

Letters From A Fisherman
Week 27
2 Peter 3:1-10
“The Day Of The LORD”

Introduction

“For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them.” says The LORD of Armies, “not leaving them root or branches. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing,” says The LORD of Armies. **Malachi 4:1-3**

There are many today who have completely abandoned the teachings of Scripture. Today’s liberal universities have ridiculed not only The Word of God, but also anyone who would believe in its truth. Such is the way of the modern humanistic worldview that teaches that mankind can better itself without the aid of religion. In other words, *there is no God, therefore the only one we have to answer to is mankind*. Sad to say, that after all of the so-called experts, who espouse this ridiculous notion, have come and gone, the world keeps getting worse instead of better. People are angrier, more violent, not to mention increasingly empty and more depressed with every passing season.

The solution to this problem has never changed. People need to be in tune with their Creator. As much as some would like to remove God from the equation, God is the only way the equation works. Without Christ, life is empty and unsolvable, devoid of any real meaning. Therefore, those who reject Him are forever searching for something to dull the pain of meaninglessness. They attempt to fill that void any way that they can; using pleasure, wealth, status, or a plethora of other empty means, oftentimes turning to false religion that offers many promises, but no lasting peace or freedom. It is these “plastic imitations of faith” that Peter warned us to avoid nearly two thousand years ago, and yet, they still remain a powerful source of distraction for many today.

Genuine truth is by and large despised in modern society, for it stresses man’s need to repent and follow Christ, rather than obsess over one’s own personal lusts. Christ calls us to *die* to self, while the world urges us to *live* for self. Every television commercial these days carries the message of “*living the good life*” or “*having it all*”, leaving many further and further in debt and deeper in despair. The simple life is a thing of the past, having been replaced with the frantic race to “get all we can, and to can all that we get”, as it were. This seems so foreign to the peace that is offered in The Word of God. A peace that could lead the Apostle Paul to say:

I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me. **Philippians 4:12-13**

I cannot begin to tell you how many even so-called “Christians” have used this passage as an excuse to serve their own selfish lusts. They abruptly abandon the *12th* verse, in order to separate the true meaning of the *13th*. Instead of teaching total reliance on Christ to sustain us through all things, they use it to say that Christ will give them everything they want, if they simply believe in *themselves*. What a horrific example of what Peter has so clearly warned against! For you see, false teaching is everywhere my friends, and we need to be sober-minded and clear eyed in order to discern truth from heresy.

Whether this world will accept it or not, Christ will one day return for His bride, The Church! It is not an empty hope of the deceived, but rather, it is a certainty based upon the reliability of our God. And He has promised that there is a day coming when those who have attempted to disprove His authority

and even His very existence, will face the consequences of their actions. Peter declared that God has a schedule, known only to Himself, and He will fulfill all in due time. In this, our study passage today, we will be reminded of God's promises as we see, *The Course of The Sincere*, *The Calamity of The Scornor*, and *The Coming of The Son*. Please allow me to explain.

The Course of The Sincere (vs. 1-2)

Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you: in both letters, I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder, so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles. **2 Peter 3:1-2**

Peter begins this section by reminding the church of the first letter that he had sent them. And in both instances, he had intended to bring the truths they already knew back to remembrance (**2 Peter 1:12-13**), for, as Believers, we often need to be reminded of what we believe and just *Who* we believe in! It is one thing to know something, but it is quite another to keep what we know in the forefront of our own consciousness. Life sometimes brings with it quite an array of distractions, and those may very well serve to alter our priorities if we allow them to do so. This is why church attendance and a steady diet of God's Word is necessary in order to keep the main things in clear focus.

I love the phrase he uses in the first verse; **I want to stir up your sincere understanding by way of reminder...** The KJV translates this, **"I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance..."** The word that he uses, translated as "sincere" in the CSB and "pure" in the KJV is *eilikrines* in the Greek, and it carries with it the sincerity or purity found in something when it is exposed to the light of day. Peter who had gone to great lengths to warn them of infiltration of false teachers, wanted to encourage the Believers to keep their doctrinal beliefs pure, so that they would stand in the light of God's judgment, for it is only those whose beliefs are sincere and true that will be able to rejoice at the coming of The LORD Jesus! The false teacher may in fact deceive many, but those who are firmly grounded in The Word will endure.

