

Not Wishing That Any Should Perish

2 Peter 3:8-10

Thought for the Day. In light of the events connected with the coming Day of the Lord, we need to repent of our sins, and urge others to repent and accept Jesus Christ as the Savior of their souls and Lord of their lives.

God intervened in human history in the past to destroy the entire world with a universal flood (vss. 5-6). He is going to intervene once again in the future to destroy the entire world with universal fire (vss. 7-10).

8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

- This is not a formula for calculating when the Lord is going to return.
- The main idea: God is not constrained by time as we are.
- "God is eternal. This means that He has neither beginning nor ending. Man [on the other hand] is immortal: he has a beginning but not an ending. He will live forever in either heaven or hell. But God is eternal... and He dwells in eternity. Eternity is not just extended time. Rather, it is existence *above and apart from time...* While God works *within* time, He is not limited *by* time the way we are." (*Wiersbe, Be Alert, pp. 99-100*)
- Verses 5-7 focus on God's judgment of the ungodly, both past and future. Verse 9 focuses on God's patience—He will again judge the ungodly, but He is putting it off as long as possible so that people can repent. Taken in context, the primary emphasis of verse 8 is that God does not operate according to our timeframe.
- "As far as God is concerned, our finite perception of time is irrelevant. What comprises time on earth in no way impacts God's master plan. He is timeless—that is, He dwells above and apart from the cause-and-effect flow of time as we perceive it." (*Charles Swindoll, 1&2 Peter, p. 356*)
- "God will surely accomplish His purposes and promises, even though it may appear that He is slow in doing so. His timing is always perfect!" (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 2135*)
- "It has been 2,000 years since the time of Christ—why hasn't God executed His judgment upon the earth?" Be patient—in the economy of God, it's only been two days!

9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

- Even if the Lord waits another 2,000 years, it's because He wants more people to be saved from His coming judgment!
- "Why does Peter mention this theological truth? Because the scoffers [of the preceding paragraph] rest their point on the basis of the human view of time, suggesting that a long delay in Christ's coming implies that God doesn't keep His promises. To be sure, from the perspective of finite human beings, God often appears to take His time to intervene. He often seems slow. We would love to push Him into fulfilling His promises or rush His Plan. But God does things according to His own mysterious timetable. This doesn't mean that God doesn't care about rescuing and rewarding the righteous. Just the opposite! Peter actually claims that God's 'delay' of judgment makes room for His mercy! He is deliber-

ately holding back the events of the end times in order to give as many people as possible an opportunity to turn to Christ and be saved." (Swindoll, *1&2 Peter*, p. 356) (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

- "But God's patience isn't only a benefit for unbelievers. As He delays the coming judgment, it gives straying believers the opportunity to get their lives back on track. It leaves room for us to repent—not from damnation to salvation, but from a spiritually barren life to a spiritually fruitful life." (Wiersbe, *Be Alert*, p. 100)
- "This is the only place where Peter used the word *repentance* in either of his letters, but that does not minimize its importance. To repent simply means 'to change one's mind.' ...Repentance is a change of mind that results in an action of the will. If the sinner honestly changes his mind about sin, he will turn from it. If he sincerely changes his mind about Jesus Christ, he will turn to Him, trust Him, and be saved. 'Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' is God's formula for salvation." (*ibid*, pp. 101-02)

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief...

- The time will come when God's patience ends and the day of His judgment comes.
- What is the day of the Lord?
 - The word "day" here does not refer to a single twenty-four-hour day.
 - The "day of the Lord" is used at least 21 times in the Old Testament to refer to various times of God's judgment in the past.
 - It is used only 5 times in the New Testament and always refers to a future judgment of God that will occur in stages:
 1. It refers to the Tribulation, a seven-year period when God will judge unbelieving Israel (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2).
 2. It includes His return to earth [at the end of the Tribulation] when He will inflict vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus (2 Thess. 1:7-10).
 3. It is used of the Millennium when Christ will rule the earth with a rod of iron (Acts 2:20).
 4. It refers to the final destruction of the heaven and the earth with fire. That is the [primary focus] here in chapter 3. (MacDonald, *Commentary*, p. 2401)
 - In summary: The future Day of the Lord will begin at the start of the seven-year Tribulation period and run through the Millennium, until the final destruction of the heavens and the earth with fire, just before the creation of a New Heaven and Earth at the beginning of eternity future.
- It will come unexpectedly, without warning, at a time when those who are on the earth will not be looking for it. (Matthew 24:43-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)
- Human nature being what it is, if people knew when the day of the Lord was coming, they would wait until the last minute to prepare!
- Remember that the Church will not be here for the beginning of the Day of the Lord; Christians will be removed from the earth in the Rapture some time before that day begins.

...and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

- This will not happen on day one, obviously, but will be the final destruction at the conclusion of the Day of the Lord, approximately 1,007 years after its commencement.
- The entire physical, material, universe will be destroyed in what can only be described as an unimaginable explosion, like a universal nuclear bomb!
- The very elements of the universe will be melted away with an incredible fervent heat.
- The earth and everything on it will be burned up and dissolved!
- Every material thing in the universe will cease to exist!
- "There are only three things in this world that will last forever: God, the Word of God, and people. Everything else will burn! Are you spending your life on things that will burn? Or investing your life in the things that will last forever?"