

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 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.

We begin where we stopped last week with the fiery judgement of God on a rebellious world that hates Him and rejects Him because they love sin.

Jesus comes in stealth mode to remove His saints. The true Christians, those who are indwelt with the Holy Spirit, who know and love Jesus, who love His book, and who are separated from this world because of that personal relationship with the Saviour who has removed their sin and given them a righteousness, not their own, those true believers, whether they were born again yesterday, or have loved Him for decades, will meet Him in the air and exit this world.

That event begins a 7 year period of time that God will deal specifically with His chosen people, the Jews. The Bible calls it the time of Jacob's

trouble, and tribulation.

It's a time frame in which whatever restraints the salt of the word of God brought to this world by the church of God through the Holy Spirits influence . . . is removed.

We watch the news and shudder at the things humans do to humans and we think how can that person possibly be that unfeeling. That depraved. But the frightening thing is when every restraint is removed from this world and Satan can run rampant, unrestrained, it becomes a worldwide holocaust.

And that's just the beginning of troubles. *10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.*

Peter wants us in that mind frame for his next statement. That's why I repeated some of the truths we spoke about last week. The last several weeks. False teachers. Lust. Arguments against God that lead people away from the truth. Ultimate fiery judgement against those people who hate and reject God. And Peter says . . . in view of all of that;

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, X2

That may sound like a rhetorical question, a question with only one possible answer based on everything else Peter has just said, and it is, but if we were greek students and could read this in the voice that the original folks heard it in as they read it, it's really more of shout!

The voice is loud. This is Peter's climactic conclusion to everything he's said and if we were there that day for this sermon, at this point, Peter's pounding his fist on the pulpit and he's elevated his voice to make this final point. *Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness*

I'm no Peter. Not even close. But I wanted you to understand that

Peter's making his final logical point based on all the prophetic truths of scripture and his apostleship.

So then, let's think about this. It's pretty clear, what Peter's saying. If the world is going to be burnt up and God is going to judge wickedness, how should that affect how we live?

Francis Schaeffer, one of the churches most brilliant intellects in the 20th century wrote a famous book, a christian classic, and his title is a paraphrase of these words of Peter. It's called simply, "How should we then live?"

That sort of gets right to the point. How should we then live? If the world we know here is temporary and will ultimately be destroyed because of evil, should that motivate us? Should we do anything differently?

I'm going to just pick on one person right now. If God plopped Peter down in Tonopah in 2018, and Peter spent a couple of weeks with me, observing how I live, I fear he would be appalled.

If the world is going to be burnt up, why are you wasting your time playing with old cars and old cameras? Really? Your neighbors are going to be burnt up and you're sand blasting an antique gasoline pump for the back yard?

Listen to Paul's defence of his apostleship to the Corinthians. 1 C 5:11-15

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be

sober, it is for your cause.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Paul says, knowing what I know about the coming terror of judgement, I've got one job. Persuade men. And Paul was so focused on that one job, people accused him of being crazy.

Paul says; If I'm crazy, it's for God, and if I'm sober, it's for you. He says the love of Christ burning in his chest constrains him to live this way. Go tell as many people as possible about the good news.

And then he says that part that openly judges how I live. *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

I confess to you; I live unto myself. I spend 8 or 9 hours a week studying so I can bring these study's to you and try to make the most simple and elegant sense of what is written by the apostles and the prophets.

I work 40 hours a week. Pam will confer that I do the bare minimum around my home so that the neighbors don't rise up and ask me to please live somewhere else. Maybe a little more. It's not the best and it's not the worst looking residence on the street.

And the rest of the time after all the things we consider necessities, which oddly isn't that much, I spend playing with my different hobbies. Guilty.

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

In the first century after Jesus rose from the dead, the church through the

agency of the Holy Spirit, given as promised at Pentecost, 50 days after the crucifixion of Jesus and then His resurrection, spread the news of what had happened, and it's resulting possibilities, freedom from sin and judgement, across the entire known world.

Here's the bottom line. That didn't happen because christians were like me, playing in the back yard with some antique that's going to be burned up in a very short while.

In this country, we have the CDC. The Center for Disease Control. And the W. H. O. the World Health Organization.

In 1918, a hundred years ago, my grandparents were alive in there first decade of life. People I knew well, who had a huge role in my life, were alive then. The span doesn't seem so great if you think of it that way.

In 1918, between 20 and 40 million people died. No one really knows the total number. I looked it up. That was 20% of the worlds population in 1918. 1 in 5. They died, not from WWI, but from the flu. Influenza.

There was no vaccine. No one understood what it was. Only a hundred years ago. Influenza is a communicable disease. That means one human in close proximity to another human spreads the disease, and it spreads and it spreads until 1 in 5 people in the entire earth is affected.

