord, and since we have a promised new home and since everything is going to be destroyed, we ought to live holy and godly lives. We're to give God the place in our lives he deserves. It's based upon his call to wholesome thinking in v. 1. As a person thinks, so is he or she. We're to be set apart from the ways of the world. We're to be uncontaminated by the rotten garbage and corrupting pollutants of false teaching. Our priorities and goals don't revolve around the stuff that's going to be burned up. We're to live in ways that please God because we have reverence and awe toward him. We're to grow spiritually in our attitudes, words and behavior.

We can dip back into 1 Peter. READ 1:14-16; 2:11, 12; 3:8-12; 4:3, 7-10.

The result of living holy and godly lives is found in V. 14. We'll be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him when he returns. Spotless and blameless contrast the blots and blemishes of false teachers. (2:13). Peace refers to having a conscience that is right with God and people. We're not fighting him or them.

During the apartheid era of South Africa, a woman from the Bantu people group faced daily difficulties because of her color. In spite of the mistreatment, she didn't become bitter or disillusioned. What kept her from these was the knowledge that the Lord would return and would right all wrongs.

Peter personalizes the call for action by using the term dear friends, loved ones. We're to make every effort. Earlier he appealed to us to make every effort to add character qualities to our faith (1:5) and be all the more eager to make our calling and election sure (1:10). Peter includes himself in the challenge. He will make every effort so others will be able to remember these things he's teaching (1:15).

In 1986, researchers asked mothers in Japan and Minneapolis to rank the most important things a child needs for academic success. The top for moms in Minneapolis was "ability." Moms in Japan said "effort."

The call is to diligence. We're to make it our business to live holy and godly lives. We're to bring together our mental faculties, physical abilities and psychological makeup on this. Put some heart, soul, mind and strength into it.

A mother went to her church's youth pastor with a problem, "I can't get my daughter to clean up her room. Is there anything you can do to help?" He said, "I think so." At the next youth group, he announced he was going to visit each student's home, take a picture of each teenager's room and post them. The girl's room became much cleaner and so did those of the other students!

We're able to speed up its coming. One thing it doesn't mean is that the world will get progressively better until humanity reaches a combined goodness where it's appropriate for Jesus to return. I'm not sure how it all works but it seems to be connected to the Lord not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance. V. 15 calls us to "bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation." Another Scripture: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). When we tell others about Jesus, we're moving the countdown clock forward.

III. What about Paul?

God has Peter do something unique. He refers to Paul's writings as authoritative, as scripture. These may be the book of Romans which was intended as a letter to be circulated among the churches. Peter says his and Paul's writings agree. Both write about the problems of false teachers who twist scripture to suit their sinful lifestyle, about Christ's second coming, that God is patient and while we're on earth, we need to live holy lives that please God. Peter says what Paul writes is hard to understand, not that it's difficult or perplexing to interpret, but it's hard to accept and put into practice because the ignorant and unstable bend scripture to suit their desire to serve self and pleasure. They claim to be in the know...but they don't really know.

They distort Scripture. Some question how a loving God condemns anyone to hell. Their hope is there isn't a hell. It would take the fun out of life. They wouldn't feel free to live a life of pleasure and that ignores God. Therefore, they refuse to believe in hell, the devil, sin and whatever might cause them to feel bad. They feel they are getting along just fine.

An atheist farmer often ridiculed those who believed in God. He wrote a letter to the local newspaper in which he scoffed, "I plowed on Sunday, planted on Sunday, cultivated on Sunday, and hauled in my crops on Sunday; but I never went to church on Sunday. Yet I harvested more bushels per acre than anyone else, even those who are God-fearing and never miss a service." The editor printed the man's letter and then added: "God doesn't always settle His accounts in October." (Taken from "Our Daily Bread," date unknown.)

Peter proclaims, "Christ is coming back suddenly and unexpectedly. Make sure that your life is clean and ready for His coming! Live in holiness in light of that day! The rewards are out of this world worth it."