

What Manner? • 2 Peter 3:10-13

Read vs.

The Story

1. During my high school years, my parent's 27 yr marriage blew up.
2. It was a bad time in our home. Their breakup wasn't peaceful.
3. It was really hard on me because there was no clue ahead of time they were on the way to a divorce.
 - a. My dad became an alcoholic over a period of about a year, then had an affair.
 - b. My parents kept me in the dark about it and I woke up one morning to find my nice, quiet little family life was shattered.
 - c. My dad moved in with his girlfriend, we had to sell our house, & my mother & I moved to an apartment.
4. I coped with all the turmoil & pain by retreating into the world of Middle Earth created by JRR Tolkien in *The Hobbit & Lord of the Rings*.
 - a. The books became a *hiding place*.
 - b. Reading allowed me to enter a story where I could play a part ***just by being there***.
 - c. I didn't know how my *family story* would end.
 - d. But I knew how *The Lord of the Rings* ended because I'd already read them.
 - e. They ended ***victoriously!***
 - f. So I climbed into the pages & followed The Fellowship of the Ring on their journey.
5. Then there came the day I committed my life to Jesus.
6. It wasn't long till I realized we're all living in a ***real*** story very much like *the LotR*.
 - a. A great evil has risen in the land that wants to steal, kill, & destroy.
 - 1) It's name isn't Sauron, it's Satan.
 - 2) He delights in brutality & violence.
 - 3) He hates beauty & wants to dominate everything.
7. But there's an Army of Light that stands against evil & overcomes it by the power of the Spirit.
8. You & I are a part of that Army of Light.
9. We really are part of a great story, a tremendous drama that began long ago in a Garden & moves steadily toward its climax.
10. It's ***to*** that climax that we turn today.

Recap

1. Before we do, let's briefly recap what we saw last time in vs. 1-9.
2. Peter reminded his readers that while ***this*** is the time of God's mercy & grace,
3. People mustn't assume judgment's ***never*** coming. It is!
 - a. The reality of judgment is ***historical***.
 - b. God brought the flood in the days of Noah.
 - c. And the fact that the universe ***had a beginning*** ought to be clear evidence there's some great ***goal*** history is moving to.
 - d. What began, will end. Of that end Peter writes . . .

V. 10

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

1. This Planet we live on, as solid & permanent as it appears, will 1 day pass away.
2. The physical universe is a ***theater*** God built to erect a ***stage*** in; that stage is ***Earth***.
 - a. On that stage a great story is being played out.
 - b. When the story is finished, there's no more need for the stage or theater.
 - c. So God will demo deconstruct them.
4. That's what Peter describes here.
5. He calls it *The Day of the Lord*.
 - a. In the OT, the *DofL* is the when God ***intervenes directly*** in history to end evil & establish global righteousness.
 - b. Right now is the ***Day of Man***, & because humans are rebels to God, it's a day of evil & sorrow.

- c. The DotL is just that; ***Jesus' Day***.
- d. He will come to take possession of what rightly belongs to Him.
 - 1) First the Church, then the Planet.
 - 2) In the DotL, no 1 will question who's running things.
- 6. In Jewish thought, History was divided into 2 ages
 - a. ***The present age***, marked by man's rebellion against God,
 - b. & ***The glorious future***, when righteousness reigns under the Messiah.
 - c. The DotL ***begins*** when the present evil age ***transitions into*** the glorious future.
 - 1) It commences with the Rapture of the Church,
 - 2) Runs through the Tribulation,
 - 3) Then really gets rolling with the Second Coming of Christ who reigns over Earth thru the Millennium.
 - 4) It all ends with what Peter describes here; the dissolving of the physical universe & the arrival of the New Heavens & Earth.
- 7. Peter says the DotL will come like a burglar in the middle of the night.
 - a. It'll be ***sudden & unexpected***.
- 8. Listen: As Peter warned in v. 4, things are ***not*** going to go on forever as they are now!
 - a. A great story is being played out.
 - b. There will come a day when the story ends.
 - c. The point is, the end ought not take us by surprise.
 - 1) While the DOFL will come to the lost world of rebel mankind as a thief in the night,
 - 2) It's ***not*** to be that way for the followers of Jesus.
 - 3) In Matt 24 Jesus said ...

⁴² Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

4) Speaking of this same thing, in 1 Thess 5, Paul wrote

Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

9. Paul takes it as a given that believers know what the Bible says about the end times and that when they see certain things coming to pass in world affairs, they'll know they ARE the Last Days & that the DotL is ***imminent***.

