

**THE DAY OF THE LORD**  
**II PETER 3:10-13**

**INTRODUCTION:**

There are two sides to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. To those who know Him as Savior and submit to Him as Lord, the Second Coming of Christ is a blessed hope. Anticipating His Coming fills their hearts with joy and adds a special dimension of confidence and hope to their daily walk. This is the bright side of our Lord's coming.

However, there is a dark side to the coming of the Lord Jesus. The Old Testament prophets foresaw that coming and called it "the day of the Lord." When they spoke of the day of the Lord it, was almost always in terms of judgment. Let me just share with you a sample of what the Old Testament prophets said about the day of the Lord:

Isaiah 2:12 "The Lord Almighty has a day in store  
for all the proud and lofty,  
for all that is exalted  
(and they will be humbled.)"

Ezekiel 13:5 "You have not gone up to the breaks in the wall  
to repair it for the house of Israel so that it will stand  
firm in the battle on the day of the Lord."

Joel 1:15      “Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.”

Malachi 3:2    “But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like the refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.”

Acts 2:20      “The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.”

Thess. 5:2     “For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”

When Peter speaks of the day of the Lord, it is against this Old Testament background. He is describing what the coming of Christ would mean to the world itself – not to the people who have claimed Christ as Lord and surrendered their lives to Him. To the world itself the Second Coming of Christ will be a horrific Day of Judgment. By the use of the word “day” we should not limit it to the idea of a twenty-four hour day. In this case the word “day” is used of an epoch, of a whole process that will be initiated by the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heavens itself. That whole end time process as it relates to the creation and the world of lost humanity can be called “the day of the Lord.” What is the significance of this day that is sure to come for you and for me? What difference should it make in my life if I live life with an awareness that Jesus

Christ is coming as the judge of all the earth again? These inspired words of Simon Peter give us some insight to the day and its implications for our lives.

### **I. THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A THEIF IN THE NIGHT.**

Peter declares, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.” The verb that opens that sentence in the Greek, and thus is in the emphatic position, is the word “come.” Peter uses a word and then places the word in the sentence in a way to emphasize the certainty of this coming. But while the coming of the day of the Lord is certain, it will still happen like a thief breaking in unannounced in the middle of the night.

1. This emphasizes the unexpectedness of the day.

When a thief comes in the night he comes unexpectedly. None of us go to bed at night expecting our sleep to be disturbed by the intrusion of a thief in our home; at least most of us do not. I heard about one family where the wife was constantly hearing sounds in the night and was being frightened by these sounds. She would awaken her husband and send him on a search of the house to make sure that no one had broken in. Finally after years of this kind of experience, one night as the husband was coming down the stairs and into the kitchen with a flashlight in his hand, he did encounter an intruder. When he saw the intruder in his home he reached out his hand to shake hands with him, “I want you to come up stairs and meet my wife. She has been looking for you for years.”

When Jesus first used this image of the thief coming at night he was emphasizing the uncertainty of the time in which His coming would take place. The coming itself is not uncertain, the time of the coming is uncertain. It will catch the world by surprise.

2. It emphasizes the unpreparedness of the world.

It is a common theme of scripture that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will catch the world unprepared. The Apostle Paul instructed the Thessalonians to prepare for the coming but warned them that just before the coming of the Lord the world will be saying, "Peace, peace!" The world will feel like it is finding solutions to its own problems and does not really need the Lord to help them manage the problems of the world. But then in that moment of contentment and false security the day of the Lord will burst upon them. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with ten thousands of His angels and the process of judgment upon the world will be initiated.

The truth that we are to absorb is this – the Lord is coming like a thief. He will not give any warning. He will just suddenly appear on the scene as the great Lord of history and the judge of all the earth.

However, it was never the intention of the Lord that it should catch His people by surprise. Those of us who know Him should be eagerly anticipating the day, and living in a state of preparedness.

## **II. THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL INVOLVE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE**

## **WORLD SYSTEM AS WE KNOW IT.**

The language of Simon Peter is graphic and apocalyptic as he describes the day of the Lord. His primary focus in his description of the day of the Lord is upon the creation, the universe, as we know it. It is a frightening scene that Simon Peter's describes in this inspired statement.

### 1. The passing away of the heavens.

“The heavens will disappear with a roar.” By “the heavens” the Apostle is doubtlessly referring to the heavens that are visible to the human eye. He is talking about the sky with all of its spaciousness, the sun and the moon and the stars and the planets! The verb that he uses is a strong and poetic verb. The word itself was used of the sound of something passing through the air. It was used for the sound of an arrow that was on its way to its target. It was used for the rumbling of thunder as a storm moves across the skies. It was used of the crackle and roar of flames in a fire that is out of control. In this instance it seems to be the roaring of a flame that Peter has in view. It is the roaring of a destructive flame that is enveloping the whole of the visible heavens. What a sight that will be! Everything that man's eye has been able to behold will suddenly with a roar be enveloped in a destructive flame.

### 2. Melting of the earth.

Peter adds this other word of description, “The elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” By the word “elements” the Apostle is probably referring to the heavens again. It is probably all of the individual stars and planets that make up space, as we know it that He has in view. But then, he adds to it “The earth and everything in it.” The earth is our home, the soil on which we stand, the firmament that is beneath our feet.

