

End of the World - 2 Peter 3:1-13
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Top 10 Question - *What does the Bible teach about the end of the world?*

Now this is a question that gets everybody's attention. Dozens of movies and books have come out with end of the world apocalyptic plots, with all sorts of end of the world scenarios. For the Ghostbusters the sign was ghosts, a sign that people were rising from the dead ushering in Old Testament kind of judgment that would end with, "Forty years of darkness, earthquakes, volcanoes, human sacrifice, cats and dogs living together! Mass hysteria!" Funny thing, we all have a sense that there is an end, and that some sort of judgment comes with it.

The Bible affirms a final day and throughout Scripture this final day is called "the Day of the Lord." This day will not be brought about by zombies, vampires, a meteor, or aliens. Rather, it is a fixed day set in the sovereignty of God. The phrase "the Day of the Lord" appears dozens of times in the Bible (Isaiah 13:9-13, Zephaniah 1:14-18, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-7 for example), including our text this week. Allusions to this day are everywhere, with as many as 150 chapters in the Bible being dedicated to this final day and its implications. In the New Testament alone, warnings and promises related to the final day are in 25 of the 27 books with over 300 references in 260 chapters. In other words, as God revealed His Word to us, He wanted us to be aware of the reality that history will come to an end one day, and that we should be ready and live in anticipation for that day.

Our text begins with this admonition, as Peter reminds First Century believers about the predictions of the Old Testament prophets and the word of Jesus Himself passed on to them by the Apostles. These prophetic passages speak to people in different times, yet there is clarity about certain aspects of that day. Most importantly, the Day of the Lord is ushered in by the return of Jesus in His Second Coming. The Biblical promise is that there is a moment in history when Jesus will be fully revealed, will physically appear, and every eye will see Him. Jesus' appearance will bring the curtain down on the story of human rebellion and chaos. This day, therefore, for those who have not trusted in Jesus, is the final day of judgment. Our text uses a crazy metaphor, speaking of the heavens passing away "with a roar". The word here is an onomatopoeia (word formed from a sound) of an arrow whizzing through the air. As a result the heavens will "pass away", the elements burned up and dissolved, and all works done on earth will be exposed. Now, does this mean that Jesus' return "with fire" refers to an explosion that destroys the whole earth? While there is some disagreement here, I do not think this is what the texts are communicating. Fire always does two things. It burns up what is burnable, but it also purifies what is beautiful. Wood burns, gold is purified. I believe the Bible uses this metaphor to speak of the burning up of all that is temporal and more important, what is built on human effort, pride, and rebellion. At the same time, this fire will usher in the New Heavens and Earth, which is not God's blowing up this one and forming a new one. Rather, this language references a return to Eden, heaven invading this earth and refining it so that every taint of sin and the Fall are gone! But for lost humanity, the warning of this day should cause them to consider the Gospel and repent. Instead, in Peter's day (which is 30 days after Jesus died and rose), people were already scoffing, getting comfortable that this day was little more than words from religious nuts seeking to control people.

It's not just the people who lived in the First Century. For 2000 years the church has warned of this day and lived in anticipation. And for 2000 years scoffers have scoffed, meanwhile, Jesus has not returned and the Day of the Lord has not appeared. So why has God delayed on this? Peter reminds us, time in God's eyes does not work the same way. Yet, every day Christ delays is an opportunity for those who live in complacency, believe false doctrine, or shake their fist at God to repent and trust in the Gospel.

On the other hand, for those who have trusted in Jesus and tasted His grace, the Day of the Lord is filled with the promise of our final redemption. We are waiting for this day and the coming of the new heavens and new earth where righteousness will dwell. Therefore Peter echoes the message given to believers throughout the Scriptures. Haters gonna hate, scoffers gonna scoff. But there is a day we will be vindicated. And our hope for that day should transform our lives in this day. So Peter asks, "What sort of people ought you to be?" His answer is lives of holiness and godliness? In other words the promise about the return of Christ should lead us to be more like Jesus in our character and more deeply devoted to Him in worship. And it should lead us to work for the hastening of His coming. What does this mean? Jesus told His disciples that the one thing that would signify His coming most clearly was that the testimony of the Gospel would be proclaimed to all nations. So we join the project when we give, pray, and go for this task.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Matthew 23	Matthew 24	Matthew 25	Matthew 26	Matthew 27	Matthew 28	Exodus 1

Reading from this past week's sermon: 2 Peter 3:1-13

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday:

Family Worship

Song - *His Mercy is More*

<https://youtu.be/AqdwSji8fb8?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: King Solomon

Story: Solomon Thought About His Life

Big Picture Question: What does God know?

Answer: God knows everything about the past, present, and future.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 1

New City Catechism

Question 34: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through Christ alone, must we still do good works and obey God's Word?

Answer: Yes, so that our lives may show love and gratitude to God; and so that by our godly behavior others may be won to Christ.

Verse: 1 Peter 2:9-12

2 Peter 3:1-13

- What movies or books have you encountered with end of the world/apocalyptic themes? How did the end come in the story? Why are people enamored with these ideas?
- What is the Day of the Lord? What does this text and the rest of Scripture tell us will happen on that day?
- Why does Peter tell us that God has delayed the coming of Jesus and the Day of the Lord? What does this mean for us?
- How should our belief in the Day of the Lord shape our lives and values?

Prayer

*Pray that we would live in anticipation for the Day of the Lord and that God would use us to bring many to repentance for that day.

*Pray for our partners at the Send Relief Ministry Center in Ferguson.