

We come this morning to 2 Peter 3, verses 8-13. 2 Peter 3, verses 8-13. Peter began this chapter by stating that there were false teachers who were mocking the idea that God intervenes in his world. And they were mocking specifically the idea that he would ever intervene in judgment. And Peter responded to that idea by saying that God has intervened in the past. He created the world. And you can think, for example, he says of the events of Noah and the flood when he intervened and he brought judgment. And so he's arguing and stating that God has judged in the past and he will bring about his final judgment just as he declares in his word that there is a judgment day coming.

With these remarks, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and preaching of His Word. Father, unless Your Spirit goes forth, the reading and preaching of Your Word is done in vain. But, O Lord God, should You send forth Your Spirit into the hearts of believers here this morning, they would be edified. If there be any unbelievers, they would be brought from death to life. And so we pray, Father, that You would pour out Your Holy Spirit for Your own name's sake. In Jesus's name we pray, amen. 2 Peter 3, verses 8 through 13. This is the word of God.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn, But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Let's end the reading of God's holy word. May he bless the proclamation of it to our lives. On our passage today, you see the day of the Lord. And the day of the Lord is a reference to the day that is coming when Jesus Christ will return and judge the living and the dead. So in our passage you see the day of the Lord. And I want us to consider this morning the day of the Lord underneath three headings.

First, God's time. Second, God's ways. And third, God's calling. So first, God's time. You see God's time in verse 8. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. Peter's point in verse eight is clear. God's time is not our time. It's not simply that God's timing is not our time, timing. It is that God's time is not our time. meaning that the entire way that God relates to time itself is different than the way that you and I relate to time.

God, he is stating in verse 8, is eternal. You see, the scoffers seem to think that God is being slow. Why hasn't he come yet? He's running late. But the reality is the scoffers haven't yet understood, at least not the implications of, the fact that God is eternal.

There is no slowness for God. God is outside of time. We speak of God's being infinite. God's infinity in relation to space means that he is not contained by space. Do you understand that God is not contained by heaven? That God is in a special way present in heaven, but he can't be contained by any space. He is the creator of space. He is

infinite. And in his infinity in relation to time means that he cannot be constrained by any time. He is the creator of time. And this is why he is sometimes called ageless or the lord of time, sovereign over time.

And this means that he's not being slow as the scoffers suggest. They don't understand that he doesn't even relate to time as you and I relate to time. Here's how the Puritan George Swinnock captured God's eternity. And if you scratch your head as I read this, it's because it's beyond our ability to comprehend.

His duration, that is God's, knows nothing of former or latter, past or future. His essence is not bound, but he enjoys his whole eternity every moment. Nothing has been added to God's duration since the creation of the world. It is incorrect to say God was. For none of his duration is ever passed with him. It is also incorrect to say God will be. For none of his duration is ever future with him. His name is I Am, Exodus 3, 14. Not I was or I will be. His full eternity is always present.

Christ declares to the Jews, before Abraham was, I am, John 8, 58. It seems like poor grammar, but it is proper theology. If an angel had spoken, it would have been proper for him to say, before Abraham was, I was. If Adam had been alive in Christ's day, it would have been proper for him to say, before Abraham was, I was. But it was most proper for Christ, who is God, to say, before Abraham was, I am.

His duration is without any succession. The whole of it is ever present. So Peter here, in verse 8, by referencing Psalm 90, which we've just sung together, is saying God is eternal. A day for him is as a thousand years, not literally, but metaphorically.

Man, though, is tempted to think that God isn't going to judge because, well, everything appears, as man sees it, to just carry on as usual. Tomorrow will come because yesterday came and today came. Business as usual. This is just the way things are. If there was going to be a judgment, surely God would have done it by now. I mean, after all, it's been roughly 2,000 years since Jesus came. And Peter says, on one level, what you've done is you've failed to understand the character of God, that he is an eternal being, the only eternal being.

But what does all this have to do with your life? Well, it's a reminder to you that God is eternal, which should bring you humility and comfort in your life. It should bring you humility and comfort in your life because you go through things that don't make a whole lot of sense to you. You wonder sometimes, where is God?

What is he doing? But this doctrine reminds you that he is the Alpha and the Omega, that he knows the end from the beginning. You only know right now. You only know the things that plague you in this moment. But God knows the whole story. And so He might even be, and is in fact, orchestrating the things that you don't right now understand for good purposes. He is. And because he's eternal, you can know that he knows what he's doing because he does see the end from the beginning.

