

As we read or listening to the news, it seems to get worse everyday. Some might be thinking that it cannot get much worse ... some might think that the world is going to heck in handbasket, to paraphrase an old saying. We have false religions killing people in the name of Allah ... we have politicians proposing laws that not only are in conflict with the Constitution of the United States, but are definitely in conflict with the Word of God.

And we think – what next? However, as we look at the Scriptures we find that there is great hope – because we know the end of the story – God wins. That is exactly what we see in the passage that is before us today in 2 Peter 3:3-10 (READ) – please turn with me there.

The bottom line of this passage is that final judgement is coming at the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't know when it will be ... but we know that it is coming and it will come with a vengeance.

Remember, that Peter is writing to the Christians of the dispersion – those that had to flee because of their faith in Christ. He writes to them to remain steadfast in their faith and to not to listen to the false teachers that have arisen. As we saw last week, he was faithful in reminding them of the truth as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom he was an eyewitness.

We have the same truth in God's Word at our disposal. We just have to read it and study it and know it. As it is said, we need to inwardly digest it. The other day we got some Chinese food, and as is their custom, they gave us some fortune cookies. Now, I don't put too much stock in the little slips of paper with the fortunes on them – but one that we got had a lot of truth in it. It said: "You have at your command the wisdom of the ages."

There is a lot of truth in that. Almighty God – the creator and sustainer of the Universe has given us His Word – the Bible. He has given us, as I have said before, all that we need for life and godliness. That is, how to live in this world and in the world to come.

One of the things that the Scriptures teach us, is that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again in judgement. He came the first time as the Suffering Savior. When he comes again, it will be in judgement and victory. And that is exactly what Peter talks about as we continue in our study of 2 Peter.

Consider what he says first in 2 Peter 3:3,4: "*knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"*"

Just a point of information first – Peter refers to "*the last days.*" The last days is that time between the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ and his return. Some interpret it as the immediate time before his coming, but we believe that we have been in the last days since his ascension – and that is why we believe in the imminent return of Jesus – it could happen at any time. We will see more of this in a moment.

One of the things that the false teachers were doing is scoffing at the fact that the Lord Jesus was coming again. When we think about it, people have been scoffing at the return of Christ since his ascension.

But we have the promise recorded for us in Acts 1:9-11: "*Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee,*

why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

The false teachers were and are walking according to their own lusts. They did it then and they are doing it today. They had the wisdom of the ages, but they ignored it. The truth had been revealed to them, but as is the case today, people ignore it and, worse, they scoff at it ... they make fun of it. And they say to us ... you don't really believe that stuff?

As Peter goes on he tells his readers and us that they do this willingly – 2 Peter 3:5: *“For this they willfully forget...”* In other words, even though they know the truth, they forget what they know in order to follow their own agenda ... in order to follow their own lusts.

We see this in the “Church” today where people are ignoring God's written Word and doing what they want. They are teaching false doctrine and they are leading people astray. Even as Peter said, they are denying the Lord that bought them.

We see this in the political realm. It is commonly held that the actions of Franklin Roosevelt prolonged the Great Depression by eight years. It was only the war that brought us out of it. And yet what do we find – we find that the politicians in control today are following the same erroneous path and even to a greater extent.

We read what Peter says next about the false teachers and that which they willfully ignored: *“that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”*

God had created the world by separating and gathering the waters ... He then destroyed the existing world by the Great Flood ... He now preserves the world by His Word – reserving for the day of judgement.

Basically, what was happening is that because in the mind of the false teachers the return of Jesus had not happened yet, it wasn't going to. They thought that they were the ones who controlled time ... that it needed to happen on their schedule.

In the last 40 or so years there have been a number of books written on the return of Christ, with some even giving a date. The only thing that they all have in common is that they have been wrong 100% of the time. These writers were looking at world events and predicting the return of Christ from these events – most centering around the re-establishment of the nation of Israel after almost 2000 years.

What all these people failed to realize is that God's timing is His timing. He is not bound by the same time constraints that we are. And that is exactly what Peter says as he goes on: *“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

Notice what he says about God's timing – *that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* God is sovereign over time and things will happen in His time. As Peter tells, we have God's Word on it – *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness* – what He says He will do,

He will do – in His time.

But then Peter tells us something interesting – that there is a purpose to the delay: *but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.* The delay in the return of the Lord Jesus means that people still have time to repent, because ultimately, judgement is coming, and that is exactly what Peter says next: “*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*”

We don't know when it will happen – it can happen in the next moment ... the next year ... the next decade ... the next century – but it will happen – we can count on that.

So, as we look at the events of the world and the church – and they are not pretty – remember two very important truths – God is in complete control and judgement is coming.