

Sunday School Lesson for December 28, 2025
Luke 21:27-28 and Second Peter 3: 8-14

Happy New Year and welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this last Sunday of 2025 and the fifth Sunday of Advent, we're celebrating the first advent of the Lord Jesus at Christmas and looking forward with great expectation and anticipation to His second advent--the time when He returns in glory to usher in a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells as we read in Luke, chapter 21, verses 27 and 28 and Second Peter, chapter three, verses eight through fourteen.

I trust you all had a wonderful Christmas--enjoying wonderful times with family and friends--eating delicious meals and sharing gifts--all the while celebrating the greatest Gift that was ever given--the greatest Gift we could ever receive, and the greatest Gift we could ever share. And the good news is that Jesus didn't remain as a baby in a manger. He grew and became a man Who lived a perfect life, completely without sin, so that He could take upon Himself the punishment for our sin. That's what His first advent was all about.

You probably spent months thinking about and preparing for Christmas. Making a list, checking it twice so that everything was ready and in order when the 25th of December arrived. If we do so much to prepare to celebrate for His first coming, how much preparation should go into ensuring that we're ready to welcome Him at His second coming? That day is just as sure as December 25th, but only the Father knows when it will be, but He is coming--of that we can be sure. In the fullness of time, He will split the sky and descend just as He ascended after the resurrection--this time to destroy all wickedness and usher in a new age with a new heaven and a new earth to restore an unbroken fellowship with Him--all in fulfillment of prophecy and His own words about His soon return.

The writer of our lesson says, “The day of Jesus’ return is certain and coming, but--so far--it’s not today. We find ourselves much like the Israelites of long ago--waiting. Which begs the question: How then shall we wait?”

Part of the answer is found in our texts today from Luke, chapter 21 and Second Peter, chapter three. In Luke 21, Jesus and His disciples are in the Temple. As the disciples marvel at the beauty and splendor of the Temple, Jesus shocks and surprises them by saying in verse six, “As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” Naturally, the disciples were horrified by His words, for the Temple was, for them, the heart of their religion, the symbol of their national heritage, and the soul of their eternal hope. If it were to be destroyed, how could they and their religion survive?

So, they asked Him, “Teacher, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” In His answer, He spoke of false prophets who would come, wars that pit nations and kingdoms against each other, natural disasters, persecution of His followers, “signs in sun and moon and stars,” and even “the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” “And then,”--verse 27--“they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

When we look back to the Old Testament, we find these images of the upheaval of the physical universe used to describe the political and social consequences of the fall of other great nations. For example, in Isaiah, chapter thirteen, Isaiah pronounces judgment on Babylon with these words: “See, the day of the LORD is coming--... The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.” In Ezekiel, chapter 31, verse seven, we read of God’s judgment on the Pharaoh of Egypt: “When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon

will not give its light.” Our Lord uses this same prophetic imagery to portray the greatness of the doom of those who will experience the judgment of God.

These events, whether symbolic or actual, will precede the return of Jesus Christ. His long-awaited, glorious appearing will happen just as the angels announced to the disciples when the Lord ascended into heaven after the resurrection--Acts, chapter one, verse eleven: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” This, by the way, was also the vision that Daniel wrote about in chapter seven, verse thirteen of the book that bears his name: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.”

When the Lord Jesus was called before the high priest after His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Caiaphas said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Matthew tells us that Jesus replied, “Yes, it is as you say. But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” John reminds us of what the Lord said in verse seven of the first chapter of The Revelation: “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.” The clouds will be creation’s majestic backdrop for the Lord’s return in glory.

Paul speaks of this moment, writing to the followers of Christ in Thessalonica, in his first letter, chapter five, and verse thirteen: “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,

with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Of course, the whole reason for Jesus telling His disciples all this was so that they would be ready when the moment of His return comes. In the gospel of Mark, chapter thirteen, verse 33, Jesus concludes His answer to this same question asked at another time by saying, “Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.” In the same way, Luke, in our text for today, records the Lord Jesus urging them, “when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Jesus was leading His disciples away from the far less significant question, “when will these things be, and what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?” to the greater reality of being properly prepared for His second advent whenever it would come.