Peter reminds the church that there were very credible witnesses to the truth, namely, the prophets of *The Old Testament*, Christ Himself, and His apostles sent out to share the gospel. Any one of these witnesses would be credible in their own right, but taken as a whole they are a source to be trusted without hesitation.

False teachers prey upon those who are not grounded firmly in faith. I once read an article concerning the practices of Mormon missionaries, who go door to door looking for people to proselytize. One of their main tactics is to go out and visit on Sundays, while Christians are attending church services. Their target audience? People who claim to be Believers, but have, for what ever reason, withdrawn from regular church attendance! Why do they do this? Because when they present their "doctrine" to those who aren't completely sure of what they believe, it has a "ring" of spirituality to it. It "sounds" Christian enough to those who aren't completely sure what Christian doctrine really is. So who are the cults looking to enlist? Answer: people with enough knowledge about God's Word to be dangerous, for it is exactly these same people who are the easiest to lead astray!

And that is the reason for the sincere to remain steadfast and pure in our faith as we anxiously await the coming of The LORD. If we do not want to be caught up in that which is false, then we must prepare our hearts and minds with truth. Counterfeits are easily spotted, when we have an intimate knowledge of the real thing. This is why Peter uses the Greek words for *know* or *knowledge* some thirteen times in this short epistle. He is making the case for the sincere mind of faith! When your knowledge is pure, it will stand up to inspection in the light of day. And know this, that day is fast approaching!

In Peter's first epistle, he instructs us to have the *"loins of our minds girded"* with the knowledge that Christ will come again (**1 Peter 1:13**). This is simply a colorful way of saying that we need to be prepared for our exodus to the promised land. Our focus is not on the here in now, but rather, we are

sojourners on our way to a better place. Therefore, we must not let the distractions of this world take our focus off what truly matters. We don't belong here. We are merely passing through. So we mustn't plant our roots too deeply into this world's soil, as it were. Our minds are girded up for the journey, and our focus or our "course" if you will, is set on the eternal rather than the temporal. This is the pure mindset of the child of God.

The Calamity of The Scoffer (vs.3-6)

Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days scoffing and following their own evil desires, saying, "Where is his 'coming' that he promised? Ever since our ancestors fell asleep, all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation." They deliberately overlook this: By the Word of God the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water. Through these the world of that time perished when it was flooded.

2 Peter 3:3-6

Those who would attempt to discredit God's Word are everywhere. They existed in Peter's time, and they most certainly are alive and well today! *The Bible* calls them "scoffers" or "mockers". And they seem to flourish for a time, but sadly, their day is coming. Their attempts to rationalize their foolhardiness are laughable. They say that since day after day has passed and Christ hasn't come, then that must be proof that Christ isn't coming at all.

Peter reminds us that a similar mockery was issued in the days of Noah. We can be certain that Noah did his very best to warn the fools of his day as well, but no one believed him. How do we know this? Because only one family was on that ark, that's how. Jesus said it will be the same in the last days. No one thought it would rain, simply because they had never seen rain before. That is, until the entire earth was buried under water. And as bad as that was in those days, what is coming is far worse! God has promised not to flood the earth again (**Genesis 9:11-16**). And He gave the rainbow as a sign of that covenant. These days people have even corrupted God's covenant sign by connecting it with perversion. And we have the audacity to believe another judgment isn't on the horizon!!

So the scoffers think they have history on their side, their argument being, Christ isn't returning... because He hasn't for some two thousand years now. But how quickly they forget that God spoke this world into existence by simply saying the word. He covered the world with water, simply by saying the word. And one day, He will destroy the world with fiery judgment, just by saying the word. Peter tells us that the simple reason for their denial is to have an excuse for their own evil desires. They want to sin, so they "*deliberately overlook*" the truth of the matter (The KJV says they are "willingly ignorant"), meaning they *deny* the truth, because they do not *like* the truth. That is akin to attempting to cure a fatal disease by pretending you do not have it!

