

II PETER 3:8-10
THE GRACE OF GOD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to II Peter chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study of this letter.

Keep in mind that Peter is on death row. His martyrdom may only be weeks to months away at this point. And I don't care who it is, if you know that your death is imminent, you are not going to write a letter talking about the weather outside!

What you are going to share is what is important and that is exactly what Peter is doing in this letter!

As we have seen, Peter wants us to grow up, to mature in the Lord.

Why was that so important?

Because of the false teachers with their false doctrine that they were trying to bring into the church. Thus, "**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**" John 8:32.

I think that this is a big problem in the church today, that they do not know the Word of God and thus, they are open to anything and everything that makes them feel better, that will tickle their ears!

Not only that but we are also seeing people being afraid to confront false teaching. They don't want to lose friends. They don't want to seem mean or unloving. So they, in a sense, just ignore it.

Let me be clear on this, and this is not my opinion, but this is what Jude admonishes us to do. He wrote, **“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”** Jude 3

In other words, we as believers and followers of Jesus Christ must – ***STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH, WE MUST CONTEND FOR THE FAITH THAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED TO US!***

Why is that even important?

Jude goes on to say, **“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Jude 4

God has entrusted us with – ***THE FAITH!*** It is unchanging. It does not need to be updated for the days we are living in. Instead of compromising the faith that has been entrusted to us, we must take a stand and confront these attacks against our faith.

Not with just empty words, but with the Word of God. We must show them why we disagree with them. Don't say ***“Pastor Joe said . . .”***

Here is what you need to say, ***“It is written!”***

Let me share this with you and it will help set the stage for what we will be looking at this morning here in II Peter chapter 3.

We are told,

It is one thing to staunchly hold your ground when your convictions come under attack. It is quite another thing to take charges head-on – to provide an answer for why your convictions seem to be at odds with the way things really are.

Throughout this letter we have seen the aged apostle staunchly holding his ground on his conviction that the Lord will come again in power and glory. He has reiterated this conviction in each chapter.

He has supported it with personal experience (1:16-19), prophetic discourse (1:20-21), and historical evidence (2:1-10), as well as with God's word at creation (3:4-7).

What he has not done to this point is to take the charges leveled against him head-on. He has not answered the question, Why?

Why the delay in Christ's return? Why are his convictions at odds with the way things are?

Put simply, the question of 3:4 – *“Where is the promise of his coming?”* needs a direct answer.

Many people today are still looking for an answer to these questions. For some, their belief in the Lord's return is simply the result of having given up on a belief in God altogether.

Now suppose that one of these doubt-filled and disbelieving friends of mine stood before us:

“Hi. Thanks for seeing me today. I'm a bit embarrassed to be talking to you, and I want to say right up front that I'm not really here to upset your faith. I only mean to be honest with you. You see, lately I've been wrestling with my belief in the Christian faith. Quite honestly, I think I am more of a skeptic at the present time.

If there is a God and that God is good, then certainly he would have returned by now. You know, to put everything in order and all. There is so much hatred in the world, so much unkindness. There are too many acts of violence and war. Don't you think he would have come back by now? I mean, we could sure use him around here. My friends tell me to grab as much enjoyment and pleasure out of life as I can. Well, thanks for listening to me anyway!"

As my imaginary friend departs, we must confess that many of us resonate with that logic that has led this person to doubt.

After all, why hasn't God pulled down the curtain of history? Where is the promise of his coming? What can a good God possibly be waiting for – especially in light of the clear teachings found in the prophetic writings, the commands of Jesus, and the preaching of the apostolic age?

- David R. Helm, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude, pp. 253-254

Those are very important questions, and Peter is going to share with us some answers.

Keep in mind what we dealt with in our last study as we opened up II Peter chapter 3.

Peter was dealing with the mockery of the Lord's return, that He is going to judge a Christ rejecting world.