What right now to you appears to be a grave mistake, he knows is being used to accomplish great and good ends because he is the eternal God. So it demands of us humility, doesn't it? It demands of us repentance when we're

afflicted and we lash out against him. It demands that we receive whatever the providences of our life are with a sense of humility, knowing that he knows what he's doing.

He is eternal. He is God. So when you ask that question, what are you doing? What's happening, oh God? When those questions arise in your heart, a text like this says, he is eternal. Remember his character and humble yourself underneath him. And in particular, as this relates to the judgment, it means he's not slow. He is coming and it will be in his time. And he does not relate to time as we do.

It could be 10,000 more years. or more, or it could be before this service is over, but he is coming. But secondly, let us see God's ways. You see this in verse nine, the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish or that all should reach repentance. You see here in verse 9 that one of the reasons God is delaying his return is because he's patient. The judgment is being delayed because he is patient. This is his way. God's ways are ways of patience. God's ways are not our ways. We are impatient. If you were God, you would have brought the judgment down by now upon humanity. but you are not God.

I remember I used to work with the Belhaven University football team and in God's providence one of the players was saved. And for months after this man was converted, if not every time, it seemed like every time we would spend time together, He would just marvel as he was reading through the Old Testament for the first time in his life that God hadn't killed these people yet. He just couldn't believe it.

He was absolutely flabbergasted that God had not brought down the hammer on all these people who were constantly disobeying him. But then he had the sense to go, essentially, I don't know why he hasn't done that to us yet today either. None of us are doing any better. Why hasn't God just executed judgment?

He knew God should have done that to him. He should have been executed. He was living in rebellion to God up till the day when God saved him. And he understood that he deserved to be executed, destroyed underneath the wrath of God. And he marveled that God was patient with him. patient with him though for a purpose, and that purpose was to bring this man to repentance.

And that is why God is patient with you here this morning too. Even you who are in Christ, he's being patient with you as you battle those ongoing sins that you might be repenting of them, that you might be growing in personal piety. And if you don't know Christ, don't think you're alive today because there's no judgment day coming. He's left you here on earth for a purpose. And that's that you would repent of your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. That's why you exist. So either repent or you will perish. That's what verse nine is declaring to us.

So he's not being absent at this time. He is merely being patient. Writing on this verse, Stephen Myers, who's a professor at Puritan Reform Seminary, talks about how this verse tells you the reason time exists is so that the gospel might be preached until all the elect are saved. That's the reason time continues to roll on. Here's how he writes.

The continuation of time is for the in-gathering work of the gospel. That means that each individual living Christian presently inhabits the earth rather than dwelling in the blissful realms of glory so that he or she can tell others that there is salvation in Jesus. That in-gathering mission is the reason for the continuation of history.

If the church gives itself to foreign or even peripheral, to things foreign or even peripheral to that gospel work, it is quite literally abusing the patience of God. Time rolls for the purpose of the gospel work, but the church uses that time for other priorities. So time continues on so that we, the church, might be preaching the gospel until all of the elect are saved.

Now there's one exegetical comment I would like to make about verse 9. Is verse 9 suggesting that God decrees to save all people? Look at the latter half. Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. When I answer that question, what we need to do is instead of just reading the latter half, read the whole verse. So let's read the whole verse. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

So to whom does the any refer in verse nine? And as Sproul, and if you've listened to much Sproul, you know how he can communicate. As Sproul says, does the any refer to giraffes? Who's in view? What is going on here? Of course it doesn't refer to giraffes, but who does it refer to? Does it refer to all people?

All you need to do is go back to that you. So God is being patient toward you, not wishing that any of you should perish, but that all of you should reach repentance. And who are the you? Well, you just gotta go back to the start of verse eight. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved. These are the beloved who are in view. These are the elect that are in view. And he is saying, beloved, God is being patient because he wants He will, he declares, he decrees that he will save all of you, all of you who are elect, all of you who are among the beloved.

But what is knowing anything about God's ways really matter? You have work tomorrow, you have grandkids, you have things to do that perhaps seem much more pressing than knowing the ways of God. But actually it matters a great deal, doesn't it? Because What you think about God, in large measure, will determine how you relate to him. What you think about God, in large measure, will determine, it does, whether you actively think it or not, what you think about God determines how you relate to him every single day.

And this is true even on a friendship relationship. So think about this. You have a friend, but you believe that friend is untrustworthy. Don't you think that's going to affect how you relate to that friend? You're going to relate differently because you think that friend is untrustworthy. Or you have a friend and you think they're impatient. And now you're going to relate to that friend a bit differently because you believe they're an impatient person. Well, when it comes to God, this text is saying that the God who is, is a patient God. Therefore, you should relate to him as one who deals with you patiently. He does not cast off his children. He does love his people and he deals with them patiently. So keep repenting, keep turning back to him. He's not given up on his children and he won't do it.

