

## Transcription of 16ID1612

2 Peter 3:10-14

"How Should We Wait For Him?"

February 21, 2016

Well let's open our Bibles to 2 Peter 3:10 as we are sneaking up on the end of the book. In fact, Lord be willing, we will finish it next week.

Peter was writing to the church from death row. He was awaiting his execution; verse 14 of chapter 1 says he knew that his end was near. And the saints were being battered by the rage of a man who ruled the world - Nero, and he would bring death to millions (actually the Roman Empire would over the next couple hundred years). So Peter wrote this book in 67 A.D., two or three years after his first letter, and because it is his last letter, it is important to us. We want to pay particular attention always when someone writes their last words. So Peter was good at cutting through all of the things that he might have written about, and he kind of majored on the majors. And in three chapters, he left the church with what he hoped that they would run with when he was gone. The first chapter is all about the true things of God, the second about the false things of man, the third chapter about the end of things - which is where we are now, the Lord's return.

And in chapter 1, Peter said that knowing God was really the most important thing you could do with your life. Learn that from a guy on death row. Know God. That's your primary goal. And you can add to your relationship with God by faith, obeying as you learn, and put into practice what you've learned from Him, what you know from Him. So if they did that, he said (chapter 1), an abundant entrance into glory would await them. And if you did and lived like that, your faith would grow, and you would never stumble. You'll never be unfruitful.

In chapter 2, Peter talked and turned to the false. Strong warnings, very strong language, about the battle that every generation faces with the false teachers. He told us they would always be with us, they would always seek to broaden the way, always distort the truth, are always driven in their destructive heresies to set Jesus aside and seek to gain by people's hunger for God. Peter said their judgment was coming - God would have the last word. But in the meantime, be careful who you listen to, who you follow. Know the Bible. Stay with it. He looked back to speak about the fallen angels who'd found the judgment with God. He talked about Sodom and Gomorrah that, for generations, lasted; then finally God's judgment fell.

Same thing with Noah and the flood. God is longsuffering, but there's an end to His longsuffering. And then the judgment will come.

In chapter 3, which we started a few weeks ago, Peter challenged the scoffers who questioned the promise of the Lord's return because it had been a long time since He said He'd be back. And Peter said their assessment is being willfully ignorant of the fact God has always stepped into man's life to bring judgment, and he references those same things he had mentioned in chapter 2 - that God is patient, that His view of time is different than ours. We looked last week at verses 8 and 9 and said to the Lord a thousand years is like a day. His assessment of time is very much different than ours is. So God waits for us. So we looked at, and we'll end with (next week), God's great patience and desire that all men would be saved. But if verses 8 and 9 dealt with our impatience, verses 10-14 this morning deal with our overenthusiasm. At least in Peter's day, and sometimes in ours as well, people go, "The Lord's coming." They don't want to be responsible. "The Lord's coming." But we have to be busy until He comes.

So if last week's message was "God Waits For You," this week's message is "How Should We Wait For Him?" How are we to wait for God? Peter, having refuted the false teachers, now states with finality and with certainty the Lord is coming alright, and the church has work to do. So we should be busy about God's business because it won't be long. And by eternal standards, and by the eternal clock, if you will, we should stay the course because our redemption is drawing near.

So he says in verse 10 this, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." The most certain fact in future history, based on God's record of performance from the past, is that the Lord is coming back. We mentioned to you, I know several times, that the "day of the Lord" is one of those phrases that covers a huge amount of time. But it starts with the rapture of the church, and it extends to all of the seven years of tribulation, to the second coming of Jesus, to the thousand-year reign of Christ, and even to the dissolving of this earth and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. But when the "day of the Lord" phrase is used in the Bible, it is always attached to judgment. Though you and I are delivered, everything that follows that is judgment - which is the point. So in the biblical calendar, the next event is the capturing of the church into the heavens, into the clouds. Right? The Lord is coming for the church. That's going

