

ChristReformationChurch

Tillamook, Oregon

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com

www.lightfordarktimes.com

The Second Epistle of Peter

A New Creation Where Righteousness Reigns (Part 2)

November 5, 2017

Sermon Text: 2 Peter 3

Scripture Reading: Psalm 90

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, 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. (11) Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, (12) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! (13) But according

to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The false teachers in the visible church who Peter is warning us against *deny the primary storyline of the Bible. They tell us that God's eternal purpose is just a fable, that this world has always been and always will be.* As we saw last time, not only are there overt denials of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture such as liberal theology makes (no resurrection, no vicarious atonement on the cross, Christ is just a man, etc) but more dangerous are the creeps who come in among us who deny these truths in practice, though they claim to believe them with their mouth.

The Christian, Peter says, is a person who believes God's promise and is therefore waiting for and looking toward the new heavens and new earth where all will be right.

We all need to be reminded of this very regularly because we are

surrounded by people, even professing Christians, who are so wrapped up in this present world that the very goal of God for us in Christ is hardly even mentioned.

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (16) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (17) And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

From Creation to New Creation

You all know the main storyline of the Bible. True history past, present, future. God's plan to move us back to Eden where perfect sinless righteousness reigns. What was lost by man's sin is regained by Christ's victory over sin and His atoning death on the cross for His people. *This is why you read so much about Eden in the very last book of the Bible.* It is why Christ is known as the second and last Adam:

1 Corinthians 15:45-58 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (46) But it is not

the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. (47) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. (48) As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. (49) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

(50) I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. (51) Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (53) For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (54) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (55) "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

All these things are denied by wicked ones who claim to be sent to us from God and who insist that they are speaking for Him. They are liars.

Much of what is taught as “scripture” in local churches has been and continues to be what Paul calls “the wisdom of this world.” One of the chief effects such false teaching has is to dull the eyesight of our faith in the promise of Christ:

John 14:1-3 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Peter is reminding us here that all these things are true, that we must be people who see them from “afar” as Abraham did, and not only believe the promises of the inheritance awaiting us, but people who live in this present here and now world as aliens, strangers, as people who know their real home is REAL and that this is not it.

So then, after exposing the fallacy of

the false teachers’ logic which claims “all things just keep on continuing as they are and that is all that is going to happen, ever,” Peter tells us some remarkable things about what the Lord is going to do when He comes again.

Listen to him once more:

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, 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. (11) **Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,** (12) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! (13) But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

A new heavens and new earth – a new creation – where everything that has ever gone wrong, been wrong, done wrong, is put right once and for all time. The Christian must see to it that he or she is a person who is “waiting for and hastening the coming Day of God.” Each one of us, in all honesty, must confess that we are way, way too

attached to this present world and that it is still very easy for us to live as if this present life were the chief thing. But it is not.

Let's take a closer look at the things Peter is telling us:

- the day of the Lord will come like a thief

This is emphasized by our Lord Himself:

Revelation 16:15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!")

Matthew 24:42-46 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. (43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. (44) Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (45) "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? (46) Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing

when he comes.

How do you live in readiness for Christ's return? *By conducting yourself in holiness and godliness.* By being people who are not worldlings but whose lives model the fact that Christ is coming, that this world is coming to an end, and that those who belong to Christ are going to live forever in a new creation.

At most every funeral you will hear inevitably someone say of the deceased "they are in a better place." Well, there IS a better place, but it is not the grave. It is the presence of Christ and it is the new creation that is to come. In fact most of the time the people who this is said of *are not in a better place at all and never will be because they rejected Christ in this temporal life.*

But Peter is here describing for us how this is going to come about and he exhorts us not to give in to the lying creeps who try to destroy our faith in God's promises. In fact he ends this letter with those very urgings:

2 Peter 3:14-18 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. (15) **And count the patience of our Lord**

as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, (16) as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. (17) **You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.** (18) But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

See their tactics? They try to persuade us that Christ's promises are not true because all this time has gone by and He hasn't yet returned. *Ha! And they were using that argument even way back in Peter's day, claiming in addition that the Lord has never and will never intervene in this world for judgment.*

2 Peter 3:4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

Peter's instructs and cautions us:

(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.

