

February 8, 2009 by Steve Brandon



The Day of the Lord Will Come

2 Peter 3:10-13

1. How will it come? (verse 10)
2. How ought we to live? (verse 11-12)
3. What should be our hope? (verse 13)

Our exposition of 2 Peter brings us this morning to 2 Peter 3:10-13. Consider what Peter wrote, ...

2 Peter 3:10-13

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

As we begin, we need to realize that this is a difficult place in this text to start. It's difficult, because verse 10 is the climax of last week's message (which we mentioned, but only briefly). And so, before we actually begin in our text, I want to spend a few moments reviewing my message from last week, so we can feel the punch line of verse 10.

Chapter 3 begins with Peter focusing our attention upon the most important things that we need to remember. He told us that his purpose in writing this letter was to remind us of the important things, like the letters he wrote, along with the words of the prophets and the commands of Christ.

In verse 3, Peter begins to remind us of the second coming of Christ. He told us that we ought not to forget that **mockers are coming** (verses 3-4). In the last days, there are going to be people who will come and ridicule your faith in the second coming of Christ. They will come and say (according to verse 4), "Where is the promise of His coming?" They will then make the observation that things have remained the same since the foundation of the world. They will argue, "what has been ... is. And what is ... will be." In other words, they claim that all has been the same and all will be the same. Peter's message to us is that we ought not to be surprised when this takes place. People have always mocked God in this way.

Peter continues in verses 5-7 by telling us how to deal with these false teachers by remembering that **all is not the same**. Peter's counsel to us is to remember how the world was created. That was different! We went from nothing to everything. Furthermore, he said that the world was destroyed by the flood. God sent forth a rain upon the earth that flooded the earth and destroyed all flesh that walked in the earth, with the exception of Noah and his household. Just as surely as God created the world in the beginning of time, and just as surely as God flooded the world with water, so also will God destroy the world with fire. All is not the same.

Peter's third bit of counsel came in verses 8-9 in which he told us not to forget that **God is patient**. He is far more patient than any of us can imagine. He can wait a thousand years, and it seem to Him to be only a day! Do you know why the second coming of Christ is delayed? Because of the character of God. He is patient. He is patiently waiting for people to come to repentance. He even delays the cosmic destruction of the world, so that people would turn from their sins. Do you know why Christ didn't return today? Because there were people who repented of their sins today. God is waiting to bring in more into His kingdom, before He brings the world to an end.

But, there will be an end to it all. There will be an end to God's patience. And that's the point of verse 10 in which Peter says, "But the day of the Lord will come." It will come. We need to take it by faith in God's Word. "The day of the Lord will come."

Mockers may mock all that they like. They may claim that Christ isn't coming. But, it doesn't matter, "The day of the Lord will come." It may seem that things in this life have always been the way that they are. People may think that. It may seem that all will continue on forever. But, it doesn't matter, "The day of the Lord will come." God's patience may seem to last forever. He has been waiting for 2,000 years to us. It seems forever. But, His patience will come to end.

There's going to be a day that ends it all. And that's the point of verse 10, "The day of the Lord will come." This is the title of my message this morning, "The Day of the Lord will Come."

Now, before we actually dig into our text this morning, it would be helpful for us to spend a few moments thinking about what exactly the day of the Lord is. The phrase, "the day of the Lord" is mentioned often in the Old Testament. It is used so much so that it's practically a technical term used to describe "God's intervention in the history of judgment." ^[1] This term is often used to describe the day in which God will judge the wicked of this world.

Here are a few examples. In Isaiah 13, we see Isaiah's prophecies against the wicked nation of Babylon. Isaiah writes, "Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty!" (Isaiah 13:6). A few verses later we read, "Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it." God is coming to judge and destroy the world.

In Ezekiel 30, we get the same feel. This time, the prophecy is directed against Egypt. Ezekiel writes, ...

"Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Wail, Alas for the day!
For the day is near,
Even the day of the LORD is near.
It will be a day of clouds,
A time of doom for the nations.
A sword will come upon Egypt,
And anguish will be in Ethiopia;
When the slain fall in Egypt, they take away her wealth,
And her foundations are torn down'" (Ezek. 30:2-4).

And the day of the Lord isn't always against the wicked nations. Joel speaks of how the day of the Lord is coming for destruction upon the unrepentant people of God.

"Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming;
Surely it is near,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and thick darkness" (Joel 2:1-2a).

With these verses as a background, when Peter mentions the day of the Lord, I'm sure that his readers heard it and thought of the coming judgment that would come upon the unrepentant. And that's Peter's point. Particularly here, the judgment will come upon those mockers who are saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" (verse 4). The judgment upon them is sure.