And as much as people want to mock that, or make fun of it, Peter tells us to go and do a little history lesson. In fact, he takes us back to Genesis and another judgment of God upon the world – ***THE FLOOD!***

The problem is that many today – ***WILLFULLY FORGET*** what God has done in the past so they can continue on – ***WALKING IN THEIR OWN LUSTS OR FLESHLY DESIRES!***

What is interesting here in the verses we will be looking at this morning is yes, Peter will talk about the judgment of God, but there is something else that is so important, and we can't forget – ***THE GRACE OF GOD!***

Here is where we need to be careful, especially as our nation and this world gets more wicked. We have to be careful not to look down upon the unsaved because it will end up making us self-righteous!

We were saved by the grace of God!

We live by the grace of God!

And one day we will be taken home to glory by the grace of God!

What is my point?

My point is simple. We have no reason to look down upon anyone because all that we have has been given to us by Christ, not because we deserve it, but it is all – ***HIS GRACE!***

Think about it like this.

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage.

When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize.

When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award.

But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award - yet receives such a gift anyway - that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor.

This is what we mean when we talk about the grace of God.

I have broken down the verses we will looking at into the following main points. They are,

GOD IS ETERNAL – II PETER 3:8

THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD – II PETER 3:9

THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME – II PETER 3:10

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in II Peter chapter 3, beginning in verse 8 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***THE GRACE OF GOD!***

II PETER 3

VERSE 8

Remember what Peter said back in II Peter 3:3-4, **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’”**

The idea here is that things just continue on as they always have and always will. People have been talking about the return of the Lord for a long time, almost 2,000 years now and still nothing. Thus, these words are empty, there is no truth to them. That is what they have said and continue to say and today, even amongst so called Christians!

But Peter wants them to understand that God's timetable is different than ours. God is outside the space/time domain and thus, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day.

We live our lives in the linear aspect where we are born, we grow up and we die. We have a beginning and an ending!

God doesn't because – ***GOD IS ETERNAL!***

For those of you who are always late for things, I have great news for you. When you get to heaven, you will always be on time because there is no time!

To show his point we see that Peter is using Psalm 90:4 where the Psalmist tells us, **“For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night.”**

Again, God is outside the space/time domain!

What does that have to do with the return of the Lord and His coming judgment?

Because God is outside of time, time is nothing to Him. A thousand years to God are just like a watch in the night, which was about 4 hours. (Judges 7:19)

One author put it like this. He wrote, ***“Peter was simply using a simile. What to people, including scoffers, may seem like a long time is to the Lord very short. The present Church Age has lasted, in God's eyes, not quite two days!”***

I like that because it gives us a good perspective of things.

Another author put it like this, ***“Peter did not give some prophetic formula, saying that a prophetic day somehow equals a thousand years. He instead communicated a general principle regarding how we see time and how God sees time. When people use this verse as a rigid prophetic key it opens the door for great error.”***

I agree, we must be careful not to read into the text what it is not saying.

What do I mean by that?

Let me show you one example.

Because of evolution coming on the stage and the lies that they have told, many have taken that, and they believe, because of evolution, that the world was not created in six literal days, but each day represented, not a twenty-four-hour period of time, but millions or billions of years!

And they will tell you that is what Peter is saying here!

No, he is not!

How can they do that?

Because they believe the words of man over the Word of God. And to justify this they will tell you that in the Bible the word “**day**” can be used for an indeterminate period of time!

One example that they may give is “**the day of the LORD.**” This is an expression that is used throughout the Bible showing not just a twenty-four-hour period of time or one day, but an extended period of time beginning with the seven-year Tribulation Period!

Because of that and what Peter has said here, their conclusion is that the earth has evolved over billions of years, and they use the Bible to justify what they believe!

And guess what?

They will then tell you that science proves what the Bible is saying.

That is a problem because that is not what the Bible is saying, that is what this false theory of evolution is saying, and it is not even good science!

Is that truly what the Bible is saying?

Absolutely not!

How can I be so sure?

Let’s look at the evidence, let’s look at what the Bible is saying instead of what man is saying.

The Hebrew word for “**day**” is *YOM* and yes, it can mean a literal day or an indeterminate period of time like I have said.

Then how do we know how to take this word in Genesis, as a literal day or an extended period of time?

God can’t make it any clearer than He does in Genesis and for that matter, we see this same idea throughout the Old Testament with this word.

First of all, almost every time we see this word used in the Old Testament it refers to a twenty-four-hour period of time.

