

The day of the Lord

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[0 : 00] There's a day marked in our calendars that shapes the way which we live today.! It's a day that some are looking forward to you and a day that fills others with dread.

It's a day that will affect, maybe even now, how we are saving and spending our money. It's a day that shapes whether people are naughty or nice.

It's a day in December on the 25th. Can anyone tell me what day that is? Go on, Bethany. It's Christmas Day. You're with me. That's good.

So, like we live in the light of Christmas Day all through the year, but certainly once you get to October, November, December, like that there's another day that we should be living in the light of.

It's not a day marked on our calendars. But it is a day that is coming. A day that is surely coming. It's a day that will fill some with joy and some, as we sang, with anguish.

[1 : 27] It's a day that will bring the end of human history and usher people on into eternity. It's a day that will come suddenly, this passage says, like a thief.

A day when the heavens will disappear with a roar and the elements be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

That, as Peter says, that, as Peter says, is the day of the Lord. Three points for us this evening. First of all, something to understand. Something to understand. In the last days there will be skeptics.

Skepticism, Peter says. Perhaps that's why John Benton's book is entitled God for Skeptics. There will be skeptics and scoffers.

[2 : 29] Verse 3. Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come. They will say, where is this coming, he promised.

Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. Everything just seems to go on and on as it always has done.

The sun sets every night and every morning the sun comes up again. And so the end of history doesn't seem to be a reality.

Round and round life goes, people will say. Birth, population, death. Round and round again. Lion King might put it that it's the circle of life. And so the idea of verse 10, the day of the Lord coming like a thief, is something scoffers will cast out on.

Think about it a bit like this. A few weeks ago I read in the news that in Glasgow, Wonka Land was being advertised.

[3 : 40] And it should have looked something like the picture on the left. But people turned up to something a bit like the picture on the right.

And that might have even been the best part of it. It was advertised as a wonderful, immersive, chocolatey experience. But the reality was something very disappointed.

A half-hearted, barely nothing attempt. A complete con. Police turned up. Actors walked out. It was a disaster.

What's that going to do with verse 3 and 4 and these scoffers? People may hear what we say as Christians.

They may hear the gospel. And they may hear particularly that a day is coming when Jesus will return and judge the world. The wicked will be condemned to eternal punishment.

[4 : 43] And the Lord's people will get to spend eternity in the new creation. But these scoffers are suggesting, where is this?

The reality seems something different. Maybe it seems disappointing. You tell me God is a God of justice and will judge sin.

But it doesn't look like it. There are shocking abuses going on. Awful injustices. The wicked seem to get away with it.

People may hear us talking about a hope of a new world. But the reality that we see is wars rage on. Earthquakes happen.

Volcanoes erupt. Climate change is a real issue. And you say Jesus is coming again. You say God is in control of all this. Well where is this coming that he promised?

[5 : 43] Thousands of years of human history have gone on. Today is here and tomorrow will come. Just as it always has. Peter is writing to us.

As Christians in a world which scoffs and mocks us. On many things. But his example here is in terms of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can you believe this when the reality seems so disappointingly different? What are the things that people may say to us? Well Peter says in verse 5 that they are deliberately forgetting.

Verse 5. They deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

In other words people forget that this world has had a beginning. How can they deliberately forget? It was something I was puzzling over this week.

[6 : 47] How can you deliberately forget? Sorry forgetting is accidental. Well I was thinking back to my school days where there were times where I deliberately forgot my coat.

Or deliberately forgot to do my homework. Don't take me as an example please. People are deliberately forgetting that there's a creator.

That's what Peter says. They deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being. And the earth was formed out of water and by water.

Creation speaks of a creator. The Bible shows us that. Psalm 19 verse 1. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The skies proclaim the work of his hands. Or Romans 1 19 to 20. Since what may be known about God is plain to them.

[7 : 53] Because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world. God's invisible qualities. His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen.

As you look at creation. People should see and understand that there's a creator behind this. And that creator we believe from scripture is God.

And so Peter agrees with these scriptures. People are choosing not to acknowledge that God has created the world. And therefore he has the power to bring the world to an end.

And so he goes on to talk about one other thing. The flood. Verse 6. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

There was a time when God has stepped into human history. And changed the course of things. He brought worldwide judgment in the floods.

[8 : 56] He saw the wickedness that was going on in the world. And he judged it. Proving that God can. And is so able to intervene in nature.

And it's a well documented event. Many cultures and religions even have various creation accounts and flood accounts. And if he's done it once then we can be assured that he will surely be able to do something like that again.

Verse 7. By the same word. The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire. Being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Peter says that rather than water it will be with fire. A fiery judgment to come. That's where the world is heading for. But people don't see the reality.

Maybe just maybe one of the reasons why is that they don't want to see the reality. That's why many people will follow false teachers who Peter's warned us about in chapter T.

[10 : 18] People who help to justify me and my evil behavior. And make me think that God's pleased with me. People following whatever their itching ears want to hear.

