

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The End of the Universe, Part 3

Scripture: 2 Peter 3

Code: 90-362

Well thank you, John, and musicians for leading us in our worship tonight. Thank all of you for being here with us, always...as John Rourke said...a great privilege to hear the testimonies of those who have come to faith in Christ. I can't get the story of the penitent thief out of my mind because it is that dramatic miracle that happens again and again and again when God graciously saves sinners...just as dramatically on the inside if not quite as dramatically on the outside.

Now this would be the third in a series of messages that I've been giving you on the end of the universe. We began actually with one on the beginning of the universe, or the theology of creation. That might be a message that would be of encouragement and help to you that you can also pick up. But I want you to go to 2 Peter chapter 3 after a couple of weeks of kind of a hovering around this text, we want to direct our attention to this text because it is in 2 Peter 3 that we have the revelation of God as to the end of the universe. There are other texts that speak to this issue, none as pointedly and directly as this one does.

And I think it would be helpful for us if we listen to the reading of this passage. So I'm going to begin reading in chapter 3 at verse 1 and read down to verse 14.

"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the words spoken before hand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your Apostles. Knowing this, first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking following after their own lusts and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.' For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the Earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But the present heaven and earth by His Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness. But is patient toward us not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. But in the day of the Lord...but the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will melt away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness looking for and hastening the coming of the day

of God on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat? But according to His promise, we're looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless."

Now what launches this marvelous revelation by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Peter is the fact that the church at the time of Peter's ministry was being assaulted by those who were mocking the idea of the return of Jesus Christ. In fact, at the beginning of the chapter we are reminded in verse 3 that in the last days, and I remind you again that the last days is a term referring to the Messianic era which began when Jesus came. Since His coming, it has been the last days. In the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" One of the things that mockers will mock is the idea of the return of Jesus Christ.

Of course, mockers would assume that Jesus Christ is a man and therefore they would assume that Him being crucified would then nullify any future activity on His part. They would deny the resurrection and therefore they would deny the ascension and the return of Christ. They scoffed at the idea of the return of Jesus Christ. This could have an effect on the believers in the early church because they had such expectation of Christ's return that it would be imminent. They were almost sure in their minds that it would not be long until Jesus came. They had that anticipation.

And if you remember how First Peter begins, you'll remember that Peter is writing to believers who have been scattered and who are under some severe duress, who are being persecuted severely. Peter's writing to them, he even encourages them in the midst of their persecution to expect that this is a means of glory and to have the kind of attitude that Christ had in the midst of His persecution when He was reviled, He didn't revile in return but committed Himself to a faithful Creator. But there is much in these two epistles that assumes that it's very difficult to be a Christian. There is persecution and there is, of course, even martyrdom involved as Peter himself would find out. And so there was an eager anticipation that the Lord Jesus would come and as life became darker and darker and it seemed as though things were getting worse and worse, and they were, and persecution escalated and it was harder and harder to be a Christian, it looked like history was going the wrong way. Maybe it was kind of a Habakkuk attitude, "How long, O Lord? How long, O Lord before You act? How long are You going to allow Your people to suffer this kind of difficulty?"

So mockers would come and prey on their unfulfilled hopes, prey on their p-r-e-y, on their unfulfilled expectations, cause them to question the veracity of the claims of Jesus and the Apostles that the Lord Jesus was going to return. What you have then in this passage is a series of arguments that comes from the mockers, a series of tacts or approaches, or I guess maybe we could say a series of attacks.

The first attack we notice in verse 3 is just ridicule. Mockers will come with their mocking. Just outright ridicule. This, of course, is playing on their feelings, playing on their unfulfilled expectations. The second argument or the second attack, we noted, is an attack that basically comes from morality or the lack thereof. They do this because they are following after their own lusts. Those who deny the Second Coming of Jesus Christ do not do so because there is not available revelation telling them that He is coming. It isn't even a theological issue to them. They are not interested in the return of Christ because they're not interested in accountability. They're not interested in facing the judge. They want to live after their own lusts. They want to do what they want to do without any fear of accountability or future judgment.

