

Title: **Living in Light of Two Worlds (Part 2)**

Passage: **2 Peter 3:10-11**

Theme: **Living in the shadow of two worlds: one temporal the other eternal**

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{Read Passage}

We finally get to pick up the pieces in 2 Peter.

As we look at what it means for us to live in light of 2 very different but related worlds: The world we live in t/flesh (humanness) and t/eternal world of righteousness that will be inaugurated at t/DOTL.

As believers we live in the shadow of two worlds: the present creation that will pass away with the coming of Christ and the future recreation that we will inherit based upon God's promise.

Peter's perspective on the powerful prospect of the promised parousia.

Background: Skeptics (vv. 3-4).

They were pseudo-Xn antinomians. License. Freedom to sin. (cf. 2:10, 13-14, 19).

Like X crucified between 2 thieves, t/o its history, t/CH has been threatened from 2 oppos. sides: Legalism and Antinomianism.

Legalism ==> adds works or merit to grace nullifying t/Gospel.

= dangerous is Antinomianism which denies that holiness is requisite for t/Xn life thus polluting t/purity of X's vineyard w/tares (pseudo-Xns who wrongly think that perverts in doctrine & practice can be heirs of EL).

That basically sums up t/scoffers or mockers that Peter has in his sites.

In vv. 8-9 Peter has explained that t/apparent delay in t/Lord's return is not procrastination, but patience (full # of t/elect) Peter turns (10-13) to how we are to live our lives in light of all that.

4 main points that relate to these 4 vv. Each point speaks to a different aspect on how we are to live.

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

II. We are to live soberly: understanding that this world is temporary (10b)

III. We are to live diligently: focusing on the task at hand (11)

IV. We are to live expectantly: looking forward to the glories of Christ (12-13)

We are to live: hopefully; soberly; diligently; and expectantly.

Several weeks ago we took an in-depth look at those first 2 points, both of which come out of v. 10.

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

A. Certainty

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief . . .

1. Very first word of this verse in t/Grk. text is ἤξει

= it will come. Putting this word first in t/sentence is another way to make it emphatic (emphatic position). Done for emphasis.

But the day of the Lord *will most certainly come* . . .

Important because t/FTers mocked t/idea (esp. as it related to final judgment).

A. Certainty

B. Chronology

Chr ==> relates to "when" which relates to t/meaning of ==> "the day of the Lord"?

We noted that t/phrased is

(1) Used in 2 different ways

(a) Historical

Used of a special visitation of God, generally in judgment.

Zephaniah 1:14–15 **14 Near is the great day of the LORD, Near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. 15 A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of destruction and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and thick darkness,**

(b) Eschatological (Final) (i.e. Amos 9:11–15)

Quote worth repeating ==> Dr. Gary M. Burge - prof. of NT at Wheaton College ==>

Therefore this "day" is both near and far, both historical and eschatological . . . It may be a divine visitation within history as well as a final visitation that climaxes history. [s.v. "Day of Christ / God / The Lord" in *Elwell's Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*]

(2) The historical is a foreshadowing of the eschatological

Fulfillment in miniature of what is to come in finality.

AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem.

Eschatological has an additional component: HOPE.

Historical = Doom; Eschatological = Hope.

Eschatological DOTL is 2-orbed: involves judgment and salvation.

Peter here is talking about t/Eschatological Day / The Day of Christ's Personal and Visible Return to Earth & all t/events that surround His Coming.

How are we to live?

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

A. Certainty

B. Chronology

C. Contingency

But the day of the Lord will come . . .

How?

1. ὡς κλέπτῃς

like a thief . . .

That means unexpectedly. Thieves work by stealth. They strike when you're least expecting it.

Not just thieves. . . .

December 7, 1941 - Pearl Harbor - Japanese came like a thief catching t/American forces asleep as it were. I read that when an Army radar operator saw blips on the screen and reported them, an officer said, "It's probably just a pigeon with a metal band around its leg." At that time the attacking planes were fifty minutes away. At 7:55 the first wave of the

attack began, and eight of our battleships and three light cruisers were sunk or damaged, 220 planes destroyed or severely damaged, 2,300 men killed. [Helm, 259]

ALERTNESS / Be ready. Don't be caught sleeping.

