

Day of the Lord

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Date: 04 December 2011

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[0 : 0 0] I was Satan's temple in the garden. He says to her in Genesis 3, did God really say don't eat from that tree?

So he denies the past. And then he says, surely you will not die to Eve. Surely you won't die. Surely there's going to be no repercussions. Surely there's going to be no judgment.

He denies the future. And of course what happens is she lives in the present. She lives for the now. It says in Genesis 3, when the woman saw the fruit of the tree, she was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

She lives for the present. And she lives essentially for the present. Folks, whenever you hear someone denying the Christian promises, particularly the future judgment, the return of Christ, whenever you hear somebody denying that, whether they are a Christian or an atheist or an agnostic or a layman or a bishop, whenever you hear someone denying that, you're hearing the voice of Satan.

Right. Is everyone awake? It's true. You're hearing the voice of Satan. And this is the backdrop of our passage today.

[1 : 1 6] This is why Peter wrote this little section to his church. Because there were scoffers in the congregation. There were people who thought Jesus was going to come back, you know, within sort of 48 hours of him ascending, right?

And he didn't. So they started thinking, well, Jesus hasn't come back. I'm just going to throw the whole thing in. Can't be true. Everything's nonsense. From verse 3, which is a few verses before what we read, it says this, So 2 Peter 3, 8-13, this Advent reading, this traditional Advent reading, we see Peter directly addressing this issue, directly addressing the lies of the enemy.

And it's jam-packed, these seven verses here. He deals with it in several ways. In the first couple of verses, he deals with it specifically, going, no, no, that's not the case, for two reasons.

And then he warns his church, and then he ends with this call to live a certain way. We'll get to it. But let's begin with the direct responses. Where is your God?

I mean, that's the question, isn't it? If God was real, surely he'd come back. Why hasn't he come back already? Where is your God now, St. John's?

[2 : 4 3] A hundred million people died violently in the last century. Child prostitution, human trafficking, cancer, domestic abuse. Where is your God now?

I mean, that's the accusation, right? And what does Peter say? How does he respond to this accusation that God hasn't turned up, so it's all nonsense?

Well, in verse 8, he says, basically, we're not like God. And in verse 9, he says, you know what? God hasn't returned, and there are reasons why you should be thankful he hasn't quite returned yet.

Let's deal with those individually. The first one, we are not like God. It says here, but do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Now, that is not saying, in God's economy, a thousand years equals one day. That's the mistake of, what's his name? Harold Camping, right? You know the guy who predicted the end of the world on May 21st, and then changed it to October 21st, spent millions and millions of dollars on billboards, saying the end is coming.

[3 : 51] It's happening on these days this year. I mean, this was his, 2 Peter, this was his proof text. He calculated it out. It's boring, but anyway, he got it wrong. Schoolboy error.

A schoolboy error. It says it's like one day. What is it actually saying now here? It's saying God is eternal, so he doesn't experience time like we do. Our lives are short. We are impatient.

You know, back in the days, if you wanted something to eat, you know, you would have to like, you know, get a stick and sharpen the end of it up and, you know, get some other people with sharp sticks and hunt animals and kill them and gut them and, you know, take their skin off and start a fire and, you know, cook it, rotate it and cut it up and dish it out, right?

It's like, like, the 80s or something, you know? Like, nowadays, if we, if we want something to eat nowadays, right, we can just, you know, we can just bust out the ramen noodles one minute in the microwave.

And even then, good example, and even then, though, it's sort of like, oh, come on, man, come on. You know, it's like it's stealing your life from you, right, this one minute.

[5 : 09] We're impatient people. God, God doesn't have, God isn't impatient. God is obviously happy to let a thousand years go by when in our, our calculations, we'd like something to happen right now.

He's happy for a couple of thousand years to go by while He works out His plans. Why hasn't God come back? Verse 8 says, God's timetable is just not our timetable.