10. Here in v10, Peter describes ***how*** the physical creation will end.

... the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

- a. You couldn't find more accurate description for what would happen if the physical *substance* of our universe was let loose.
- b. This is ***proof*** the HS inspired Peter because he wrote long before science understood the atom.
- c. Yet what he says aligns perfectly w/what we ***now*** know about the structure of matter.
- 11. 1 of the first things you learn in chemistry is that like charges repel—opposite charges attract.
 - a. But here's a mystery physicists have yet to plumb – What holds the nucleus of every atom together?
 - b. It's composed of a bundle of protons – all positively charged.
 - c. What keeps the nucleus of every atom from flying apart?
 - d. The explosion of a nuclear bomb is just the nuclei of a bunch of plutonium atoms doing what the laws of physics say Like charges repelling each other.
 - e. We all know how much energy in the form of heat is released when you find a way to overcome the forces that hold the nucleus together.

10. So, what force is it that holds the nucleus together?

11. The physicists say, “???”

12. They may be clueless, but not Scripture. In Col 1 we read . . .

¹⁶For by [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, . . . all things were created by him, & for him: ¹⁷And he is before all things, & by him all things consist [= are held together]

a. Jesus didn’t just **create** everything; He **sustains** it too.

b. **He’s** the One who holds the nucleus of every atom together.

13. When there’s no longer any need to do so, because the universe as served its purpose, Jesus will let it go; & all matter will melt away.

14. While a technically accurate picture of what will happen, it wasn’t Peter’s concern to describe HOW the universe will end.

15. His point comes at the end of v10

both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

a. By “**earth**” he means the physical world.

b. “**Works**” refers to everything humans have made & done.

c. From **Stonehenge & The Great Pyramid** to the **Golden Gate Bridge & Hoover Dam**, all of it will be burned up.

Vs. 11-13

¹¹ Therefore, since all these things . . .

1. All the great works of mankind, all the things people spend their time & energy on thinking that in them they’ll find some meaning & purpose -

¹¹ Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

2. Peter’s challenge is simple yet profound.

3. Since the earth and its works are doomed to dissolve, what kind of a person ought we be?

a. The kind whose lives are defined by things that won’t last?

b. Or the kind whose lives are based on that which is eternal?

4. A couple kids sit down to play a game of monopoly. One is rich, the other poor.

a. As they play, the poor kid secures all the property while the rich kid falls behind & loses the game.

b. When it’s over, the winner has all the property deeds, money & little plastic houses & hotels.

c. The rich loser has nothing, but rises from the game board to climb into the back of his limousine for the drive to the mansion where he **really** lives, for a gourmet meal cooked by a world-class chef.

d. The poor winner wanders down the street to a refrigerator box where **he** lives; his lunch is gleanings from a dumpster.

5. This world is a **Monopoly** game.

a. People think winning means acquire property; houses, cars, & lots of cash!

b. 1 day they’ll realize they’ve played the wrong game & lived for the wrong thing.

c. It may **seem** to the world being a Christian means being a loser.

d. But when this little game of Monopoly is over, the Christian will rise, climb into a divine limo & go home to his/her mansion in heaven where they’ll enjoy glory forevermore.

6. V13 -

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

CONCLUSION

1. Let’s take a sober look at the question Peter asks:

What kind of person ought you & I be?

a. Since all this is going to dissolve, how should we live?

b. What should we **invest** our time, talent & treasure in?

c. By what standard should we **define** ourselves?

d. What’s **important** to to?

e. What kind of person are you Earthly or Heavenly?

2. There are **scoffers** who **mock** that question.
 - a. They decry those who are “so heavenly-minded, they’re of no earthly good.”
 - b. But history has proven time & again, it’s precisely those who are **most mindful of heaven** who’ve done the most good in & for this world.
 - c. Those who are worldly are too busy serving themselves to make anyone else’s life better.

Regret

1. Have you ever looked back over your life and wished there was a time you could go back & redo?
 - a. Not live over because it was so fun,
 - b. But something you messed up & wish you could go back w/what you know now & do over; do differently!
2. I asked Pastor Chris if there was such a time in his life. He said there was; the 3 yrs he spent in 5th Grade.
3. My 30 yr high school reunion was an interesting experience, as I’ll bet it was for many of you.
 - a. While there were a few exceptions, by & large, the teens who’d gone on to do well in life weren’t the popular or cool set in school.
 - 1) They were the quiet, humble, diligent ones who’d studied hard.
 - 2) Years later they were the most healthy & seemed happy.
 - b. Many of the kids who’d been popular in High School weren’t even **at** the reunion.
 - 1) Turns out being popular & cool doesn’t equip you for a successful life as an adult.
4. Millions of people reach their 30’s & look back on their school years w/regret they didn’t use them as they ought.
 - a. A few **less** nights out getting into trouble ...
 - b. & a few **more** at home doing homework could have dramatically altered their future.
5. So let me end by asking this question: If you could go back to the 15/16 yr old you w/all you know now –
 - a. What would you say to yourself?
 - b. What counsel would you urge?
6. In light of what Peter says here & what we know about heaven
What **counsel** would the glorious, future, Jesus-seeing you **urge** the VC you of today?
Are you living for what lasts?