But that truly does not give us the evidence.

Then what does?

When the word “**day**” is coupled with numbers or words, it will show you exactly what it means! That is what God does for us in Genesis!

In fact, in Genesis chapter 1 God uses both numbers and words to show us what He means. I guess He knew we would try and mess this up, so He wants us to clearly see what He means!

Let me show you what I mean by looking at one verse, Genesis 1:5. We are told, “**God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.**”

And if you still don’t get it, listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse. It reads, “**And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.**”

So to understand what this word means, we see God say it was “**evening and morning**” and we understand that to be a day, not millions or billions of years!

Not only that, but He then says that this period of time is the “**first day.**”

In other words, God is telling us that this is a literal day and not millions or billions of years!

But here in II Peter I believe Peter is clearly speaking to the fact that – ***GOD IS ETERNAL!***

And as one writer put it, “*All time is as nothing before him, because in the presence as in the nature of God all is eternity; therefore nothing is long, nothing short, before him; no lapse of ages impairs his purposes.*” (Clarke)

And listen to the perspective that Spurgeon gives to us regarding this. He wrote, “*All things are equally near and present to his view; the distance of a thousand years before the occurrence of an event, is no more to him than would be the interval of a day. With God, indeed, there is neither past, present, nor future. He takes for his name the ‘I AM.’ . . . He is the I AM; I AM in the present; I AM in the past and I AM in the future. Just as we say of God that he is everywhere, so we may say of him that he is always; he is everywhere in space; he is everywhere in time.*” (Spurgeon)

In essence, you can summarize God’s eternity in that He is . . .

- (1) *Without beginning.*
- (2) *Without end.*
- (3) *Without succession of time.*

I think it is important to understand this fact that God is eternal and because of that, He knows the beginning from the end! Nothing catches God by surprise!

Think of it like this,

The word *eternal* means “*everlasting, having no beginning and no end.*”

Psalm 90:2 tells us about God's eternity: **"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."**

Since human's measure everything in time, it is very hard for us to conceive of something that had no beginning, but has always been, and will continue forever.

However, the Bible does not try to prove God's existence or His eternity but simply begins with the statement ***"In the beginning God . . ."*** (Genesis 1:1), indicating that at the beginning of recorded time, God was already in existence.

From duration stretching backward without limit to duration stretching forward without limit, from eternal ages to eternal ages, God was and is forever.

When Moses was commissioned by God to go to the Israelites with a message from Him, Moses wondered what he would tell them if they asked him what God's name was.

God's reply is most revealing: ***"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you'"*** (Exodus 3:14).

This signifies the real being of God, His self-existence, and that He is the Being of beings.

It also describes His eternity and immutability, as well as His constancy and faithfulness in fulfilling His promises, because it includes all time, past, present, and future.

The sense is, not only I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am. God's own words about His eternity speak to us from the pages of Scripture.

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, also verified His deity and His eternity to the people of His day by declaring to them, ***"Before Abraham was born, I AM"*** (John 8:58).

It is clear that Jesus was claiming to be God in flesh because the Jews, upon hearing this statement, tried to stone Him to death.

To the Jews, declaring oneself to be the eternal God was blasphemy and worthy of death (Leviticus 24:16). Jesus was claiming to be eternal, just as His Father is eternal.

The apostle John also declared this truth regarding the nature of Christ: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”*** (John 1:1).

Jesus and His Father are one in essence, they exist *sans* [without or minus] time, and they share equally in the attribute of eternity.

Romans 1:20 tells us that God’s eternal nature and His eternal power are revealed to us through His creation. All men see and understand this aspect of God’s nature by the witness of the various aspects of the created order.

The sun and heavenly bodies continue in their orbits century after century.

The seasons come and go in their appointed time; the trees produce leaves in spring and drop them in the fall.

Year after year these things continue, and no one can stop them or alter God’s plan.

All of this attests to God’s eternal power and plan for the earth.

One day, He will create a new heaven and new earth and they, like Him, will continue into eternity.

We who belong to Christ through faith will continue through eternity as well, sharing the eternity of our God in whose image we are created.