The second reason He says, God hasn't come back, Christ hasn't returned, in verse 9, let me read it to you, the Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any of you should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

You know, you could sort of say, well, God hasn't come back, so He's apathetic, or He's weak, or He's not good, or He doesn't exist. I might have told you this story before, but it's a true story, in a Chicago subway station, somebody got really high up, and wrote on the top of the wall, God is dead, signed Nietzsche, and somebody crossed that out, and said, Nietzsche is dead, signed God, and somebody crossed that out, and said, God is dead, see Time Magazine, 1966, someone crossed that out, Time Magazine is dead, signed God, somebody crossed that out, and wrote, God isn't dead, I spoke to him this morning, signed Billy Graham, somebody crossed that out, and wrote, who's Billy Graham, signed God, anyway, it sort of went, it kind of went on, and on, and on, and on, and on, right, and until, until somebody wrote this, God isn't dead, He just doesn't want to get involved, and nobody wrote anything after that, it was as if they'd summed up, our great fear, that God is either dead, or is apathetic,

God's lack of coming backness, is not due to his non-existence, or to his apathy, verse 9 says, it's due to his great patience with us, I want you to think about this, what would it mean for God to come back now, would mean the world, instantly over, would mean us all facing God, making an account, for how we've lived our lives, and for those of us who are Christians, we stand with Jesus, on his good record, but what about our friends, and family members, who don't know Jesus, do you really want God to return now, do you really want him to come back right now, to face God alone, no, no, neither does God, I mean some people say this line, this line, verse 9 here, it makes God a universalist, not wishing that any should perish, but they should reach repentance, it's a hugely debated verse of the Bible, some people are saying, oh it means that everyone all gets to go to heaven, well it's not, because in verse 7 it says, there is a day of judgment, so that doesn't work, there's big arguments, between Calvinist and Armenian, sort of theology about, well is this,

[8 : 23] I read a lot of it, and it's, it's very complicated, and you know, I think the simplest meaning of the text is this, it's God doesn't want anyone to perish, the perishing, does not lie in God's hands, it's in their hands, people choose to be without God, and if you choose to be without God, when you face God, God will say, you will be without me for eternity, you know, people say that hell, is locked from the inside, God doesn't want that to happen, but it will happen, for huge swaths of humanity, so why hasn't he come back yet, well, our timetable is not God's timetable, and secondly, because God wants more people, to come into his family, he wants your friends, the family, he wants people, he wants to give them a chance, to repent, to come to him, Peter now moves in verse 10, to a warning, he says, just because we can't know God's timetable though, it doesn't mean we should be apathetic towards it, in fact, it will come like a thief, but the day of the Lord, will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with the roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up, and dissolved, and the earth, and the works that are done on it, will be exposed, the message here is that, we can't predict when it's going to happen,

December 7th 1941, a radio operator in Hawaii, saw some bleeps on a radar, and told a superior, the superior said, it's probably just pigeons, don't worry about it, it was in fact 350 Japanese bombers, and no one was expecting it, and as a result, America lost, eight battleships, three light cruisers, two and a half thousand men, two or three hundred planes, when God comes back, no one will be expecting it, like this, they weren't expecting this, you can't predict it, some people try, and they're fools, you know, some people say, well the Bible does say that, you know, like in the last days, there'll be pestilence, and war, and famine, and earthquake, and stuff, the Bible is, is very general about this stuff, so that we can't predict it, I mean in 2000 years of church history, when has there been a time, when there hasn't been, earthquakes, and famine, and war, and pestilence, and stuff, you know, it's going to happen, we can't predict it, but we must live, with the expectation, that it could happen, at any point, and then Peter finishes, with a challenge for us, in verse 11, since all of these things, are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people, ought you to be, lives of holiness, and godliness, waiting for, and hastening, the coming, of the day of God, so he finishes by saying, well knowing all this stuff, which is great stuff, how should we live, it's great, you know, he connects our eschatology, which is our idea, of what the end will look like, he connects it, directly, to our morality, our hope, the way we should live, right now, to live well now, means we need to have, a great sense, a secure sense, of the future, and to think rightly, about the future, means it stimulates us, to live well now, now I want to point out, a really interesting, part of this passage, verse 12, waiting for, and hastening, the coming, of the day, of God, what, does that mean,