to happen first. "The trumpet will sound, in the twinkling of an eye" (we are told in 1 Corinthians 15:52), and God will catch up - in the air - you and me. The word is "*harpazo*," violently gather or grab, if you will. So before the judgment of God comes, the righteous get delivered, and we're going to be taken to heaven. And then there's going to be seven years of great tribulation upon the earth. And notice that though it is not an unexpected event for you, for them it is like a "thief in the night." The world is functioning, and they will be caught by surprise, and Peter uses that familiar terminology "thief in the night." The scoffers will be overtaken. After the Lord takes you and me to heaven - His own to heaven - we will be with Him in glory for seven years. We will spend time worshipping the bema seat judgments that you read about in Corinthians. The judgments of your works - not for your salvation but for your rewards - will take place in heaven, and we will witness what John saw there in Revelation as well: Jesus taking the title deed of the earth, and we will sing songs of His glory and His worthiness.

Meanwhile, on the earth, the Antichrist will come to power. For  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, according to the book of Revelation, Daniel and a hundred other places, he will be looked at by most as a hero - someone who has answers for the Mideast crisis, someone that will help Israel to rebuild its temple, someone that will come to the aid of Israel, to God's people. But in the midst of that seven years, at the  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -year mark, with the temple being done, he will show up at the temple and show his true colors and demand to be worshipped as God and will force people to take the mark of the beast and will basically reveal himself for who he is. Those last  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, according to the book of Revelation, will be times of tremendous wrath as God pours out, in increasing intensities, His wrath upon an unbelieving, scoffing world. Now, according to Revelation, there might very well be more people saved during that time than have been saved since the church was born - just because of the population. It does give us lots of hope that there will be lots of folks who will come to Jesus. But then they will have to literally die for their faith, and many will still oppose it. It will culminate in the armies of the world gathering together against God in the Valley of Megiddo. We call it Armageddon, but it is in the Megiddo Valley (where we visit every time we go to Israel).

Well, Jesus will then return (at that point) to the earth, accompanied by you - His people - to establish His kingdom on the earth for a thousand years. And then we will rule and reign with Him, and Satan will be locked up during that time in the "*abusso*," the abyss, so that the rule will literally just be glorious. It'll be God's Word, and that'll be it! And for a thousand years, people will get to experience

what it's like to have the Lord rule. But then, after a thousand years, Satan, for a short time, will be released to offer people an alternative, and phenomenally, they'll choose - some of them will choose - to live under his rule, foolishly; his lying ways rather than under the righteous rule of Jesus. Well then Satan will be taken by Michael the archangel (we're told in Revelation) and thrown into Gehenna with his hordes, and the great white throne judgment will take place - where all of the lost will gather together. None of the saints will be there. And what Peter mentions here will become a reality. The heavens and the earth as we know them will be melted and burned up. They will disappear. Nothing that you see today or place value in or marvel at will be left. And God will introduce a new heaven and a new earth to us. Now we know very little - precious little - about this new heaven and this new earth. You do get some description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21, and even that's kind of - wow! That's amazing. But there's not much more to go on except there's no more sea and no more sun and no more moon; no more night, the Lord will be the Light; no more crying, no more tears; the gates of the city always open. Exciting to look forward to what God is going to do. But all of those things - all of that we just mentioned - are labeled under the "day of the Lord." So when you read through your Bible, you want to be sure that when you read the words the "day of the Lord," you look around to see at what part along that timeline you find yourself and what God is trying to reference to you. Be careful the context. But notice that the surprise here is "as a thief in the night." We're going to be taken, and we're not going to be surprised. But the world is. So, we have the beginning of the "day of the Lord," the gathering together of the saints, mentioned in the "thief in the night" issue, and then we have the end of the "day of the Lord," the melting away of the heavens and the earth as we know them.