Well we learned about germs and we created vaccines and we established the centers for disease control and the world health organization so that we can control something like that happening again.

Humans contacting other humans is how disease spreads. And humans contacting other humans is how christianity spread in the first 100 years of the church. It spread like a disease. One on one on one, all over the world, like influenza, christianity spread.

I believe that in the spiritual world, Satan had to think on his feet. This disease called christianity is spreading all over the place. If you're Satan, it was like a communicable disease that had to get stopped.

Satan learned that there's no one vaccine that works against the spread of christianity. He's tried all kinds of different things. Persecution. That just spread it around worse than ever, so he quit using that on a large scale.

Then before very long at all, we know this because Peter and Paul are already fighting against it, Satan came up with false religion. Get something that looks very religious, every possible shape, size, and form, because people come in all styles, we need something that will appeal to almost every type, and make it very religious, all flowery and showy and spiritual, but . . . devoid of the Holy Spirit.

That was the spiritual vaccine that worked. False religion. That took care of a huge percentage of people who had a felt need to try to fill up a void of emptiness in their lives. False religion, full of false promises, and busy busy busy doing good works that God will like. But no Holy Spirit. No true knowledge of the Saviour.

But there's one final problem to address. What do we do with real christians. They're the most dangerous because they actually do have the real virus, a true heart knowledge of Jesus and the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and when they bump up against other humans and share that disease, there's a real chance it can spread.

Killing them is one very real possibility, but God is in control of the very hairs of their heads, so that isn't always possible. He allows it sometimes, for His purposes, but over time Satan's learned it often has the opposite of the desired affect.

Killing christians is like putting a seed in the ground and 100 more pop up from the one seed. So it's sort of counter-productive.

But here's something that might work. Put them in a land of plenty, a land of blessing, then sell them on the lie that their life belongs to them. My life. My life. My life belongs to me and I need to live it to the full.

God is just a satellite orbiting around me along with many other

satellites that all have a part of my life. Jesus is a value added component of MY life.

God doesn't own me. I own me. This is MY life. God is necessary. He's orbiting out there, giving me good things, helping me be the very best me I can possibly be.

He's like adding ethyl to gasoline. It just makes gasoline better. Gives the car higher performance. That's what God is to a bunch of Christians who are living their lives. He's like the high octane additive that gives them more power. Helps them get over the hills without losing any speed.

That describes American evangelicalism. God is a high powered additive to YOUR life. He gives you good things. He helps you get up those hills. He causes you to have the best life you can have. It's not about Him, it's about YOU. He's about YOU.

That's diametrically opposed to the Christians we see in the first century of the church. *And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again*

First century Christians had a name they called themselves, and also each other. Doulos. doulos. It's the word for slave. It's the word for someone who knows that he does not own himself, he belongs to a master and answers to that master.

They called themselves slave and they referred to each other as "fellow slaves". If we are both owned by a common master, we are fellow slaves. Brothers.

Slaves get up every day and say, now where was I at in the task I'm working on completing for the master, and they continue to work towards a common goal.

Satan has to nip that in the bud. Killing them is only marginally effective. Getting them to fight with each other is useful. It's a good

temporary stalling tactic. But nothing's quite as effective as fat lazy Christians who are living for themselves, after all, it's *their* life. Christians sidetracked with other concerns. Christians whose one main goal is themselves.

Get them to abandon the slave idea and to focus on their own satisfaction. A million different possibilities. Good one Satan. Incredibly effective. Christianity neutralized. Just like a disease when you find an effective vaccine.

I have a homework assignment for you. I want to see every person writing this down. If you need a pencil or a pen, Jeff can get one for you. I'm serious as a heart attack. This is your assignment for this afternoon.

Go to google. Type in three words. John Piper seashells. Write it down. Seashells is one word. Do the search. Go down to the YouTube. It's about 7 1/2 minutes long. 7:49 Listen to it.

Well, I've been beating on this pretty hard. It's because I'm preaching to myself. I'm a terrible slave. Wasting the Master's time restoring an old gasoline pump. And a thousand other dopey things.

Any earthly master would have flogged me to death by now. Jesus is a wonderful, loving, patient Master, but I am troubled when I come face to face with the reality of all of His time I've wasted.

If Paul's love is measured by how it constrained him to work for the Master he loved, what does that say about me? How did I love? After 40 years of wandering in the desert, 9 hours a week. For Him.

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Looking for and hastening the day of God . . . is the logical product of

living in holy conduct and godliness.

Paul and Peter and indeed, obviously many many of the first century saints were looking wishfully for the day of God. Why? When you spend everything you've got investing in an enterprise, the logical thing is to want to see that investment.

Humans are goal oriented. We work towards something. We labor to see the final payoff of our labors.

If you're a slave, and you've unraveled your life working hard to build something for a Master, doesn't it make sense that you long to see that?