So we have seen that – ***GOD IS ETERNAL!***

But wait a minute. Some may argue, “*We have been waiting some 2000 years and Jesus still has not come. What is up with that? Why is God waiting so long!*”

Here is the amazing thing about our God and our next point – ***THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD!***

VERSE 9

As some see all that is going on in the world and nothing being done about it, they come to the conclusion that either God does not care, or He can’t do anything about it.

And the reason that they come to these conclusions is they don’t read the Word of God because if they did, they would see that God does care and He will be doing something about it.

But why is He waiting so long?

Please understand that God will judge in His perfect timing and the reason He hasn’t done so yet is because He is longsuffering, and His desire is that all would be saved.

He is allowing people the chance to enter into a relationship with Him. You see, He gets no pleasure in the death of the wicked!

We see this spoken of in Ezekiel 33:11 where we are told, “**Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’**”

Now some may say, “*This is speaking of Israel and not us!*”

That is true, but what is Peter saying here?

He is telling us that God is longsuffering because He is giving people a chance to be saved! That is the New Testament!

And here is the reality because many people have a misconception about what God does.

You may hear them say that God sends people to Hell but that is not exactly true! Man goes there by choice. God is pleading with man to turn from his sinful ways so that he may live, but if they refuse, they will die in their sins!

Again, this is the Old Testament, and this is the heart of God, for man to be saved! Again, there are those who say that the God of the Old Testament is the God of vengeance and anger and the God of the New Testament is peaceful and full of love!

Did you hear His plead to sinful man to turn to Him! That is not a God of vengeance and anger but a God who loves sinful man so much that He died so that they may live!

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament, and we see those same attributes, that same love in both the Old and New Testament!

In the New Testament, Jesus said in Matthew 18:11, **“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”**

You see, He comes looking for us.

And as John 3:36 tells us, **“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”**

God has done everything possible to save man, He sent His Son to pay the penalty for our sins and if we reject that we will die in our sins, and we only have ourselves to blame for where we will spend eternity!

Let me deal with this word **“longsuffering”** and what it means.

The Greek word is **MAKROTHUMEO**, (mak-roth-oo-meh'-o) and it literally means ***“long-tempered.”***

Now, as you look at all the evil that is going on in the world, keeping in mind we are only aware of a small portion of the evil, and God knows it all, even the thoughts and the intents of man’s heart, and yet He is longsuffering towards us because He wants people to come to saving faith!

He could wipe us all out right now, but God is extending His grace towards us, giving us something that we don’t deserve, eternal life. And that gift of grace is only found in Jesus!

And please understand that God has not delayed His judgment, He is not late with His judgment, it is not that He can’t judge sinful man. There is no apathy here with God, but it will be done in His timing according to His plans and not man’s!

Remember what we read in II Peter 3:8, **“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**

Make no mistake about it, even though the mockers are out there saying that ***“People have been talking about the Lord’s return for thousands of years and this coming judgment, but that is not going to happen. Things will just continue on as they have always been!”***

As we will see in a few minutes, **“But the day of the Lord will come . . .”** (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Aren’t you glad that the Lord did not come back and pour out His judgment a year ago, five years ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago. I think you understand that!

But if you don’t, let me put this into perspective for you.

If the Lord returned back in 1967 during Israel’s Six Day War, I would not be saved, what about you?

Many thought that was the end, but it wasn't. And we even see that today where people are saying that the Lord is coming back and if we last another six months, they would be surprised!

Guess what?

SURPRISE!

Thank God He is longsuffering. He gives people every opportunity to be saved, but it is their choice!

Clarke put it like this, ***“As God is not willing that any should perish, and as he is willing that all should come to repentance, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul to be saved.”***

And please understand that God does not send anyone to Hell. As I have said, they go there because of the choice they have made, by rejecting Jesus.

He has every right to send every one of us to Hell, but by His grace and mercy He saved us by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, paying in full the penalty for our sins. But we must appropriate that gift into our lives by faith and if we don't, then, by our choice, we will spend an eternity apart from Christ in the Lake of Fire!

And because of the wait, many reject this coming judgment. But make no mistake about it, there is coming a day when His grace will come to an end and then judgment will come.