If you want some proof of God's willingness to judge, consider what we looked at in chapter 2. God judged the sinning angels (2:4). God judged the sinful ancient world (2:5). God judged the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6). His delay today is only because of His patience (verse 9). But, there will be a day when God will come and judge those who are mocking His return.

My message this morning has three points, which come in the form of questions. Let's begin with my first point.

1. How will it come? (verse 10)

Verse 10 describes what will take place when the day of the Lord comes. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (verse 10).

At this point, it would be good to mention that Peter isn't putting together a detailed explanation for us of everything that will take place when Jesus comes back. Peter is scant in the details. There is no mention of the rapture, when the Lord will gather together His saints upon His return. There is no mention of any signs that might precede this day. There is no mention as to how long the day of the Lord will be. There is no mention of the tribulation which will come during this time. There is no mention of the millennium. Peter gives us only a few details about this day.

But, listen carefully, these few details were sufficient for those in Peter's day. And, these few details are sufficient for us today. This is because his aim is ethical. Peter isn't aiming to teach us a systematic theology on the return of Christ. He wants for us to think of His return and live appropriately (as we shall see).

With that being said, verse 10 does tell us a thing or two of His return. You can see there that it will come "like a thief." That is, it will come quickly. It will come suddenly. It will be unexpected.

Peter isn't the only one to use this picture. Several times in the New Testament is the coming of Christ described as coming like a thief. This is how Paul described it in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape."

Twice in Revelation it uses this imagery as well. Jesus told the church in Sardis, "If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you" (Rev. 3:3). When the war of the great day of God was coming, God says, "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake" (Rev. 16:15).

The reason why this imagery was used in the New Testament is because it is the imagery that Jesus used when describing His return. Jesus said, ...

Matthew 24:42-44

Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the

house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

When Jesus used this imagery of the thief coming in the night, He gave some counsel: Be ready for His coming! This is Peter's point as well. "The mockers won't be ready. They are mocking the return of Christ. They don't think that it's going to happen. So, they aren't ready. They leave their doors unlocked. They leave their windows open. The thief will come upon them suddenly and plunder them.

Have you ever been the victim of theft? It happens quickly. It often happens when you aren't prepared.

When I was a junior in college, I had a car with me at school. This car wasn't a particularly nice car. In fact, it was a bit on the ugly side. I don't know what sort of car it was, but it was an ugly blue color. It used to be my grandmothers' car, so we affectionately called it, "the gram-mobile."

Well, this car was of little value and was so ugly, that I figured, I was immune any thievery upon my car. So, it was my custom to leave the car unlocked. I had no problems for most of the year. But, I remember, one time, when I received a call from security. They called me up and asked me to verify my license plate. Then, they said that the security guard happened to be patrolling the parking lot where my car was. He startled some guys, who quickly ran away from my car. Upon further inspection, the security guard noticed that my radio had been stolen and that they had attempted to get at my speakers in the back by prying the seat forward to get into the trunk. They did a bit of damage to the back seat of the car.

I had no clue that someone would try to steal the radio out of my car. But, having gone through that experience, I now lock my car, wherever I go. Twenty years later, my practice hasn't changed. It is rare that I ever leave my car unlocked. Why? Because I am ready for the thief to come. This is Peter's point. The "day of the Lord will come like a thief." It's going to be quick and sudden and unexpected. So, be ready for it.

Now, fortunately for me, the thief came to steal things in my car. I have another chance with the cars that I now own. But, such is not the case with the second coming of Christ. You will either be ready or you won't be ready. There are no second chances on this one. We don't have the luxury to learn by experience on this one. There's not going to be a do-over. Rather, we need to learn by faith. We need to be ready now for His coming.

Sadly, there are many who aren't ready. When Jesus told of His return to the earth, He often told of those who weren't ready. Jesus said, "The coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah" (Matt. 24:37). Nobody was ready for the flood to come. They were all out "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matt. 24:38). There was no thought that it would all end. Those of Noah's day believed that life would go on, like the mockers of Peter's day and like the mockers of our day. But, they weren't prepared for the flood that came upon them.

Jesus told of the evil slave, who said in his heart, "My master is not coming for a long time" (Matt. 24:48). And so, "He beat his fellow slaves" and ate and drank with the drunkards (Matt. 24:49). Then, the master returned in a time when he was not expecting it and he was cast out of the house and assigned a place with the hypocrites (Matt. 24:50-51). He wasn't ready.

