

**Subject: *The Promise of Christ's Coming***

**Scripture: *2 Peter 3:1-14***

We hear a lot about global warming and some say it is the greatest threat to our world. The Bible takes that a step further and says the real threat is a global meltdown, a time in the future when God will judge and destroy everything by fire. In the days of Noah God destroyed the world by flood, and He promised never to send a flood like that again. In the future God will destroy the world by fire. To understand this text we need to see three worlds that Peter refers to:

- The pre-flood world (vs. 6)
- The present world (vs. 7)
- The perfect world (vs. 13)

This coming judgment by fire and creation of new heavens and a new earth is linked to the Lord's coming. Three times in the text Peter refers to the promise of Christ's return and what will happen as a result of His coming (vs. 4, 9, 13). Christ came the first time to save, but He is coming the second time to judge.

**1. THE PROMISE IS DOUBTED BY SCOFFERS (vs. 3-6)**

As believers, we stand on the promises of God, but unbelievers scoff at His promises. Peter describes these scoffers in two ways:

- A. The scoffers live in sin (vs. 3)
- B. The scoffers don't know the Scriptures (vs. 4-6)

They have a theology that supports their lifestyle. They assume that all things will continue as they have always been. But the world is not the same today as it has always been. They think that since there has not been a judgment in the past there won't be a judgment in the future. But they are wrong, and they are ignorant of the great flood in the days of Noah.

**2. THE PROMISE IS DESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE (vs. 7, 10)**

- Judgment will be sudden and unexpected (vs. 10)

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. ***1 Thessalonians 5:2*** *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

- Judgment will be by fire (vs. 7, 10, 11, 12)

When God judges this world in the future it won't be flood, but by fire. It will be fire like the world has never known. Fire will be unleashed and there will be a total meltdown of everything. The earth's core is red hot (about 12,400 degrees Fahrenheit). Our planet is a flaming liquid ball of fire covered by a thin outer crust only 10 miles thick. When a volcano erupts somewhere we are reminded what is under the earth. Everything is made up of atomic particles (protons, electrons, and neutrons). There is tremendous energy locked up inside

these atoms. All that energy will be released and everything will burn up or dissolve. As with the flood that happened in Noah's day, God has built into creation the seeds of its own destruction.

### **3. THE PROMISE IS DELAYED BY A SOVEREIGN GOD (vs. 8-9)**

Two things account for what seems like a long delay in God's plan:

#### A. God's sovereign plan (vs. 8)

God doesn't operate on our time schedule. The amount of time that passes has no bearing on God's timing. He is the God who inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15).

#### B. God's sovereign patience (vs. 9, 15)

The only thing that separates this world from God's judgment is His patience, and the reason for His patience is the salvation of sinners. We must not think that God is indifferent or forgetful or powerless or lenient. He is patient toward us. Who is "us"? They are God's chosen people who will be saved before judgment falls. God is not willing that any should perish (go to eternal hell), but all should come to repentance. This is the only place where Peter used "repentance" in either of his two letters. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of heart and conduct. If a person truly changes his mind about sin, he will turn from it. If a person truly changes his mind about Jesus Christ, he will turn to Him and serve Him. What does it mean to "come to repentance?"

### **4. THE PROMISE IS DESIRED BY SAINTS (vs. 11-14)**

The new heavens and new earth will not only be new in time. They will be new in kind or quality. There is one word that describes the future world: righteousness (vs. 13).

#### A. Everything now will pass away

All things as we know them will be dissolved (vs. 11, 12)

#### B. Everything then will be perfect and permanent

We are looking for God to fulfill His promise, and that affects how we live in the meantime. We are still living in this world, but we are living for the world to come.

An officer in the Civil War told his men as they pitched camp: "Men, don't drive your stakes down too deep. We're pulling out in the morning." The Lord is reminding us not to drive our stakes too deep in this world. We're going to pull out soon. We have His promise on it.