

Back to the future 2 Peter 3:10-18

On the 14th January 2018, a text message was sent to all the inhabitants of Hawaii that said this:

“Emergency Alert. Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill.”

How would you have responded if you had received that text message?

There are some announcements that don't really impact what we choose to do each day.

For example, if someone tells you that the price of a newspaper in New York is going up by 10 cents, well frankly who cares? Such an announcement will make absolutely no difference to our future.

However, if we were living on Hawaii and received a text about an incoming nuclear missile, well that's different, isn't it? Because as a result of the news, we'd all be forced to make changes because of the future that is before. Now that might be trying to find shelter if you thought you had the time or it might be calling someone you love. But do you see my point? Regardless of how we would change, this news would make us change.

Now as it turned out the Emergency Alert text in Hawaii was a mistake. The threat wasn't real.

But today in **2 Peter chapter 3** we are confronted with something true that must change how we live today. That is, we are presented with something absolutely certain about the future that is to shape our everyday decisions.

What am I talking about?

Look at verse 10. **Read verse 10a.**

The key phrase is: **The day of the Lord.**

Old Testament background. A day that God's people were looking forward to when God would remove their enemies and bring times of great joy and renewal.

What the NT does. This future day is linked to the future personal and visible appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, the same Jesus who was here. Who was born, who grew up, who lived and who died on the cross, and who raised bodily from the dead, and who ascended into heaven to be with his Father, well one day this same Jesus will appear again. And when he does this will be **the day of the Lord.**

There are **two** important aspects about this future day that are presented to us in **2 Peter chapter 3.**

- This will be a day of destruction (Vs 10-12)
- This will be a day of creation (Vs 13-18)

First, a day of destruction (Vs 10-12)

Look at how verse 10 continues. **Read verse 10b.**

Most people think the world will simply run out of steam. **The impersonal fuel of the universe** will simply run out. But they are not too worried as it won't impact them in any real way.

What does the Bible say about the future of our universe?

- There will be an end. We must reject any philosophies that speak of endless cycles of birth, death and renewal. Those stand in contradiction to what the Bible says.
- It will be destructive.

Through **fire**. The difference between the flood and the final judgement. Water and fire.

This is not annihilation it is the complete reshaping and remoulding of everything physical that currently exists.

- It won't be impersonal. It will be brought about by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what? That's one of the most important questions we can ask when we read the Bible. What difference should this information make to my life?

Words are not just for information they are for transformation.

How are we supposed to respond to the news that the day of the Lord will be a day of destruction?

Peter tells us in verses 11 and 12. Look at verse 11. **Read verses 11 and 12.**

This is not the first time we've come across the requirement for Christians to live holy and godly lives.

Do you remember how 2 Peter started? **1:3**, "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life."

The expectation from God is that Christians live the life that God prescribes.

What does this kind of life look like?

- What we look at
- What we listen to
- Where we go with our legs
- What we do with our hands
- What we speak about – **godly talk – part of this is gospel talk**

Why? What's the motivation? Because everything will be burned up.

So focus our *energies* and our *passions* on what will last through the destruction.

Our characters and the characters of others who are saved by the gospel.

This doesn't mean we withdraw from daily activities. We are part of wider human society and we participate as loyal citizens committed to the general well beings of those around us.

But we are promised that all worldly achievements will be destroyed.

What do we want most for our children, for ourselves and those we love?
To get good grades, a good career, a comfortable house and good health?

The Bible says don't live for these. Don't organise your schedule around these priorities. No, organise your **dreams** and your **diary** around living a holy and godly life. And so this because only your character and the characters of those saved by the gospel will last.

Our wall of worldly achievements.

This is very encouraging for every Christian. It is something we can all do regardless of who we are. And not just for ourselves. For others.

What might this mean in practice?

- Learn the gospel better
- Learn how to answer questions
- Put what we hear into practice
- Come to church
- Attend Growth Group

If you are doing these things, be encouraged. These things will shape characters that will last forever.

You may have noticed **two surprising things** mentioned in these verses in relation to this future day.

- Christians are to look forward to it
- Somehow they can speed its coming

How can we look forward to this day of destruction? Think about what happened at the flood in Noah's day. The destruction purified the earth of wickedness. This is what will happen perfectly when Jesus returns again. Evil and all the structures of evil will be no more.