Jesus told the parable of the 10 virgins. Five of them were wise and prepared their lamps. Five of them were foolish and took no oil with them. It came about that the oil of the foolish virgins ran out, so they went to purchase some more for themselves. But, when they were out in the marketplace, the bridegroom came. The foolish virgins were left outside the wedding feast. Though they pleaded, "Lord, lord, open up for us," they were not allowed into the feast.

This is the point of Peter's comparing the return of Christ with the thief. Peter is warning us of the coming of Christ. We need to be ready. There is no second chance for those who aren't ready. Are you ready?

You say, "How can I be ready?" Believe in Christ. Believe His promises. Believe that Christ is sufficient to turn God's wrath away from your soul. Believe that Christ's sacrifice upon the cross cleansed your sin. Believe that in Him you are pure and blameless in God's sight. Believe that Christ is sufficient for you (2 Peter 1:3). Believe His promises (2 Peter 1:4). Should you believe such things, then you will be ready for His return.

In verse 10, Peter gives us another description of how the day will come. He said, "in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up." These verses describe massive destruction. It's not merely that the thief is going to come in and steal a bit of your goods and take off. No, the illustration is better if you think of the thief breaking into your home, taking what he wants, and then dousing the home with a hundred gallons of gasoline and setting the home on fire, so that it is quickly reduced to ashes.

That's the picture Peter gives. He gives the picture of a total wipeout! After the Lord is through with our universe, there seems to be nothing left. "The heaven will pass away with a roar." This is talking about the atmosphere and sky and stars. With one shout, the heavens will be rolled up "like a scroll" (Rev. 6:14). They will run like a scared kitty-cat. "The elements are destroyed in the intense heat." This is talking about the most foundational building blocks to our universe. Everything that makes up the earth and the sky are gone. If you see it now, it will be gone later. "The earth and its works are burned up." This earth will become a giant fireball. It will burn and burn and burn, until it's gone.

When you think about the day of the Lord, don't think about a wadded up piece of paper that's somehow thrown into the trashcan. Rather, think about a piece of paper that is thrown into the fire. It catches fire and then it goes up in a blaze of yellow light. After it's burned, only a charred remnant remains. That's how the day of the Lord will come (verse 10). It will come suddenly and unexpectedly. There will be nothing left. It will all be gone.

"The earth and its works will be burned up." Are you convinced that the day of the Lord will come in this way? Are you convinced that everything that we see around us will be gone someday? Or, are you living like it's going to be here forever? Perhaps you are hoping in, trusting in, and loving the things of this world. Listen, it's all going away. "The world is passing away" (1 John 2:17). But, Peter told us to seek the world to come. In his first epistle, he described our inheritance in Christ as something that is "imperishable, undefiled and unfading" (1 Peter 1:4). This is so much better than the earth that we are now experiencing. The world may fade away, but not our inheritance in heaven.

How is the day going to come? It's going to come like a thief. It's going to come in great destruction. Let's turn now to my second question, ...

2. How ought we to live? (verse 11-12)

In verses 11 and 12, Peter brings us into some areas of practical application. This isn't all pie in the sky, nice to know sorts of things. No, this has some eminently practical implications. Peter writes, ...

2 Peter 3:11-12

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Since the heavens will be destroyed, and since the elements will be destroyed, and since the earth will be destroyed, we ought to live holy, righteous, and god-fearing lives right now. Here's the principle that Peter shares: **knowledge of the future affects how it is that you live today.**

This happens on the small scale of day to day living. If you are planning on attending one of our small groups meetings this evening (in which the topic of conversation will be the application of this message to your life), then you will pay attention right now to the words that I am speaking. Knowledge of the future affects how it is that you live today. If you know that you are headed off to work tomorrow morning, then you will plan on getting enough sleep tonight to prepare for that time.

This also happens on the large scale. Think of yourself toward the end of your high school years. As you think about the future, you think about the further training that you want to pursue, perhaps it's college or perhaps it's trade school. If you understand the importance of such training, then you will work hard in your classes today, so as to prepare yourself for the future. In the case of those students who are receiving poor grade, my guess is that in most instances, these are the very same students who haven't grasped the importance of their education regarding their future. In other words, they don't know about the future, so they aren't exerting their effort to grow in their skills today. Knowledge of the future affects how it is that you live today.

This happens on the largest scale of all scales as well--our lives in the balance of eternity. Peter says, "Despite what others may be saying, the day of the Lord will come. On that day, everything around you will be destroyed. And since you know that everything upon this earth is to be destroyed, it ought to make a difference in your life. Your pursuits will be in the directions toward holiness."