And so they argue against the Second Coming of Christ from sheer ridicule and from the vantage point of their own evil desires. Another attack comes based on the idea of uniformity. And we looked at that in verse 4. They say, "Where is the promise of His coming for ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation?" This is the historical approach. You see the emotional approach, you see the immoral approach and now you see the historical approach. They say, "Hey, look at history. What are you talking about? Everything just goes along in a uniform way. There are no such cataclysms as the return of Jesus Christ in an act of worldwide judgment."

This is playing on the mind. They've played on the feelings. They've played on the moral impulses or desires, and now they're playing on their minds saying, "Why would we expect this to happen? Things like that don't happen. Everything continues exactly the same from the beginning until now."

So those are the kinds of arguments that they use to assault the doctrine of the Second Coming and the hope of the believers. Peter wants to respond to those things and so he gives defenses for the coming of Christ in this same text. And there are a number of them and I'm just reviewing it this time what we talked about in the last couple of messages.

The first is a defense from Scripture, verses 1 and 2. "This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you in which I'm stirring you up in your sincere mind by way of reminder." To clarify anything, I just need to stir up your minds to go back to what you have been taught. Verse 2, "That you should remember the words spoken before hand by the holy prophets." That's all the promises in the Old Testament that are directed at the glorious coming of the Messiah to establish His earthy kingdom and to judge the nations. And one of the most dominant themes in the Old Testament is the day of the Lord which is a day of judgment. And the ultimate day of the Lord is that final day when the Lord comes to judge the ungodly and to establish His Kingdom...is the Old testament perspective. There were some days of the Lord, they were always judgment days, but there will be an ultimate day of the Lord, we'll say more about that in a little bit when we get to it, which is the end of human history and the establishment of divine history in the earth and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is

prophesied in the Old Testament. We'll look at some of those prophecies in a moment.

And secondly, remember not only the word spoken beforehand in the Old Testament by the holy prophets, but the commandment of the Lord and Savior which has come to you through revelation by the Holy Spirit and written down by the Apostles. So remember what the Old Testament said and remember what the New Testament said. The defense against mocking is the Scripture...it's the Scripture. That's where you go to defend the truth of the Second Coming of Christ, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The second defense that he offers is a defense from history. He turns their supposed theory of uniformity on its head in verse 5, saying, "When they maintain this, when they endeavor to maintain the idea that everything continues exactly the same way, and this is a sarcasm, it escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water." It escapes their notice that God in a cataclysmic fashion created the world as we now know it. And essentially it was dominated by water...water inside the earth, water above the earth. We went into the fact that before the Flood, a canopy of water surrounded the Earth, cutting out the ultraviolet rays of the sun and that's why dinosaurs lived in that era because reptiles never cease growing and they lived long enough to grow that large and men lived to be nine hundred plus years old. There was a different eco system prior to the Flood, but it was an eco system dominated by water. And in fact, that water became the means of destruction, verse 6, "Through which the world at that time was destroyed being flooded with water."

When the Flood came, Genesis 6 and following, the water broke up in the canopy above and deluged the Earth for 40 days and 40 nights. The fountains of the deep inside the earth broke up, the continents as we know them today were formed and water came flooding out and drowned the entire world except eight people. And estimates of how many people drowned go from ten million to a hundred million. All things do not continue as they were.

I was at the Ligonier Conference the last couple of days and it was a wonderful time to minister the Word of God with R.C. Sproul and my friend Legan(?) Duncan, two some wonderful people. And one of the things you get to do when you're there is you speak a lot and you do a lot of question and answer. And then when you're not doing that, you get to go and autograph books. And that way you get to meet people. And long lines of people go along and this one guy came along and said, "I have something for you." And I said, "Really, thank you. What is it?" And he dropped in my hand the tooth of a shark. Now people give me all kinds of things but that's a first...a shark tooth. And he said, "Yeah, this came from the desert here in Arizona." Really? "Oh yeah,," he said, "there are a lot of them." Interesting. You will find all over the world evidences of a universal worldwide flood. You'll find seashells in Canyon Country.