It’s a poor reflection on believers who are more concerned about getting the timing of the Lord’s return right / than living in watchful readiness for His return. At least two faith groups--one of which is certainly not what we would call a Christian denomination--but at least two major faith groups emerged from the late 19th century preoccupation with the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. This fervent focus on the Lord’s return is not limited to a time two hundred years ago. Just this year, a pastor in South Africa went viral on the Internet with his claim that “He”--referring to Jesus Who appeared to him in a dream--“says to me on the 23rd and 24th of September 2025, I will come to take my church.” But the Church is still here.

So, in order to focus their thoughts and our thoughts away from a question of “when” to a question of “what do I do now?” the Lord Jesus concludes the conversation in Luke, chapter 21, by telling them--verse 36: “But stay awake at

all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Peter also wanted the believers he was writing to / to be prepared for the Lord’s second advent. In the opening chapter of his second letter, Peter describes how the knowledge of God that comes through a personal relationship with Him gives us access to the life we were originally created to live. In the second chapter, he warns us about those who would distort that knowledge to promote behaviors that are morally and ethically corrupt. In the third chapter, he speaks about those he calls “scoffers” who brashly proclaim that the Lord Jesus isn’t coming back and calls us to consider how we are to live as the Day of the Lord approaches.

In the first three verses of chapter three, Peter gives voice to these scoffers, and, in verse four, he tells us, “They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’” What they fail to remember, Peter tells us, is that there is a divine purpose in everything that exists--first--that it was brought into existence by God, and it can be destroyed by God as it was by the Flood of Noah’s day. Even now--verse seven, “the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”

Second, the Lord will surely keep His promises about the judgment He will bring in the last day / in His timing / which is far different from the way we understand time. This is what he writes in our second focal text for today beginning in Second Peter, chapter three, verse eight: “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.”

The scoffers had said, “Everything continues just as it was from the beginning of creation,” so, in their minds, it was foolish to believe in a judgment to come. Concerning those scoffers who dared mock “the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Peter reminds his readers and tells these scoffers that, even though they haven’t yet seen the Lord return, it will certainly happen, and he gives three evidences to that fact.

First, “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Peter calls his readers to recall the words of Psalm 90, verse four that reads, “For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as, a watch in the night.” If the Lord’s return is delayed a hundred years or ten thousand years, that doesn’t mean it’s not going to happen. What appears as a long time to us is not long to God. From our perspective, a thousand years is a very long time; but, from God’s perspective, that thousand years could look like a single day.

God is eternal. His thoughts, His plans, His activities are not, like ours, subject to the laws of time. The time between the Lord’s ascension and His Second Coming may be but a day in the unfolding of the great purposes of God compared with our limited perspective. Just because we don’t see a fulfillment of God’s promises happening according to our time schedule, it doesn’t mean it’s not ever going to happen. God’s timing isn’t a math problem. With Him there is no concept of our measurements of “a long time” or “a short time.” Nothing He does should be measured by our petty, human standards, least of all, time. For God, the past, the present, and the future are one unbroken “Now.” “Beloved,” Peter writes, “don’t let this one fact escape your notice.”

Second--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,

but that all should reach repentance.” You might think God has encountered some problem that’s kept Him from doing what He promised; but, in reality, His patience and long-suffering have led Him to choose a time to fulfill His promise according to His mercy and His grace.

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness.” Just because it seems like God’s not going to fulfill a promise He’s made / doesn’t mean He’s broken His promise. When people we know fail to keep an appointment, we assume they’ve changed their plans, forgotten their promise, or something has interfered to hinder them from keeping the appointment. But none of this happens to God. Some among Peter’s readers may have thought this was the case, but he assures them it’s not so.

What’s really going on is that His delay--His delay from **our** perspective, that is--is really proof of His patience and His desire that everyone should be saved. He’s not willing that any should perish.

Look at how long he waited before sending the Flood of Noah’s day--it was a hundred twenty years between the Lord’s first announcement that He was going to destroy the world and the day it began to rain.