With all of the evidence that the Bible sets before us to conclude that the Lord is coming, most of the world still doesn't care. They're kind of oblivious to that, you know? Unaware of the times, unaware of the seasons; just not moved at all by the things that are progressing or how the Bible has taken root, if you will, and then fulfilled. Like the days of Sodom or like the days of Noah, when the judgment of God came with plenty of warning, no one took it seriously. So it'll be that way again. We might say, "Well, I don't know if the Lord can come yet. Look, no one's looking." Well, yeah, they're not going to be looking. You're going to be looking. And we find both Jesus and the apostle Paul and (here) Peter using this phrase to speak about the shock that the world will find itself in when they realize, "Oh, man, we missed it. Something has just taken place that we weren't ready for." In Matthew 24:42-51 Jesus said this, "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is

coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Paul wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6), "Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober." When Jesus wrote that letter to the Sardis church, where there were some believers and lots of unbelievers gathered together, He said (towards the end of His Word to them), "If you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you" (Revelation 3:3). So there is this impetus, always, to the church - be ready. For the world, no way. They're going to get caught off guard. They don't care. But to you and me, as the church, even though it seems like we've waited a long time (we read that last week), it is worth waiting with eyes open and hearts open - looking up. Right? No one took it seriously except the church.

And the world will be shocked when God's patience is finally at an end. But you shouldn't be shocked. We don't know the day. We don't know the hour. But the Lord says you can know the times or the seasons, if you will; you can know the conditions that are ripe, then, for the Lord's return. And we've said it before, but certainly the most pivotal end-time prophecy in your generation and mine is the reestablishment of Israel into the land. They'd been out since 70 A.D. They'd been scattered throughout the whole world. No nationality has been able to keep their national consciousness and awareness, or even their nationality, for more than three generations without a homeland. And then Israel survives for nearly two

thousand years, and they're gathered in the land today. And more than 50% of the Jews in the world today live in Israel. It's pretty amazing. And there're African Jews and Egyptian Jews and American Jews, and they've come from everywhere; Indian, Japanese Jews. Because God scattered them, and now He's bringing them back together. Ezekiel wrote this in chapter 37:21-22 (speaking of the last days). He says, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.' " So Peter says we, as a church, have to be ready. That's Peter's cry from death row. Be ready, church. Be watching and living in a way that you say you believe what you know about the end times. Live in expectation of His coming. John was 90 years old when he wrote those last couple of books there in your Bible - 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Revelation. He was almost 100. But in 1 John 3:2-3 he wrote, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." In other words, if you live with the anticipation that the Lord is coming, then you will live a different kind of life. I lived a different kind of life when I thought my parents might come home on the weekend - when I was a kid. If I knew they were gone a long way, I lived a different kind of life. But if I knew they might walk in and catch the old party we were having at the house.....kind of the same way, you know? Lots of things we can get involved with, but if I think the Lord might come today, I might think twice. I'm going to purify myself. So His coming in judgment is certain, and it begins with you being taken out of the way, and it leads up to the dissolving of the heavens and the earth.

Well for now, the Lord has the whole world in His hands. For now. In fact, we read there (towards the end) everything is going to "melt with a fervent heat, and the works of the earth, and everything that you see is going to be burned up." He says in verse 11, "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved." Now the word "dissolved" in verse 11 is the same word for "melt" in verse 10, and down in verse 12 we'll read again, "because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt" (same word, again) "with fervent heat." So the word "melt" and "dissolve" are all the same word. The judgment of God is coming. It is by fire. And everything you know and see - that's the end of things - will be gone. So anything you can invest in and put in your closet and hang on to and die to have -

gone! Everything that is physically with our eyes, captured, will be gone. Isaiah wrote, in 700 B.C., this, "For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Isaiah 66:15-16). Micah wrote, "The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire" (Micah 1:4). Malachi describes this. "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble, and the day which is coming shall burn them up" (Malachi 4:1). So wherever you turn in the Bible, even 700 B.C., God's Word says it is going to be destroyed.

You might have heard (maybe I've told you) this story of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson who went camping one day together, and Watson wanted to impress his master - Sherlock Holmes, smart guy. And, in the middle of the night, Sherlock woke up Watson, and he said, "Hey, Watson. Look at the stars. What do they tell you?" And Watson went, "Oh, no. A test...in the middle of the night." He didn't want to mess up. He said, "Astronomically, Sherlock, I think that there are millions of stars in my view which would suggest there are potentially billions of planets and galaxies elsewhere." He said, "Horologically, I looked at where the stars are, and I think it's 3:15 in the morning. Theologically, I surmise that God is infinite and powerful, and we are small and insignificant. Look at all that He has made. And meteorologically, just looking at the way things are, I think it's going to be a sunny day tomorrow. How'd I do? Sherlock, what do you see?" He says, "I think someone stole our tent!" (Laughing) It was a good line.