1 Thess. 5:4

How are we to live?

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

II. We are to live soberly: understanding that this world is temporary (10b)

That's an important lesson. Our hope is not laid up in what this world has to offer.

A. Characteristics

3 things will accompany that day (testimony to what really matters):

1. The heavens will pass away with a roar

. . . in which the heavens will pass away with a roar . . .

a. The "heavens" harkens back to vv. 5,7

(1) These same heavens will pass away with a roar

(a) Word that's only used here in the NT (hapax) - ῥοιζηδὸν

Onomatopoeic word (sounds like what it describes). English - wail, buzz, knock, mumble, murmur, whisper, zap.

This is a word (royzaydon) that sounds like what it describes (much like the word it translates, "roar." (snakes hiss, whirling of a bird's wings, whoosh sound an arrow makes as it hurtles thru t/air). Roaring fire.

2. The elements will be destroyed with burning heat

... and the elements will be destroyed with burning heat ...

a. These are the elements that comprise the physical universe

Elements=things in a row (building blocks, abc, notes on musical scale).

3. The earth and its works will be exposed

... and the earth and the works done on it will be exposed.

a. Last time ==> Talked about a textual issue centering on this word

Some translations have "exposed" or "disclosed" / others "burned up."

I'm following t/reading "exposed" in this case.

But what does it mean?

3. *The earth and its works will be exposed*

When 1 and 2 come to pass ==>

1. *The heavens will pass away with a roar*

2. *The elements will be destroyed with burning heat*

Everything that men have done, said, thought, failed to do while on this earth will be exposed to God's judgment.

Luke 12:2 "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known."

Romans 2:16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

II. *We are to live soberly: understanding that this world is temporary*

1. *The heavens will pass away with a roar*

2. *The elements will be destroyed with burning heat*

3. *The earth and its works will be exposed*

B. One last comment before we move on to verse 11

It has become popular in some circles to squeeze most, if not all, references to Christ's 2nd coming into t/destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Debate that relates largely to Matthew 24 & t/Olivet Discourse.

1. Theological persuasion out there known as Preterism (from Latin word meaning "past")

There is a heretical strain of Preterism (hyper, full, complete, consistent) that maintains that there will be no future, literal, return of X. Rather, they would say, X returned metaphorically in judgment upon Israel as typified in t/horrendous siege against Jerusalem & her subsequent destruction (including t/Temple) in AD 70.

There's one author who has written some popular books proposing this who says of our passage here in 2 Peter:

The coming of Christ which is in question here is that of His parousia/coming in A.D. 70. [John Bray, Matthew 24 Fulfilled, 274]

a. Contra

As I studied this passage I didn't find a single scholar who even entertained that as a possibility, or who even bothered to mention it, much less refute it.

While I don't have an issue with Jerusalem's 1st c. destruction being a foreshadowing of Christ's Second Coming, I do have a big problem w/the idea that this is what Peter has in mind here.

For one thing ==>

(1) This warning of sure judgment was written to Gentiles in Asia Minor and the judgment is against the false teachers, not the Jews living in Jerusalem

(2) The word παρουσία (Gk. coming) is a technical term for the yet future 2nd coming of JC in glory – the blessed hope of the Church

It refers to an actual arrival; it's never used in the sense of a metaphorical or spiritual "coming."

As my friend Reid Ferguson has written ==>

And in terms of reference to Jesus' second coming, it is tied to the resurrection - they are not separated. His coming and the resurrection of the saints find their terminus in the same event. [personal correspondence]

(3) The promise of 3:9 relates to the fulness of the elect which was not accomplished in AD 70

(4) The 1000 years as a day argument that Peter makes is pointless if he was looking for a coming that was going to precede the death of the last disciple alive when Jesus gave his Olivet Discourse

(5) Early church history argues against any view that denies a future literal appearance of JC to rule and reign forever

If Christ returned in AD 70 why is there nothing in the earliest records of the church (i.e. Polycarp / ECFs) that confirm this?

(a) The Didache ("teaching" or "doctrine")

One of t/most ancient docs. pertaining to early Xnty o/s of t/N.T. It's been called an early pastoral manual, the first catechism, & a glimpse into how Jewish Xns saw themselves in light of their Gentile counterparts.