Now, at this point, it may not be obvious how it is that the coming destruction should urge us on to holiness. In fact, if you think about it a bit, you might as easily conclude the very opposite. If it's all going to be destroyed in the end, then what's the use of living righteously? We might as well indulge the flesh during our days upon the earth. Indeed, there were some in Isaiah's day who reasoned this way. Isaiah wrote, ...

Therefore in that day the Lord GOD of hosts called you to weeping, to wailing, to shaving the head and to wearing sackcloth.

Instead, there is gaiety and gladness,
Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep,
Eating of meat and drinking of wine:

'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die.'" (Is. 22:12-13; see also, Is. 56:12).

Paul even reasoned this way. He said, "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32). And, apart from that first line, "if the dead are not raised," it makes total sense to live for our own pleasures. If we were mere animals, "created to be captured and killed" as food supplies for another species of beings, with no afterlife, then such reasoning makes sense. If Christ is not coming, they why not follow after our lusts, as these mockers were doing (verse 3)?

But, all of those if's are not true. The dead are raised and Christ is coming back. So, we need to live our lives differently in light of that fact. Primarily, it has to do with the fact that for believers in Christ, the day of the Lord isn't merely a day of judgment. The day of the Lord is also a day of rescue. We saw this back in chapter 2. The day of the flood wasn't such a terrible day for Noah. It was the day of salvation for he and his family. They were tucked away safely in the ark. The day that God rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah wasn't such a terrible day for Lot. He was rescued by two angels, who practically dragged him out of the city before the destruction came. And so it is with believers in Christ. For those of us who have placed our hope in Jesus, His return doesn't come as judgment. Rather, His return comes as salvation, as God has wrapped His hands around us and has protected us from His wrath.

Remember what Peter said in 2 Peter 2:9? "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment" (2:9). The "day of judgment" is the "day of the Lord" that will come. And if the Lord is going to come in the future to save us who believe in Christ, then, we need to be prepare for that day by living in "holy conduct and godliness."

The day of God is a day that we ought to anticipate. This is what verse 12 says, "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,

because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" This is a day that we ought to look for with eager anticipation. This is a day that we ought to hasten. We ought to "speed its coming" as the NIV translates it so well.

You say, "Can we actually speed the coming of the Lord?" In one measure, we cannot. The day is fixed. "[God has declared] the end from the beginning" (Is. 46:10). Jesus said, "of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matt. 24:36). The idea is that God has established the day. He simply hasn't made it known.

And yet, Peter here says that we can "speed its coming." You say, "How do you do that?" I think that there are two ways in which this can take place. First of all, we can pray. Jesus taught us to pray in this way, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. They will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). This is a prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God, in which no more will the unrighteousness reign. This is a prayer for God's righteous rule to extend to the earth to the same extent that it does in heaven.

The second way to hasten the kingdom of God is to evangelize the lost. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus spoke of how crucial world evangelization is to the end of time. He said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). And so, as we labor to spread the gospel around the world, we can (at least from our perspective) "hasten the day."

More pertinent to us this morning is this question, "Do you want that day to come?" Can you say with John, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20)? Are things in life too easy for you? Is your home too comfortable? Is your vacation spot too sweet? Is your life apart from Christ too fulfilling? Or, are you longing for the coming of Christ?

The apostle John said it loud and clear, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." Perhaps you need to spend some time reflecting upon your life. Perhaps you don't have a longing in your heart for the day of the Lord, because you are more satisfied with your life here and now than you are looking forward to your life there and then. Perhaps you aren't thinking much about "there and then."

It is the thinking about the future that helps to purify us. Again, John wrote, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). Anticipating the return of Christ presses us on to purify ourselves. I believe that this is what Peter is getting at in the next verse, "But, according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (verse 13). This leads us nicely to our next question, ...

3. What should be our hope? (verse 13)

The simple answer to this is, "The new heavens and the new earth." Look at verse 13, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." As we are "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (verse 12), it's not so much because we are desiring to see the destruction that comes with it. Rather, we are looking beyond the day. We are looking for what comes later. And the new heavens and the new earth are what comes later. They are our hope.

God has promised to come and create the new heavens and earth. Though we may think that the promise is a long way off, God isn't slow about this promise (verse 9). Others may mock, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming," but we know that it is coming (verse 4). God has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises (2 Peter 1:4). We are called to believe them and trust in them.

This phrase, "New heavens and a new earth" didn't originate with Peter. Near the end of Isaiah's prophecy, he mentions the new heavens and the new earth on two occasions. The first is in Isaiah 65:17 and the second is in Isaiah 66:22. Consider the former, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind." He then continues in the next verse, "Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;" (Is. 65:18).

