

The Study of 1 & 2 Peter

Questions: 2 Peter 3:11-18

Eternal Hope

Our brother Peter starts his discussion on false teachers (II Peter 2). The scoffer denies Christ's coming. However, he refutes this claim very simply in telling us that fire will destroy the sky, the earth and everything over it (V10), and a new heaven and a new earth will start in their place (V13). He wants the new converts to abstain from heresy. His message is clear. He doesn't confuse it by talking about the rapture, the tribulation, the millennium, etc. The false teachers hope was in the world. They were devoted to it (1:4; 2:5; 20; 3:6). Their hope was in their personal freedom (2:9), the pleasure of their sexual indulgences (2:2, 14), their love of money (2:14-16), and their love of human praise (2:10, 18). Their longings and insatiable thirsts would not be met in Christ but in selfish gain. Peter reminds them again that the world is going to burn. Don't you understand? Don't base your hope on your sexual pleasure, your money, or human praise. It's all going to burn!

Our brother Peter connects what Jesus himself said in Matthew 24:42-43 when he says the day of the Lord will come (II Peter 3:10). No matter what the false teachers teach, the evidence against them is overwhelming. The day of the Lord would be unexpected, without warning, and disastrous for the unprepared. But for the prepared, it will bring deliverance, a completion of their salvation, and a living hope realized in the reality of a new heaven or a new earth. The day of the Lord was the future time when God would vindicate his holy name, bring judgement on the unbelieving, and gather his people for a new kingdom of righteousness and perfect peace. The great day, "The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Zephaniah 1:14-18). The destroyed earth ushers in the changed earth (completely new heaven and new earth) where righteousness dwells. Isaiah 65:17 promises us "See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."

The big picture of 1 and 2 Peter is a confirmation of the truth and promise that we have a living hope based on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we revisit 1 Peter 1:3-4 Peter reminds us, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". Peter begins and ends with the declaration of a living hope in Jesus Christ our Lord. He has appeared in these last times for the sake of you. "Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (I Peter 1:21). The nature of hope in Christ is a certainty (Romans 5:5). There is no other hope that will not disappoint. What a difference it makes that we have a hope that will not disappoint. Is there anything we could compare it to? (Romans 8:18) Our faith and hope is in God. Jesus gave us a living hope when he was raised from the dead

We have a promise of heaven coming down to us and transforming the earth with new bodies, the redemption of our spirits and living in the kingdom of God. Just think about it, we will all be together: eating, dancing, loving, and hugging. In Revelations 21:3-4 we are confirmed of the promise, "The tabernacle of God will be among men, and he shall dwell among them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be among them, and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have

passed away. The New City Catechism states, “we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be forever freed from sin in a renewed, restored creation”.

The way we live now is controlled by our future. When we understand our blessed future, our present life is eternally changed. It’s the passing away of the earth and its world that should motivate us to holiness and godliness (V11) wrapped in a living hope! Thurman is an expert on the negro spirituals. He states that the meaning of the negro spirituals is other worldly and based on the new heaven and the new earth where Revelations 21 is a reality. John MacArthur tells a similar story of visiting and teaching Siberian Christians with their ice covered homes and little or only horse meat for food. He began his teaching and was interrupted with the plea, “Could we learn more about heaven?” He gave them hope that could not be taken away. Similarly, 1 and 2 Peter was planted in the soil of Christian persecution and difficult circumstances. Peter was there reminding them of the undefiled and imperishable hope through Jesus Christ from the dead. The thread of the biblical seed of hope weaves through both books, and the blood of the martyrs waters the seed.

Living hope taken into our hearts changes us into peaceful, spotless, and blameless people of God (II Peter 3:14). There is a parallel to this verse in 1 John 1:7, “If we walk in light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”. The fellowship with one another parallels living at peace and the blood of Jesus cleansings us from all sin parallels being without spot or blemish. Both Peter and John are encouraging us to do the same thing. The conclusion of 2 Peter brings us back to the beginning where Peter stirs us by way of reminder. “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

He is giving Christian women the same message: don’t place your hope in this world! Don’t hope in money, status, the good opinion of others, your family, or your goodness. You get the idea! There is only one hope that will not disappoint and that is Jesus Christ (Romans 5:5). He is our highest hope and our highest good (Col 1:2, 1 Peter 1:3-4). Now as beloved daughters, we share in the life of God by means of Christ and the Spirit living in us (Romans 8:9, Galatians 2:20) and we “grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.”

John Calvin

Elyse Fitzpatrick

John MacArthur

John Piper

Timothy Keller