Consider the warning Jonah delivered to the people of Ninevah: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” The king of Ninevah clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes and proclaimed a fast, urging the people to call upon the Lord. “Who knows?” the king said, “God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” “When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”

Every unbeliever should be grateful that God has not already ended his or her life and taken away that last chance to trust Christ. No, God’s not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness--He’s patient--patiently setting the arrival of the Lord’s second advent according to His perfect plan, “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

In saying, the Lord is “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance,” “wishing” or “willing” describes the desire God has that no one should spend eternity separated from Him. If anyone perishes--and the word “perish” as used here doesn’t mean simple annihilation, but the state of existence that’s the opposite of salvation--if anyone spends eternity separated from Him, it’s not because God desired or designed that fate.

Someone might ask, “Well, then, why should anyone perish?” Because God has given us the choice to love and obey Him or not love and obey Him, the choice is ours and we own the consequences of our choice. As much as He offers His mercy and grace, it’s our choice in the end, and, because He respects the choice we’ve made, He won’t alter the eternal consequences of that choice. He doesn’t wish people would choose to reject His love, but He forces **no** one to love Him. His invitation is full and free: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”--Matthew, chapter eleven, verse 28--and the call is universal: Isaiah, chapter 45, verse 22: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.”

Could any other words speak of more mercy than this? God truly desires that everyone would place his or her trust in Him, and His patience proves that He is willing that they should be saved. If He were not willing, it would be easy for Him to cut them off, and exclude them from hope immediately.

In spite of the naysayers who claim the Lord will not return, Peter assures them that the Day of the Lord **will** come, and he places the verb at the beginning of the verse to emphasize that very fact. And, to those who still might think that the Lord is slow to fulfill His promise, Peter has one more reminder in verse ten: “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.” This Day of the Lord, of course, is the day of His return--His second advent--when all of humanity and all of creation will acknowledge Him as Lord and Judge of all.

This day will come like a thief in the night--suddenly, unexpectedly. Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica reminding them that this was something of which they were “fully aware”--First Thessalonians, chapter five, verse two; and it’s likely that Peter’s readers had the same full awareness, for the Lord Jesus Himself had made this abundantly clear in Matthew, chapter 24 and Luke, chapter twelve, for example. And John uses the imagery twice in The Revelation in chapter three, verse three, and chapter sixteen, verse fifteen.

When the Day of the Lord comes like a thief, “then the heavens will pass away with a roar.” “The heavens” is not a reference to the place where God dwells, but what we often speak of when we look up into the sky at the sun, moon, stars, and planets. Because “In Him”--that is, “in Jesus”--“all things consist” or “hold together,” as Paul tells us in Colossians, chapter one, verse seventeen, it seems that the power that holds all things together is suddenly taken away and the very elements of which the universe is made will, as one commentator suggests, “fall together like a soulless corpse.”

When the Day of the Lord comes like a thief, the heavens will pass away “and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved.” This is in line with what Jesus said in Matthew, chapter 24, verse 29: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” The aftermath of this dissolving is pictured in The Revelation, chapter twenty, verse eleven, and the first verse of chapter 21.

When the Day of the Lord comes, the heavens will pass away, the heavenly bodies will be burned up, and “and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed,” “burned up,” or “seen for what they are,” depending on what manuscript evidence a particular translation chose. The “works” that are done on the earth most likely include all the “works” of individuals as the underlying motive behind every word and deed is “revealed by fire” as we read in First Corinthians, chapter three, verse thirteen--and judged accordingly. It could also refer to all the things that humans had built--

empires, cities, palaces, monuments--those things that reveal humanity's pride of accomplishment.

With this striking imagery of the events surrounding the Day of the Lord at a time yet to come, burning in their minds, Peter confronts his readers with a timeless question that believers of all ages should ask and answer each and every day--verse eleven: "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." // Knowing all this, how should we live?

It's a great question that each of us should be asking at the beginning of a new year and as we come ever closer to that day: "what sort of person ought I to be living in holiness and godliness?" In answering the question, the first thing we should remember is that "all these things" will be dissolved or destroyed just as Peter has described. There's nothing permanent on earth. This world is not our forever home. Anything that will endure the climactic obliteration of everything here on planet earth will be those things that we've stored in heaven. Jesus said in Matthew, chapter six, verse twenty, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal," and He followed that with a way we can judge where we're storing our treasures: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Reflecting on the fact that all these things that we value here on earth are going to be destroyed, it should put things in an eternal perspective. It would make us serious about life right now. It would eliminate prideful ambition. It would keep us from burdening ourselves with more stuff that we don't really need and free us to commit more of what God has entrusted to us / to His Kingdom's work.