Anticipating the future is a reason for joy and happiness for us. John picked up on Isaiah's imagery and spoke about it in Revelation 21 with these most memorable words, ...

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

These are words of great hope! No more death. No more tears. No more pain! When we think of the day of the Lord, this is what we should think of. We should think of God's promise of the new heavens and the new earth, and it ought to bring great joy to our hearts as we anticipate these things. And yet, others cannot rejoice at these things, because they have only destruction to look forward to receiving on that day.

You can see that in the contrast between verse 12 and verse 13. Verse 12 talks about what will be destroyed. Verse 13 talks about what will be rebuilt. As some anticipate the coming of the day of the Lord, they are anticipating the judgment. But, as others anticipate the day, they are anticipating a place of joy and happiness.

You can see these different destinies in the teaching of Christ. When Christ comes back, there will be a separation between the righteous and the unrighteous. When you read about his coming judgment, you hear of how, "There will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left" (Matt. 24:40). "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left" (Matt. 24:41). "He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:33). "They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away" (Matt. 13:48).

And, the two fates of people give every reason to respond differently to the coming of the day of God. Some will eagerly look forward to the day. Others will dread the day. It all has to do with what you will receive.

A good illustration of this was yesterday, when my wife turned 40 years old. For some, such a milestone can be a very discouraging time. I know of one person who turned 40 and dealt with a bit of depression in growing older. But, Yvonne had something else to look forward to on her 40th birthday. It wasn't a day of doom and gloom for her. It was a day that she was looking forward to, because I had told her a few weeks ago to keep the day open. I had plans for her that day. And so, she looked forward to the day with eager anticipation.

As it turned out, I had arranged for her a seven-course meal for her. But, the meal was at seven different homes of our friends. Our day started at two o'clock down south at the Guske's home, where they served us some appetizers. An hour later, we were at another home for another appetizer. At 4:00, we had soup in another home, followed by salad in another home. At 6:00 we had dinner. At 7:00 we had dessert. Finally, our evening ended up north at the Wriedt's home with an after dinner tea. At each stop I had a note and a present for her. On the note, I affirmed my love for her and told her something that I appreciated about her.

Why did I do this? I wanted to show Yvonne that I loved her. I wanted her to remember her 40th birthday as a time of joy, rather than a time of gloom. As Yvonne looks back on that day, she will look back with happiness and joy, rather than depression over getting older. [\[2\]](#)

When we are in heaven, what a day of rejoicing it will be. "In Your presence is fullness of joy. In Your right hand there are pleasure forever" (Ps. 16:11). Your joys in heaven will far exceed any joy you have experienced on earth. But, we are not there yet. We are here, waiting for that day!

Now, I want for you to think back to a couple of days ago, when Yvonne was waiting for this birthday surprise. She didn't have any clue as to what would happen on that day. She was excited about it. She was looking forward to it. I think that it ended up exceeding her expectations. The glories of the day crowded out all depression of growing older.

We are in the same boat regarding eternity. All is in the future. We don't really know what heaven will be like. But, I promise you, it will exceed all of your expectations. Such an outlook will help you look for and long for that day, even if it is linked with great destruction.

If you are in Christ, you will love and long for the day. If you are unbelieving, you will dread the day. It all depends upon what you will receive that day. For us, who believe in Christ, we have the promise of new heavens and a new earth. Like all promises in the Bible, it's not because we have earned anything in any way. Rather, it's God's promise to be merciful to those who have turned from their sin and have trusted in Christ.

Your hope will show itself in the way that you live. This is the point of verse 14 (which we will examine more closely next week), "Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless."

In closing, I want to illustrate this point by looking at 1 Peter 1:13-16, in which Peter teaches the same thing. He writes, ...

1 Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Peter is telling us to think rightly about what is to come. We are to be sober in our thinking. We are to think and set our hope completely "upon the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (verse 13). Peter had mentioned the glorious reality that we will experience at this time -- an imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance. This is another way of talking about the new heavens and the new earth. And as you put your minds there, your life will lead toward living in a holy manner (verses 14-16). A hope upon the things to come leads to a life that delights to follow in the ways of God, trusting Him.

Now, in our own strength, we don't have the ability to do this. But, as 2 Peter 1:3 says, "God has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." Because God has given us everything that we need for life and godliness, we can live in holiness.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on February 8, 2009 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Volume 2, p. 46.

[2] Lest you think that I am a romantic husband, please think again. Such an event is extremely rare for me. But, this fact is actually to my favor, as the effect of this day went way beyond those who regularly do such things for their wives.