

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class: "What Will the End of the World Be Like?"

II. New Testament Passages

E. 2 Peter 3:1-13 (*continued*)

Verse 8: Peter now turns his attention to the faithful. "Do not forget this one thing" (using the same verb he used of the scoffers in verse 5). He says it this way to emphasize that his readers need to act just the opposite the scoffers are acting.

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in Your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

What is our natural view of history? _____

Since God is eternal, what seems to us to be a long time is not very long at all to Him. God sees time with both a perspective and an intensity that we lack.

Some have used this as a numerical formula for predicting when Christ will return, i.d., the six days of creation must mean that there will be 6000 years of human history followed by heavenly and eternal rest. Since some have dated creation to have begun in 4004 BC, that would have put the end of the world in 1996.

Obviously that did not happen.

Verse 9: Peter's third refutation of the scoffers is drawn from the nature of God.

What do we learn about "the Lord" in this verse?

"not _____ in keeping His _____"

"He is _____ with you,"

"not _____ anyone to _____"

"but _____ to come to _____."

Ezekiel 18:23 "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?"

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

The scoffers are wrong on two points: 1) They don't see how God does intervene in His creation (e.g. the Great Flood); and 2) What they consider to be a divine delay is instead evidence of God's long-suffering patience. Not impotence, but mercy, is the reason for God's delay in bringing about the end of the world.

What is repentance? Sorrow over _____ and faith in God's _____ in Christ.

The plain meaning is that, although God wants all men to be saved, and although He has made provision for all to be accepted, some will exercise their God-given free will to exclude God. And this He cannot prevent unless He is to take away the very freedom of choice that marks us out as men. Some will indeed perish, but this is not because God wills it. The logical corollary of this verse is that Christians should use the time before the advent for preaching the gospel. The word of evangelism always belongs to the word of the end. For the gospel concerns a Person whose first coming ushered in the last days, and whose return will seal them. (Michael Green, 2 Peter and Jude, Eerdmans, 1984, page 136)

Verse 10: "day of the Lord" is the way Old Testament prophets referred to God's end-time judgment. Peter here uses apocalyptic (descriptive) language like those writers to describe the end of the world.

"like a thief"- that is, suddenly and unexpectedly. Peter uses the same image that Jesus used in Matthew 24:43 and that Paul used in 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

Revelation 3:3 (Jesus to the church at Sardis) "But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

Revelation 16:15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

"heavens" = what is above us, the atmosphere that surrounds the earth. **How will they disappear?** _____

This word is used only here in the New Testament. "It is a colorful, onomatopoeic word which can be used of the swish of an arrow through the air, or the rumbling of thunder, as well as the crackle of flames, the scream of the lash as it descends, the rushing of mighty waters, or the hissing of a serpent" (Green, page 138).

"elements" = broadly, what is physical, the totality of creation; narrowly, the basics of matter, hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, etc.; "fire" was a medical term used for feverish heat.

"earth" (see NIV note) "laid bare" (ESV) "exposed" = all will be opened up to God's judgment, no more hiding of what we have done; or "burned up" = destroyed by fire.

What might such sudden and complete destruction by fire reveal to us in the 21st century how the world will come to its end? _____, _____, _____

Verses 11-12: These things that we think are so valuable and precious, the things that we save in the attic, store in the basement, shove in a garage until we have no room left to walk (all those things that our children will throw away with a sneer, give away in a heartbeat, or sell for a dollar a box) will be destroyed.

So what is our answer to Peter's question? **What kind of people should we be?** (nature before behavior)

Then what should we do? "live _____ and _____"

"holy" = special, set apart, separated from sin; "godly" = following God's ways, reflecting His will

If we do not know that life is going somewhere, there is nothing left for us to live for.

In living a holy and godly life we actually look forward to Christ's end-time return.

How can we "speed its coming?" _____, _____, _____

What will happen on that day of our Lord's return?

"the _____ of the _____ by _____"

"the _____ will _____ in the _____"

Isaiah 34:4 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.

Verse 13: **Until then, what can we count on for our lives?** _____

To what are we looking forward? "a new _____ and a new _____"

Isaiah 65:17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

How does Peter describe life past this day of destruction and judgment? _____

(literally, "in which righteousness dwells")

What is our view of eternal life? _____

Perhaps we need to adjust our view if we think of heaven as floating with the angels, walking on clouds, and playing harps while wearing white robes. Maybe eternity is closer to what Adam and Eve experienced in Eden before their fall into sin, that is, a perfect creation with a visible and personal relationship with the Lord and nothing separating us from each other. Think of a sunny Saturday afternoon without having to mow the grass or pull weeds. You can sleep in the shade, barbeque a steak, have a glass of wine, visit with family, friends and neighbors (and the Cardinals always win!).