Every thing that is in it is a translation of the word “works.” It evidently has its focus upon on the things that man has been able to produce upon the earth, all that he has been able to build. The word is that all of this will be “destroyed by fire.” A more literal translation would be, “will be desolved by burning.”

The last verb in this statement that is translated in the new International Version, “Will be laid bare” has an alternative reading. You find it in the margin of the NIV and it is translated “be burned up.” These reflect different textual readings that are available to us. If the textual reading will “be laid bare” is the proper reading, then it means that this day of the Lord will reveal the earth and what man has done on the earth for what it really is. All of the sham will be burned away and we will suddenly see that all of this is by its very nature temporal and subject to the fire. Those who have put their confidence in life upon the earth and what they are able to do on earth will suddenly discover the folly of their ways.

You are probably familiar with the theory that the earth and the universe began with the “big bang.” Whether or not it began with a big bang is still questionable, but there is no question concerning how it will end – it will truly end with a big bang! The judgment of God will ignite the universe into a flaming caldron as it comes to an end under divine judgment.

These concepts were once unthinkable to human kind, but we now know that through the splitting of the atom and the production of hydrogen bombs man himself has under his control the elements needed to make this become a reality on the earth itself. If mortal man has the potential to envelop the earth and its inhabitants in a fiery caldron, why should you doubt that

almighty God has the power and the ability to do this? The earth is to be dramatically and judicially impacted by the day of the Lord.

### **III. THE DAY OF THE LORD ENCOURAGES HOLY LIVING.**

Peter gives this graphic description of the day of the Lord in order to motivate the people of God to serious action. “Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” You cannot believe that we are hastily moving toward the day of the Lord and not allow it to alter your lifestyle. Literally Peter raises the question of “what country” should we be in light of this coming event. The implication is that, if we believe that this earth on which we live, is destined to be incinerated in the fiery judgment of God, we need to make the most of our citizenship in heaven. We are here only temporarily. Our permanent dwelling place is in the new heavens and the new earth. So, since this is true, there are some things that ought to characterize our lives as we move toward that day of destiny.

#### **1. Holiness: separation unto the Lord.**

Peter uses that familiar Biblical word “holy.” Our lives day by day ought to be marked by holiness in light of this coming judgment of God. Holiness has two sides to it. On one side it involves separation from evil that is in the world. On the other side it involves separation unto the Lord and His purposes. If we are genuinely anticipating the day of the Lord, it will move us to refuse to conform to the value system of the world in which we live. It will move us to separate our lives to God’s holy purposes and to live in the world as the people of God.

We are not accused very often being “a holy people.” The worldliness of the church has become the scandal of our day. We think like, talk like, the world in which we live. There ought to be a distinctive quality in our walk, our talk, and our conduct, that will indicate to the world the unique relationship that we enjoy with God.

## 2. Godly: devotion to the Lord.

The word translated “godly” has in it the idea of devotion to the Lord. It is translated by many “piety.” At the root of the word is the idea of worship of the Lord. The idea is that of living a transformed life that is taking on the likeness of God Himself. All of us become like that which we worship. If our lives are poured out to God in worship and devotion they will naturally be transformed into the likeness of God. We will begin to reflect the likeness of His character.

The anticipation of the day of the Lord encourages godly living. It encourages consistency and faithfulness in the worship of the Lord. It encourages a genuine desire for and commitment to walking as He walked. The day of the Lord is a strong motivation for holy and godly living.

## 3. Usefulness: service for the Lord.

Peter continues this statement with these words, “As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.” As we eagerly anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ in this awesome day of the Lord as His people we are committed to do everything we can to hasten His coming. In the broad context of scripture this involves praying for His coming. He taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come”. It involves winning others to Jesus Christ. As we look at this broader context and learn that if the thing that has delayed His coming is His unwillingness to see men perish –

we see the urgency of our task of winning those that are lost to a commitment to Him as Savior and Lord. Every time we bring another person to Jesus Christ, and thus bring joy and satisfaction to his heart, we have moved one step closer to His coming. There is plenty of Biblical evidence that the coming of the Lord Jesus ought to put an urgency in the evangelistic efforts of the church and in its commitment to world missions. Those who talk about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and never do anything to bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ are involved in just religious talk, the reality of this truth has never quite gripped their hearts.

Can you imagine how tragic it would be for many that we love if Jesus Christ were to come today? Can you imagine the horrible destiny that would be theirs? Can you imagine being involved in this terrible fiery caldron that awaits the world? Can you imagine standing before God totally unprepared to meet Him? Can you imagine hearing Him say, "Depart from me I never knew you!" Can you imagine being cast into the lake of fire to live for ever and ever?" This is the destiny of our friends who are without Christ! The certainty that the day of the Lord is just ahead should move us to unceasing efforts to bring others to the Lord Jesus so they, too, care be saved.

The day of the Lord is certain! The time of that day is unknown. Every one of us needs to give attention to the condition of our souls so that we will not be caught unprepared when the day comes! Then we need give attention to the souls of those we love and the lost of the world.