In fact, Paul tells us in Romans 11:25, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”**

In other words, when the last Gentile is saved, God will Rapture His Bride to Himself, He will pour out His Spirit upon the Jewish people and His judgment will come upon this Christ rejecting world!

We long for that day but again, until then, let us go into the highways and byways and compel people to come into the Kingdom of God!

Now let me deal with this for a minute.

When Peter says that God is not “**... willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**” he is not saying that all the people in this world will be saved. A kind of universal salvation!

Again, don't just read one verse and make a doctrine out of it.

What is the context here?

What is Peter talking about?

What has Peter just said?

Back in II Peter 3:7 we are told, “**But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**”

If Peter is saying that all people will be saved in the end, then why in the world is he speaking of the judgment of ungodly men in II Peter 3:7?

You see, that would make no sense, and all will not be saved but they do have a choice to receive Christ or reject Him, that is their free will!

Again, this gift is open to every person on this planet, but they must make that decision before they die, because after death, then comes their judgment, they will be separated from God!

We see this spoken of in Hebrews 9:27-28 where Paul wrote, **“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”**

There is the judgment of God and there is the salvation for those who come to Him!

This grace gift is for all of mankind, as I have said. Remember what Jesus said in John 3:16-17, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

God’s love for mankind is seen in what He has done for us. God became flesh, dwelt amongst us to go to the cross of Calvary and die for our sins, being raised from the dead on the third day and by His shed blood we are cleansed of all our sins.

But is this only for a select group of people?

Absolutely not! Jesus said, **“... that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** We have a choice to make, and this grace gift is for – ***WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM!***

We even seen this in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 45:21-22 we are told, **“Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”**

He alone is our Savior, and this is a grace gift for all that believe in Jesus or **“All you ends of the earth!”**

And the Bible closes in Revelation 22:17 with this same grace gift extended to all as we are told, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’**

And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”

This gift is open to all, but tragically, many will reject this gift, and the longsuffering of God will come to an end, and judgment will be poured out upon a Christ rejecting world!

Remember what we were told before the flood of God’s judgment came upon the earth, destroying the wicked and saving 8 people, Noah and his family.

In Genesis 6:5, **“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”**

Imagine the depravity of man as his thoughts are wicked throughout the day! Keep in mind there were probably over 8 billion people living on the earth at this time, and some feel that number is even higher, and wickedness permeated their lives!

Now we can fast-forward to the New Testament because Jesus takes what was going on here in Genesis and applies it to the last days judgment of God.

Listen carefully as Jesus made these interesting remarks in Matthew 24:37-39 in regard to His return and the judgment of man.

He said, **“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”**

Notice, society was filled with wickedness and yet life went on. They were totally unaware of the coming judgment of God.

Now, look at these conditions before the flood came and see how they parallel what is going on today and how people are totally unaware of the coming judgment of God!

- ***THERE WAS A POPULATION EXPLOSION – GENESIS 6:1***
- ***THERE WAS SEXUAL PERVERSION THAT PERMEATED THE WORLD – GENESIS 6:2***
- ***THERE WAS HEAVY DEMONIC ACTIVITY IN THE WORLD – GENESIS 6:2***
- ***MAN’S HEART WAS CONTINUALLY EVIL – GENESIS 6:5***
- ***THERE WAS WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION AND VIOLENCE – GENESIS 6:11***

It is as Peter reminds us, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”** II Peter 3:9-10.

Yes, God is patient, He is longsuffering, and He wants people to come to Him, but remember that His Spirit will not strive with man forever. He is going to judge the world for their wickedness, and I believe that day is fast approaching!

Yes, we have clearly seen – ***THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD!***

But as we read on, we will see that – ***THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME!***

VERSE 10

Yes, the Lord is longsuffering, but that day will come to an end and the start of **“The Day of the Lord”** will begin.

To understand what is taking place here we have to understand what this phrase, “**The Day of the Lord**” is all about.

Please understand that this is not speaking of a literal day, but it is speaking of a period of time!

And here is where many are confused.

The Day of the Lord begins with Jesus breaking the first seal spoken of in Revelation 6:1-2.

