

2nd S in Advent (SJ, SM 12/10/23)

2 Peter 3:8-14 (NIV0211) 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. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. 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. 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 its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

In the name of Christ our Savior, Dear Fellow Redeemed:

Have you ever confused 253 days and a single second of time? Probably not. But that's roughly the same difference of time between a single day and 1000 years. (Note - exact is 253.4 days).

Peter helps us understand how different God is from you and me. **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.** We sometimes think it takes an eternity of waiting when we have to twiddle our thumbs for just 5 minutes time.

Even though time is so very different for God than it is for you or for me, Peter tells us today that as Christians, we may:

- Hasten the Day of Christ's Coming
1. By not abusing God's patience
2. By being prepared for the Last Day

1. By not abusing God's patience (vv. 8-11)

Peter wants us to know that God waits patiently for the sinners of this world to repent of their sins and turn back to him in repentance. Our God is **not slow in keeping his promise**. The picture Peter gives us here is of someone standing around, loitering, a person standing around doing nothing when he should be doing something. In other words, a lazy person.

But when we wonder why God is taking so long in coming back and ending this wicked world once and for all, Peter shows us the Lord has a reason for waiting: **Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

God is not slow. Nor is God impatient or hasty. He is full of patience and grace, giving the sinful people of this world every last second of opportunity to repent and be saved. We know that God **wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** (1Ti 2:4 CSB)

Scripture warns us not to waste the time that God has given us. **Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.** (2Co 6:1 CSB)

God in his love for the people of this world sent his One and Only Son because he didn't want the souls of this world to spend eternity in hell, separated from him and his love.

But when we treat God's forgiveness as cheap, as something of little importance, when we act as if our sin doesn't matter, as if Judgment Day is a long, long ways away, then we are abusing God's patience.

Make no mistake. The fact that the Last Day has not yet come does not mean it is never coming. **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.**

2. By being prepared for the Last Day (vv. 12-14)

Judgment Day may seem slow to us but that's only the Lord's patient waiting for us. But because it is certainly going to come, Paul warns us to be prepared for that day.

Peter tells us that we "hurry" or hasten Judgment Day by being fully prepared for Christ's coming.

We know **the day of the Lord will come like a thief**. We don't have to worry about Judgment Day coming at a specific time or date because some astrologer or false prophet predicted. When Jesus does come, it will be totally unexpected. It will be complete and total surprise.

But what will happen on Judgment Day? Peter tells us about **the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat**. Do not procrastinate hearing the Word or coming to church to be fed from the living bread of our Savior's Word, that Jesus promises will satisfy our spiritual hunger. Don't put off drinking from the living water that Jesus promises we may drink of it and live forever. We desire to accept our Lord's gracious invitation to receive his body and blood **given and poured out for us** for the strengthening of our faith and the forgiveness of our sins.

So how should we live as we await the Lord's return?. Paul urges us to **live holy and godly lives** and he gives us an very interesting reason: because by living this way we speed **the coming of Judgment Day**.

This sounds strange to us at first. We probably think, "Well, Judgment Day is going to come when it's going to come, and nothing we can do will change it." But there are two ways that as Christians we do have an impact on the coming Judgment Day, at least from a human way of looking at things.

First, we know that Judgment Day will not come until the last soul appointed for eternal life has come to faith. The last of those who God has chosen to be saved must come to faith before our Lord may return. And when you and I share the Word with other people, we hasten the day of the Lord's coming.

Secondly, because of his love for those that he has chosen, God will not allow any of those whom he has chosen to be lost. So Scripture speaks of God shortening the end of the world for the sake of the elect. (Mt 24:22)

Christmas isn't a thousand years away. It's just two weeks away now. How different our God is, how differently he experiences time than you and I do. Even so, it's important for us not to stall, not to delay our preparation for that day and in the process, become guilty of abusing God's patience.

And as we await our Lord's return, we prepare for the end of this wicked and evil world – as the news constantly reminds us – by living holy and god-pleasing lives as we hasten our Lord's return. Amen.