

- Good morning. It's good to see everyone! Last week I left you with a cliff hanger statement of sorts. Well kind a – sort a – but maybe, not really.
 - It depends on where you are on the topic of “Climate Change”. I say that – tongue and cheek sort of! You'll see what I mean later.
 - Anyways – before getting into all that, I told you last week that Peter was going to make another shift in topic, or you might say, a shift in his methodology or reasoning back against these mockers.
 - Mockers who were mocking Christians.
 - Saying – and I am paraphrasing here, they were saying, “You Christians keep talking about the Lord's return”, that Jesus is coming back, but where is He?
 - Matter a fact, ever since the fathers have fallen asleep He hasn't returned.
 - Another way to say it is, it's been 2000 years – and Jesus is nowhere to be seen.
 - So – obviously what you guys are saying isn't true about Jesus coming back.
 - That really is the jest of what the mockers were saying and as I said previously, I could see them saying that using that statement as their proof that Jesus isn't who they say He is!
 - I mean really – It makes sense to me that the unbelieving world would use the fact that Jesus still hasn't returned – as backup to what they were trying to prove.
 - And then of course, their statements are what led Peter to write this in verses 3-9. As usual we will back up and catch verses 3-7 and then move forward in context.

2 Peter 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,

2 Peter 3:4 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.”

2 Peter 3:5 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,

2 Peter 3:6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

2 Peter 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

- So, verse 9 caused us to pause for 2 weeks and go deeper – and expound further on the

debate between Calvinism versus Arminianism.

- I am not going to dive back into that discussion this morning, but if you weren't here and you are interested, you can go to our website – and listen to the previous two weeks messages for further clarification (If you call it clarification when you're done).
- Now having said that, I would like to say this – and then I will let sleeping dogs lie, and that is – just remember when dealing with this topic, or any other topic of debatable doctrine, always be cognitive – to keep the main thing the main thing.
 - Meaning – don't lose track of what's important.
 - And what is important? First – it's salvation. We should want to see people saved.
 - And the person of Jesus Christ – specifically His life, death, burial and resurrection is the key to salvation.
 - More specifically – someone's belief in Jesus.
 - Which brings about the revelation of not only who he is – but also who that person is before a Holy and Righteous God.
 - Which is (as we know), a sinner in need of a Savior.
 - And of course that individual must not just believe – but also confess and acknowledge the work of Jesus on the cross – and how that act is what makes our salvation possible in the first place.
 - Then – after salvation – we are commanded to move to sanctification, which is simply growing and maturing spiritually as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ.
 - Or another way to say it is becoming more like Christ!
 - And as we've learned – that can only take place when someone becomes intimate with God – learning in a much deeper way who God and Jesus truly are.
 - The method or facilitation of this process can only happen one way, which is by and through the ingestion of God's Word.
 - Which means we must study and know His Word if we want to mature because as we've learned, it's God's Word that Saves You
 - And it's His Word that Sanctifies You!
 - So, be careful not to make anything in scripture a thing and certainly don't make something a thing to the point or degree that it causes you to become hard and or callused and puffed up.
 - Instead remember – there is much work to be done.
 - And never forget that doctrine and or arguments over doctrine can become a means – by which the enemy sidelines you.
 - It can be a slippery slope - Amen – Amen!
- Moving on, I said last week – we were going to touch on a topic that is somewhat of a hot button in our society today, and that topic – is the topic of climate change.
 - Now when I say climate change, as said earlier – I am speaking with a little tongue

and cheek, and I will admit – Peter's final writings here in Chapter 3 have zero to do with “climate change”.

- But when we read the final verses of Chapter 3, you will see somewhat how climate change could come up in today's teaching.
 - Because even though the Bible doesn't specifically speak on this topic, it does speak rather vividly – about a day when Climate Change will be a stark reality
 - And that thought started me thinking about the topic of climate change especially as it relates to our modern-day thinking, but more specifically, it got me thinking about the earth and our relationship to it.
- But before we do that let's read Peter's final words in 2 Peter 3:10-18 as move ever so closely to the completion of yet another book or letter of the Bible. My NASB Bible entitles this section: A New Heaven and New Earth

2 Peter 3:10 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.

2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2 Peter 3:15 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,

2 Peter 3:16 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.

2 Peter 3:17 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,

2 Peter 3:18 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.

- So, as I said, Peter makes a shift in his topic where he moves from explaining why it is that the Lord has not returned.
 - It's because - His timing is not our timing.
 - It's because - something has not happened yet.
 - It's because - it's not time.
 - Because – everyone who is going to be saved in human history has not been saved.
 - Because as Paul says in Romans 11:25 “The fullness of the Gentiles is not complete”
- Then from there Peter immediately moves into writing about the Lord's return, and he does so through the topic of eschatology – which is the study of the End of Times.