And, as Peter tells us, it is going to end with the destruction of the present material universe by God, spoken of in II Peter 3:12 and He will create a “**new heavens and a new earth**” that is spoken of by Peter here in II Peter 3:12-13.

This is what Peter says, “**looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**”

As a young Christian, this verse here in II Peter 3:10 confused me because I thought it was speaking of the end of the Tribulation Period.

But, if I had just read on, I would have seen that this is speaking of a new heaven and a new earth, not the end of the Tribulation Period. Yes, the Day of the Lord begins with the opening of the first seal, but it continues on because it is not a literal day but a period of time!

And I think this follows a Jewish day.

Let me explain.

The Jewish day ran from sundown to sundown and thus, it started in darkness, and it ended in darkness.

And that is what the Day of the Lord is all about, it will start in the darkness of the Tribulation Period and move into the Kingdom Age where there is the light of God that permeates the land, and end in the darkness of the Great White Throne Judgment!

It is after this that God creates a new heaven and a new earth! In other words, the eternal state!

Now what about the Lord coming as a thief in the night, how does that fit in?

Listen to what Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 5:1-5, **“But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.”**

Paul starts out by speaking to believers as he says **“you”** and thus, this Day of the Lord should not come as a surprise, we see what is happening and we know the season we are in, and the Lord is coming for His Bride, the Church!

From there Paul now starts speaking of **“they”** and it is speaking of unbelievers, and they will be unaware of this coming judgment. It will come upon them suddenly and they will not escape!

Again, for those not waiting for His coming it will be a surprise to them just as it was for those who were drowned in the flood of God’s judgment during the days of Noah.

For 120 years they heard of the coming judgment from Noah, and they refused to listen, and we see God's grace for almost 2,000 years now, **BUT** His judgment is coming and many still refuse to listen.

And here Peter moves on to the culmination of history you might say. He goes past the end of the Tribulation Period, past the Millennial reign of Christ, past the Great White Throne Judgment to the creation of a new heaven and a new earth where we will dwell with the Lord forever, sin will be done away with completely!

Today the big push is to stop global warming. Why? Because the world is coming to an end. And I guess we don't call it global warming any longer because we have cold spells and thus, they call it – ***CLIMATE CHANGE!***

Yes, the climate will change, the weather changes all the time, so this is much to do about nothing. The world does not end with climate change, but with the judgment of God!

Remember Al Gore and his movie promoting this cause. And I have to share this with you, it is very funny and very sad.

USA Today had a front-page news story by Elizabeth Weise and cited "***forest ecologist***" Glenn Juday with this alarming data: "***Since the 1970s, climate change has doubled the growing season in some places and raised the state temperatures 6 degrees in the winter and 3.5 average annually since 1950, says Juday, a professor at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks.***"

That should be alarming news to you. You should be terrified because if her data is true, if her facts are right, if the annual winter temperature in Alaska has increased 6 degrees Fahrenheit annually since 1950, it means that the average winter temperature in Alaska is 336 degrees higher than they were in 1950!

People need to listen to what is being said, right!

Isn't it amazing the garbage people read and believe and yet, when it comes to God's Word they just laugh, they think it is a joke!

Folks, it is no joke! God says what He means and means what He says and if you want to deny the coming judgment, you can. But it is not going to change the facts, His judgment is coming just as it came in the days of Noah. The difference this time is that it will not be by a flood, but by fire!

I guess you could call it global warming!

Back on December 2, 1942 – at the University of Chicago's Stagg field – Robert Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, and Albert Einstein tested their theory that if Uranium 235 was bombarded with neutrons, energy was released.

Then on July 16, 1945, in the deserts of New Mexico, the first nuclear device was tested, and it melted the 10-inch metal that was used to drop it. Debris shot several miles into the air and 1800 yards in every direction.

Not only that, but the sand, for 800 yards around the test site, turned to glass!

Then, in August of 1945 the atom bomb was dropped over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki!

Folks, when the Lord lets go there will be a thermal nuclear reaction beyond belief. But out of that, a new heaven and a new earth will be created as Isaiah 65:17 tells us, “**For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.**”

Now this is interesting to me. In Colossian 1:17 we are told, “**And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**”

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, “**And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). [Prov 8:22-31.]**”

Paul is telling us that Jesus is holding everything together. And that is interesting to me.