Did they forget this when they said all things continue as they were, that God destroyed the entire world by water? Verse 7 he then says, "But the present heaven and earth by His Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." The world will never again be destroyed by water. God made a covenant about that, didn't He? Told Noah, "I'll never destroy the world again by water." And He put a rainbow in the sky and every time you see a rainbow, that's a reminder of God's promise. So as I said to you last time, we don't have to worry about the polarized cap melting and drowning everybody, that is not going to happen. God did His destruction with water.

And so, there is an argument from Scripture defending the Second Coming. You go to the Old Testament, you go to the New Testament defending the Second Coming, you argue against the history or the theory of uniformity by saying, "You can't say everything has continued exactly the same way, that is not true, not even close." The whole planet was drowned. The uniformity argument just doesn't hold up.

And then there is a third defense and I would call this the defense from eternity. You have to look at things from the perspective of God. Let's say you're a believer and you're living in the day that Peter wrote this in the first century of the Christian church and it's only a few years since the Lord died and rose and ascended to heaven, and you're a few years after that and you're wondering when He's going to come and you think He should come at any moment. You live in the anticipation of that and that's the way the Lord wants all generations of believers to live, that's why He doesn't tell us when He's coming so all of us will be ready, anticipating it.

But it's a pretty limited view to think that because He said He's going to come, it should happen in the first century maybe in a few years after He left. Because if you'll notice verse 8, "Do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is one day." Which is simply a way to say God doesn't operate on your clock. God can't be confined to a human timetable. You may think a lot of time has passed. With God no time has passed because God does not live in a realm of time. Everything with God is one vast, eternal present, the argument from eternity.

And then there is another argument, another defense of the return of Jesus Christ, and it is the defense from the purpose of God. The defense from eternity could be called the defense from the nature of God, He is an eternal being outside time...time is irrelevant to Him, except that He uses it to achieve His purposes, but He doesn't live in a realm of time. But this is the defense from the character of God. Why ...or the purpose of God...why didn't God come in the first century? Why didn't He send Christ in the first century? Why didn't Christ invade this world and establish His Kingdom then or in the next century, or the next, or the next, or the next? And here we are two thousand years later and He still isn't here, what are we waiting for? What is He waiting for? What is the delay? Is the Lord somehow, notice verse 9, slow about His promise? Is there some defect in His ability to get at

what He should be doing? Is He like us? Does He have really good intentions but never gets around to it? Is He a procrastinator like you are who wastes his or her time and then crams the night before the big exam? Is God preoccupied with so many things going on that He can't quite get it all organized into the way He wants it organized to make the final act happen?

No. He is not slow about His promise. He is not *bradutes*, loitering, late. He is not flawed in that way. It's not about indifference. It's not about inability. It's not about preoccupation with other things. God acts on schedule. Galatians 4:4, "In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made unto the law...in the fullness of time." How many times in Jesus' ministry did He say, "My time has not yet come? My time has not yet come?" The timetable was incredibly precise. Jesus designed His own death to occur on a Friday afternoon at Passover in Jerusalem at exactly the time Passover lambs were being slain. He had to orchestrate every detail, including all the evil machinations of the Sanhedrin and the Jewish leaders and the execution squad of Roman soldiers to achieve it. He had to die when Passover lambs were dying. He had to be in the ground before that day ended so He would be dead for a period that involved three days...Friday, Saturday, Sunday...that He would rise and fulfill the prophecy that He would rise in three days. No, no, His timetable is absolutely precise. And He keeps His Word.

Is there some flaw with God? No. Titus 1:2, "God who cannot lie," Hebrews 6:18, "It is impossible for God to lie." Revelation 19:11 identifies Christ as the one who is faithful and true. So Peter denies that the Lord is late in fulfilling His promise that may seem to mockers that He is taking His good ole time, but He is right on schedule. He is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, and he's referring here to the mockers who are accusing God of that and perhaps some of the believers who are succumbing or being persuaded of that by the mockers. It's not that.

