

## Living Between the Flood and the Fire

### 2 Peter 3:3-15 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

#### The Coming Day of the Lord

<sup>3</sup> Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, "Where is the promise of His **coming** (parousia-kc)? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> through which **the world at that time** was destroyed, being flooded with water. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.

#### A New Heaven and Earth

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, <sup>15</sup> and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation;

#### Introduction

Have you followed the news lately ranging from earthquakes, rumors of wars, hurricanes, and wildfires? It makes us wonder if this is the end times. I believe so. **But let's be honest, we've been saying "the end is near" for 2,000 years.** Skeptics and even some Christians look at the clock and ask the same question that was raised in Peter's day: **"Where is the promise of His coming? Everything continues just as it was from the beginning."**

Two thousand years ago, the Apostle Peter addressed that very issue in today's letter. He gives us the authoritative answers we need to navigate the time between Christ's first and second coming.

## Content

His letter deals with three questions:

Q1: Where is the promise of the Second Coming? This question was raised by the mockers.

Q2: Is the Lord slacking off concerning His promise? This question was raised among the believers.

Q3: What manner of persons ought we to be while we await His coming? This question was raised by Peter himself.

Let's go over them one by one.

### Q1: Where is the promise of Parousia?

First, Peter answers the scoffers who raised the question, *"Where is the promise of the Parousia? Everything remains the same just as it was from the creation of the world." There's no evidence of God's judgment in the world, since the creation of the world until now. Therefore, they argue, don't wait for Parousia. It is not happening.*

Peter's response: Pay attention to the Scripture and believe in His promise of Parousia! Not everything remains the same since the creation of the world! Rather, he points out, when evil becomes too powerful and too prevalent among people, God judges the world. Remember Noah's ark? God judged the world with water. In due time, He will do it again for the same reason, to the same world. This time, however, with fire. *"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"* (v. 10). On the Day of Judgment, God will avenge wrongs and bring perdition to the ungodly (v. 7). He will bring His full reign to earth with peace and justice for all. Therefore, Peter urges us to trust in God's faithfulness that He will keep His promise—the promise of Second Coming. Remember: **God's silence is not absence, and His patience is not powerlessness.** The future judgment by fire is just as certain as the past judgment by water.

### Q2: Is the Lord slacking off His coming?

Next, Peter comforts the believers who wonder about the delay.

People of God asked the same question back then and still today: *Is the Lord slacking off His coming? Why Is He delayed?*

Peter's answer: No, He is not delayed. He will return precisely at the time when He means to. He is never late or never early. He is precisely on time. His Parousia may seem delayed to your eyes, but the Lord is not slow in keeping His promise.

Peter reminds us of two things: **The divine concept of time and the Lord's patience.** First, the Lord's understanding of time is quite different from that of ours: "*with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day*" (v. 8)—Consider a giant, ancient Redwood tree. To a Mayfly, which lives for a single day, the Redwood seems utterly timeless, unchanging, and permanent. The Mayfly asks, "Why hasn't this tree grown? Why hasn't it changed?" But to the tree itself, which has lived for a thousand years, the Mayfly's whole life is just one brief, passing moment. Our 2,000 years of waiting seem like forever to us, but in God's eternal perspective, it's just two days. **The point is: Go with God's time, not yours.**

Second, Peter explains the reason why the Lord takes time in His Second Coming. **He wants no one to perish.** Therefore, He takes time so that He would give everyone a chance to hear the gospel and repent (v. 9). E.g., Billions of people still need to hear the gospel message today. Peter's saying here is this: *It's not slowness—it's mercy.*"

### **Q3: What manner of persons ought we to be?**

Finally, he challenges us with how we should live as we await His Coming.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are still waiting for the Coming of the Lord. We must ask ourselves of the same question as Peter, "*What kind of God's people ought we to be? How shall we live daily?*" Peter answers:

First, **be on the alert in prayer so that you may be ready for His coming** (Matthew 24:36-44), because the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. If you know what time the thief would break in, you would be ready even at night, right? You wouldn't be in bed sound asleep. Likewise, the Lord commands us to stay awake and be alert for the Day of the Lord, because we don't know the day or hour.

The way we "stay awake" is through **prayer**. Prayer is the spiritual alarm clock that keeps us from falling asleep to sin and complacency. It is this attitude of **constant, watchful prayer** that enables us to **be on the alert**. **Be on the alert in prayer.**

Next, **be diligent** (make every effort, ensure) **to be found by Jesus in peace, spotless, and blameless** (v. 14). Make sure no sin stands between you and God. Also, pursue peace,

holiness, and godliness in your life (v. 11). Why? By doing that, you prepare yourself for the wedding banquet in Heaven. E.g., Have you even been to a wedding? Everyone dresses up for the occasion. You don't dare to go there in shorts, bare feet, or unwashed. In the same way, righteousness and holiness prepare you for the wedding of the Church and Christ (Matthew 22:12).

Furthermore, by pursuing the life of holiness, we also hasten the coming of the day of God (v. 12). Remember: nothing impure/unclean will be in the presence of God. No one will see God without holiness (Hebrews 12:14). Only those with pure hearts will see God (Matthew 5:8).

So, where do you begin for the life of holiness? With your heart. In your heart. Listen to what Jesus says: *from within, out of the **heart** of men, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and **defile the man*** (Mark 7:21-23). Make every effort to imitate Christ in every manner—thoughts, words, and actions. **Be diligent to be found by Jesus in peace, spotless, and blameless.**

Thirdly, **the Lord's delay is your gospel deadline.** Every day of His patience is a precious gift given so you have one more chance to reach your family, your friend, your coworker. Don't treat God's mercy as a procrastination window; treat it as a salvation opportunity for your family, your friend, your coworker (v. 15). Let's make the most of the time given us to reach out to the unsaved, especially our own family members. I am sure you have a heart for your loved ones. I am sure you pray for the salvation of your families and share the gospel with them. Don't give up on them. They would be forever grateful for your witness and prayers. E.g., George Mueller prayed for the salvation of friends over 50 years. All of them were saved. The Lord's patience saved them. Who is waiting on your faithfulness?

## Conclusion

We are still waiting for Christ's return. Remember He will come this time not as the Savior but as the Judge to bring the full reign of God to this world (Hebrews 9:28). We shouldn't be afraid of His coming. Rather, we should welcome and look for it with all our hearts, because He will restore peace and justice for all forever. He will wipe every tear from our eyes. No more death, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:4).

So, while we wait, let us pray with alertness, live in holiness, and share Christ with others.

**Action Points:**

1. Pray daily with alertness.
2. Pursue holiness in one specific area this week, either in words or action.
3. Share the hope of Christ with one person you love.
4. Reach out to mend a strained relationship this week.

Amen.