Since all these things are going to be destroyed and “The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,” now is the time to examine our lives to make sure we’re living as citizens of a heavenly kingdom--elect exiles and sojourners and exiles--as Peter reminded us in his first letter.

For believers, holiness and godliness should be the primary characteristics of our lives. Holy conduct is the literal translation of the word, “holiness,” and Peter spoke at length of this in his first letter. Holiness is, of course, central to the ethical teachings of the New Testament where the radical transformation of an authentic believer’s conduct is seen as evidence of genuine faith and the work of the Holy Spirit. It serves as a reminder that the Christian life is not merely about right belief but also about living out that right belief in how we go about our daily lives.

“Godliness” or “devotion” is the second characteristic that others should see in our lives. The word is used in the New Testament to describe the quality of a life that’s lived in accordance with God's will and reflects a sincere devotion and reverence for Him. Godliness is not just an internal attitude--it’s a lifestyle that’s practical, visible, and fully aligned with God's desire for you and me.

Peter’s question to us is, “what sort of people ought you to **be** in holy conduct and godliness?” Holiness and godliness aren’t character traits that should be visible only when the preacher’s around. We are to **be** this sort of people all the time. The little word “be” emphatically expresses a permanent and continuous state. Since this life passes away so quickly and the Lord is returning soon, every believer should conduct his or her life / pursuing and modeling the eternal realities of holiness and godliness.

As we pursue and model these eternal realities of holiness and godliness, we will do so as we are “waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God”--verse twelve. This waiting, of course, is an active waiting, so some

translations read “looking for” as a result. Since we don’t know when the Lord is returning, we should be in a state of continuous expectation so that we won’t be taken by surprise when He comes / like a thief in the night. If we truly believe that what Peter has said about the Lord’s return is true, that truth should shape our lives in such a way that others would see that heightened sense of expectation lived out in our lives.

“Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God.” In our expectant waiting, there should be a sense of earnest desire for the Lord’s return. The word Peter chose here is used in the New Testament to express a sense of urgency or eagerness in action. And so the shepherds “hurried off” to Bethlehem to see the newborn Jesus, eager to witness the fulfillment of the angel’s message. It can refer to both an actual, physical hastening and a symbolic eagerness or diligence in pursuing a goal.

So, is Peter saying that Christians can actually shorten the timeline of the Lord’s return? Quite possibly. As our lifestyles demonstrate holiness and godliness and a sense of eager expectancy for the Lord’s return, and more and more people entrust their lives to Christ because of our testimony, // the long-suffering patience of God becomes less and less necessary--He doesn’t need to delay--from our perspective-- His return / because fewer and fewer people are perishing and more and more people are choosing repentance.

The words also suggest our duty to pray for His soon return, even as we find in the Lord’s prayer, “Thy Kingdom come.” The Lord Jesus told His disciples in Matthew, chapter 24, verse fourteen: “This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

However the Lord would lead you to choose the meaning of this word, we are still called to perseverance in prayer for the soon coming of the Kingdom of our Lord and to prepare for it in holiness and godliness.

In the second half of verse twelve, Peter reminds us yet again of the reason why we wait eagerly and expectantly and live lives that reflect that eager expectancy: “because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!” We don’t see it in our English translations, but the verbs are in the present tense--scholars call it the “prophetic present”--, a clear indication that Peter is absolutely certain these events will take place exactly as he’s described.

Having answered the question about what sort of people we should be in light of the certainty of the Lord’s return, Peter pauses to reflect on what’s in store for believers **when** the Lord returns in verse thirteen: “But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” Here again, the word “heavens” refers to what we see in the physical realm above us, and the word “new” is not the word for “new in time” but a different Greek word that means, “of a new kind,” “fresh,” and “qualitatively different and better.”

This promise comes from Isaiah, chapter 65, verse seventeen, where the Lord says, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind,” and we find the fulfillment of that promise in the first verse of chapter 22 of The Revelation, where John writes, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’”

What this new heavens and new earth will be like and what we will be like, whether there will a renovation of the existing earth and heavens or a wholesale replacement by a totally new world as Paul suggests in First

Corinthians, chapter fifteen, verse forty, is beyond the scope of our study today, and we can only imagine. But it really won't matter, because God will be with us, and, chapter seven, verse seventeen, "The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

And in this new heavens and new earth, righteousness will dwell. We see this in The Revelation, chapter 21, verse 27: "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false," and in First Corinthians, chapter six, beginning in verse nine, Paul tells us the same thing. Finally, creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption--Romans, chapter eight, verse 21.