Please notice the rest of the verse. "But He is patient toward you, or patient toward us." Here it's patient toward you. Who is this you? Or who is this us? The answer to that, I think, is pretty clear. If you go back to verse 1, "Simon Peter...chapter 1...Simon Peter, a bondservant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness." Who is he writing to? Who's he writing to? Believers, those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours. They have been given by God sovereignly the faith to believe the gospel. They have been given the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. They've been given grace and peace and the knowledge of God and Christ. They have been by means of divine power given everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true and saving knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. They have been given, according to verse 4, precious and magnificent promises. They have been enabled to become partakers of the divine nature. They have escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. This is...this is no one but believers. He is writing to believers.

And so, in chapter 3 when he says the Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, or patient toward us, either reading, we know exactly who he is talking about. He's patient with regard to believers, not wishing for any...and the any is the you...not wishing for any to perish but for all...and the all is the any, and the all and the any are the you, and the you is those to whom he writes. The bottom line, folks, is, He is waiting until all whom He has chosen come to repentance. So the patience of God is redemptive. The patience of God is for the purpose of redemption.

If you drop down to verse 15, Peter says this, "Regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation. Just as also our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given him wrote to you as also in all his letters, speaking in terms of these things in which are some things hard to understand." The doctrine of election is hard to understand. The doctrine of sovereign grace that Paul taught is hard to understand. And some have been unstable and untaught and they have twisted the Scripture to their own destruction. But Peter says you have to regard the patience of the Lord as salvation.

Why didn't Jesus come in the first century? Because there were chosen before the foundation of the world people for at least two thousand years who would be included in the bride that the Father was gathering for His Son. Scoffers view God's delay as a vice, as a fault. Peter views it as a virtue. He is patient, *makrothumia*, this is a very unique word. Literally it means that His anger, *thumosis* large. He has makro anger. That is He has an immense capacity to hold His wrath before He releases it. Great word. *Makro*, we know that, right? *Thumos*, anger. God has a massive capacity to contain His anger because that would be the issue. You see, as long as God is going to wait at least two thousand years to save people, He has to contain His anger through all that time. Every single sin ever committed by every person is an offense against God and is a just cause for God's anger. And when Romans 2 says that the unrighteous are storing up wrath against the day of wrath, the storehouse is the divine capacity to contain that anger until it finally bursts.

God has huge capacity to hold His anger. He is patient, in that sense. And He holds that anger in until the all and the any who are the you, who are the believers, have all been gathered in. You think about God enduring almost countless assaults against Him and you understand why the people in Habakkuk said, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Why the prophet said that, or the martyrs under the altar in Revelation, "How long, O Lord, how long? How long? How long are You going to be doing this? How long are You going to take this? How long are You going to put up with this?" The imprecatory prayers of the psalmist, "O Lord, O Lord, protect Your holiness and Your virtue. O Lord, crush the sinner. Kill the sinner. Kill those who commit iniquity. Kill those who blaspheme Your name. Lord, how can You possibly endure this?"

Because God has infinite ability to contain His wrath until His purposes are accomplished. He endures countless debaucheries, defiance, challenges to His holiness. He endures the loose lips of

the profane swearer. He endures uncountable adulteries, murders, lies, fornications, thefts, deceptions, perversions, heresies, and we are astounded at His patience.

Look, somebody sins against us, we blow up pretty quick. We would understand that God being offended would have every right to be angry and to let His anger go. But He contains it until He accomplishes His saving purpose. His patience is connected to salvation.

And God was patient even in the days of Noah. For 120 years Noah preached righteousness and no one listened. But now Jesus said, "I will build My church," and He's doing that and He's gathering His elect from every nation. And it says He is patient toward you, or toward us, not wishing for any to perish, any that are chosen but for all to come to repentance. Some people think this means God doesn't want anybody to be unsaved. That's not true. If God didn't want anyone to go to hell, no one would go there. If God didn't want anyone to perish, no one would perish. If you're meaning by that every person who has ever lived. If God wanted all to come to repentance, all who have ever lived then, all who have ever lived would come to repentance. So you have to narrow the all and the any and the you to the us, to the believers, the ones that Paul refers to earlier...or that Peter refers to earlier in this great epistle.