Christians, at least the first century variety of christians, and indeed some of my hero's today, are spending themselves to purchase a treasure that they will inherit later. In the next life.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God

This world is passing away. This world is scheduled for destruction. And we watch the news and we think, it's really really getting near. Nothing we build here is going to last. It's all going to be burnt up. And soon!

Me and Pam were chuckling to ourselves the other day out at work in the chow hall having lunch. One of the guys I work with, at another table close by, talked the entire 20 minutes about his stock investments.

Never a good sign. The last time people were talking nonstop about their investment portfolio's was 2008 just before the bubble burst. This time we may not be as lucky.

This world and all of it's wealth and ease, and all of Jim's junk collection, are passing away. *Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.*

Are you looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God? Why would you . . . if that's not where your work and investment is vested?

This is so logical. The worlds going to burn up. Therefore invest in heaven. And you do that by living for a Master there. And when you do that, of course you're looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. That's perfectly logical. If that's what we're doing.

It's not a hard passage to interpret folks. Why is it that I don't hear this being taught. When's the last time some one told you you're a slave and your master is King Jesus, and you need to spend yourself, exhaust yourself working for His kingdom and His glory, and if you do that, you'll have treasure in another place. Seriously. Again, preaching to myself.

because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

The word translated elements there is interesting. It's the word for the most basic building blocks. Now they didn't have microscopes yet. They didn't know about atomic particles. *stoichaiea* = fundamental things.

It's no accident that Mendeleev called the first list of elements compiled the periodic table of the elements. *and the elements will melt with intense heat!*

Scientists can't explain how protons and electrons with opposite electrical charges that should repel and scatter, hold together. What is the nuclear glue that holds the tiniest known building blocks together?

Let me read you a couple of wonderful verses from Colossians. 1:16,17
16 For in Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

The dissolution of all things, the uncreation, sounds to me like it's simply the opposite of this verse. The elements will melt with intense heat when Jesus stops holding this creation together and speaks a new heaven and a new earth into existence.

13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

We believe, from what is written by the apostles, especially John in the Revelation, that after a thousand year reign on this earth by Jesus on David's throne in Jerusalem, Satan will again be loosed, it says for a short time.

He will gather a wicked rebellion on the broad plain of the earth against King Jesus and the result of that conflict is when the elements will melt with intense heat.

All wickedness will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Satan and all other rebellers. Jesus will uncreate this heavens and earth and will create a new heaven/earth. That's what vs. 13 is talking about.

This earth is passing away. Nothing permanent here.

We used to see a little wall plaque. You could buy them in the christian book store. It was very simple. It said;

*Only one life,
Twill soon be past,
Only what's done
for Christ will last.*

Such a simple truth. So hard to live it. Especially in America, 2018 with all of it's distractions.

Vs. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

Therefore. Why is it there for? Because of everything we've taught this

morning. Because this world is passing away. Because nothing we do in this life has any permanent benefit except what we accomplish for the glory of God's Kingdom. Because we are slaves, driven by love for our wonderful benevolent master who died to purchase us out of this perishing world. Who loves us and gives us all things to enjoy. Who cautions us not to be attached to this perishing world, but to live and invest in another place, not here.

14Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him

Stop right there. You realize that He's going to surprise us too. He's coming like a thief. We do have much prophetic truth that causes us to believe it may be very soon. But we don't know the day or the hour. He told us that.

Just before He vanished into the heavens to return to His Father in heaven, the disciples had a question for Him; *6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority*
Acts 1

It wasn't the first time He had told them that. On the evening before the morning of His crucifixion, on the mount of Olives they had asked Him about His coming and the end of the age. Olivet discourse, Matt. 24

35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. 36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

The people alive during Noah's time were surprised when a tidal wave came out of the sky and immersed them in water. Nobody saw that

coming.

The rapture will be like that. Jesus will show up. Every one of us will be found. Doing something. Caught in the act. Whether good or bad.

Peter says, make it good. Be *found* doing the Masters work. *be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,*

Peters words and ideas of peace, spotless, blameless come right out of his and Jude's descriptions of the false teachers. 3 things they lack

2P2:13b They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,

Jude 12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

False teachers are wild waves, wandering stars, as opposed to peace . . . spots, blemishes as opposed to being spotless and blameless. They are the example of what not to be doing when Jesus arrives with shout and trumpet.

When sin is confessed and we are doing what is pleasing to the King, then we know His peace. When you're living in disobedience, there is no peace.

Examine yourself. Paul reminds the Corinthians, you were bought with a price, and you are not your own.

This Sunday is the beginning of year number 5. None of what I preached about this morning happens because we make up our minds and make it happen. Only the Spirit can bring real revival. I knew going into this that it wouldn't happen overnight. So I just plug along

and teach Gods word, verse by verse, and I'm waiting to see what He will do with His church in Tonopah.