The document was disc. by Philotheos Bryennios, a Greek Orthodox bishop of Nicomedia in 1873. It was published in 1886. Significant discovery, much like t/DSS.

What makes this document so attractive is its early date. Unlike people, if you are a MS t/more ancient you are t/more attractive you are. Most scholars date t/writing of t/Didache around t/turn of t/1st c. - 80 to 120 AD. Put that in perspective, it could very well have been written w/i t/lifetime of TAJ.

It's not inspired or inerrant. But it is noteworthy & even for those things in it that may not be good theol., it gives us a better understanding of what some segments of t/CH - particularly Jewish elements - were thinking.

This is from chapter 16 ==>

1 Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour the hour in which our Lord cometh.

Sounds a lot like Jesus in Matthew 24:15. Be ready!

2 And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season.

IOW - persevere. Next, the writer turns to the last day's apostasy ==>

3 For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. 4 For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began. 5 Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and

perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself. (cf. Gal. 3:13)

6 And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead; 7 yet not of all, but as it was said The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. 8 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. [Didache 16:1-8]

Irenaeus, who was a student of Polycarp, wrote in t/2nd century ==> . . .this faith: in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all the things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise anew all flesh of the whole human race. . .

The Apologists (2nd c. theologians) ==> Aristides; Tatian; Athenagoras; Theophilus of Antioch . . .

Another 2nd c. Apologist, Justin, writing between 155-65 supports what we've been saying all along about this passage in 2 Peter ==> He suggests in several places that the delay in X's coming is due to t/fact that t/number of t/elect is still incomplete. [1 Apol 28;45; Dial 39]

Apostle's Creed of the 2nd c. and t/Nicene Creed of t/4th c. both affirm as central to t/Xn faith t/yet-future coming of Christ in judgment.

If X's coming was final in AD 70 you'd think some of these guys would have realized it. Acts 1:11.

So ==> How are we to live?

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

II. We are to live soberly: understanding that this world is temporary (10b)

Both of these points relate to the fact that we live in light of two worlds. We're in 1 waiting for /other.

Delay of sorts. We live expecting X's return in glory. We wait.

Mid-20th c. Samuel Beckett premiered what was to become his most powerful play: *Waiting for Godot*. Drama about waiting.

As one reviewer wrote:

The play is not about Godot, who he is or whether he will ever arrive, but about waiting; or to be more precise what people do while they wait.

The two central characters are Vladimir and Estragon. They appear dressed as homeless men sitting alongside a road where there stands a solitary tree.

That's it.

The rest of the stage is empty.

As the curtain ascends, the audience sees these two characters waiting for a figure named Godot (who never comes).

Act 1 opens with Vladimir saying, "Nothing to be done." IOW - "All we're doing here is killing time."

Aimless conversations ensue, often mixed with humorous dialogue. However, midway through the first scene two other characters come onto the stage. One is named Pozzo, the other Lucky.

As night falls and Godot hasn't come, the actors are on the verge of despair.

In Act 2 the characters are both filling and killing time. Only one thing is certain — Godot never enters time.

The concluding dialogue in Beckett's play alternates between Estragon and Vladimir as follows:

E: What's wrong with you? V: Nothing. E: I'm going. V: So am I.

E: Was I long asleep? V: I don't know. E: Well where should we go?

V: Not far. E: Oh yes, let's get far away from here. V: We can't.

E: Why not? V: Well, we have to come back tomorrow. E: For what?

V: To wait for Godot. E: Ahh, he didn't come, did he. V: No.

E: And now it's too late. V: Yes, now it's night.

E: Why don't we hang ourselves? V: With what?

E: You haven't got a bit of rope? V: No. E: Ahh, then we can't.

Silence.

V: Let's go. E: You say we have to come back tomorrow? V: Yes...

E: I can't go on like this. V: Well, that's what you think.

E: If we parted? That might be better for us.

V: We'll hang ourselves tomorrow. *Pause.* Unless Godot comes.

E: And if he comes? V: We'll be saved. E: Well, shall we go? . . .

V: Well, shall we go? E: Yes, let's go.