But the truth is sometimes The human heart does not believe the God of Scripture is patient, even though he has declared himself to be. But when you embrace that reality, it will, if understood rightly, stir you up to more repentance, won't it? Because if you don't believe he's patient, you're not going to stop sinning. What you're going

to do is you're just going to try to hide those sins and deal with them on your own and keep pretending like they're not there. But when you believe he's patient, you'll be open with him. You'll go to him again and you'll confess openly and honestly because you believe that he is a patient God who loves his children.

But is that how you view God? Do you understand that though he is a God of wrath and he will judge the world for sin, he is also a God of mercy who patiently saves sinners? And if you understand this, it really should stir you up to love for him and affection for him and a desire to please him and obey him, not to abuse his patience. But thirdly, God's calling, God's calling.

Verses 10 through 13. You see that there's a calling for personal holiness based on this fact that the day of the Lord is coming. He says in verse 11, since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to live, ought you to be in the lives of holiness and godliness? The fact that this judgment day is surely coming is underscored in these verses. You read in verse 10 and 11 and 12 that these things will all be dissolved, that these things will all be burned up.

And the impact this should have on you is that you should want to live for the world to come. If all of the world around you will be dissolved and burned up, then why would you live for the things that are going to be dissolved and burned up? As one person I was listening to this week put it, are you consumed with the things that are going to be consumed? Why would you want to be consumed by things that are going to be consumed? There are things that will last. Living for God is what will last. Living for eternity is what will last. And so that is where your value ought to be as a Christian.

You should be so heavenly minded that you're earthly good. It was said of one of the Puritans that heaven was in him before he was in heaven. That should be your desire. You should want to be able to say that about yourself or wish that other people could say it about you, that heaven was in you before you were in heaven. You were living for another world.

This future hope that you have as a Christian calls for cutting off all worldliness. You should cut it all off because this world is passing away. Calls for you to reflect upon your use of time and your priorities. How do you use your time? What are your priorities? Are your priorities only for this world? Are your priorities eternal? Calls you to reflect on your affections.

What are you most passionate about? What are the greatest affections of your heart? Do you love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, and with all of your strength? and your neighbor as yourself, you will have that love for God that you ought to have when you're not loving this world as if it's what matters most, because it's gonna burn up. You should love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, and with all of your strength.

And you should be repenting of your sins because You love Jesus Christ. These things are gonna pass away, but your love for Christ should stir you up to be repenting of your sins, to be putting to death worldliness in your life, because this life is fleeting and it will burn up. So that's what it means for the Christian. That's the calling for the Christian here, is to live with this hope, this hope that is coming. There's a day coming for you, Christian, in which

righteousness dwells. And that reality should stir you up to love God and want to live for God. You shouldn't simply be repenting out of fear. You should be repenting because you love God. But also this has a calling on the unbeliever that's quite obvious, I think, and that is you will be consumed. You will burn up unless you repent.

There is no hope outside of Jesus Christ. If you're in Jesus Christ, this day of coming is not a day of terror. I mean, there's an appropriate trembling, you're going to be in the presence of God, but it's a day of joy for the believer, a day of reverent worship, a day of wonder and amazement that you, a great sinner, have been rescued from the great wrath of God through Jesus Christ and you worship and you're filled with joy. And we can't even really begin to imagine what that day will be like. But outside of Christ, it will not be a day of joy. It will be a day of indescribable horror. And so the calling of the text then is to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that you might be saved. The day that will be a day of wrath for you if you do not will be a day of rejoicing.

Well, let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you and we praise you and we thank you for the coming day of the Lord. We do praise you for it. We look forward to it. We look forward to it because it helps encourage us to live for that day even now. We also look forward to it, Father, because we can't wait to see our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We can't wait to see the one who gave himself up for us.

We can't wait to bow and worship him without ending, without ceasing, finally not having our sins so easily entangling us and stirring us up to all sorts of wickedness and our own flesh wandering off into all sorts of immorality. We delight that we know there's a day coming when we will bow and we will worship you as we ought. And we ask that, oh God, each of us in this room would begin more fully to live righteous lives as we look forward to that great day. Oh Lord, if the worldliness that entangles us, we pray that you would sovereignly pour out your spirit that we would repent and turn from those things.

And instead of being entangled by worldliness and things that will be consumed, we would marvel at our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and really believe that since we have him, we have all that we need and more. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.