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# Sermon Notes

May 5, 2024

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Living in Light of Christ's Return 2 Peter 3:11-13

### The Finale

- ❖ On the coming day of judgment and destruction when Christ comes back, God will dissolve the current heavens and earth with fire
  - to liberate them from the curse of sin
  - to inaugurate a new heaven and earth which reflects the perfect righteousness God possesses
- ❖ As Peter describes the "finale of history" in the finale of his letter
  - he gives his readers some "homework" to do
  - he tells believers how they are meant to respond and live in light of the promise of Christ's coming
- ❖ What the Bible says about the future has practical value and application to the way God's people are called to live in the present

### (+)'s and (-)'s

- ❖ Positive and negative forces work together and complement each other as God accomplishes His perfect purposes
  - the return of Christ will bring both destruction AND renewal

- believers live up to Christ's standard of righteousness in order to
  - distance themselves from the current, doomed, decaying world
  - prepare themselves for the new world in which righteousness dwells
- ❖ Just as our physical bodies wear out, so too will the entire universe wear out
  - Romans 8:20-21 depicts the second law of thermodynamics (the law of entropy)
    - the general trend of the universe is toward death and decay
    - God did not build the world to last forever
  - but Peter is not offering a SCIENCE lesson, Peter is offering a LIFE lesson
    - *what kind of people ought we to be?*
    - we ought to live *lives of holiness and godliness*
    - we are to be *waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God*

### Walking the Walk

- ❖ What does it mean to live a life of holiness and godliness?
  - our thoughts, speech, and actions are meant to mirror God's own character and His "set-apartedness" from this world (*cf.* 1 Peter 1:14-16)
  - everything we do should reflect well on the God we have come to know in Jesus Christ
    - making God "look good"
    - our character and behavior should put the beauty and attractiveness of the gospel on display for all to see

- love for God and His truth should shine out of our lives through our reverence for God and compassion for others
- ❖ God gives you the power to live as He intends (2 Peter 1:3-4)
  - the quality and character of your life flows not only out of what God has accomplished in the past
  - the motivation to keep living as God intends is fueled by staying focused on what God promises about the future
  - the quality and character of your life is an essential aspect of your witness for Christ
- ❖ How are we to wait for *the coming of the day of God*?
  - waiting = looking forward to
  - knowing ABOUT the Lord's return is not the same as living in eager anticipation of *the coming of the day of God*
- ❖ How can we hasten *the coming of the day of God*?
  - although not a part of Biblical truth, there was a common rabbinic teaching that said the Messiah would come only if all Israel would repent and obey the law perfectly for one day
    - Peter echoes "the gist" of this teaching in his sermon in Acts 3:19-21
    - repent that times of refreshing may come and that He may send the Christ appointed for you
  - as is the case with prayer, God ordains both the ends and the means to His ends
  - even though God is fully sovereign, constantly and totally in control of all things, human actions are both significant and meaningful

- God factors the actions of His people into His determination of when "the end" will come
  - the role of evangelism (Matthew 24:14)
  - when we share our faith or participate in world missions through prayer and financial support, we are hastening *the coming of the day of God*
- prayer: *Your kingdom come*

### What's Coming?

- ❖ Will God start from scratch and make a whole new universe, or will he renew and revise the current one?
  - Scriptures like Micah 1:3-4, Isaiah 65:17, and Revelation 21:5 suggest a replacement universe
  - Romans 8:20-21 suggests God will revise His current creation
- ❖ A helpful illustration from recent forest fires
  - fire is necessary in order for certain forests to be rejuvenated
  - perhaps the melting of the current elements will unleash the seeds of what is to come
- ❖ Peter's main point is not about HOW God is going to do what He is going to do but how WE are going to get ourselves ready to live in our new home
  - the study of end times is not an end in itself
  - we study these matters in order to stimulate ourselves to pursue and deepen a holy and godly lifestyle
- ❖ God puts His people in place to create a culture that is marked by holiness and godliness
- ❖ Resisting the pull of materialism