So, we hear the argument then that the reason God is not acting is because He is so patient with sinners. Then everything changes at verse 10. So let's look at that. This finally gets us to where we want to be. "But the day of the Lord will come," underline that. That is the turning point. The day of the Lord will come.

Now the day of the Lord is something to be thought of as a technical term...a technical term. Old Testament prophets spoke about it. You can read Isaiah 2, you can read Isaiah 13 verses 6 and 9, you will find significant references to the Day of the Lord in Joel, chapter 1 verse 15, chapter 2, at least three references to it in chapter 2. You will find references to the Day of the Lord in the book of Amos in the minor prophet Obadiah. You will find references to the Day of the Lord in Zephaniah. You will find explicit references to the Day of the Lord in Zechariah 14:1. You will find references to the Day of the Lord in the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi. And all of these references to the Day of the Lord speak of the Day of the Lord in exactly the same way, that it is a day of darkness, it is a day of destruction. Malachi would be enough to give us a picture of the Day of the Lord, chapter 4, "Behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace." There's that fire element again. "And all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

And then it says in verse 5, "I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the Lord." If you brought all of those prophetic testimonies together, you would see it is called a day of judgment, it is called a day of darkness, it is called a day of destruction. It is a day when God will set on fire this earth and destroy the ungodly, a day of unequalled darkness, a day of

unequaled destruction. It is the climactic day, day not in the chronological sense, but day in the epoch sense. It is a day, by the way, that stretches from the Rapture of the church in the beginning of the Tribulation, when the Day of the Lord really is launched as divine judgments break loose in the time of Tribulation. It stretches through the time of Tribulation. It stretches to the end of the Millennial Kingdom when final destruction falls on Satan after his final rebellion and all those who have rebelled against the reigning Christ with Him.

So it is a day that stretches for over a thousand years. Peter may actually have that in mind when he says, "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day," because the very Day of the Lord itself stretches over a thousand years. It is a day of final judgment.

The New Testament writers talk about the Day of the Lord. Read First Thessalonians chapter 5. They pick up the same inspired message of the Old Testament writers and let us know in no uncertain terms the nature of this day. Chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians, verse 2, "You yourselves know full well that the Day of the Lord will come." The Day of the Lord will come.

It was something they knew full well. In Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, I might just note that for you, chapter 2. "Don't be shaken from your composure, or disturbed by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come. It hasn't. It hasn't. Don't let anybody tell you it's already come, it hasn't come, it will come." Jesus even refers to the Day of the Lord in Matthew chapter 24. It is a technical term referring to the final destruction in the return of Jesus Christ, a destruction that begins in the time of Tribulation and reaches its climax at the end of the Millennial Kingdom when the entire universe as we know it goes out of existence.

How does it come? Let's go back to 2 Peter. Like a thief, that's exactly what Paul said in the Thessalonians. "The Day of the Lord will come like a thief." It comes like a thief. What does that mean? Surprise, thieves don't announce their arrival. I'm coming to rob you at six tomorrow evening. It's a surprise. Sudden, unexpected and the idea of a thief is the idea of plunder and destruction and devastation. We don't know when, but it will come like a thief, at a time when people don't expect it with devastation.

And when the Day of the Lord comes, this is what's going to happen. "The heavens will pass away with a roar." There's no word, no concept in Hebrew for universe. This is the substitute. When it uses the term heavens, it is referring to the universe. In primitive Hebrew they didn't appear to have a concept or a name for universe, but they spoke of the heavens. And he is saying the universe will pass away because it is the Day of the Lord. Men aren't going to do it. Do I need to go back and say that again? Men are not going to do it. We're not going to do it. We're not going to bring this earth to its end. It is not the day of man, it is the Day of the Lord. It is the Lord who will do this. And the universe will pass away. What does that mean? Go out of existence. Isaiah spoke of this in Isaiah 34. And it will go out of existence, this is so interesting, with a roar. Now that's a hard word to translate. I

suppose roar is an option but it is one of those words that we call an onomatopoeia, you know. You remember your English class and figures of speech and an onomatopoeic word is a word that sounds like its meaning. In English we would say, whizzing. There is a word that sounds like what it means...whizzzzz. This word is *rhoizedon*...rhoizzedon, rhoizzedon. It has to do with the whizzing, whistling crackling sound of something whizzz, disappearing. That's the way it's going to go.

