Arguments for Divine Justice

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[0:00] We've been looking at certainty of the second coming of Christ.

! And thus far we've examined some important themes.! We talked early on about the arguments against the second coming.
And then we talked about the arguments for the second coming. Those were covered in 2 Peter 3, verses 1-9.
But when we closed last week, there was one heading under one verse that we had not covered. And I'm referring to verse 10 under the heading of the assurance of divine judgment.
Verse 10 says this, But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be found out, meaning burned up.
[1:24] Better translated, burned up. Peter has put forth what I believe to be the conclusive proof that the day of the Lord will come.

false teachers in Peter's day and our day, false teachers today, claim this isn't going to happen. God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, all say, it's going to happen.
So who are we going to throw in with? The false teachers, or the triune God? Obviously God. And that day, I would suggest to you, we don't know when it is, but that day is getting closer, with every beat of our heart, with every breath we take, and every sunrise or sunset we experience.
So we begin this evening with a question, what is the day of the Lord? Please note I didn't say when, because we don't know. And when I see a man that says he knows when it's going to happen, I say he doesn't know.
[2:52] And I don't get all exercised about it. When I was growing up in the late 40s and 50s, I was familiar with a term used in journalism.

It was called a second coming headline. Y'all ever heard that? That's what newspaper meant, particularly the early 50s. I didn't have much to contribute in the late 40s.
I was born in 1948. But they called this a second coming headline. And that referred to an event that was so monumental, the call went out in the newspaper business, stop the presses.
And I know most of you have heard that term. Stop the presses. And they would. And a new front page would be printed.
And newspaper men in those days used the term, the second coming, believing that that would be the largest headline in history.
[4:03] I had one newspaper guy downtown at the Examiner Enterprise, which is where the Bank First is now. I was a Cub Scout. We were touring it.

And he said, that second coming headline will also be in red. It'll take up half the page and it'll be in red. Let me give you a few examples.
These are my own examples of second coming headlines. I kind of speculated on a few of these, but the sinking of the Titanic. That would have been a gigantic headline.
Certainly the attack on Pearl Harbor. The ending of World War II in Europe and later in Japan. The assassination of President Kennedy.
And then men walking on the moon. In my lifetime, those were big headlines. Of course, we have benefit of television and all that.
[5:06] And we can see it unfold live. But the day of the Lord will be a supreme example of a second coming headline because it will be God intervening in human history.

And he's done that a few times before we talked about him. The flood, for instance. Creation of man. But he's going to intervene in human history and he's going to do so for the purpose of judgment.

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And it will culminate in the final judgment by God of all the wicked on earth who are without Christ as Lord and Savior.
Now, the Old Testament prophets viewed this day as one of unparalleled judgment and damnation. It will culminate in the New Testament in the destruction of the universe, ultimately a creation of new heavens and new earth.
And the New Testament writers saw that day as a fearful event. Peter described this day saying it would arrive like a thief in the night.
[6:37] I remember a story, a fiction, but this guy broke into a house and a homeowner walked down the hallway and pulled out a gun.

And the guy said, well, please don't shoot me. I don't have a gun. He said, well, I'm going to take you. I'm going to call the police. He said, I understand. I shouldn't have broken into your house. So the police got there and they handcuffed him and everything.
They started to lead him out and they said, wait a minute. I want to go back and introduce him to my wife. She's still in bed. He said, she's been hearing him for 50 years that we've been married.
She wakes me up four times a week and said, I heard something. I heard something. Someone's breaking in. I heard something. I threw that in for free. But Peter was the one that said this would arrive like a thief in the night.
Borrowing from that analogy, it means the day of the Lord will be unexpected. There will be no warning. I've had people absurdly tell me, you know, I don't know Jesus, but when I know for sure He's coming back, I'll take care of it then.
[7:48] That's going to be pretty quick. In the twinkling of an eye, which is the time light hits the pupil of an eye and the eye reacts.

It's like one six billionth of a second. There's not going to be any time to prepare. It'll be the greatest possible disaster for those who are unprepared.
Verse 10 tells us four definitive things about the day of the Lord. The day will come like a thief in the night. The heavens will pass away with a roar.
The elements will be destroyed with intense heat. The earth and all its works will be burned up.
We're not looking for a flood. There's going to be a fire consuming the earth. And we won't be there.
[8:58] Believers won't. God's power will consume everything. But in the midst of total destruction, God will protect and provide for His sheep.