How can we speed its coming? God has said that one of the main reasons for the delay of Christ' return is so that the gospel will go out and all tribes will hear of Jesus. Therefore, as God's people commit to gospel living and gospel speaking then the day of Christ will come sooner, from our perspective.

That's the first aspect of the day of the Lord. It will be a day of destruction.

Second, the day of the Lord will be a day of creation (Vs 13-18)

Look at verse 13. **Read verse 13.**

What is a Christian most looking forward to? Most would say heaven. That's not a bad answer. But what is the ultimate hope for a Christian? It's not to live forever in heaven in some bodiless existence. No, it's to live forever with God and his people in a new physical universe, with new resurrection bodies.

Or in the words of **2 Peter 3**, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

This is in keeping with his **promise**. That is, God has said this before.

Isaiah 65:17, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create."

As we've already seen there will be a cosmic destruction in the future. But there will also be much continuity.

The physical creation was not a mistake. The physical creation is not wrong.

Our big problem is not that we are trapped in a physical body in a physical world and so therefore what we need is to be saved from the physical for a bodiless eternity.

No, our big problem is that we are sinners with sinful desires living in a sin tarnished world.

But God's promise is that in the future he will create a beautiful physical universe for his people to dwell in forever.

Our bodies are not an irrelevance. Our feelings are not ultimate. But we live out bodily existence as broken people in a broken world. **Transgender.**

But there is a different future ahead! It will be awesome! Think about all the greatest physical things of life now and multiply those experiences by a million.

But so what? What difference should this make to our lives today?

Look at what Peter says in verse 14. **Read verse 14-15a.**

These verses are a brilliant reminder of the purpose of our lives. Why are we here now? What's the point? What is the most meaningful thing we can do?

The temptation in our age is to say that it all depends. It's all about our individual preferences, and that we have to find what works for us.

These verses remind us that this is nonsense. **The big point of our lives is to get saved and to save as many people as we can.**

Imagine you were on the Titanic, what should you be doing with your time? It depends on whether the ship has hit the iceberg or not. After the collision, the point is to get saved and to save as many people as you can.

Peter says, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God. Because this is the time of salvation.

The crucial question is how? How do we do this? By believing in Jesus and sticking with Jesus.

Our temptation is to hear this as a call to do more things. To try harder in our moral tasks. No, this is a call to be found in Jesus, the spotless and blameless Saviour. The one who was sent from heaven to make peace with God possible and sure.

This focus on salvation was not just a personal hobby horse of the apostle Peter. Look at what he says next in verse 15. **Read verses 15-16.**

So much packed into these verses. We could say something about how not everything in the Bible is equally easy to understand. Or we could notice that Peter puts Paul's writings on the same level as the Old Testament Scriptures.

But the big headline I want us to grasp is that this focus on salvation is what consumes Paul's heart as well. No wonder, it is the heart beat of the Bible story. The challenge is to make it the centre point around which we organise our lives.

How do you respond when an outreach event is announced at church?

When we understand that this is the age of salvation, then our first response should not be, do I like this kind of thing? But what friends and family do I know who like this sort of thing? Because it's not about what I like but about finding more ways for people to hear the salvation message.

And particularly in a world when so many other voices will be trying to get us to prioritise other things. This is just hard!

So what's the answer? How do we stick with the Biblical Jesus and stay focused on his salvation priorities? Look at the final two verses of 2 Peter. Verses 17 and 18. **Read verses 17 and 18.**

Don't be carried away from your secure position in Christ by listening to any other voice that would capture you, and take you from the Biblical Jesus.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Christian experience is not to be static. We are certainly to pray for growth in numbers. But we are to seek growth in maturity. Or let me phrase it more positively, we can grow in maturity.

What a prospect this is! If we stick with God's Word then we will not stay the same. We will be gloriously transformed.

It will get easier over time to prioritise values of Jesus. **We will be given a taste for them.**

In conclusion

Today we've presented with the future day of the Lord. If we're sensible it must impact our decisions today.

- It will be a day of destruction
- It will be a day of creation

So come to Jesus, stick with Jesus and live for Jesus