At the same time the elements will be dissolved or destroyed with intense heat. This is the picture of fire that is so consistent. Elements, *stoichea*, very important word, things in a row...things in a row. Things that are basically rudimentary. It can be letters that make up an alphabet. It can be numbers that establish mathematical processes. Rudimentary things, basic things, atoms, the units that are foundational to something. Letters, the units foundational to language. Numbers, the units foundational to mathematics. Atoms, the units foundational to the universe. It refers to the essential substance that constitutes matter.

When God made the universe, He made it out of component atoms in an indescribable act of power creating this universe. And with a whizz it will go out of existence. Dissolved essentially means to melt. The word destroyed or dissolved means to melt with heat, furious, incomprehensible heat. Now we know how much heat atomic energy can generate, right? Just imagine the entire universe in a nuclear explosion, the whole universe. And the earth and everything in it burned and not even ashes left. The whole of the physical universe with its eco system and its social system will be consumed. The solar system, the great galaxies, all elements which make up the physical creation dissolved in an atomic implosion and utterly melting out of existence. This will happen at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.

Scripture is to be believed as we all understand and it is to be believed when it speaks about spiritual things. And it is to be believed when it speaks about physical things as well. Second Thessalonians 1:7 says that the Lord Jesus is going to be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire. Water is never associated with the end of the universe, it's always fire, consistently fire.

And now we come to an application in verse 11. "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way...now that you know that...now that that has been made clear to you, what sort of people should you be?"

This is an interesting structure in the Greek. Just to give you a little thought. It doesn't actually ask a question. But it makes an explanation of astonishment, like what kind of people should you be? The implication is the answer is obvious. It doesn't...it's rhetorical, it's a rhetorical astonishment that doesn't expect an answer because the answer is too obvious. If you're a Christian, what kind of person should you be? And he gives us the obvious answer. You ought to be involved in holy conduct and godliness. And you ought to be looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense

heat and he rehearses the whole thing again. You ought to live a godly life. You ought to live a holy life. And you ought to eagerly anticipate the day that is coming when the whole universe will be destroyed.

You say, "Well why would I look forward to that?" Verse 13 says, "Because according to another set of promises, we are looking for a...what?...new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." As Christians we should never be able to be comfortable with this world. In the first place, we shouldn't be running around signing all kinds of crazy documents that assume that we can perpetuate the planet. It's ridiculous. The call of Christians in light of this short-term planet with a very limited life, this disposable universe is to focus on godliness and to focus on holy conduct and to keep your hope bright for the destruction of this universe that it might be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. I don't know about you, but I would much rather live in a universe without sin.

So I think we want to start a new document. The society...the society for the eager destruction of this universe. We'll get a whole bunch of people to sign it. We know it's coming to an end. We want to live holy and godly lives so that when it does come to an end, we'll enter into the reward the Lord has prepared. We know it's coming to an end and we know that the only reason it hasn't come to an end yet is because God is patient and His patience is for salvation. And so we want to use the time we're here to preach the gospel. I just can't believe that people who call themselves Christians are jumping on the green bandwagon. And the new message of Christianity is to reduce carbon footprints.

Folks, there's going to be a huge carbon footprint in the future of this universe, and it's going to be a big one from God in one great holocaust. In the meantime, as I told you last week, we're supposed to subdue everything in this earth to use it for the benefit of man and to give God thanks for putting it all here for us. We don't want to live, "O my, we've got to preserve the planet. We've got to preserve the planet." You can't preserve this planet. In fact, we want to live, it says, "Lord, bring it to an end, bring it to an end, how long, O Lord, how long, O Lord, gather in Your elect." And when that day comes we'll be so blessed to escape the horrors of this sin-filled universe and enter into the new heaven and the new earth where righteousness and righteousness alone dwells. Let's get our perspective right as Christians.