- Now – as always, the question for me is why? Why does he do that?
- I mean – there are mockers mocking the Christians, which is part of the reason Peter is writing to them. And these mockers are using as their proof the fact that Jesus has not yet returned, that it's been thousands of years.
 - But then he jumps to this topic of The End of Times.
 - Actually, I would say he moves to the topic of what happens when "The End of Times" begins and finishes.
 - Specifically – he speaks about our hope of the New Heavens and New Earth.
- So, wonder why he does this?
- Well – remember in this section of scripture Peter is writing, all to encourage these believers to lift them up!
- And so, if we stay in context with the theme of his writings, we can know that his writings here at the end of Chapter 3 must be in keeping with this same logic.
 - And logic, as we learned (when we studied Hermeneutics few weeks ago), is one of the rules that we use when interpreting scripture.
 - Having said that, even though encouragement is his intent, for you and I there is a lot more for us to unpack, and we will begin with verse 10 with the concept of The Day of the Lord.
 - This is important because the encouragement these people receive from their understanding of the end of times.
 - Specifically – what happens to this world and subsequently what our future is in this world.
 - The answer to that question is where the encouragement comes from.
- The words "Day of the Lord" are also important – because they show up in other places in scripture, using the same words but worded differently.
 - Such as in verse 12 in this same set of verses where Peter calls it – "The coming day of the Lord".
 - Also in the Old Testament, it's called the Day of Yahweh.
 - Or in other places it's called, "The great and terrible or dreadful day of the Lord"
 - For most Christians, they wouldn't know this to be the case if they hadn't studied these phrases.
- Which is what has led many believers to become confused about this topic. And let me just say this before we move on, the topic of the end of times is another one of those highly debated topics as well!
 - Or let me say, the views on what happens when Jesus returns is a highly debated topic. Maybe even in some sects – more highly debated than Calvinism versus Arminianism.
 - And so, let's dig in and discover what this Day of the Lord thing is all about.
 - But first, before we do that, I want to touch on the topic of our earth and climate change.

- Maybe a better way to say it is – the earths’ purpose – and then we will hit this climate change debate head on.
- To do this we will have to answer a fundamental question: what is the purpose of the earth as it relates to us?
 - And to answer that question, we need to venture back to where it all began in the Book of Genesis – so let's pick up and read Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 1:29 Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;

Genesis 1:30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food”; and it was so.

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

- And so, just to set the context, for purposes of time this morning let me explain what is going on in this scene. It's simple – and you probably know the story very well.
 - Basically – God created the Heavens and Earth. And just a side bar – He did so through His Word.
 - After creating the Heavens and Earth He then created Adam and Eve, and placed them in the Garden where everything was perfect – until something happened.
 - And what happened?
 - Well – as we know the serpent enters the garden.
 - He catches Eve alone.
 - Begins speaking to her, confuses her.
 - Confuses her as it relates to God's Word and His rules and instructions as it pertained to eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
 - And what were His instructions?
 - God told Eve and Adam that they could eat from any tree in the Garden – just not from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

- So, Satan (the serpent) twists God's Words and says – God didn't mean what He said, (at least not the way you heard it).
- Which then causes Eve to question what God said.
 - From there she does something God told her not to do.
 - And what was that?
 - She eats from the tree!
 - And then (of course – as we know – misery loves company).
- So, she gives Adam the fruit as well, and then Adam partakes.
- And of course, as we know, the scriptures say God told them – if you eat from this tree, you will surely die.
 - But when Eve eats – she doesn't die (I am assuming). Even though the scripture doesn't say it – but it's inferred.
 - But I assume, the fact she didn't die is one reason Adam was so quick to eat as well.
 - From there – Moses writes the following about this situation -

Genesis 3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity

Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said,

“I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you.”

Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’;

Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.

Genesis 3:18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your face

You will eat bread,

Till you return to the ground,

Because from it you were taken;

For you are dust,

And to dust you shall return.”

