

6-25-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Final Chapter

Purpose: Provoke people to embrace what Peter said about the last days and live accordingly.

Spiritual Truth: We live in the last days so I will be faithful to God in a corrupt world.

Text: Acts 1: 9-11, 2 Peter 3:1-13

Topic: Last Days, End Times, Second Coming, Judgment Day

Series: The Final Chapter

Series Purpose: Teach people about the last days and show them how to live accordingly.

## The Final Chapter

### I. Introduction (The historical account of Jesus' ascension to heaven)

**A. Acts 1:9–11 (ESV)** when he (*Jesus*) had said these things...he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven...two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said...why do you stand looking into heaven...**Jesus ... will come in the same way as you saw him go** into heaven.

A.1. I.e. Jesus is coming back to earth from heaven. When Jesus went to heaven, a period known as the last days began. The primary focus of the last days in the NT is the evangelization of the world and the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ.

**B. I'm beginning a new series called, "The Final Chapter";** it's about living in the last days. The emphasis will not be predictive, i.e. who is the antichrist or the sequence of end time events but rather focusing on how Christians should live in the last days, i.e. our values, priorities and character.

**C. Series purpose:** Teach people about the last days and show them how to live accordingly.

**D. Spiritual truth:** We live in the last days so I will be faithful to God in a corrupt world.

**E. Today** we'll discuss an overview about the events predicted to happen in the last days and examine the Apostle Peter's teaching about the last days.

**F. Purpose: Proclaim an overview of the last days and provoke people to embrace Peter's teaching about the last days.**

**G. Title: The Final Chapter**

### II. What are the last days and what events are predicted to happen?

**A. The "last days" is** an expression in Scripture to describe the final period of time in the world as we now know it. "Last days" implies lasting a long time. NT believers thought

Christ's return was imminent and so should we. John speaks of "the last hour." 1 John 2:18 (ESV)...you have heard that antichrist is coming ... Therefore we know that **it is the last hour**. The last days will end on the last day, called the "Day of the Lord". Acts 2:20 (ESV) the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before **the day of the Lord** comes... The last day will be a day of final judgment for the unrepentant, but a day of salvation for believers. The created order will be restored in a new heaven and new earth. The "last days" demand believers be responsible to proclaim the gospel throughout the world so all people have the opportunity to repent.

- B. The Bible predicts events to happen in the last days:** Evil people will get worse and worse, the gospel will be preached to the entire world, believers will endure persecution, the 2nd Coming of Christ, the dead in Christ shall rise from the grave, the rapture of the church, the Great Tribulation, the rise of the antichrist, the beast and false prophet, the 1000 year reign of Christ, the destruction of the heavens and earth by fire and creation of a new heaven and earth, satan will be cast into hell, the Great White Throne Judgment, the Judgment seat of Christ, unbelievers will be judged and sent to hell while believers experience their ultimate salvation and live in heaven with God for eternity.

III. **The Apostle Peter's words for living in the last days (*exegete longer passages*)**

- A. 2 Peter 3:1-13 (ESV)** This is now the second letter that I am writing to you...In both of them I am stirring up your sincere **mind** by way of reminder,<sup>2</sup> that you should **remember** the **predictions** of the holy **prophets** and the commandment of the **Lord** and Savior through your **apostles**,

A.1. Peter is saying to think right about the future, distinguish the true from the false.

People have varying thoughts about the future, some are right and some wrong, e.g. unbiblical beliefs about the future, e.g. a one world government is a good thing, there are many ways to heaven, all religions worship the same God, etc.

A.2. Prophets, apostles and Jesus all predicted events of the last days. The same Bible that accurately predicted details of Jesus' life and death predicts events yet to come.

- B. Verse 3** knowing this first of all, that **scoffers** will come in the last days with scoffing (*NCV people will laugh at you*), **following their own sinful desires**.<sup>4</sup> 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.

B.1. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPOfurmrxo> George Carlin

B.2. People laughed about Jesus and the Bible 2000 years ago and they're laughing today. They were wrong then and they're wrong now. In vs. 4 they reasoned that the

future can be understood by how the world operated in the past, i.e. the universe is governed by natural laws so supernatural events like the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming won't happen.

- B.3. Description of the scoffer: 2 Peter 2:10 (NLT) those who follow their own **twisted sexual desire**, and who **despise authority**. These people are **proud and arrogant**, daring even to **scoff at supernatural beings** without so much as trembling.
- C. **Verse 5** For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and **the earth was formed** out of water and through water **by the word of God**, 6 and that by means of these the world that then existed was **deluged with water and perished**
- C.1. Peter believed God's creation of the world and Noah's flood were literal, historical events. Water played a big part in creating the world but God also destroyed the world with water. God can change natural processes as He chooses. Like today, scoffers ignore God's Word and belittle the Creator and the Noah's flood.
- D. **Verse 7** But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for **fire**, being kept until the **day of judgment** and destruction of the ungodly.
- D.1. At the end of the last days God will judge the earth and those who reject Him by fire. Malachi 4:1 (NCV) "There is a day coming that will **burn like a hot furnace**, and all the proud and evil people will be like straw...
- E. **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 as one day**. 9 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.
- E.1. "Where is the promise of his coming?" Peter said (1) God looks at time differently than we do. Time has made scoffers feel justified while believers keep living by faith. Psalm 90:4 (NCV) To you (*God*), **a thousand years is like the passing of a day**, or like a few hours in the night. We are finite, bound by time but God is eternal
- E.2. (2) God wants as many people to be saved as possible. God is a just Judge but He is 1<sup>st</sup> a merciful Father. This doesn't mean everyone will be saved but God wants them to be . He gave us all free will so everyone gets to accept or reject Him.
- F. **Verse 10** 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.
- F.1. The heavens are the earth's atmosphere and the starry sky, not God's abode. The elements are either stars or the material elements with which the universe is made.

F.2. Mt 24:43–44 (NCV) ...If the owner of the house knew what time of night a **thief** was coming, the owner would watch and not let the thief break in. 44 So **you also must be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at a time you don't expect him.

G. **Verse 11** Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in **lives of holiness and godliness**, 12 waiting for and **hastening the coming of the day of God...**

G.1. To be holy means to live separated from the world and set apart to God. Godliness means to live in reverence to God, obedient to His will and devoted to serve Him. These qualities are to be constantly present in a believer's life.

G.2. How do believers hasten/ speed up His coming? By living godly lives, praying and witnessing to lost people. Mt 24:14 (ESV) this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world...to all nations, and **then the end will come**

IV. **Conclusion: Verse 13** But according to his **promise** we are waiting for **new heavens and a new earth** in which **righteousness dwells**.

A.1. Isaiah predicted this 2700 years ago. Is 65:17 (NCV)...I will make **new heavens and a new earth**, and people will not remember the past or think about those things

A.2. In the new heaven and earth, righteousness dwells, i.e. believers will live with God and do what God wants them to do for all eternity. I want to go there, but until that day I choose to live my life in a way that's pleasing to Jesus. How about you?

v. **Response**

A. **Prayer:** Lord, help me live in a way that pleases you!

B. **Souls:** What do I have to do to go to heaven? Believe and follow Jesus. Randal Roy.

C. \*\*\* *Logos Bible Software and library, Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, Tyndale Bible dictionary, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, A handbook on the letter from Jude and the second letter from Peter were used to prepare this message.*