A philosopher says this. I want atheism to be true and are made uneasy. Sorry. Yeah.

I want atheism to be true and are made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well informed people that I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God.

It's that I hope there is not a God. I don't want there to be a God. I don't want a universe to be like that. He doesn't want God to be true.

Real. Otherwise he's got to change the way he lives his life. But Christians here in this passage, we're being stimulated to wholesome thinking.

[11 : 26] For us, we must understand that Christ is coming. That the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire.

Being kept for that day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. That's what Peter wants us to be very clear on.

As Christians, this is something important for us to understand. There will be scoffers, but take confidence. Jesus is surely coming. Just as God has brought a beginning to the world and has stepped in in judgment in the flood, so he will bring the world to an end.

Why do you think Peter wants us to understand this? Well, I wondered about this. I think it's helpful for us when it comes to our evangelism.

When we have opportunities to invite people to things like meal with a meaning and Easter. There's Easter flyers now available, by the way. We should want to do that because there is a judgment coming.

[12 : 44] But bear in mind that when we do that, when we talk about Jesus, people may scoff at us. I'm sure we're aware of that. That is a reality of living in this world.

But no, it's not us they're rejecting. They're deliberately choosing to forget that God is creator.

That God is also judge. They want to live their own way. And yet we still and we must share.

And there is hope as we're going to see. God's return has not happened yet. God is patient and we're going to see that in a moment.

And that's a good and wonderful truth to delight in. But just to be a bit different, we're going to pause and we're going to sing.

[13 : 50] We're going to sing of that day of judgment. A day which will be full of great joy for us who know the Lord. And we'll sing, hallelujah, Christ has come.

But we're also aware that it's not like that for everyone, which is a sobering reality. So let's sing these truths to the Lord, to his glory and also to one another as well.

Let's stand and sing. Something not to forget. When it comes to the day of the Lord, we're well aware that it hasn't yet come, aren't we?

Verse 8. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years. And a thousand years are like a day.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you. Not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

[15 : 07] Two things not to forget, I think, here. Firstly, perspective. Perspective. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years.

And a thousand years is like a day. It means, to the Lord, these two days, this weekend, Saturday and Sunday, have been like a thousand years.

But today, no, have been like... I'm confused. A day is like a thousand years. So yes, this weekend has been like two thousand years.

And yet, a thousand years are just like a day. Are you baffled? God's not like us. God is eternal.

He's outside of time. He's not bound by time. And therefore, he is surely not slow. Turn with me to Psalm 90.

[16 : 11] Just for a moment. That's where these words really come from. Psalm 90. A Psalm of Moses. Verse 1 and 2.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born, or you brought forth the whole world from everlasting to everlasting.

You are God. All part of creation. Let's see if we're still awake. What part of creation does Moses mention here in these verses?

The mountains. Mountains. Yeah. Mountains, which seem so firm and established and tall like they were here forever. And yet, before even mountains were born.

Before this world, which people may feel like has just gone on and on forever and ever. Day follows day. Before that was God's.

[17 : 36] Maybe you've noticed. Maybe you haven't. Because it might be hard to see. There's some string up across the middle of the room. It starts from over here.

Creation. Creation. This string. I want us to think about this being time. Okay. This is time.

This is human history that we can look back on. Maybe somewhere in the middle. I don't know. The Lord Jesus came to earth.

Zero. Zero AD, would that be? And then you go down to the end. We don't know when the end of time is going to be, of course. But it's down there at the end.

And here's us. Put a rough estimate of years. 1985 to 2073. At most would be this post-it note on this string.

[18 : 41] I think actually would be even smaller. Maybe something like that on this string of time. But God is bigger than this.

God goes way off there. And keep going. And keep going. And he goes way off there. And keep going. And keep going. Because God is everlasting.

From everlasting to everlasting. You are God. And so God's perspective on time is so different to us.

Big quote from Augustine, which might be slightly baffling. Thy years fail not. Thy years neither come nor go. Whereas ours both come and go.

That they all may come. Thy years stand together because they do stand. Nor are departing thrust out by coming years. For they pass not away. But ours shall all be.

[19 : 45] When they shall no more be. Thy years are one day. And thy day is not daily. But today. Seeing thy today gives not. Are you confused?

Gives not place unto tomorrow. For neither doth it replace yesterday. Thy today is eternity. Thou hast made all things. And before all times thou art.

In other words. God is eternal. And that's a big thing. For us to get our minds around. Isn't it? We're here today. And gone tomorrow. But God is eternal.

His perspective is so different from ours. And so don't imagine. For one moment. That God is sleeping on the job. That he's forgotten to come.

He is coming. And the second thing is there. Second thing not to forget. Is that he is patient.

[20 : 46] And I think this is something. We can rejoice in actually. The Lord's patience. Verse nine. The Lord is not slow. In keeping his promise.

