

Message 1 Belief in the Day of the Lord v1-7

The famous Christian author, C.S. Lewis, said, “I have found a desire within myself that no experience in this world can satisfy; the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”

Today we begin a new series entitled, *The Spectacular Day of the Lord*, taken from 2 Peter 3, with key verse being “...looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth...” (2 Peter 3:9). The ‘Day of the Lord’ refers to the return of Christ. It includes a time of judgment and the inauguration of a new (or renewed) heavens and earth. A one-word description of this event is **spectacular!**

Here are three things to know about believing in the Day of the Lord...

1. Belief in the Day of the Lord is wholesome thinking v1-2

v1 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. v2 I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.

Peter opens the chapter showing deep affection for his readers. He addresses them as “Dear friends.” This is the way leaders, including Small Group leaders, should consider their members.

Peter’s purpose is to remind them about the Gospel of Jesus and its connection to godly living. He is concerned about some false teachers claiming to be Christian but without the belief that Jesus would return. Our first major principle is that belief in the Day of the Lord is part of **wholesome thinking**. One commentator explains, “the idea is that by his letters Peter wants to stir up or stimulate their capacity for morally sound spiritual judgement.” (Mounce).

The Gospel of Jesus includes belief in his second coming, the Day of the Lord as a day of justice for all nations. This, essentially, is a stimulus or motivation for godly living.

I was talking this week to an enquirer from another religion. He asked about the meaning of Gospel, “Is it the four written ‘Gospels’ in the New Testament?” These writings are about the one Gospel from different perspectives, they each contain the message of the one Jesus – his godly life, death for our sin and resurrection to include us. This includes belief in the physical return of Jesus Christ, as he promised. It is an essential part of the Full Gospel (i.e. salvation by faith, Spirit baptism, healing, second coming).

The coming of Christ & motivation for godly living is in both Old Testament (i.e. “the prophets”, e.g. *Isa 40:3 A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”*) and the New Testament (especially the command of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5-7). (Note the superiority of the NT about Jesus over the OT, which only has “words spoken” compared to “command given” by Jesus.)

It is also vital to know that, in holding to the Full Gospel ...

2. Belief in the Day of the Lord will be criticised

v3-4

v3 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4 They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.”

The Greek word for “coming” is *parousia*. This is now a technical word used to refer to the promised second coming of Jesus. Peter predicts that scoffers will ridicule the parousia. When believing in the Day of the Lord, you can naturally expect that not everyone will agree. Some will even mock and ridicule, as happens occasionally in the media. A deep-seated reason for is, says Peter, can be that people like following their “**own evil desires**”. They don’t want their secret sins disturbed! They don’t want to be wrong. It would be too embarrassing for them to become Christian. They love the darkness so must reject the light; but it is only temporary.

A person was driving on a long, windy road and had to stop suddenly because a bridge had collapsed. He realised other cars were still coming and could easily crash. He quickly wrote on a big placard, “DANGER – the END is NEAR!” All the coming cars ignored it and also were nearly crashing. He changed the sign to “POLICE CHECK around the corner!” The coming cars slammed on their breaks and slowed down. Half quickly turned back to where they were coming from!

Perhaps we have a more difficult situation than that faced by the early Christians. It is now much later, 2,000 years, and Christ has not returned! Added to this, there have been many date predictions failing miserably. However, the Gospel is still spreading among all nations.

Jesus told a parable about a king who temporarily left his domain in the hands of servants who then mistreated their responsibility. The king returned and punished those who mucked up. An accusation against Christians is that the belief in the Day of the Lord causes inaction and lack of contribution for the good of the world. The truth is the opposite – knowing a future day of judgment *encourages* godly living and purposeful living! For those few who do abandon their hope for the world and sit back (like Jonah) waiting for judgment, Jesus had another parable – that of the 10 talents. “Dear friends” we must use our talents more than ever, to live useful and meaningful lives, making a valuable contribution for a better society because of belief in Day of the Lord!

Peter explains how the false teachers promoted immoral conduct. They deliberately forget..

3. Belief in the Day of the Lord is based on God’s Word

v5-7

v5 they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. v6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. v7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

Peter basically argues, “God has intervened spectacularly in the course of human history:” (D. Moo), and he will do it again, this time with fire. New Year’s Eve was an amazing time with all the fireworks, but it is no comparison to the Day of the Lord. By all accounts, the Day of the Lord will be the most spectacular event the world has ever seen.

Make sure you are on the right side of the ledger before you reach the “Police Check” around the corner! Slam on the breaks and get your heart right with God. Receive Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit in order to live a transformed and purposeful life.