Well here's Peter facing death, and all he can think about is that the world is running out of time. There's really nothing. Look around, and what are your conclusions? What do you decide? We're dying, look in the mirror, the earth is running out of time. You've heard the expression "it's all going to burn." That's biblically correct. It is all going to burn. Absolutely true. Once the flood came, this next time it'll be fire, and it'll be universal. It's not new news. That's old news. Isaiah wrote, 700 B.C., these words, "For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine, I will punish the world for its evil" (Isaiah 13:10-11). "And the earth will violently be broken and split open, and the earth will shake violently" (Isaiah 24:19). And he said, in Isaiah 65:17, "I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." 700 B.C. 2000 A.D.

Now, how is this going to take place? Well, we can surmise. The universe is made up of building blocks, I'm sure that you know, called atoms. And in the atom, there are protons, and there are electrons, and there are neutrons. But there's a great power in the atom. Coulomb's Law would say that positives repel. So you try to put the same side of a magnet together, and you can feel the pressure. They don't pull together; they seek to push apart. I received a letter five or six years ago from a Stanford physicist who was a researcher in the issue of protons and electrons, and he sent me some pictures of mesons - the scientific word for those things that the scientists believe kind of hold forces together. Because electrons are negative. They have a negative charge, and they have virtually no mass. Electrons are infinitely small. They are  $2.5 \times 10$  to the  $15^{\text{th}}$  power of inches or, if you will, like 2.5 quintillionth of an inch. They're very small. Protons, in the same place, have a much greater mass and are positively charged, and they reside with other protons in the nucleus of an atom. So in the nucleus of an atom, you have negatives, and then you have a bunch of positives that want to push away from each other. The negative and positive will pull together, but the positive - the larger protons, the ones with much more mass - don't want to really be near each other. So atoms have much more space than they have matter. In fact, if all of the atoms in your body collapsed, you'd be a speck of dust, and you'd still weigh the same. There are some stars with that type of specific density, where a golf-ball chunk of rock weighs a ton. But that's just the way we are. That's what science would tell us, and there's no way to disprove; in fact, there're plenty of ways to prove that those things are so. If you were to take a teaspoon of protons and stick them on the North Pole, and then stick a teaspoon of protons on the South Pole, to keep them together would require three thousand tons of pressure - even at that distance. So there's this great repelling force amongst protons. And our universe is made up of atoms, and these protons in the atom want to push away but yet they are held together. Mesons, the Stanford physicist, told me.

Well, if you open your Bible to Colossians, it says in chapter 1:16-17, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things," and then you have this word, "and in Him all things consist." And the word "consist" means to be held together, to be kept together. The word is "*sunistemi*," but it means.....can you imagine the force of holding everything together? We've learned, as people, how to upset the molecular structure of uranium by bombarding the nucleus of the uranium atom with slow-moving neutrons (which have no charge) that then force these protons to become unstable and act according to their



nature and push away from each other; and that result is this massive release of energy as the protons push apart. We saw Nagasaki or Hiroshima, where both were the fissionable material - the things that blew up - were smaller than a dime. But yet it is that amazing power that is held there together.

Well, it does seem that one day the Lord is just going to release His hold on everything that you see. If He holds everything together - by Him all things consist - for this new heaven and this new earth to come, and this old heaven and this old earth to be burned up - He just has to do like this....He holds them all together. But if He lets go of them, we're done. That's it. That's how big our God is. Right? That's what Isaiah 65:17 said. "The former shall not be remembered. I create new heavens and a new earth." And the word "create" there is the word "**bara**," and it's an interesting word. It only applies to God, and it means "I will make out of nothing." In the beginning, God created, "**bara**," the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew word "**bara**" means made out of nothing. Not assembled together. That's another Hebrew word, "**asah**." It means to assemble. Create, "**bara**," means make out of nothing. "I will just speak it into existence. It will just be there because I will it to be so."