This newness will be in stark contrast with the memoirs of mankind. The history of this world has been almost entirely a history of sin--its first appearance, its effect upon all of creation, its nature, its spread, and its results. There have been no perfectly holy beings on the earth, except the Lord Jesus and the holy angels who have occasionally visited it. But the new heavens and the new earth and all those who dwell there will be perfectly pure.

"Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?" How does this message require a change in the trajectory of your life in terms of a decision you need to make, a lifestyle change you need to follow through with, a sin you need to turn from, forgiveness you need to offer, reconciliation you need to pursue. "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?" A great question to answer as we prepare to begin a new year.

To answer that, Peter urges his readers to focus intently on holiness and godliness in verse fourteen: "Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace." As Peter delivers his concluding thoughts in this letter, reminding them of the

fulfillment of God's precious and very great promises to them for which they wait expectantly, he urges them--once again--to "be diligent"--focused and intent on the pursuit of holiness and godliness in their daily lives as the Lord's second advent draws nearer. The overall effect of the certain return of the Lord Jesus Christ should be to lead us to an honest evaluation of how we're living in these last days, asking ourselves whether we're prepared to dwell in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness will dwell, and if our lives reflect that continuous state of preparation and readiness. If we truly have our hopes set on these precious and very great promises, we should be laboring diligently and faithfully, straining towards the glorious goal set before us, "casting aside every weight and [the] sin [that] clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith"--Hebrews, chapter twelve, verses one and two.

Peter's heartfelt desire is that all those who would read his letter would "be found by [the Lord Jesus] without spot or blemish." This was Paul's prayer for the Church as the bride of Christ as he writes in Ephesians, chapter five, verse 27: that the Lord Jesus "might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." In the first chapter of his first letter, Peter described the character of Christ as "a lamb without blemish and without spot." It's not Mary Kay that removes the spots and blemishes from our lives, but God's grace in our lives as we diligently pursue holiness and godliness.

The kind of peace Peter longs for his readers to experience includes every facet of the result of our pursuit of holiness and godliness: peace with God, peace with each other, the peace that the Lord Jesus Himself gives--which is not the peace the world gives--but the peace that overcomes the world and the peace that passes all understanding. It's the peace the angel announced to the shepherd on the night of Jesus birth when he proclaimed: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" This peace comes from the assurance that we are without spot or blemish because

we're clothed in the righteousness of Christ and living in holiness and godliness.

After several other calls to holiness in verses fifteen through eighteen, Peter closes his second letter with this doxology: "To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." This is the goal of Peter's labor of love in writing this pair of letters: that the Lord Jesus would be glorified in and through His servants in first-century Asia Minor and in 21st century Tallassee. That they and we would grow in our understanding of / and relationship with Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Whose perfect example of holiness and godliness we're to follow; even as we expectantly anticipate His soon return is Peter's earnest desire. The Lord Jesus will return on the day of eternity--an unusual expression found only here, but one of which Augustine said, "It is only one day, but an everlasting day, without yesterday to precede it, and without tomorrow to follow it; not brought forth by the natural sun, which shall exist no more, but by Christ, the Sun of Righteousness." We need to be ready when that day comes.

Thank you for preparing your heart and your mind to engage with the wonder of Christmas and the Lord's promises about His greatest gift--the One Who would save us from our sin and grant us eternal life, always prepared for His second advent--His soon return. This concludes our advent lessons. Next week, we begin a new set of lessons from a course called "Vines by the Book"--a ten-year, chapter-by-chapter study of the Bible beginning with the gospel of Matthew. Our first lesson will come from Genesis, chapter twenty, followed by an introductory overview of Matthew on January 11th. After that, on January 18th, Trey will preach from the first chapter of Matthew, and the Bible Fellowship lesson will come from the second chapter, and that will be the pattern for preaching and teaching in the months to follow.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! Happy New Year, and may God bless us--every one!