- So, inside these verses in Genesis, you have (what is) the answer to the question: what is the purpose of the earth and its relationship to us.
 - Let me read Verse 28 of Chapter 1 to you one more time for context, I'll read it one more time.

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- So – according to the Creator of the universe we are cursed and so is the earth.
 - And our punishment for Adam and Eve's mistake is that we will work the earth (by the sweat of our brow) – but it's ours to subdue.
 - The word "subdue" in Hebrew is a verb – it means to bring into bondage.
 - It means – we are to make the earth our slave.
 - Bring it into subjection – make it work for us.
 - Which means – we are to do with it as we see fit, at least from the standpoint of it providing for our needs.
 - An example of that would be "water"
- We – in America and around the world – have figured out how to clean up and purify water.
 - And I don't know about you, but I am personally thankful we have done that.
 - But this wasn't always the case.
- At one time many people died daily – after drinking water out of a creek or river.
 - So, we did what God told us to do and in America, we subdued it and created a way to clean it up – make it safe to drink.
 - The same thing applies to sewage.
 - The same thing with fossil fuels.
 - With coal.
 - With electricity – hydro and nuclear power etc.
- God gave us this earth – and not only allowed us – but told us to subdue it.

- To bring it into subjection for the purposes of sustaining life.
- And for the countries that have done that, the results speak for themselves.
- For the countries that have not! Well – if you have ever been to those countries the results are not good!
 - And so, when we apply logic to all of this it tells us something – and what does it tell us?
 - It tells us that we are not here for the earth, the earth is here for us.
- But wait – someone might say, well preacher – that’s all fine and dandy, but what about protecting the environment for the next generation, for our children – I mean, if we ruin it, how will they sustain life?
 - My answer to that individual is, yes – I agree we should be responsible with the resources we have been given
 - But – for the believer – you must never forget this thing (this world we live in) – is temporary.
 - It’s so temporary that we could call the earth disposable or a throw away.
 - Meaning, if you understand how this whole thing ends, you will understand why we are to extract all we can from this planet.
 - Subdue it – bring it into bondage.
 - Because eventually (and soon) – this earth is going to go through *the ultimate climate change*, and the earth (as we know it) will cease to exist.
 - That’s exactly what Peter is referencing here in 2 Peter Chapter 3:10

2 Peter 3:10 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.

- So, due to my lack of political correctness in this situation we know what we are to do with the earth and the resources it gives us.
 - And we know the future of this planet.
 - So God said (paraphrasing here), use this planet – make it work for you.
 - Use it while you can, because soon – I am going to destroy it!
 - And not only is the earth going to be destroyed, but also, all the works it has produced.
 - Which tells us our earth is a temporary resource – created by God, for our sustenance.
 - Nothing more and nothing less!
 - And one day it will all end with something Peter calls, “The day of the Lord”
- So, the day of the Lord, do you wonder what that is?

- The phrase "the day of the Lord" refers to a specific time, yet future, and is (as I previously stated) – referenced elsewhere in Scripture – under different terminology.
 - And believers will know when that day has begun because it begins when the Antichrist rises up and makes a covenant with Israel, and it will conclude with the burning up of the present heavens and earth (as referenced in Dan. 9:27).
- And that is exactly what Peter says here in 2 Peter 3, but that's not all he says, and to be honest – that's not his point.
 - So, what is his point?
 - Well – let me re-read verse 11-13 and I'll explain as we close.

2 Peter 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
2 Peter 3:12 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!
2 Peter 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

- Here is the context of Peter's writings, and it not only applied to them, but it also applies to us as well.
 - Guys, this life and this world is temporary and as believers we know exactly how the movie ends.
 - So – the question is what sort of people ought you be?
 - You should be Holy in your conduct!
- But what does that mean?
 - It means – we should be sold out to Christ.
 - It means – that your actions and reactions should be God honoring
 - It means you should live your life knowing Jesus is coming back at any moment!
 - Because He is – we know He hasn't yet. But know this – to the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day!
 - So – don't think God is slow – as some would count slowness.
- But know this – God is going to return – and it will happen like a thief in the night.
 - You won't know it – you won't expect it.
 - And you can't anticipate it!
 - And remember – this life is short.
 - But the believer's home will last forever!
 - Amen – Amen!