So Peter says all of this - the beginning and the end and the "day of the Lord" - it's all going to be dissolved, it's all going to melt away. You're going to be ready because you're going to be taken. The world's going to be surprised like "a thief in the night." But his whole application is in verse 11, "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening" (literally towards, or you are tumbling towards, running ahead towards) "the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." Peter's whole point of making these applications is how should we be waiting for Him, knowing what the end of everything that we see around us is to be? The purpose of every bit of prophecy is never speculation, but motivation. God only tells you what's coming so you'll live differently. He doesn't want your head filled with information while you sit around and rattle off stuff. He wants to change the way you live. Some people that are into prophecy almost become fat heads with information. They give you every possible theory and scenario, and yet they don't live any differently. Peter's point is he's about to die. "Hey, look, make sure that what you know is coming changes the way you live. Knowing these things ought to make a difference in how you live."

So, look in verses 11-14, and look at the words Peter uses - holy conduct, godliness, looking for, hastening, according to His promise, looking. We should, with great eagerness, live this life with a real urgency to know that this isn't going to last. One day, everything that we know is going to be gone. If we believe that - if you truly believe that - you will fix your eyes not upon temporary things. You will spend your life and your time with eternal things that make it past this life. Right? The things you send ahead. And according to verse 11, this expectation ought to make a difference in your personal conduct. It ought to change your priorities. It ought to make a difference with what you want in life and what you seek after and what you put first in your life. There's always this indissoluble link between conviction and conduct. If I'm truly convinced this is going to come, then my manner of life ought to be different.

William Barclay, a well-known Bible commentator, wrote on this section, "There are only three reactions to life for those without purpose or a knowledge of God. They are hedonism" (which is - Paul covered it too - eat, drink and be merry; tomorrow we might die), "or apathy," (which says nothing matters except just take care of myself), "or despair" (what is there to live for?) What is there, really to live for?

But you and I are in a different place, right? We can have a life that is holy, separated for the Lord, and godly. By the way, the word "godliness," if you translate it, literally means worshipping well or worshipping good; but that doesn't sound too English (part of the "add" verses of chapter 1:6). If you respect God and His ways, when you realize that the world will be no more, you'll live that way because we're "looking for" (verse 12). Our eyes are upon the coming of the Lord. Ready, prayerful. Look, "hastening," we read it, and we think, "Can we hurry it along?" No. But because it's such a short amount of time, you're running headlong at it. Days are numbered. It is fixed by God. So we have to be ready. But verse 13 says your knowledge changes your outlook, and your outlook changes your behavior. The world will find judgment. We look for deliverance. And God is going to bring a new work. You can read through the first five verses of Revelation 21 where the Lord describes everything that I know about the new heavens and the new earth. We don't have much to go on, but it's going to be awesome.

So, verse 14, "Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless." Be found in Him, having peace with God, having a knowledge of God, having an eagerness and an expectation, and waiting, and living in such a way that the world doesn't have you, man. You're

just walking through. You're passing through. Has to be so. If He's coming, it has to be so. If He's not, then foolish, man. Eat, drink, and be merry. Tomorrow you might die. But if it's true, then we've got to live like He's coming.

Look, if you knew that the Lord was coming today at 9:15 (that's 16 minutes from now), would you have to run out of here and take care of something? If you would, you're not living like He's coming. If you, "I have to do this, then I have to do that.." What would you have to change? No, no. Just keep that truth before you in the days that you live. Simple illustration. Very present reality. If He comes right now, you're ready. "Lord, five minutes. Just give me five minutes!" Hmmm, you've had a long time. So be ready to meet Him. Or you'll be left behind, you meet His wrath. One way or the other, we have to be ready.

Well next week, we will finish Peter's letter. You probably never thought we'd get there, but look at us. Here we are. Four more verses.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
February 23, 2016