And again:

2 Peter 3:9 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.**

And once more:

2 Peter 3:15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

In other words, the reason 2000 years or more have gone by since Christ promised to return once again is due to God's mercy, patience, and kindness toward those who are still dead in their sin. He has His elect and in His goodness toward us He is going to see that every last one of them is saved. *Do you understand that if Christ had come again before you were born or before you were born again, you would have at best been a non-created being and at worst we would be in hell!* These fools who deny the truth of Christ's promises spit at the very God who is calling them to repentance and

salvation.

We also see here that the doctrine of unconditional election and God's predestination in no way means that He does not desire every human being to be saved. He does. Paul also says so:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, (2) for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (3) This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, (4) **who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

God obviously then does not "elect to damnation" so that sinners exist who really want to repent but cannot because God has not elected them. He is genuinely grieved by people who reject Christ, just as Jesus was grieved when the rich young ruler turned away from Him.

Is God Timeless?

Look at these verses once more:

2 Peter 3:8-9 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. (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.

Peter is referring to Psalm 90-

Psalms 90:1-4 **A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.** Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. (2) Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (3) You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" (4) For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

Does this mean that God has no sense of the measure or passing of time? Well, time is HIS creation. He is the one who created day and night. Who established the solar system which is the measure of our seconds and minutes and hours and days and months and years. His Law commands rest on the 7th day. So certainly God has a sense of time.

And yet, God is eternal. What then is even 1,000 years to God? To eternity? It is nothing. It is as a second is to us,

and even less than that. Infinitely less. Therefore these false teachers are once again shown up to be fools. They fail to consider the being and attributes of God. They demand He measure according to man's measurements.

Consider – God made the Promise to Abraham. Probably about 2000 BC. Moses and the Exodus came along around 600-800 years later after enslavement in Egypt for 400 years. Christ did not come until 2000 years after Abraham, though He was the very object of Abraham's faith. And now here we are some 2017 years after Christ. Yet even in Peter's time – say 50 AD there were these false teachers telling people that Christ's promises were void because so long a time had passed by and nothing, they say, had happened. Anyone familiar with Scripture should be able to understand that God does not move in haste according to man's measure.

These millennia however in no way show God to be "slow" in fulfilling His Word. He is not like some man who makes a promise and then grows cold and drags his feet in fulfilling it. God is not a man, and therefore God's regard of 1,000 years takes no more toll on Him than a day.

The Present Creation Will be Dissolved

Now, here is what I consider to be the most exciting and encouraging thing about what Peter is saying. Listen still once more:

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, 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. (11) **Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,** (12) waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! (13) **But according to his promise** we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The Promise. It is not by mere chance that Peter uses this phrase. He is of course calling our thoughts back to Abraham and the Promise the Lord made to him *and to his seed*. This is the very heart of the gospel-

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name

great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 15:5-7 And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." (6) And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (7) And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

Paul also brings us back to this Promise-

Romans 4:13-25 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. (14) For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. (15) For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no

transgression. (16) That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (17) as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. (18) In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." (19) He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. (20) No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, (21) fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (22) That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." (23) But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, (24) but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, (25) who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Now, in the midst of this Promise to

Abraham and to US in Christ, is this promise of “Land.” People speak of the “Promised Land” but rarely understand what it really means. The earthly land of Canaan into which Moses led the people of Israel *is not this Promised Land ultimately*. It was “a” promised land, but not The Promised Land to which we look. Nor is it going to be any kind of future Promised Land for the physical, earthly descendants of Abraham as so many people teach and believe. We know this from the words of Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

Hebrews 11:12-16 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. (13) These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having

acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (14) For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. (15) If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (16) But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Pretty clear, isn't it?

So what Peter is telling us is that this present earth and in fact this entire present creation (stars and planets included) are going to be burned, dissolved, set on fire, melted. In other words, *purified and cleansed* from every remnant of sin and the curse. *Then the Lord will make the new heavens and the new earth and THAT is the true Promised Land which all who are in Christ will certainly possess*. No enemies, no diseases, no sin, no death, no curse. Eden not only restored but infinitely surpassed because it will fill the entire earth and universe. And we will be there in our immortal, perfect, resurrected bodies.

Let me end with this very pertinent insight from G.K. Beale-

“Christians who live in the light of

that anticipated judgment and consummation understand that it shapes how they live right now: Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the Day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

It is doubtful that neither Christian steadfastness nor Christian morality, let alone Christian spirituality and Christian eschatology, can long be maintained without the dominance of this vision.”

Is it dominant in your vision? Every single day?