No sheep is going to be lost in all this. Well, what does the world do with all that information? Well, we've seen some of it in our study.
For instance, mockers mock. They ridicule. False teachers scoff at the scenario and use it to bolster their false tension.
But believers wait. I think we should wait in eager anticipation of those events. Nearly every day I utter the phrase perhaps today, Lord.
That's a good way to get up in the morning. Perhaps today, Lord. But then go about your business. Go about your business. When is the Lord going to return for His people?
[10:13] I'll give you some dates here. No, not really. Not really. I'm not going to do that. But a lot of people lately, I've been noticing, even some guys I used to really respect, lately, a lot of men and women are engaging in the folly of setting a date for the Lord's return.

that boggles my mind. And I decided a long time ago that if a person believes they've figured out what only the Father knows as to the return of Christ, I finally made the decision, I know one thing's certain, it's not going to happen on that day.
God's not going to honor that guy. I do remember this, almost humorously, but there was a guy named Edgar Wisenhunt.
Remember him? He wrote a book based on his study of the Psalms that the Lord was going to return in 1988.
He came out with a book and it sold millions of copies. Why the rapture will happen in 1988. Well, it didn't happen.
[11:46] So next year he came out with another book, Why the Rapture Will Happen in 1989. And it sold several hundred thousand and didn't happen.

And then about three years went by and he wrote a book and says, why it might happen this year or something like that. I mean, the poor guy finally died and he was elderly, but it didn't happen.

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We can rely on the fact that the second coming of the Lord is a guaranteed fact. We do not know when it will happen, but we know it's going to happen.
And we can rest assured that the time of his return has not been delayed. Fellas, it's right on time. I've heard this phrase, I've used it and I hate it. If the Lord tarries, the Lord doesn't tarry. it's right on time.
[12:53] Well, in the meantime, what do we do? What should we do? We can live our lives in anticipation of his return. Be praying for your family members that are unsaved, your friends, your enemies.

We can wait on the Lord's return. Now, what do I mean by that? I remember the story of a guy who lived out in the country and he had a stump out in his pasture and he told his wife, I think I'm saved. I'm going to go out there and sit on that stump and see what God does about saving me. It was a fictional story. Well, that guy finally died and went to hell.
The stump didn't help him. But it's going to happen. We live our lives. knowing that it's going to happen someday.
We can wait for his return. There's nothing wrong with that as long as we also are working. We are engaged in things like true worship, witnessing, sharing the good news.
[14:11] as we live our lives. We should do so in anticipation of return. Here's what Peter says. This is in 2 Peter 3 beginning in verse 11-13.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens burning will be destroyed and the elements will melt with intense heat.
But according to his promise, we're looking for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
One day we know the universe that we know will be completely destroyed down to the very atomic particles.
Some theologians that I respect use the word an event of uncreation. Creation is going to be uncreated. And for those who rejected Christ or simply weren't interested in the things of God, it's unimaginable.
[15:42] It is so unimaginable that many who reject such thought assign it to fiction. I guess that brings them some comfort, and it shouldn't. Here's how the Holy Spirit described that time writing through the Apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 14 to 28 then comes the end when he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father when he has abolished all rule and all authority and power for he must reign until he put all his enemies under his feet.
The last enemy to be abolished is death for he has put all things in subjection under his feet but when he says all things are put in subjection it is evident that he is accepted who put all things in subjection to him and when all things are subjected to him then the son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected all things to him so that God may be all in all.
that will also be a time of the complete eradication of sin. Before his death I heard Dr. MacArthur one time ask what to him was the most amazing thing about heaven and he said well it's not going to be the gold streets or the pearly gates.
[17:29] He said I might be fascinated with that for a few minutes but it's going to be the absence of sin. We're going to be in a place where there's no sin.

The eradication of sin. We've never lived in a world like that. Our parents going way back Adam and Eve lived in such a sinless world very briefly.
We don't know I think it was like three weeks but I don't know that. By the time they reached Genesis chapter three that world was gone.
That world was gone. And the story of the Bible from Genesis three right before you get to maps and revelation all that in between has been the story of God taking back the world that is rightfully his.
Old Testament and New Testament. So if we were doing a timeline where would we find ourselves right now?
[18:49] Well that's pretty plain in the teachings of the Apostle John. In one of my favorite books of the Bible 1 John chapter 2 verse 18 he says this children it is the last hour.

