

A Glorious Promise from God

2 Peter 3

Prelude

Peter admonishes believers in his second letter to persevere in their confident faith in Christ no matter what. The glorious promise of God is shown in 2 Peter 3:10, 13:

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The Lord promises to do away with a heaven and an earth no one wants to remember in eternity.

The first heaven is stained by an attempted coup over God, and the expulsion of a third of all the angels. The first earth absorbed the lifeblood of Adam's murdered son and has continued to do so to this day for the countless sons and daughters of Adam's race.

But inheriting God's glorious promise will take perseverance by Christians, especially those closest to the end of time. Are we them? Consider what Jesus said in Matthew 24:33-34,

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

We must ask two questions of verse 33 to understand who the generation is in verse 34, "See what things?" and, "What is right at the door?" Jesus preceded these two verses with the answers.

- a. Whoever sees the "beginning of sorrows" described in 24:4-14.
- b. Whoever sees the Antichrist abominate the Temple in Jerusalem, described in 24:15-28.
- c. The second coming of Christ is at the door, described in 24:29-31.

In Gen. 15:13, 16 it looks like a generation is 100 years. In that passage, God told Abram that his immediate descendants would be in Egypt 400 years, but the fourth generation will return to their promised land.

Many Christians believe the restoration of Palestine to the Jews in 1948 was the initiation of the generation that will see the end of time. If a generation is 100 years, that last generation would extend to 2048. And when we look at the condition of the world today, we wonder if there's substance to that theory.

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Regardless of the events of the world, Christians are admonished to persevere and hold on to the glorious promise of God.

Persevere By Remembering the Teachings of Scripture

1. vv. 1-2, Remember with trust those who faithfully taught the Scriptures; the Old Testament prophets, the New Testament Apostles, and contemporary, Holy Spirit-filled prophets, evangelists, teachers, and preachers, who relay the fundamental themes and principles of Scripture.

2. vv. 3-4, Remember our persecution was foretold; that near the end, Christians would be dismissed and doubted, mocked and maligned for trying to warn the world of imminent destruction and impending judgment.

3. vv. 5-7, Remember that the world will refuse to believe both that the earth was once destroyed by water, and will face a second destruction by fire.

Persevere By Remembering Why the Lord Delays

2 Pet. 3:8-9 states that the Lord will fulfill His glorious promise of a new heaven and a new earth after Jesus' comes again and reigns a thousand years, but He delays so that as many as possible will come to repentance.

Persevere By Remembering We Must Maintain Daily Faithfulness

2 Pet. 3:10-12 states that Jesus will come suddenly, and when He does, there won't be any time for people to repent. No one will make it in by the skin of their teeth because they've had fair warning from the Scriptures that Christ will return suddenly and surprisingly. When they first realize these things they must turn to God and maintain a devotion to Him daily.

Persevere By Changing How We Look at the Things of God

2 Pet. 3:13-18 states that Christians who really look for a new world of righteousness change the way they live to make sure they make it into that world. We are warned to not look at the coming of Christ as the world does; they say that it has been preached for millennia and hasn't happened yet. We are warned to wait with diligence, and not be led away from our perseverance.