I mean it sounds like, it sounds like, I mean you think about it, it actually sounds like, it's saying that, that, that, the way we live, can somehow, speed up Christ's return, doesn't it, that's what it sounds like, right, that's what it's saying, like I spend, a lot of time on this, thinking, well it's probably, that doesn't sound right, you know, it must mean something else, but, it just means, what those words mean, when you say them, in that order, you know, it's just like, it just means that, and it should be, no surprise to us, really, if you think about it, like, why has Christ not returned, one of the reasons, so, God can gather more people, into his kingdom, and how can we speed up, his return, by gathering people, into his kingdom, by being about the work, of the gospel, so here's a great prayer, for you this Advent,

Father in heaven, help me to live, in such a way, which hastens, your return, I want to kind of finish, with some words, from Abraham Lincoln, that he spoke in 1863, they're the words, from an official, government proclamation, declaring a day, of fasting and prayer, in the states, almost exactly, 100 and, well, 150 years ago, here's what Abraham Lincoln said, we have been the recipients, of the choicest, bounties of heaven, we've been preserved, the many years, in peace and prosperity, we have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation, has ever grown, but we have forgotten God, we have forgotten, the gracious hand, which preserved us, in peace and multiplied, and enriched, and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness, of our hearts, that all these blessings, were produced, by some superior wisdom, and virtue of our own, intoxicated, with unbroken success, we have become, too self-sufficient, to feel the necessity, of redeeming, and preserving grace, too proud, to pray, to God, that made us, and this is our great temptation, folks, of living in the present, the temptation of Eve, right, this is the great temptation, of us who live, in a place like Canada, and why passages, like this, are so important, and why the season, of Advent, is so important, because it reorientates, it reorientates, our hearts, to our great hope, and our great hope, is Christ's return, it is not our self-sufficiency, it is not our superior wisdom, it is not our technology, it is not our unbroken success, it is Christ's return, and it's recreation, and what a great hope it is, what an amazing hope it is, and that's how the passage finishes, in verse 13, our hope is this,

Christ will turn, and there will be a new heaven, and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells, that is awesome team, that is awesome, perfect union, with Christ and others, and I've been trying to think, of something today, that we can compare it to, have you guys seen, those videos on YouTube, of American soldiers, returning from Iraq, and surprising their family members, any of you guys seen that, oh my goodness, so my in-laws, send me videos right, you know when people, sort of first get on the internet, you just, right, and, and, so I get lots of, lots of mail, and, one day they sent me this videos, these videos of, and what it is, is servicemen, American servicemen, returning from Iraq, or Afghanistan, Afghanistan, and instead of announcing it, to their family, they just turn up, at the home, or the best ones, where they turn up, at their children's schools, the, you know, little kids, so they walk in the door, surprising their uniform, and then the kids, see them, and, and, they, they, they, they, they huge smile, and then they just start, bawling their eyes out, sprint over the, mostly dads, sprint over the dads, wrap their arms around their neck, like, their little bodies, are as close, as you can get, to their fathers, right, and they're crying, and they're crying, and they go, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy,

[16 : 44] I can't let go of each other, it's, it's beautiful, I started watching this video, one day in my lounge, and I started, I started crying, you know, and my wife, she's laughing at me, and then she starts watching them, and she's crying, and, and, it was just, it was a debacle, right, but it's, they, they capture this moment, of pure love, and joy, and union, and, reunion, you know, where everything, is, is kind of perfect, for just, for just a moment, everything is perfect, and I thought of that, as it's the tiniest window, into imagining, what Christ's return, and new creation, would be like, and what that reunion, will be like for us, folks, let's live in such a way, that hastens it, let's live, in the reality, of Christ's return, amen, Dan, you come and pray for us, mate, with what?

alt, can you