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Obviously an hour to the Lord is not an hour to us. But the Lord described this. The Holy Spirit said you're in the last hour. we're living our lives in the last hour before all things Peter is talking about will occur.
In the above passage the Holy Spirit uses the Greek word padia it's directed those children belong to the family of God and it means those whom the Father wants to warn of impending disaster.
now the last hour spoken of here has been going on for many generations. The last hour began we got a beginning point at the first coming of Christ and the last hour will end when he returns.
That age encompasses all the time even encompasses the thousand year reign of Christ referred to as the millennial kingdom. Millennial means a thousand.
[20:27] But don't be anxious. No one in here that's a follower of Christ should be anxious that the Lord could return at any moment. We should welcome that.

God. That doesn't mean you have to rush home and get your trash out early. Although I did because tomorrow morning is trash day. They come at 630 if you can believe that.
Don't stop your mail. But the prospect of the return of Christ should have an impact on our daily lives.
What are you doing with your lost neighbor? What are you doing with a lost child, a lost nephew? I have all those. There's something that will help if you remember this.
Right now we're living our life on this earth. But we're aliens and pilgrims in this world.
[21:35] Here are a few passages that might help. Philippians 320. Very, very famous. For our citizenship is in heaven.

Guys, we're not a citizen of this world. Our citizenship is in heaven from which we also wait eagerly for a Savior.
Savior. And then Paul names that Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. Then John throws in 1 John chapter 2 again, verse 15 to 17.
Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
Now, let me point out something. That's the world system controlled by Satan. That's not mountains and lakes and rivers, the beauty of this planet.
[22:41] That's the world system. Don't love that. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father.

it is from the world and the world is passing away and also its lusts but the one who does the will of God abides forever.
Our attitude is to live our lives in view of the return of Christ and the blessings we receive when he is revealed in all his glory.
This perfectly describes the apostle Paul had and put on display. Paul said this in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 9 and 10.
Therefore we also have as our ambition whether at home or absent to be pleasing to him for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds of the body according to what he has done whether good or bad.
[24:07] We're going to the judgment seat of Christ. That is also called the reward seat. The Lord's going to give out rewards for our conduct on earth.

He's also going to explain to us why some were taken away for our conduct on earth. Both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter were very similar in many respects.
For example, Paul had thoughts of the future that would include both reward and divine accountability.
And this touched the apostle Paul. He lived his life knowing that one day he would appear before Christ. He would be there in the presence of the king of the universe, give an account of the life he had lived, and that motivated Paul to live his life in light of the very inspired words he wrote in Ephesians chapter 4.
This is chapter 4 verse 1. Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called.
[25:28] we should be engaged in a worthy walk. As Peter reflected on the great truths of the end times which the Holy Spirit then motivated him to reveal, he concluded along with every believer was to live their life that was characterized by holy conduct and godliness.

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By holy conduct Peter was admonishing his hearers to pure external actions and behavior. By godliness Peter turned inward.
That involved internal heart attitudes and certainly reverence for the Lord. Peter concludes this way. He looks at seven qualities that make up the Christian walk.
And those seven are this. Eternal perspective, have an eternal perspective, have internal peace, exercise practical purity, be faithful in proclaiming, proclamation, be doctrinally perceptive as to what's going on around you, strive for spiritual progress, and be in continual praise.
next week, Lord willing, I'm going to close the study of 2 Peter by looking and examining all seven of those divine qualities next week.
[27:30] We're then going to go on and I'm going to do a few messages that weren't covered by Peter, but we're going to get into those a little bit and then we'll do something else.

And until then, we're going to close in a word of prayer. Gracious God, Father, we lift up to you that name that is above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ.
The day approaches, Lord, when that name will be shouted through the cosmos and every knee will bow and then every tongue will confess to the glory of God the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord.
Before we go to bed tonight, we can do that now. We don't have to wait for a shout. We can do it now. So, Lord, be with us. Be with all these men.
Give us safe journeys home. A good night. And, Lord, bring us back when church is open Wednesday, Sunday morning, Sunday evening.
[28:47] Ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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