Let me explain.

There is Coulomb’s Law of Electricity that states that like charges repel each other. The atom is made up of protons in its nucleus and they are like charges. Thus, they should repel each other, blow the atom apart, but they don’t, why is that?

Scientists don’t know the answer, they have made many speculations, and they do know that something is holding them together, like “*atomic glue*” but they are not sure what that is.

Listen to this. We are told,

One of the continuing puzzles of science is the question of what holds the universe together. We know that everything is made up of tiny atoms that consist of electrons buzzing around a nucleus.

Why doesn’t the centrifugal force of those orbiting electrons cause atoms to fly apart? Scientists talk hopefully of a “*grand unified theory*” of forces that they hope will someday explain what holds the universe together, but scientists are still a long way from such a theory.

Moreover, as the great physicist-mathematician Stephen Hawking has pointed out, testing such a theory would require a particle accelerating machine “*as big as the solar system,*” and such a machine is “*unlikely to be funded in the present economic climate*” (Stephen Hawking, A Brief History of Time, 74)

What holds our universe together? Science cannot answer and can only point to unnamed, undiscovered, unknown forces.

- Ray Stedman, Adventuring Through Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, p. 29

That was the most brilliant mind in the world, he is no longer with us, but he didn't know, and we would need an accelerator as big as the universe to test this out! Come on, get real, I don't care how much money you have, how in the world would you build it?

Again, the Bible is very clear on who not what holds everything together. In Hebrews 1:1-3 we are told, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

And what Peter is saying here to us is that one day Jesus will let go and He will no longer hold all the atoms in the universe together and thus, **“... the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”**

And the word that Peter uses for **“melt”** in the Greek is the word *LUO* and it means ***“to be loosed.”***

In other words, He let go!

Let me put this into perspective for you. They say that the amount of nuclear material that was used in the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was only about the size of a dime and look at the devastation it caused!

The physical universe is estimated to be 12 billion light years in diameter (6 trillion miles times 12 billion).

To think that someday Jesus, who is holding all the atoms in the universe together, will “*let go*” and there will be a nuclear bomb detonated that is 12 billion light years in diameter, is incredible to think about!

And let me put it like this. *The Big Bang* didn’t happen at the beginning, it happens at the end!

Listen to how Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us. He wrote,

We do not know when it will happen, but we are told what will happen. Kenneth Wuest gives an accurate and graphic translation of these words: “*In which the heavens with a rushing noise will be dissolved, and the elements being scorched will be dissolved, and the earth also and the works in it will be burned up*” (2 Peter 3:10).

Many Bible students believe that Peter here described the action of atomic energy being released by God. The word translated a great noise in the King James Version means “*with a hissing and a crackling sound.*” When the atomic bomb was tested in the Nevada desert, more than one reporter said that the explosion gave forth “*a whirring sound,*” or a “*crackling sound.*” The Greek word Peter used was commonly used by the people for the whirring of a bird’s wings or the hissing of a snake.

The word melt in 2 Peter 3:10 means “to disintegrate, to be dissolved.” It carries the idea of something being broken down into its basic elements, and that is what happens when atomic energy is released. “*Heaven and earth shall pass away,*” said our Lord (Matt 24:35), and it appears that this may happen by the release of the atomic power stored in the elements that make up the world. The heavens and earth are “*stored with fire*” (2 Peter 3:7, Wuest), and only God can release it.

Remember in Hebrews 1:3 we're told that Jesus is "**upholding all things by the word of His power.**" He's the unifying force - the atomic glue that binds the positive charges in the nucleus of every atom. Well, all He has to do is let go, and the universe will incinerate.

As we have seen this morning, our – ***GOD IS ETERNAL!***

That means He has always existed, and He knows what the future holds because He is out of the time/space domain!

Not only that, with all the wickedness of man, the immorality we see – ***THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD!***

But don't mistake the longsuffering of God that He is not going to judge sinful man. He is and Peter already told us to look at the flood as an example of what is coming, not with water but with fire – ***THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME!***

And I will close with this, what we will be looking at next time, since we know all these things, "**Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.**" 2 Peter 3:11.