

How to Live in the Face of Coming Judgment (2 Peter 3:10-13) May 24, 2020

- Peter continues his quest to make sure the church understands the certainty of Christ's return (challenged by false teachers: 1:16; 3:3-7) and he broadens his instruction to share some life applications.

- Someone has wisely said, "*to be forewarned is to be forearmed*", so Peter charges the church to live in two ways:

1. **Live with a ready awareness** (3:10, 12b)

- Just because the Lord is delaying His return with great patience doesn't mean He won't come at all (as the false teachers were purporting).
- Peter brings up a prominent prophetic teaching about the end times that affirm the Lord's return: "*the day of the Lord*" (term used 23 times in the Bible) What exactly is he referring to?
 - **This "day" will be unavoidable** (v. 10a): Peter marks the certainty ("*will come*") of this day and Paul notes that "*they will not escape*" (1 Thess. 5:3) and Jesus' resurrection confirms this day of judgment (Acts 17:30-31)
 - **This "day" will come unannounced** (v. 10b: "will come like a thief"; 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; Matt. 24:42-43): No one will know when this day will begin
 - **This "day" will be an uncovering of sin** (v. 10d: "*and the earth and its works will be burned up*"): Some early manuscripts use the word "will be found" and the NIV translates it "*will be laid bare*" and the ESV translates it "*be exposed*". This reminds us that no matter how smart you may be, you'll never be able to hide your sin from God (Heb. 4:13; Prov. 5:21) and any great "*works*" (your accomplishments) will ultimately land on the trash heap in judgment.

- **This “day” will be unimaginable judgment** (against nations, unrepentant sinners and the entire universe – Joel 1:15; 2:11): The descriptions of this judgment are hard to imagine (Isa. 2:12; 13:9; Joel 2:31; Mal 4:5; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:14-18; Zech. 14:1; Obad. 1:15; 2 Thess 2:9, 11-12; 2 Thess. 1:7-9 ;Rev. 12:9; 13:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:10, 12), are primarily carried out during the 7-year tribulation (Dan. 9:24-27; Rev. 6-19 in seals, trumpets and bowl judgments), with nothing like it (Matt. 24:21; Joel 2:2; Jer 30:7; Dan. 12:1) and Peter describes it like a universal cremation (3:10, 11a, 12b). The overall description of it is how God uses “fire” (v. 7, 10, 12; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev. 8:7-8; 9:17-18; 16:8; 19:20; 20:10) to decimate the universe (“heavens” and “earth”) and deal with unrepentant sinners.
- **This “day” will come unexpectedly** (1 Thess. 5:3: “*while they were saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly...*”)
- **This “day” is not designed for us** (1 Thess. 5:4-11)

2. **Live with a righteous anticipation** (3:11-12a, 13)

- Believers are past, present and future people. We’ve been saved from the penalty of sin (past), the power of sin (present) and from the presence of sin (future), so we look back to the cross, look up to the Holy Spirit’s power and look forward to the hope of Christ’s return.
- What does this mean?
 - a. It means to live with a distinct lifestyle (v. 11): We are to “conduct” (lifestyle behavior) ourselves with “*holy*” living (being distinct from sin and the world system of evil) and “*godliness*” (reverence for God in thought, word and deed)
 - b. It means to live with a different eagerness (v. 12-13): Paul uses the verb “*looking for*” three times (v. 12, 13, 14). Christ’s return is an eager expectation and it involves “*hastening*” which could reinforce the eager expectation of “*looking for*”, but it also means to speed up (from our

perspective) the return of Christ by our fervent witness (Matt. 24:14; Acts 3:19-20). We are looking for “*new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*” (the old is a corrupting and groaning – Rom. 8:20-22) and the new will be spectacular (Isa. 65:17-25; Rev. 21:1ff)