



Living in Light of Eternity

2 Peter 3:11-14

TO: LEGISLATORS', STAFF & 3RD HOUSE

FROM: DAN MADISON

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Most people believe in life after death, but it seems that few venture to talk much about it. Christians believe that they will spend eternity in a splendid place with Jesus Christ as our righteous Leader. Conversely, non-Christians seem to reflect on an unknown destiny that hopefully will be one of pleasure. Isn't it bizarre that most of humankind simply ignores heaven and eternity; hoping for the best while acting as though it doesn't really matter? In fact, it does matter!¹ Our life is nothing more than a vapor (James 4:14). Surely eternity is in view for every one. Our study today takes us directly to this issue of eternity.

I. INTRODUCTION²

Last time we looked at Peter's description of a grand event that will take place when this period, this age, this window of grace, has come to an end (2 Peter 3:10). Peter's purpose in giving this prophetic truth was not speculation, but rather motivation for the believer. As such, we should heed the practical admonitions that follow. The remaining section of Peter's letter can be outlined under three headings:

- Be diligent to Live Godly Lives (2 Peter 3:11-14)
- Be diligent to Win the Lost (2 Peter 3:15-16)
- Be diligent to Grow Spiritually (2 Peter 3:17-18³)

Today we will look at the first heading, our focus being "Living in Light of Eternity." We will visit the last two next time as we conclude this book.

II. A REFINED FOCUS 2 PETER 3:11

NKJ 2 Peter 3:11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

Here Peter refers back to the previous passage (3:7-10), in which the universe's obliteration is predicted. Because this will happen, our conduct should be characterized by **holiness** and **godliness**.

Query: Is there a difference between holiness and godliness? How would you explain it?

John MacArthur compares holiness and godliness this way: "Holy conduct refers to action, godliness refers to attitude. Holy conduct refers to the way I live my life, godliness refers to the spirit of reverence within me by which I live my life. Holy conduct refers to that which rules my behavior, and godliness refers to that which rules my heart. And so he is saying what kind of a person ought you to be in heart and in behavior, in motive and in action; in attitude and in duty."

Query: The obvious question should be: What should a life characterized by holiness & godliness look like?

Every man who has the hope of seeing Jesus, everyone who looks for His coming walks with a greater degree of purity than with which he would otherwise walk. Living in the constant awareness that the Lord's coming is at hand has a definite effect on the way one lives. When you read Jesus' words concerning the end times, you cannot come to any other conclusion than to say He wants us living each and every day looking for His coming⁴. (1 John 3:3)

Godliness (*eusebeia*) literally means "to worship well."

Holiness (*hagios*) encompasses the idea of blamelessness, purity, consecration and dedication.

III. AN ETERNAL FOCUS 2 PETER 3:12

NKJ 2 Peter 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

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Living in Light of Eternity

2 Peter 3:11-14

There are two things that characterize Christians who live in the light of the return of Jesus Christ and the renewal of creation:

Anticipation: Christians may anticipate all of this with great delight. We are looking for "...a new heavens and a new earth..." We live in anticipation of a world where righteousness prevails.

Activity: We *hasten the day* as we fulfill God's purposes during this period of grace; this is a window of opportunity that God has given us. How do we do it? We do so as we pray, "*Thy kingdom come* (Matt. 6:10), as we proclaim the gospel to others (Acts 1:8), and as we ourselves repent of our sin and obey the gospel⁵.

IV. A DILLIGENT FOCUS 2 PETER 3:14

NKJ 2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

"**Be diligent**" Peter said. The word is *spōudazō*, meaning to hasten to do something, to exert oneself. This is a re-occurring theme in Peter's letters. In 2 Peter 1:5 we read: But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence**, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge... In 2 Peter 1:10 we read: Therefore, brethren, **be even more diligent** to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble... And again in 2 Peter 3:14 we read "...**be diligent** to be found by Him in peace..."

What one is **looking for** should have a direct relationship to what one is **living for**. The writer of Hebrews confirms this in Hebrews 6:11: "And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end..."

Our urgent duty is to "give diligence that we may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight." This is not a suggestion, but a definite act; a command. Christians need to commit themselves to "be eager (or) zealous, to make every effort" to fulfill the duty of holy living, in order that we **may be found BY HIM, in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight**.

"**Spotless and blameless**" should be understood together. They describe the character of Jesus Christ as

seen in the lives of believers (see 1 Peter 1:19) where the same terms are used to describe Jesus Christ. Please note that these terms do not suggest that the follower of Christ will live a perfect life, as did Christ. Rather, they mean that what drives the Christian in our behavioral choices is a desire to be like Christ⁶.

V. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

2 Peter 1:5-11 Peter writes that in light of the fact that His divine power has granted to those who have been redeemed everything necessary for a life of godliness, we must be diligent to see that godliness characterizes our lives. Is this something that can be accomplished in our own strength, with our own resources? The resounding answer is No! It is only through the power and the strength of the Holy Spirit through regeneration that we are able to "live christianly."

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

These verses are absolutely true for the believer. However, all men live in the light of eternity and this should force us to consider our relationship, or non-relationship with Jesus Christ. The assurance that we are saved, according to 2 Peter 1:10, is the evidence of His work in our life. False teachers want to move out of the realm of anything concrete and tangible. They tell you that if you feel like you believe, then you are saved. Scripture, on the other hand, provides the basis for our salvation; **a transformed life! Are you experiencing that life?**

¹ Yancy, Phillip as quoted by John Hamby, *Living in the Light of Eternity* www.sermoncentral.com

² MacArthur, John, "Living in Anticipation of Christ's Return" as quoted by John Hamby, *Living in the Light of Eternity* www.sermoncentral.com

³ Wiersbe, Warren, *Be alert*, (Victor, an imprint of Cook Communications, , Colorado Springs ©2005) p95-96

⁴ Courson, Jon: *Jon Courson's Application Commentary*. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, 2003, S. 1623

⁵ Ferrell, Tom, *A Growth that Endures...*

www.apcweb.org/Images/Sermons/secondpeter/2Peter3_8-13_744_.pdf

⁶ Anders, Max, *Holoman New Testament Commentary I & II Peter, I,II&III John, Jude*, (Broadman & Holman, Nashville, ©1999) p143