One day, the scoffers will have their very own "*champion*", as it were. This ultimate scoffer will stand and boast of his own greatness. He will lead multitudes astray and slaughter all who refuse to take his mark upon their bodies. He will present himself as god to be worshipped, and many out of terror will do so. And what will happen to this great scoffer, the antichrist, when Christ does indeed return. Hear now The Word of God:

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him: We ask you, brothers and sisters, not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God.

Don't you remember that when I was still with you I used to tell you about this? And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but the one now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, and then the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will bring him to nothing at the appearance of his coming. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-8**

Make no mistake, to the scoffer who would deny the coming of Christ Jesus, in an attempt to give themselves license to sin.... their calamity awaits them.

The Coming of The Son (vs. 7-10)

By the same word, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. **2 Peter 3:7-10**

While God has promised not to destroy the world by water, He will, however, one day destroy the world in a fiery explosion. Peter describes in very "futuristic" language what will happen to this old earth. For you see, The Spirit of God knows exactly how the universe is put together. In Peter's time, no one knew anything about atoms, or how they were the building block of all there is in the known universe. But God knew exactly how He put His creation together!

Modern science has given us many wonderful things, but it has also given us some terrible things as well. For instance, thanks to the innovations brought on by the Second World War, we now have the technology capable for splitting atoms. As a result, we were able to develop nuclear bombs. We have seen first hand the incredible devastation they can deliver. Imagine, if you will, when God decides to allow all the atoms of the universe to fly apart at once! The heavens and the earth will pass away with a loud noise (the Greek means roar). And "all the elements" (meaning the very building blocks of the universe; ie. *Atoms*) will dissolve. It is God Who put this universe together, and it will be God Himself Who brings it to and end.

In fact, all that God need do to destroy all of creation is to simply "let go". Allow me to explain. Atoms, by their very nature, should fly apart. But something is holding them together. Scientist call this invisible "something" the "nuclear force". So would you like to know just what, or should we say *whom*, this nuclear force is? Hear once again the Word of The LORD.

He (Christ) is the image of The Invisible God, The Firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and by Him ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER. **Colossians 1:15-17** (emphasis and illumination added)

So what is causing The LORD to delay this "letting go" and destroying the entire universe? Answer: His mercy! God wants sinners to repent and be saved. This is the only time that Peter actually

mentions the word “repentance” in his writings. But regardless of what some false teachers may claim, repentance from sin is a vital and necessary part of salvation. We turn away from sin and turn to Christ. You cannot have one without the other, or you have a false doctrine, a plastic imitation faith, as it were. Listen to the Apostle Paul’s parting words to the church at Ephesus:

You know that I did not hesitate to proclaim anything to you that was profitable and to teach you publicly from house to house. I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our LORD Jesus. Acts 20:20-21

And there it is... repentance and faith, both of which are essential for salvation. We turn away from sin and toward Christ Jesus. The refusal to repent of sin is the very reason the scoffers scoff. They do not wish to give up their sin, so they pretend that Christ isn’t coming, but He most certainly will come, my friends. So it is imperative that we have our minds “girded about” in preparation for our departure.

The Scriptures tell us that Christ will come for His church, and then begins the seven year tribulation period known in *The Old Testament* prophecies as “*The Day of The LORD*” (**Joel 2:30-32, 3:14, Zechariah 14:1, Malachi 4:1, 5**). During the tribulation this old world will be given one final opportunity to choose between Christ or the devil’s messiah, the anti-christ. Then there will be a battle and Christ Himself will come to destroy the Satan’s armies (**Revelation 19:11-21**). After which, Christ will reign upon the earth for one thousand years (**Revelation 20:1-3**).

This thousand year period known as the *millennial* will also end in war (**Revelation 20:7-10**), and after Satan is defeated once and for all, this earth will indeed pass away with a roar as all of creation’s atomic particles fly apart at once! Then God will usher in a new heaven and a new earth (**Revelation 21:1-4**), where we shall live in perpetual and sinless... peace! Even so, come LORD Jesus! All that God may be waiting for in order to bring this all about is for you, or maybe someone that you know... to repent. For He does not wish for any to perish. This is the loving heart of our God.

Tell them, ‘As I live — this is the declaration of The LORD God — I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways! Why will you die, house of Israel? Ezekiel 33:11

TRUTH!!!