I'm not afraid of the destruction of this universe because I know what God has prepared for them that love Him beyond that. But in the meantime, I have a responsibility to live a godly life in this world that God might use me to bring others to the knowledge of Christ. This patience of God is for salvation.

You should be thrilled that He's going to destroy this universe. You should be thrilled that this cursed universe which is suffering under the law of entropy, the second law of thermodynamics that everything is disintegrating and breaking down not only in a physical and a scientific and material sense, but even in a moral sense. Every generation gets worse. Evil men are getting worse and

worse and worse and worse. We should be looking for the glorious day when the Lord Jesus comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who do not know Him and to destroy this cursed universe and replace it with a new heaven and a new earth. And in the meantime, we want to use every single resource God has planted in this planet for the benefit of people and to do it in the name of Christ and to do it to the glory of the God who gave it to us.

There are other things that Peter says at the end, but I'll leave them for you to look at in detail. Look at verse 17, just in closing. "You therefore, knowing this before hand, be on your guard, don't get carried away by the error of unprincipled men, fall from your own steadfastness." How many Christians are being led astray by unprincipled people who have some kind of a crazy agenda for propagating all of this global warming, save the planet as if this is the responsibility of the people of Christ? And Christian people are going into panic and changing their life patterns and focusing on all of this instead of using the time and the patience of the Lord for salvation.

Peter closes his wonderful epistle by saying, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Grow in Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

It's a good place to stop, isn't it?

Father, we thank You again for Your truth. So many people think that the Bible is an out-of-date document that doesn't speak to us. My, how wrong they are. Here is not only the redemptive history of the past, but the history of the future prewritten. It's all in Your hands and that's where it should be. Lord, we are eager for the day when we enter into the glory of eternity. We're eager for the day when we dwell in the new heaven and the new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells. In the meantime, may we use this period of patience for the purposes of gospel proclamation. May we as Christians unmistakably be known as those who relentlessly and singularly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Save Your church from losing its steadfastness, its solidarity and being led astray by unprincipled men with their personal agendas. We would only pray for a day when someone says, "Oh, Christians? They're the ones that preach the gospel of Jesus Christ." Not the ones who are involved in politics and pseudoscience. May we be known for the gospel. May we be known for godly living. May we be known for holiness. And may we be eagerly looking for and hastening the day when Jesus is finally glorified, when all the rights replace all the wrongs in the glory of that eternal realm.

So we live in the anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus for His church and then the beginning of the preliminary judgments and the Tribulation and the final at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Lord, we would say with the saints in the past and with John at the end of Revelation, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Start it...start it soon. Start it now. But until that time, may we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior and not be led astray. May we give You all the glory. Amen. Amen.

As always, our prayer room is open to my right under the exit sign, we're there to help you, to minister to you, to talk with you, to pray with you. I know you know that but in case somebody might not. If you're not sure where you stand with God, if you're not sure that you're a Christian, that your sins are forgiven, you're a part of His Kingdom, you're on your way to eternal glory. If there's any question or doubt in your mind, we'd love to talk with you and pray with you, have folks that do that. Some of you asked me this morning about joining the church, some folks did. The prayer room is for that. If you want information about baptism or any of the things that go on here, those folks will be a great encouragement and a great help to you as well.

Next Sunday morning is going to be a special time, I think, because we will come to the portion of Luke 23 where our Lord dies. And this is such a powerful, powerful message. It might be a wonderful opportunity for you to bring somebody with you that needs to be exposed to the reality of the gospel because that will come through as it has, I think, in the last several passages. But uniquely in the passage where the Lord gives up His life under the judgment of God. So that's next Sunday morning.

All right. Well God bless you and you have a wonderful week and we'll see you on the Lord's day.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).