He's not gone to sleep. His perspective is different. Instead he is patient with you. Not wanting anyone to perish. But everyone to come to repentance.

I came across this quote this week. God moves through history with majestic leisureness. It's a nice thought.

He does judge sin. But his timing is not ours. Remember that he is patient. Remember that he is slow to anger.

And abounding in love. And compassion. Maybe it seems like he's being slow in his return. But the Lord's not on the same timetable as ours.

[21 : 41] It's in his nature to have mercy. To show compassion on sinners. And you know what? Many of us in this room are examples.

Of how patient the Lord is. Personally I am incredibly grateful. That the Lord's patience did not run out in the year 2005. When I became a Christian.

The Lord is not slow. Peter says. Instead he is patient with you. And that you seems to be you.

He's writing to Christians. He's patient with you. That puzzled me when I saw that. Reading around. I wonder. Whether that you means all God's people. All God's elect. That everyone the Lord has chosen to save. Will be saved. And so we can trust him in that.

[22 : 46] He is patient. Because all will come. All who will. Will come. Maybe. And I'd be irresponsible.

To not say it. Maybe some of us in this room. Have not come. To the Lord for salvation yet. That if the day of the Lord came today.

We wouldn't be ready. Like Julie heard when she was 12. And. And maybe that's the case for some of us today. Something to think about.

You can be saved. That the. Today is here. Today is a day of salvation. But. But know that the. The Lord is coming.

That day that we can't mark on our calendars. Verse 10 says. Will come like a thief. Verse 10. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

[23 : 40] The heavens will disappear with a roar. The elements will be destroyed by fire. And the earth and everything done in it. Will be laid bare. That day is coming.

We don't know when. We can't plan for that day coming. We make our plans. But. But maybe the Lord will have come by then. Just as we can't plan for a thief to come.

But we. We do make preparations. Don't we. Make sure our doors are locked. Our windows are closed. Maybe we've got. Alarms on our houses. Just in case that day comes.

When a thief. Comes and to try. Tries to steal from us. And so each of us need to be ready. Don't we. Thirdly.

Something to do. Something to do. Just as you. Will. Live in the light of Christmas. Especially when it gets later in the year.

[24 : 42] Maybe you'll work extra hours. Save money up. Be listening to ideas. From people about what presents they might want. Maybe children will be living to try and get on Santa's nice list.

That shapes behaviour doesn't it. So we ought to live. So we ought to live. In light of the return of Christ. And that's Peter's big encouragement here.

To us. As this letter. Draws to a close. Verse 11. Since everything will be destroyed. In this way. What kind of people ought you to be?

You ought to live. Holy and godly. Lives. As you look forward to the day of God. And speed it's coming. That day is coming.

We're looking forward to it. We'll get to be forever with the Lord. Be with the one who has saved us by his grace. Forever in that perfect eternal kingdom.

[25 : 45] A welcome home. And so Peter says. How ought you to live? Well the kind of lives that he was encouraging us to live.

In chapter 1. You can go back and listen to chapter 1. Again. But we were encouraged when we looked at that. That God has given us everything we need.

To live godly lives. It's how we ought to live. In light of the fact that the judgment is coming. And strangely it seems.

Peter says. As you look forward to the day of the Lord. And as you live these holy lives. You speed it's coming. As we're living lives.

That are pointing others to the Lord Jesus. As people may be saved through our life. And our witness. So the Lord's coming may be sped up.

[26 : 43] So we ought to live. Holy and godly lives. To take living as a Christian. Day by day. Seriously. After all.

Where are we going? Where is home? Verse 13. Says. It's where righteousness dwells. We're looking forward to new heaven. And a new earth.

Where righteousness dwells. That's where we belong. And so we must live. Like. We live where we belong. And we look forward.

Don't we? To that time. When we will truly be. Holy. Perfect. No more sin. With our holy God forever.

Heading for that home. Of righteousness. That should characterize us now. And just in case.

[27 : 38] You're not convinced by it. Peter says it again. In verse 14. So then dear friends. Since you are looking forward to this. Make every effort. To be found spotless.

Blameless. And at peace with him. That's how we ought to live. Something to do. When another. Day comes. And the Lord has not come. Maybe we. We sort of think. I wish he'd return now. I wish I was perfect now.

We get frustrated. And just. Longing for that return. Of the Lord Jesus. We'll remember it's coming. When we see awful things. Happening in the world.

And we're just longing to be home. Longing to be where righteousness dwells. Remember the Lord is coming. He's not being slain. We live in light of the reality of that day.

[28 : 38] That day of the Lord that is to come. So something to understand. Scoffers will come. Doubters will say. Where is this coming? Don't let that surprise us.

Something not to forget. The Lord is coming. Be waiting expectantly. Remember his perspective is different to us. He's patient. And something to do.

Live in the light of his return. Live holy and godly lives. That's what Peter wants for us. I think this song is helpful. After looking at this passage.

When this passing. When this passing. When this passing. Thank you.