The curtain falls as they sit motionless.

Can you hear echoes of 2 Peter 3:4? ==>

Where is the promise of His coming?

Our response? Is it about waiting?

vv. 12,13,14 talk about our looking and expecting.

That's different than just waiting. We don't stand around w/our hands in our pockets // sit on park benches looking at t/sky only to return t/next day to repeat t/exercise.

Looking and expecting are pregnant w/purpose, w/movement.

2 Thessalonians 3:11–13 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

That's what we do!

I. We are to live hopefully: knowing that Christ will return (10a)

II. We are to live soberly: understanding that this world is temporary (10b)

Yes, that involves waiting, but not inactivity. Not to be dormant.

Too many Xns fritter away their lives doing things that have zero eternal consequence.

We have 1 life to live that can never be repeated. In all of eternity.

Think about that! Today is April 22, 2012. There will never be another.

Each day is a gift from God, waiting to be opened. It's a gift that cannot be saved; it can't be used tomorrow; it's a limited-time opportunity.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." [Psalm 90:12]

III. We are to live diligently: focusing on the task at hand (11)

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

John MacArthur notes that ==>

"The phrase what sort of people translates the unique Greek term *potapous* which could also be rendered 'how astonishingly excellent you ought to be.'" [MacArthur, 128]

A. Eschatology and Ethics are closely wed together by Peter

How you view end-times events (including your own mortality) ought to have an impact on how you live your life.

1 Peter 4:7–10 **7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

T. Schreiner ==>

"We have a typical feature of N.T. eschatology here. Nowhere does the N.T. encourage the setting of dates or of any . . . kinds of charts."

Schreiner continues:

"Eschatology is invariably used to encourage believers to live in a godly way . . . [not] to withdraw from the world because the end is near and to gaze at the skies, hoping the Lord will return soon. The immanence of the end should function as a stimulus us to action in this world. The knowledge that believers are sojourners and exiles, whose time is short, should galvanize them to make their lives count now." [Schreiner, 210-11]

The great reformer, Martin Luther was once asked what he would do if he knew that X was returning the next day. He retorted, "I'd plant a tree and pay my taxes."

What he meant was, he lived every day in light of the end and would continue each day's appointed tasks, as usual.

Those who disregard the future are not going to live well in the present. Not contrary to Jesus' teaching that we not worry about tomorrow; it's an affirmation of His teaching that we live in light of eternity & be ready for His coming.

1. We are to live teleologically

William Barclay gives 3 excellent examples of what happens when men have nothing to live for but the present. Inscriptions on heathen tombs It leads to *hedonism*: 'I was nothing; I am nothing; so thou who art still alive, eat, drink, and be merry.'

It leads to *apathy*: 'Once I had no existence; now I have none. I am not aware of it. It does not concern me.'

It leads, finally, to *despair*: " . . . what is below? Deep darkness. But what of the paths upward? All a lie . . . Then we are lost."

Without hope, future hope, there is nothing left to live for in t/present.

what kind of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

2. All 3 words are plural

"holies" + "conducts" + "godlinesses"

That's rather unusual. May be that Peter is emphasizing that these good works that believers are to be involved in are multi-faceted.

Given the massive investment of contemporary Christians in the nationalism, materialism, and pleasure orientation of Western culture, this passage should serve as wake-up call. When the Day comes, one's retirement fund will not be important, but rather what one has invested in the kingdom of our Sovereign Lord. [Davids, 289]

a. Whatever you do, you do t/the glory of t/Triune God

You serve // pray // exercise your ministry gifts to t/body, t/CH // raise your children in godliness // love t/brethren // do your work as unto t/Lord // rejoice always // study and meditate on God's Word // minister grace to a lost and dying world.

Lastly ==>

IV. We are to live expectantly: looking forward to the glories of Christ (12-13)

Save that for next time....

Nearly 25 years before *Waiting for Godot* Samuel Beckett wrote an essay in which he described a sense of angst when "the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being."

Think about that . . .

"the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being."

You know people like that? Their world has become so filled w/nothingness, that their menial life is replaced by t/suffering of their own existence.

Maybe you were one of those people // you are.

If a believer

If you're not a real Xn (born again to new life in X)